Teacher Considerations on Designing an Intercultural Communication (ICC) Course for the Language Classroom: Theory to Practice

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The role of teaching culture in foreign language learning and its implementation into the course syllabus is often vague. This vagueness has caused problems for teachers. One factor for this is that the term, 'culture', is rather hard to define. Therefore, to further add clarity to the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom, this study reports on the process involved in designing a course to specifically teach intercultural communication (ICC). The study discusses the following areas for teachers to consider when designing and/or teaching an ICC course: 1) the role of teaching culture in foreign language learning, and what aspects of culture specifically relate to communication; 2) a framework i.e., course syllabus designed to include both theoretical and practical considerations for introducing ICC into a language curriculum, and 3) comments from students offering feedback on the course. This study hopes to encourage other language teachers to consider designing courses with the aim of improving students' cultural understanding, which will lead to successful 'communication across borders' by including elements of culture in lesson planning that directly relate to communication, and therefore to langauge learning. A summary of this paper was orally presented at the 1st Pan-Asian 1997 TESOL Conference in Bangkok.

Key Words: Ethnocentrism, Stereotype, Empathy

1. Background

The contents of the study are based on the author's own experience in designing an intercultural communication class for fourth year English Department students in the Faculty of Education at Kumamoto University. The stimulus for designing the course is based on several reasons. One is the belief that turning a *sentaku* (elective) *eikaiwa* (English conversation) course into an intercultural communication (ICC) course would be more appealing for students. The appeal of the course can be seen in the timeliness of the subject. This is evident from the array of culture specific terms that have recently come into the spotlight like *internationalization, global village, cross-cultural communication* or *intercultural communication*, and *international understanding*. The latter term *international understanding* or '*kokusai rikai*' is even written in the Ministry of Education's Course of Study (1991) as one of its goals in the English curriculum for secondary schools.

Although the topic of the course is timely, a more important reason for introducing the course stems from the author's belief, which is supported by others (e.g. Kramsch, 1993, Seelye, 1974, Tomalin and Stempleski, 1994, Valdes, 1994), that developing a sensitivity to other cultures or having cultural awareness is directly related to effectively communicating in a foreign language. This belief that the teaching of culture has a role in the foreign language classroom is especially important because there are still some who may believe that the teaching of culture belongs solely to the world of arts and literature.

Consequently, this paper will demonstrate that there is an important role for the teaching of culture in the foreign language learning classroom.

This paper will also offer the teacher a view of how an ICC course was developed including both theoretical and practical applications. Offering insights on how teachers develop their own courses is a significant aspect of the study because "teachers are increasingly being called upon to design courses they teach" (Graves, 1994:1). Therefore, a step by step procedural model of how the ICC course was designed and implemented into the classroom is given. This entails a presentation of the framework used by the author for the purpose of designing the course from theory to practice.

2. A framework for the course

In her book, *Teachers as course developers*, Graves (1994) suggests that teachers are in a favorable position when designing a course because they hold the unique position of being able to blend theory with practice. They can plan a course from their own personal experiences, which give them a closer understanding of particular classroom needs, and at the same time they possess the knowledge of the theories of others. In this sense, when teachers design their own course they can bridge the gap between theory and practice. With this being understood, the challenge becomes how to translate practical experience and theories into a course, in this case an ICC course. Valdes alludes to this in the following:

> "The teacher who selects or is assigned [a cultural class or] a cultural text for a class does not have the whole problem of the cultural component solved; the teacher at this point needs the background from which to draw to determine methods and techniques of presentation..." (Valdes, 1994: x).

Valdes's statement implies that when teachers design a course, they need to have a deeper understanding of what they are setting out to do, i.e. a way to connect theories and practice in the course design. Towards this aim, the author has adapted a framework 'loosely' based on Anthony's model of *Approach, Method*, and *Technique* (1963). Richards and Rodgers (1988:15) adapted the model and defined the terms in the following (bracketed content are the author's):

* **Approach**

    "assumptions and beliefs [theories] about language and language learning are specified;"

    [An understanding of *why* culture should be taught]

* **Method**

    "theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught and the order in which the content will be presented [syllabus planning];"

    [Deals with *what* should be taught; kinds of cultural activities, teachers' and students' roles]

* **Techniques**

    "implementation of activities: classroom procedures are described [activities]. "

    [Focuses on *how* the activities can be carried out by clearly stating the procedures]

On the one hand, the above model offers a convenient 'top-down' design embodying theory to practice. However, the arrangement of *Approach, Method* and *Technique* has been 'loosely' adapted for the ICC course design because — as teachers with experience will realize — lesson planning and teaching

do not always fit into a nicely organized linear pattern. As Larsen-Freeman writes teachers often have to deal with the "messy realities of the classroom" (1997:27). Nonetheless, as a general guideline the above terms which can be simplified to mean *why* , *what* and *how* , respectively, provide a useful framework to use when developing a syllabus to teach ICC. Moreover, to show flexibility in the course design, Grave's (1997)*Framework of Components* was also adapted. In her framework for course design she includes various components that should be considered, and within each component are guiding questions for the teacher to consider. This will be made clearer in section 4.

