

Title: Developing and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence

Class: Cross Cultural Understanding 1st year senior high school learners

Class Size: 21 students

Textbook(s): This Is Culture, Identity

Problems Encountered:

1. Some learners struggled with communicating with their classmates.
2. Many learners focused on form rather than content.
3. Learners held more a more ethnocentric worldview.

1. Goals:

- 1) Be aware of the importance of being able to communicate cross-culturally
- 2) Have a better understanding of why people act and think the way they do
- 3) Examine how to improve your ability to communicate with others.

2. What I Did. Class by Class Detail.

- a.) Week one 04/11/ 2011 - **Class orientation:** CCU Survey. PAC survey. Demographic Survey. In this class, learners fill out surveys.
- b.) **Week two.** 04/21/ 2011 **“What Does ‘Culture’ Mean?”.** -1-30 icebreaker /DPRK Stamps /Flag Skit/ Discussion/ Journal

3.4.9 Stage 3 Week 3-6. Cultural Rules for Acceptable Behavior.

- c.) **Week three: 04/ 28/ 2011** Newsletter discussion Video/ American Teacher Skit Worksheet/ Discussion/ Journal time.
- d.) **Week four: 05/19/2011:** Newsletter discussion, American class Video. Rice ball Skit Worksheet/Discussion. Seinfeld video. Journal time .Video : Seinfeld.
- e.) **Week five: 05/26/ 2011:** Newsletter Talk. Test Preview, PEE, Discussion. Journal Time. In this class, learners discovered more differences between mores and folkways.

3.4.10 Stage 4 Week 7-13. Stereotyping and Media and Culture

- f.) **Week five: 06/09/2011:** Newsletter Talk. Brainstorming assumptions made about boys and girls. Classroom Discussion. Journal Time.
- g.) **Week six: 06/16/2011** Newsletter Talk, Boy v. Girl, Discussion, Journal.
- h.) **Week seven 06/23/2011:** Newsletter Talk, I am A but I am not B, Video, Skit, Discussion, Journal.
- i.) **Week eight 06/30/2011:** Newsletter Talk, Discussion, WWII Japanese portrayal in cartoons, CAPCOM Street Fighter II Stereotypes I
- j.) **Week nine 07/072011:** (Today’s lesson) Newsletter Talk, Year End Surveys
- k.) **Week ten-** Drawing, Who are you?
- l.) **Week eleven-**pair work, newsletter, Chiho, Titanic,
- m.) **Week twelve-**Smile, Journal talk, Ed Hall, Gung Ho
- n.) **Week thirteen-**CS#3, Questions, Skit, Discussion, Takuya
- o.) **Week fourteen-** 10 yen, newsletter, journal, Kijana & Matt
- p.) **Week fifteen-**newsletter, survey, speak out, in Japan
- q.) **Week sixteen-**C.S., newsletter, PRN, Family rules
- r.) **Week seventeen-**Values Wrap up
- s.) **Week eighteen-** newsletter, C.S., Chigusa, Culture Shock with Kenichi, Speak Out

- t.) **Week nineteen-** Valentines Day, Newsletter, Questions, Paris
- u.) **Week twenty-** Culture shock, Jane Bennett,
- v.) **Week twenty-one-** Koran burnings, newsletter, language

Table 1 Overview of Research Stages

Stage 1: 2011/04 Learners are given Cross Cultural Understanding Pre-Course Questionnaire (see appendix 1).	
Stage 2: 2011/04 to 2011/ 07. Learners work on learner journals.	The researcher keeps a learner journal of class as well as responding to journals.
Stage 3: 2011/07 Learners are given Post-Course Questionnaire (appendix 1) and Cross Cultural Understanding Reflection Survey (see appendices 2, 3 and 4).	
Stage 4: 2011/07. Post-Course Interviews (see appendix 5) are conducted in English and Japanese with six selected students to assess development in Cross Cultural Understanding based on data collected from Cross Cultural Understanding Surveys: Pre Test and Post Test and entries of learner journal.	
Stage 5 2011/09 Learners work on learner journals.	The researcher keeps a learner journal of class as well as responding to journals.
Stage 6 2011/12 Learners are given Post-Course Questionnaire (appendix 1) and Cross Cultural Understanding Reflection Survey (see appendices 2,3 and 4).	
Stage 7 2011/12 Post-Course Interviews (see appendix 5) are conducted in English and Japanese with six selected students to assess development in Cross Cultural Understanding based on data collected from Cross Cultural Understanding Surveys: Pre Test and Post Test and entries of learner journal.	
Stage 8 2011/01 Learners work on learner journals.	The researcher keeps a learner journal of class as well as responding to journals.
Stage 9 2011/03 Learners are given Post-Course Questionnaire (appendix 1) and Cross Cultural Understanding Reflection Survey (see appendices 2,3 and 4).	

3.Results

Table 2. Terms 1-3. Stages 1-9. PAC scores. April 2011-March 2011

Perceptual acuity	<u>Pre-test scores</u>	<u>Post-test scores</u>	<u>Differences</u>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
All Participants	34.4. (2.69)	35.6 (3.47)	1.2
Returnees	35.5(2.56)	34.16 (3.43)	-1.34
Non –Returnees	32.75 (1.92)	37.75 (2.16)	5.0

3.1 PAC results

From April 2011-July 2011 (see table 1), there was not much change in the answers we can see slight improvement in PAC scores among returnees. However, over the course of the term, they experienced a drop in PAC scores. There was a decrease in PAC scores. However, non-returnees saw a distinct increase in PAC scores.

Qualitative Data (Journals, Reflections and Interviews)

3.2 First stage. Anxiety and Excitement

In the first stage, learners mentioned anxiety and excitement with the nature and content of the class. Anxiety about form. The class form is carried out in English. Learners, particularly returnees from non-English speaking environments and non-returnees in this study mentioned concerns about being able to follow the material of the class and communicate their ideas in class.

I didn't talk. Speaking English is tense. Speaking English is not easy for me. But I'll try to talk next time." (A.A 1)

The second week of class there were numerous comments mentioning a fear of making mistakes. Some comments displayed anxiety about their inability to speak English as well as others.

I thought some students who say their opinions, can speak English perfectly. So other students think, "we must speak perfect English!" I want to say many opinions in the CCU class, so I study English harder than before! (Y. M 31 NR)

While other comments displayed empathy with others who may feel anxious about speaking up in class.

I like raising hand and speaking up even if I'm wrong. But at the same I understand why they don't raise their hand to try to speak up I was kind of like that when I was in elementary school. I was scared of what other should think about me or look at me if I was wrong. I regret that I was though. I finally understood that it's "The more you speak, the better you'll be- T.K. 36

After seeing the participants' comments concerning making mistakes in class, I implemented conversation confidence building activities.

First class, we didn't speak in English at all. But now we can speak in English a little. I think it is for us. But we can't speak a lot yet. I didn't like it. A quiet class is not very fun...A.N 2 RNEE)

After the third week of classes, learners failed to mention anything about the fear of making mistakes.

3.3. Second Stage. Focus on content. Interest in knowing their own culture and the culture of others

3.3.1 Interest in culture'

In the beginning of the term, a heightened interest in knowing about other cultures was displayed with comments like

At first I didn't know why Kevin looked very sad. Because it is good for use to write on flag in America. And I thought, "The differences of cultures is very interesting. And I want to know more differences. (A.N. 2)

Some learners showed heightened interest as well as a curiosity to know more about other culture by asking the researcher more questions about the skit as well as other differences.

It was interesting because Kevin's skit was real. I learned a lot. For example about flags and foreign culture. I thought, "Foreign country is perfectly different than Japan." Foreign culture is more interesting than before." "I didn't know that if you drop an American flag, you burn it. I thought burning it is worse. Is it burnt only at your house? Or every other American people?"

Q: Is it a culture to not to eat the crust of pizza in the USA? When I was in America many people were not eat in the crust. (10.K.S)

As the term went on there were fewer mentions of interest in learning other cultures and sharing culture with others. However, towards the end of the term, some learners mentioned a frustration in the inability to engage in the discussion of culture with their classmates. Yet despite the frustration in difficulty to communicate experiences, this learner showed a positive attitude toward the class.