3. Approach: The role of culture in foreign language classroom(WHY?)

As previously mentioned the difficulty with implementing a cultural component into language teaching is that the term *culture* is hard to define. For example, two well known anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckholm (1954), in their study titled *Culture: a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, found 300 definitions. Given the broadness of the range of meanings found within the term *culture*, clarity in the course design of why culture should be introduced, and an understanding of its related role to language learning must be considered. Here the teacher's assumptions or theoretical views form the basis for the approach the teacher will take. Usually these views come from experience and from the research literature done by others. The approach taken in the course design was based on the belief that culture does have a direct influence on communication. The following views from other researchers firmly support this belief:

> ✳ "Studies of interethnic [intercultural] communication suggest that lack of shared schemas in interaction are
> more likely to lead to communication breakdown than differences and difficulties at the level of linguistic
> code" (Ellis&Roberts, 1987 in Byram, 1994: 8).

Ellis and Robert point out that when interacting with someone from a different culture, differences in background influenced by one's own culture can cause more misunderstandings than those at the linguistic level.

> ✳ "Native culture is as much of an interference for second language learners as is native language" (Valdes,1994:
> 2, also see Lado in Valdes).

Linguistic research dealing with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado,1957) asserts that in language learning the native language (L1)can cause interference with the target language (L2). Valdes and Lado make the point that one's native culture also can cause interference in intercultural communication when communicating with someone from the another culture i.e. target culture (see 4.1, Fig 2a).

> ✳ Cultural content creates motivation to learn the target language (Byram, 1994, Valdes, 1994) .
> ✳ Without cultural understanding, "how or where can it [language] be put to use" (Seelye, 1974 : 21)

Byram, Valdes and Seeley imply that culture is certainly a reality for language learning and using the language; therefore, it should not be separated from the language classroom.

Although the above comments provide theoretical reasons for the relationship between culture and language learning and therefore offer support for an approach to introducing culture into the course, they do not provide suggestions for teaching or learning. Thus, another stage of planning the course to determine what aspects of culture should be introduced, and methods for implementing them need to be developed.
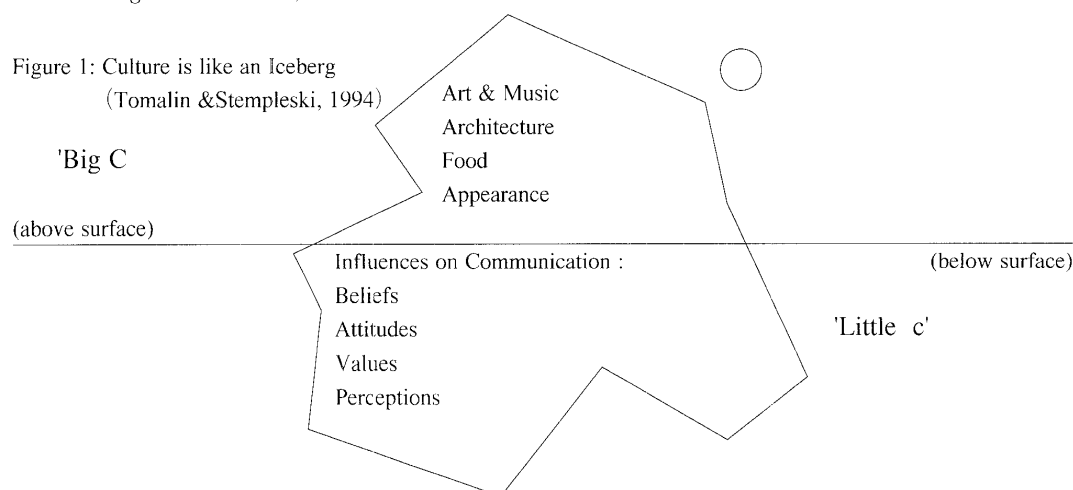
4. Method: Ways to integrate culture in a language learning classroom (*What?*)

At this stage the approach to the course is put into practice, and content selection becomes a major concern. Graves refers to this component of the course design as "conceptualizing content". Within this component is the guiding question: *What will be the backbone of what I teach?* (1997:19). Knowing what to teach can be particularly difficult when dealing with culture as it is such a broad term covering a lot of content. In narrowing the content selection the following categories; *Big C* and *Little* c are useful. The former is labeled 'big' because of the large amount of attention it gets in academia (Valdes, 1994).