At the beginning of Cross Cultural Understanding class, I'm afraid to make mistakes. I didn't have any confidence in my English. I envied who can speak English very well. I want to speak with Kevin more but I was so shy. So I wrote what I wanted to say in class in Kevin's notebook. I wanted to say something but I couldn't. So I chose character which looks enviously sees people. Now I am really enjoying Cross Cultural Understanding class. I try to tell my experience or story in English. Some times I can't speak English well. But I don't care it now. I knew that speaking English is very interesting. So I'm happy that I can study in CCU class." (I.Y. 4)

Some learners mentioned how their confidence in speaking with learners possessing higher English abilities decreased, but their interest in foreign cultures has not declined.

At first I started learning about foreign countries culture and now I get to know about foreign countries culture more but still learning. And going to learn more. In April I was a positive I was looking forward to learning. In July I understand culture a little. But I lose confidence. I didn't talk voluntarily Classmates can speak English well I am think I am inferior to classmates. (A.A.1)

3.4 Third Stage. Perspective Change

A change in perspective was noticed through participants was noticed after the learners observed in a skit involving the researcher eating an *onigiri*, a ball of rice wrapped in seaweed, with a fork and knife rather than by the hand. The skit appeared in the fourth week of class. One learner shared an experience where she could finally empathize with how someone she met who didn't know how to eat the same food.

It (the skit) was very funny. I enjoyed the skit very much! I had same situations. When I lived in Malaysia, I went to the Japanese school. That school has an international exchange programs. It is a program that we invite the Malaysian students to the school and introduce Japanese culture and know each other. When I was I was primary 6 student. We make an onigiri to introduce our food culture. We made them and we began to eat. But they didn't eat them. I said to them, "You can eat rice ball now!" They asked, "But how?" I was surprised and I answered and I answered, "With your hand!" They looked very surprised!! I thought, "Why they are surprised?! Now I know why they so surprised. I think it is interesting to know other countries culture. (I.Y. 4)

Toward the end of the term some learners talked about their change of perspective as it relates to a heightened awareness of others.

Before I take the CCU class I was not a broad-minded person. I didn't think about "the people who are different from my feelings. But now I try to understand their feelings. I knew that it is important to interpret their behavior in the context of their culture through this CCU class. I changed very much through this class. (IY 4)

3.5 Fourth Stage. Heightened awareness of differences within a culture

3.5.1 Knowledge about one's own culture as well as others.

Overall there was a lot of knowledge displayed of ones own culture and the culture of others. The knowledge of cultures increased in the middle and towards the end of the term. At the beginning of part of the term, general knowledge of cultures was displayed. However, by the end of the term, learners displayed heightened awareness of the diverse ideas within a culture, their own or others. Toward the end of the class, learners relied on their knowledge of the diverse opinions and attitudes within their own culture, to demonstrate their knowledge of the diversity of opinions that exist within another culture.

"There are many people living in all over the world. Some of them are girls and boys. And some of them are women and men. They all have different one's sense of values and character. (IY4)

At the end of the term, learners mentioned that interaction with other learners helped improved their knowledge of their own culture as well as that of others.

"There is change (my knowledge that are friends who have different opinions and feelings in class) because we talked in and I could know a lot peoples' thinking and there was different opinions as me." CCUSQ 38 YM

3.6 Fifth Stage. Heightened knowledge about how to improve understanding between cultures.

Learners exhibited this knowledge in the middle and latter half of the term. In the beginning of the term there were a few comments relating to better understanding among people from different cultures. As the weeks passed into the middle of the term, there were very sizeable instances of learners displaying heightened understandings to build communication between cultures. The skit involving the researcher eating a Japanese finger food with a fork and knife stirred a desire among the participants to prevent the misunderstanding that existed between the two parties involved in the skit.

People in other country never eat rice ball with hand so it's normal for them to use a fork and a knife. But eating rice ball with hand is traditional culture of Japan. So we have to teach people in other country about that. If we didn't, we make misunderstanding and they wont know about Japan forever. So it's very important. (YM 41)

Then in one participant's reflection, a comment was made that spurred more debate among learners based on building understanding between cultures.

"We often say, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," I think this word is important. If we go against this word, we may or will be seen by strange eyes. So I think folkways each country is very important and we have to understand each other. (H.A. 26)

Some participants agreed with comments as is evident from the following comments.

Everyone has wonderful ideas. So I felt surprised. "When in Rome do as the Romans do" I think so it. I love my country. So I want to preserve my country culture. I want to know each other. (MM 30)

Yet, not all participants completely agreed with the comment, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." They felt following norms can be done on a case-by-case basis. This participant mentioned that we don't have to follow the cultural norms as long as it doesn't offend others.

I think we don't have to "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" Because we should cherish own culture. When I lived in Belgium, I spoke Japanese. I ate Japanese food, I took off my shoes when I entered my house and I didn't kiss for greeting. I think we don't have to When in Rome, do as the Romans do." But we mustn't hurt the other people. Because if we don't understand each country and culture we can led to intercultural problems and we hurt the other people (NK 20)

This comment mentioned following norms can be done on a case by case basis.

"I felt the folkways and mores are differ country to country. I was surprised there are countries that the women don't drive a car. In Japan, such things is not possible. I don't criticism of a norm in other country. I think in another country, we should respect their folkways and mores. But following or don't following is case-by-case and we should decided it." (H.A. 26)

As we arrived at the end of the first term in July, learners took part in activities involving stereotypes. Learners were able to look at stereotypes of themselves and the groups they belong to and then were asked to look at stereotypes of others. Learners started to display an awareness of how misunderstandings can be prevented by examining the stereotypes and prejudice that we may have towards others. Comments shared showed a desire to recognize stereotypes and to try to eliminate stereotyping and relying on prejudices when trying to understand others.

"I think people make assumptions about others because it does not check whether having

come into ones mind first is true...Therefore, I thought that the mistaken recognition will be produced. In order to prevent it, we thought it required to act without having a fixed concept. By doing so I think that misunderstandings will decrease sharply. (K.T. 35)

3.7 Sixth Stage. Term 2. October- December

The content of the class turned more personal and reflective in nature. Learners were learning about identity. Through surveys and discussion activities, learners spoke more about themselves and learned about each other. The journal writings were more extensive in this term. Some of the learners wrote about the interactions they had and what they learned. This learner talked about the discussion that she had after class with her friends.

After the class, I talked about the discussion with my friends they said first of all, there's many returnees in this class. They lived abroad and naturally learned the way of different thinking compare to normal Japanese I liked the way we sat in class. I get to see more people's face and kind of easier to talk out. So I would like to sit like that all the time. -K.S.

3.8. Term 3. January-March

The content in this term was also personal and reflective in nature. Learners in this term studied about values, as a result they reflected on their own and learned about their fellow classmates values. Learners also displayed knowledge about how to improve understanding between cultures.

If we understand different values of others then we will probably have less conflicts its obvious since you know why the other person has different opinion so you wont be confuse or upset about it. I think we can say this to not only people you don't know but also to people around you. When you are in a group of friends talking and each person has different opinions. You probably wont get made because you understand them. -S.A.

4. What I learned

This study was put in motion with the goal of trying to develop ICC in classroom of diverse learners. This study showed me that learners' intercultural communicative competence in a classroom of diverse learners could be assessed through journals, reflections and interviews. However, the results from the PAC survey did not clearly demonstrate the development of ICC

4.1 Developing intercultural communicative competence

Through the journals, reflections and interviews, the researcher was able to observe how a classroom of diverse learners developed their intercultural communicative competence. A number of the learners started the term by showing interest in culture. Changing their perspective of themselves and others was also noticed at the beginning of the term. Throughout the course, the learners improved their knowledge of the diversity of their own culture and other cultures. Finally, by using their knowledge of the complexities of each culture to try promote understanding between cultures.

4.2 Activities

It was evident to the researcher that learners benefited in varying degrees from different activities. What made the activities beneficial for developing intercultural communicative competence was how they built on each other and recycled the previously discussed material. First, the skits involving critical incidents were used in class. Then, the entertaining and experiential nature of the skits caused for a more active discussion. Next, the second discussion appears in the learner journal. Then, the

third discussion occurs after the journals have been collected and their comments have been made into newsletters in class. After the contents of the previous class were placed in the newsletter, the learners would read and discuss the contents of the newsletter in the next class. Finally, that discussion would be a part of the following journal assignments reflection and this process would repeat it. Judging from the data, the interrelated nature of these activities gave motivation to learners to give meaningful attention and care for each activity, it also allowed for discussion threads to build discussion.