The upper case *big C* and lower case *little c* have been used (Valdes, 1994, Tomalin and Stempleski, 1994) to emphasize different aspects of culture. *Big C* represents the traditional courses found in the school curriculums in which the civilizations of cultures are explored. These courses are usually taught by the Faculty of Humanities or Letters and Literature (*Bungakubu*), and usually deal with what the culture has produced--literature, art, music, architecture and history. Historically in academia, after studying the content found in *big C*, one often night be seen as attaining the status of a 'cultured' person or *bunkajin*.

On the other hand, *little c* component of culture deals with the practical or social elements of intercultural relations as it involves the study of a cultural group's behavior by looking at culturally influenced beliefs, and perceptions — *especially expressed through language* — and cultural behaviors that affect acceptability in the native or host community (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1994). The key point here is that the *little c* element of culture has more relevance to interpersonal communication (and communication breakdown), and therefore to the language classroom. As a result, the area of *little c* provides a useful category to use as a backbone for course content in an intercultural communication class.

The following illustration using an iceberg as a metaphor further demonstrates the differences between *big C* and *little c*, and the relevance of the latter to communication.

Figure 1: Culture is like an Iceberg
          (Tomalin &Stempleski, 1994)

'Big C

Art & Music
Architecture
Food
Appearance

(above surface)

Influences on Communication :   (below surface)
Beliefs
Attitudes   'Little c'
Values
Perceptions

The above chart illustrates that "Culture" as the backbone of the course will not mainly refer to art, literature, food clothing styles etc.. Instead the ICC course refers to the hidden patterns of human interaction, which shape the viewpoints, and expressions that people in one culture share. Thus, the unseen nature of culture can be compared to an iceberg, most of which is hidden under. Furthermore, the part of culture that is on the surface may not cause as much difficulties in intercultural communication. On the contrary, it may be that "the hidden aspects of culture have significant effects on behavior and on interactions with others (Levine and Adelman, 1993: xvii).

4.1 ICC goals for the classroom: objectives for the course

In determining the goals and objectives of the course, Graves' (1996) guiding questions are useful here as well: *What are the purposes and intended outcomes of the course? What will my students learn to do or learn to achieve these goals?* A major objective is to have students realize that culture influences communication. In relation to this objective is the aim to help the students develop a sensitivity to other cultures. This involves teaching students the skills that help them avoid the pitfalls of hastily adopting views or forming negative judgments about other cultures. Consequently, an outcome of the class is to have the students develop ways to explore negative statements or stereotypes about other cultures on their own to avoid making rash negative judgments. In this regard, Seelye (1993) adds, "further we can help the student develop some sophistication in evaluating statements about the culture and in finding out more about it" (: 30).

In order to further develop sensitivity and sophistication in evaluating comments about other cultures the following 'key' culture-specific terms are introduced in the course:

Ethnocentrism: an emotional view, consciously or unconsciously, that one's own ethnic group or culture is better than others and that any others who have views and behaviors different from one's cultural behaviors or views is "strange" i.e. being different is odd or not normal.

Generalizations: statement (s) describing general behavior that does not apply all of the time.

Stereotypes: overstated belief about an ethnic group or nationality that comes from having a lack of knowledge or contact with members of the group (s). Stereotypical views are usually narrow and not flexible and often negative.

Empathy: The ability to understand the experience of another as seen through that person.
- multiple reality; an acceptance of another as seen from his/her own experience.
- single reality; a sympathetic understanding of another as seen from your own experience.

In the above terms, *ethnocentrism* and *stereotypes* especially can often cause problems in ICC. In a sense it is when ethnocentrism and stereotypes leak into generalizations that misunderstandings about other cultures can occur, and therefore cause problems in communication (see Fig.2a). *Empathy* on the other hand allows the student to have an open mind by allowing one to not only view the world from one's

own experience, but also by accepting the view that others may see things differently as a result of their own world view. Bennett(1979) draws a distinction between *empathy* and *sympathy* by referring to the former as having a *multiple reality*, an ability to see things from various perspectives; yours and others-- which is important in ICC-- as opposed to the latter as having a *single reality*(your view only), which tends to be more narrow in scope and problematic in ICC because it can lead to ethnocentrism and stereotyping. As a result, an understanding of the above culture-specific terms represent a salient component of the course as they play a key role in developing cultural awareness and intercultural communication. Therefore, the goal of each activity in the course is planned with these concepts in mind so that they can be understood by the student. This is further demonstrated in the next section with example activities.

The second question of Grave's framework — *What will my students learn to do or learn to achieve these goals?* — can be addressed in similar objectives of what a teacher aims for in developing the students' ability to interact successfully in the communication process. A simple definition is as follows:

● Aim for successful communication	● Aim for successful 'intercultural' communication
The aim is to develop the students' competence to encode (sender forms a message) and decode (receiver understands) one's messages as they are intended.	To develop the students' competence to encode and decode one's messages 'interculturally' as they are intended.

In the following diagram we can see an illustration of the above mentioned communication process. The participants are from different cultures. The diagram uses the cultural key terms as they are contained in an *intercultural communication filter*: closed filter causes decreased rate or slower rate of comprehension(2a), and open filter leads to increased rate(2b), which illustrates an overall objective of the class:
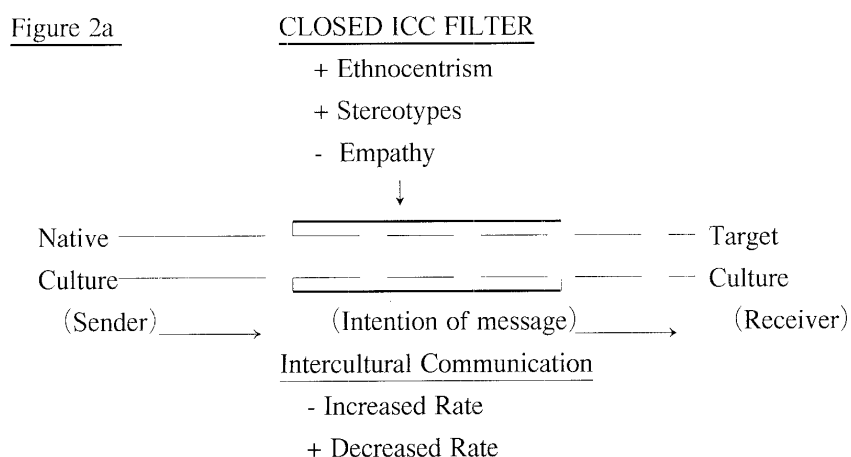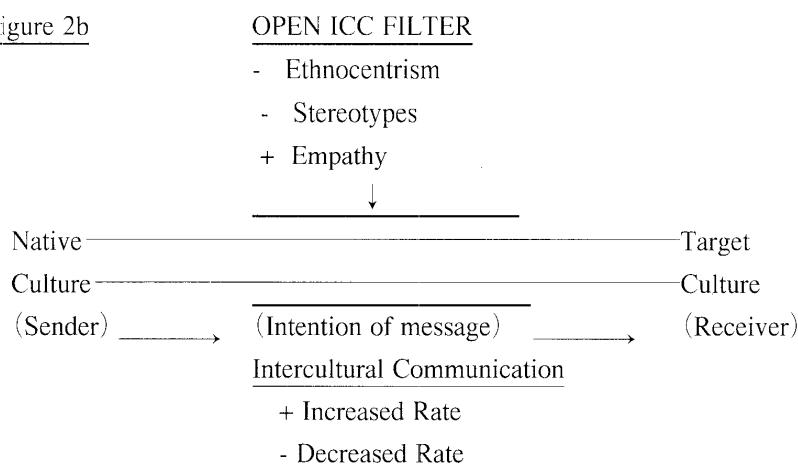
Figure 2a   CLOSED ICC FILTER
                        + Ethnocentrism
                        + Stereotypes
                        - Empathy
                              ↓
Native ———————— ⌐—— ——— ——— ——— —— Target
Culture————————— ⌐—— ——— ———, ——— —— Culture
    (Sender)————→   (Intention of message)————→   (Receiver)
                    Intercultural Communication
                        - Increased Rate
                        + Decreased Rate

Figure 2b   OPEN ICC FILTER
                                 - Ethnocentrism
                                 - Stereotypes
                                 + Empathy
                                         ↓
                                 _____
Native ──Target
Culture ──Culture
 (Sender) _____,   (Intention of message) _____,   (Receiver)
                       Intercultural Communication
                          + Increased Rate
                          - Decreased Rate

In fig. 2a we see how a closed filter caused by a high degree of ethnocentrism, stereotyping and a low amount of empathy found in the sender or receiver contributes to negative perceptions and refusals to accept others' views, which in turn can cause interference and lead to a slow rate of comprehension. However, in fig. 2b. we can see how a more balanced understanding of other cultures and their members due to lower amounts of ethnocentrism, stereoytyping and a higher degree of empathy can lead to an improved rate of comprehension.