5. Future Issues

When revising this study for future uses, the researcher makes suggestions for further research based on what he has experienced and noticed throughout this study. 1) How to develop all categories of intercultural communicative competence based on ability to change perspective and knowledge about promoting understanding between cultures. 2) Addressing the divide between learners, and 3) developing well-organized system for self-assessment of intercultural communicative competence.

Lesson Plan for Week Twenty-One

Time	Activity	AET	Learners
5-7 min	Picture analysis- Two pictures are presented	passes out pictures, facilitates discussion as a review of how not knowing the beliefs of material products can cause misunderstandings.	Get in groups and answer the questions. 1.) Where is this? 2.) What do you see? 3.) What is happening? After they analyze both pictures, learners connect both pictures.
8 min	Newsletter	Passes out newsletter	1. Read for three minutes 2. Discuss with group members 3x.
3-5 min	Language Translation	Asks learners to translate, <i>yoroshiku onegaishimasu</i> and other phrases into English.	1. In groups learners come up with translations of the phrases.
10-15 min	Listening and Reading about Language and culture	Plays audio recording of native voices talking about language and their culture	1. listen 2. answer questions in pairs 3. check answers w/partners 4. share answers with class.
7 min	Discussion on language and culture	1. changes groups members and asks to use the model dialogue to help to discuss language and culture.	1. talk about language and how it reflects their own culture with partner and change 2-3 times.
5 min	Journal Reflection	Gives the questions to journal about for next week.	Write down the questions And start writing

6. Appendix 1

Stage 1. Cross Cultural Understanding Pre and Post-Test Questionnaire

Name _____

Date _____

Section One.

1. What intercultural experience do you have?

Section Two

2. What do you expect to learn from this class?

Section 5. PAC Scale

Circle the number which best describes your feeling.

5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree.

1. I try to understand people's thoughts and feelings when I talk to them.

話す時に相手の考えや気持ちを理解しようと努力する。

5 4 3 2 1

2. I have a realistic perception of how others see me.

他人が自分をどう見ているのかよくわかっている。

5 4 3 2 1

3. I am the kind of person who gives people who are different from me that benefit of the doubt.

私は自分と違って人に対して、ひとまず好意的な見方をする。

5 4 3 2 1

4. I can perceive how people are feeling, even if they are different from me.

たとえ自分と異なる文化圏の人であっても、かれらが何を感じているか読み取ることができる。

5 4 3 2 1

5. I believe that all cultures have something worthwhile to offer.

すべての文化には、何かしら学ぶべき価値があると信じている。

5 4 3 2 1

6. I pay attention to how people's cultural differences affect their perceptions of me.

文化の違いが、他人が自分を見る目に、どのように影響するか注意を払う。

5 4 3 2 1

7. I consider the impact my actions have on others.

自分の行動が他人に与える影響について考える。

5 4 3 2 1

8. When I am with people who are different from me, I interpret their behavior in the context of their culture.

自分と異なる人と一緒にいる時、彼らの立場に立って、行動を理解しようとする。

5 4 3 2 1

9. When I am in a new or strange environment, I keep an open mind.

新しく慣れていない環境でも、偏見を持たないでいられる。

5 4 3 2 1

10. In talking with people from other cultures, I pay attention to body language.

他の文化圏の人と話すとき、ボディランゲージに注意を払う。

5 4 3 2 1

Appendix 3. People on the Tree

Look at the “People on the Tree” sheet. Please circle the person which reflected the person you were in April and label it with an “A,” and circle the person you are today in July with “B,” in regards to Cross Cultural Understanding. Please explain.



ex_People on the tree

Handout 1 for Lesson 21.



(AFP/Getty Images)

Picture 1



(Getty Images)

Picture 2

Look at both pictures. With you group members, answer the questions below.

1. What do you see?
2. Where is this?
3. What is happening?
4. What is the connection between both pictures?