4.2. What is the content?--What are the roles of teacher and students?

At this stage in the course design, the focus is on selecting and developing materials as well as forming an understanding of the participants' roles: (1) *What is the teacher's role?* (2) *What are the students' roles?* (3) *What kinds of activities to use?*

(1) The teacher's role in the course is similar to that of teaching a class with the aim of improving communication through student interaction. As Kramsch writes, "the teacher's main goal is to have the students talk and interact, in the hope that through interaction and minimal interference from the teacher the students would practice the linguistic forms they had learned and enter into meaningful dialog with each other" (1993:91). In the ICC course design, in addition to having the students practice linguistic forms, the focus is also on having them develop competence in ICC by gaining an understanding of the key culture specific terms through practice in activities. Moreover, "minimal interference from the teacher" in an ICC course means the teacher should create a non-judgmental atmosphere so that the students can form their own views. One technique is for the teacher to use broad-open-ended questions (Seeley, 1993), which require more thoughtful responses from the students.

Another role of the teacher in the course is to avoid merely teaching students the facts of a culture. Traditionally teachers who teach the *big C* type of content often think the teaching of culture is to have the students memorize facts. Questions like "*What is the tallest building in America? or What is the principal port of Germany ?* forces the students to memorize facts which tends to trivialize the teaching of culture as something superficial (Seelye,1993). Lord Whitehead (1928) wrote that the learning of facts has not justified education since the establishment of libraries and availability of inexpensive paperbacks. In the

ICC course the emphasis is learning how to learn; not to memorize facts. As a result of the course, students should have the competence to explore other cultures with open minds, learn about them in ways to achieve a sophistication in evaluating statements about other cultures. Through exploration students will avoid misunderstandings due to narrow-mindedness, prejudices and negative stereotypes caused by ignorance of other cultures.

(2) The Students' Role should be that of active participation (Littlewood,1981) by willingly participating in discussions with the teacher and with peers in pair or group work. Furthermore, in regards to the ICC course, the students need to have flexibility or openness towards the cultures or lifestyles of others (see Seelye, 1993, Kramsch 1993).

(3) In deciding the kinds of activities to use, Seelye's general objective, which is to provide students with activities that help them to develop cultural understandings, and the performance skills needed to function appropriately with those of other cultures (1993) was used . In reaching this objective, examples of activities and the procedure for implementing them are presented in the next section.

5.Techniques: Activities and procedures for implementation (HOW?)

The most important part of the course design is its actual implementation in the classroom. Graves refers to this level as the 'Organization of content and activities', and offers the guiding question: *How will I organize the content and activities?* (1996:13). In this particular course upon considering the students learning experiences in previous classes, where classes are heavily teacher controlled and student responses are limited (Laskowski, 1994), Littlewood's gradual communicative approach --controlled activities to open ended activities-- was used (1981). In designing the course, the organizing or sequencing of activities was done through what can be termed a 'bochi-bochi' process (Laskowski, 1993). In other words taking a 'step by step' approach where the material is introduced gradually from the simple to the complex, from more control by the teacher to more open ended activities that require freer responses from the students and therefore less control by the teacher (Littlewood, 1981). Moreover, the activities are sequenced so that the present activity A prepares the student for the next activity B (Graves, 1996).

5.1 Examples and procedures of activity sequencing

The following activities will demonstrate a set of related exercises that were introduced in the ICC course:

Activity #1: *What is culture?* (suggested by Smith&Otero, 1988, in Tomalin & Stempleski, 1994)

This brainstorming activity is designed to get students to look at the different meanings people give to the word 'culture'. The purpose of the activity is to show that 1) the term culture is hard to define; 2) aspects of it are not so 'unique' to one culture, and 3) characteristics of culture are often used as a means to show human differences between ethnic groups.

* Procedure:

1) Students call out names of cultural groups. e.g.. Indonesians, Japanese, Americans, Italians etc..
   Teacher writes names on the board.

2) Students are put into groups and make a list of characteristics that make each different from others.

Example:

Language	music	religion	geography	physical features
Food & Drink	architecture	clothing	arts&crafts	customs

3) Group reflection: Can all groups be 'truly' identified by different languages or religions?
4) General Discussion: Why is it difficult to define the word "culture"?
   Characteristics people use to define differences can't be applied universally.
   People identify cultures and cultural groups as a way to show that groups are different from one another.

Activity #2: *Generalizations and Stereotypes* (adapted from Levine&Adelman, 1993)

In this "controlled" fill in the gap activity, the aim is to help students develop an understanding of the key terms; *Generalization* and *Stereotype*. Although it is often hard to show the difference between the two terms, the best one can do is to suggest that *stereotypes* are often formed from *generalizations* that become rigid and negative.

* Procedure
1) Complete each of the following statements with the first idea that comes to your mind.
   a. Many politicians are _____   d. Many women/men are _____
   b. Many successful people are _____   e. Many rich people are _____
   c. Many (Koreans, French, African-Americans, Singaporeans etc.) are _____
2) Teacher elicits responses from students and writes them on the board.
3) Discussion: Was it easy to make generalizations? How did you form them? Are they generalizations or stereotypes?
   Example responses: a) Japanese are not creative b) Japanese are a group-oriented society
* In the above responses the teacher might point out that a) is an example of a stereotype and b) is a generalization

Activity #3: *A closer look at stereotypes*

This activity is less controlled although categories to control the outcome and an example are provided by the teacher. The aim is to show students that stereotypes are often too general and represent negative judgments of other cultural groups. Student A develops cultural awareness by looking at his/her view of a stereotype and then discussing it with other students (student B,C etc.) who comment on student A's view. It is hoped that discussions may change the stereotyped views of students. In addition a linguistic focus of the activity can also be introduced as students can be made aware that using ethnic terms like *Koreans, Brazilians* tend to infer 'all' or ' everyone', and that frequency adverbs like, *always, never* also to tend to overgeneralize views. Instead, terms like *many, some, usually, often, sometimes* tend to 'soften' the generalization.

* Procedure:
1) After looking at example #1, write a stereotype you have heard. Then write if you believe it or not.
2) Next give your comments to another student (ideally with a member of the ethnic group stereotyped, i.e. foreign
   student, or someone who may have some experience of the mentioned stereotype) to comment on your view.
Note: Example #1 was given to the students and example #2 is a student's example from the ICC class.

Stereotype	Do you believe it's true? Why?	Comment from other student:
#1: Japanese salary men always work too much and are never home to do things with their families.	Well it may be true. They work until late at night and on Saturdays too. On Sundays they are too tired to be with their families.	Sometimes this may be true. However, my father is a salary man; usually,he doesn't stay at work so late, and he often does things with his family.
#2: (All)Koreans don't like Japanese.	I am not sure. Because of our (Japan's)past actions, it is said that Koreans don't like us.	This is not true. When I went to Korea, many people were kind to me.

Activity # 4 (Follow up to activity #3): *Responding to stereotypes about one's culture.*

Students write dialogs to develop effective responses to stereotypical statements or questions. This activity offers the students communicative strategies for responding to stereotypes by making them aware of possible reactions and then having them create a dialog with effective responses.

(adapted from Levine&Adelman, 1993)

* Procedure:

1) Create a dialog with a stereotype (you can use stereotype in previous activity; #3)
2) Include an effective response to the stereotype.

Example: *Japanese people work themselves to death* (*Karoshi*).

Possible reactions: Ineffective: become angry, ignore them,

Effective: Joke about them, explain why they are stereotypes, ask why they were made,

Student Example (parenthesis are the author's):

A: I heard Japanese people work themselves to death (stereotype).

B: Why do you say that? (Ask why they were made.)

A: Because in the newspaper I read an article about *Karoshi*. It said Japanese die from working so hard.

B: This has happened. But the number of people who actually die from overwork is rather small. Maybe you think many people have this problem because newspapers make it seem so (explanation).

[Note: students point is that newspapers sometimes sensationalize stories and contribute to stereotypes]

Activity #5: *Critical Incident* (*Intercultural dialogs*)

Critical Incidents were used in Peace Corp. training in the 60's to prepare volunteers with problems that may arise due to intercultural encounters. A *Critical Incident Exercise* (CIE) is a brief description of a situation in which there is a misunderstanding, problem, or conflict arising from cultural differences between the members who are interacting. In using a CIE, Wight (1995) suggests that "each incident give only enough information to set the stage, describe what happened, and possible supply the feelings and reactions of the parties involved" (:125). CIEs are open ended in that they require freer responses from the student as the cultural differences that cause the problems are not given in the incident (see Discussion Questions, part B below). These problems are discovered or revealed as the students analyze the situation. CIEs are easy to conduct and allow the students on a personal level to examine how attitudes and behaviors are critical to ICC. (For more examples of CIE's to use in the classroom see Storti,1994 who offers a book with 74 CIEs in total including a brief analysis of each incident).

* Procedure:

1) Read the critical incident (A) below and then give your responses to the discussion questions (B) .
2) Discuss your responses with your group and try to identify the relative cultural differences that are causing the misunderstandings.

(A) Example of Critical Incident: *Accepting a Compliment* (Tomalin &Stempleski, 1994)

Linda, an American teacher in an adult class in the US, was speaking to Usa, one of her Thai students. She said. "Usa, I'm very happy with your work. Your English is really improving." Usa looked down and said, "Oh, no . I'm not a good student. My English is not very good." Linda really thought that Usa was making progress, and she wanted her to know it. She said to Usa, "But you are a good student and you are making excellent progress. You should be proud of your work." Usa responded to this remark saying, "No, no. You are a very good teacher, but I'm not a good student." Linda didn't know what to say, so she decided not to give Usa any more compliments.

(B) Discussion Questions

1. How much do you agree or disagree with_____ (Totally disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree)
2. If you were_____, what would you have done?
3. What are the main issues or problems in this situation?
4. How would you solve the problem?

By responding to the discussion questions, the students could eventually analyze that because of cultural influences Usa may have felt uncomfortable in being singled out for a compliment, and that in some cultures looking down is a sign of respect. On the other hand, in many English speaking countries it is normal to compliment the students for good work and for the student to say thank you. Consequently, the above activity using a CIE allows students to see how simple differences in culture can influence attitudes. Moreover, in the next sequence of this set of activities, the students are asked to write their own CIEs from their own experience or from their own projection of a possible critical incident (see Appendix A).

The set of activities introduced in this section moved gradually from being controlled by the teacher with limited responses from the students to open ended responses by the students and therefore less control from the teacher. The content aimed at providing the students with a deeper understanding of cultural specific terms such as *generalization* and *stereotypes*. Through analyzing and writing CIE's, the goal is to have the students realize that extreme generalizations, negative stereotypes and ignorance of other cultures lead to ethnocentrism, and therefore to decreased rate of intercultural understanding (see Fig. 2a). On the other hand, the students can gain an understanding of empathy by gradually engaging in activities that develop an awareness or a sensitivity to other cultures and how language is influenced by one's culture.

The activities presented in this section are examples of one set of exercises that were introduced in the course. Time does not allow to explore the full menu of sources available to teachers for selecting ICC activities. The activities presented in this study are a mere drop in the bucket. Excellent sources for ICC activities can be found in videos, literature; short story or novels, newspapers, simulation games, etc.. In addition, as computer technology enters the classroom, mediums such as internet, where students in different countries can interact using e-mail, offer a great source for an ICC course. In short, there is an abundant supply of materials awaiting the teacher who decides to introduce ICC into the language classroom.

6. Evaluation of the ICC Course

An important part of the course design process is to reflect on what is happening in the course. As Graves writes, "most courses entail modification of the course, both while it is in progress and after it is over" (1996:5). One way to do this is to get feedback from students on what they thought of the course The following survey was given to 24 students who took the ICC course in their second semester. A five point Likert type scale was used. The results are as follows:

(1) Did you understand the purpose of this class? (5=very much, 1=very little)

        5 (58%)   4 (38%)   3 (4%)   2   1

(2) What did you think about the class materials? (5=very good. 1=not good)

        5 (33%)   4 (54%)   3 (13%)   2   1

(3) In comparing cultures, did you think the teacher was fair? (5=very fair. 1=not fair)

        5 (75%)   4 (21%)   3   2 (4%)   1

(4) If you become a teacher, will you include aspects of intercultural communication in your class?

        5 (49%)   4 (53%)   3 (8%)   2   1   (5=very often. 1=never)
(5) If you meet someone from a different culture, will you apply what you have learned in this class
     in regards to intercultural communication? (5= consider very much, 1= consider very little)
        5 (75%)   4 (25%)   3   2   1
(6) Do you think your English ability improved by taking this class? (5=very much, 1=very little)
        5   4 (42%)   3 (38%)   2 (20%)   1
(7) Could you please makes some comments about our class? (Japanese or in English):

*   Because of this course I could see how cultural differences lead to misunderstandings. For example, Japanese often permit ambiguity and vagueness. Therefore they do not express their clear opinion. Americans, for example, often require explicit opinions. They take Japanese ambiguity to mean that they [Japanese] do not have interest in the topic or as agreement with their idea. If we understand intercultural communication, we can understand not only the surface of the language, but the thoughts below [behind] the language — Makiko Miyamoto

*   In this course I could learn that intercultural understanding is a must in foreign language learning. A lot of cultural misunderstandings can happen if you don't know the background of where the language is spoken even though you know the language very well. On the other hand if you know the cultural differences when you use the language you can be flexible and you can understand 'what is between the lines'--Noriko Goto

*   We could learn that even if you speak a foreign language that without knowing about foreign cultures, communication may breakdown. Just as Jack, the American baseball player said to Yoji, the translator in the movie 'Mr. Baseball' [a movie shown in class] " just because you speak English it doesn't mean we speak the same langauge". I think this is a good example--Miyuki Morishita

*   If I don't know about ICC I may misunderstand someone from a foreign country. By knowing about or understanding it, I can know why someone said that or did that. Now, I think I want to have chances to communicate with someone from a different culture. I think my language ability will get better — Ayumi Yamashiro

     From the results we can see that the overall response to the class is positive. The results of Questions 1 and 2 indicate that the students had a good understanding of the class objectives and materials that were introduced. Question 3 shows that the teacher was able to teach with an unbiased approach. Thus allowing students to form their own views. Question 4 indicates that those who become teachers would seriously consider integrating ICC in their teaching. Question 5 also demonstrates that students are much more aware of the role of ICC in their own lives. In question 6 we see that slightly lower scores are recorded in regards to how students felt about the improvement of their language ability. From the results of question 6, the author has considered that 1) students tend to be hard on themselves when asked to judge whether or not there is an improvement on their language proficiency, and 2) further reflection is needed on finding ways to continue developing materials that help students improve on their language abilities. Finally, the example comments taken from question 7 show that the ICC objectives of the course are being met.

7. Conclusion

     This study reported the process involved in designing an intercultural communication course for the language classroom. The content of the study is based on the author's on experience. Anthony's *Approach, Method and Techniques* model and Graves' *Framework of Components* were adapted and used as a framework for the course design. The paper first attempts to define the author's approach to *why* the

teaching of culture should be included in a foreign language curriculum by looking at the broad area of culture and then categorizing the subject into two areas; *big C and little c*. The former relating to cultural 'products' of a society, the latter dealing with the hidden aspects of culture that have an influence on social behavior. The study showed how the *little c* aspect of culture directly relates to communication and to language teaching. Next methods or *what* needs to be done in the course were included by clarifying the objectives of the course, teacher's and students expected roles and kinds of activities. Finally, examples of activities, and techniques on *how* to implement them into the classroom were presented. It is hoped that with appropriate teacher considerations, ICC courses can be effectively designed to improve students' sensitivity to other cultures, and therefore allow the students to enjoy successful interaction when communicating across borders. As one student wrote: *I want to make use of what I learned in this class when I communicate with people from other cultures. I think this knowledge will make it easier to be friends with a person from another country.*

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Appendix A : Student Examples of CIE's:

Activity : WRITE A CRITICAL INCIDENT

* Identify the main actors in the incident-- Give only enough background information to set the stage.
* Tell where and when the incident happened.
* Describe what happened, but do not describe the cultural differences.
* Describe how the participant(s) reacted; his/her feelings, thoughts and actions--this will depend on the point to be made with the incident.
* The incident can be from your own experience or you can create one. (If you create one you can choose other cultures besides native English speaking countries.)

Student Example #1 (By Hitomi Fujimoto)

Maria, a Brazilian, came to UK four years ago. When she came to London the first time, she could hardly speak English. So, she was going to a language school. One day she took a taxi in London and managed to explain where she wanted to go in English, though her English was poor. The driver, an Englishman, just said, "Hey giza, you've got to speak English better cos' you're here" in a cold voice with a cockney accent, as if he despised her. He didn't try to understand what she said. After this she had several similar experiences like this. For example, people ignored her when she asked the way, because she didn't speak English properly. Now, she doesn't want to be with English, and doesn't like them for many reasons. They are cold, stingy, not fashionable, unclean, rough, etc.. She has only one English friend despite being in the UK for four years.

* Student analysis: Maria should know that the taxi driver is ethnocentric and doesn't have empathy, and that all English people are not this way. But she became angry, and started to think all English are this way because of other experiences afterward. This made her lose confidence in her language ability, and she developed negative stereotypes about English people. Now, she is doing the same as the taxi driver.

Student Example #2 (by Miyuki Morishita)

Annie an American got married with Kenichi, a Japanese. One day they decided to invite Kenichi's friend over for dinner. When he was talking with his friend his wife heard him say "I just got married and I would like you to come over to our house for dinner next Sunday--Although my wife is not

beautiful and can't cook very well, we hope you will come"...At this point Annie was shocked. she couldn't understand why her husband said something uncomplimentary about her.

* Student Analysis: In Japan, modesty is valued and people often say uncomplimentary things about themselves or immediate family in order to show modesty.

Student example #3: (intracultural problem: cultural differences within a culture, by Kumiko Okita)

After passing the entrance examination at a university in Kyoto, Taro moved from Kumamoto to Kyoto to go to school there. Taro made friends with Masao who is from Kyoto. One day Masao took Taro to his house. They talked about many things. Taro had supper with Masao's family. After supper Taro was still in Masao's house. Around 12 at night, Masao's mother said "Do you want to eat 'Ochazuke?' [rice soup made with hot tea). Taro answered "yes I do. I'm hungry". Masao's mother looked angry. Taro was confused

* Student Analysis: According to the student, in Kyoto, to indicate 'it is getting late', the host may indirectly ask overstaying guests to leave by asking them if they want to eat 'Ochazuke', a dish usually eaten at the end of a meal. Ideally, the host hopes that guests will get the hint that it is time to go.