Teachers Roles and Perspectives in Raising Cultural Awareness

Andrew Reimann

Introduction

The rapid changes taking place globally and locally in terms of the requirements and nature of communication and general international exchange, are often neglected in Language education, particularly in Japan. After more than a decade of widespread Information Technology and innovation in communications, adequate and practical training is still being eclipsed by the cliche of grammar translation and other one dimensional methods which have become fossilized stereotypes of ELT in Japan. In a country that leads the world in resources allocated to Language Education and training, why has not more been invested in updating methods, curricula and policies to meet even the most basic needs? Some initiatives like Super English Language High Schools (SELHI) have shown awareness of growing deficiencies but these are short term projects limited in scope and potential by the same entrance test and curriculum restrictions that hinder the regular programs. English education in Japan has always necessitated quantifiable results, transferable to a test score. Any subsequent value of learning the language was and still is, to an astonishing degree, viewed as secondary. A more qualitative approach to language learning would need to deal with the complex issues of testing and evaluation as well as teaching. Though some tests including TOEIC and TOEFL have become more communicative and are increasingly more common, the end result remains unchanged: English is not taught as a global language for practical purposes in Japan, after 6 or 7 years of English Language Training, Japanese students are still totally unprepared for communication with non-Japanese or in a foreign context (Takanashi 2004). Why is not more being done to revitalize Japanese ELT? Where must the impetus for change come from? If teachers are at the forefront of this paradigm shift, what do they need to help learners become successful communicators?

The following reports on research aimed at uncovering and describing the extent and nature of teacher's needs, difficulties, abilities and perspectives concerning the teaching of cultural content as part of their EFL curriculum. The purpose of introducing cultural content is to engage learners with meaningful and relevant material and information geared towards raising cultural awareness as an essential element of Communicative Competence (Widdowson 2005, Byram 1997). Considering global changes and challenges, language learners who have engaged with cultural content as part of their English education are much better prepared for communication than learners who have not (Widdowson, 2005). Recently however the goal behind cultural content inclusion has become skewed and misunderstood as many texts and lessons focus on overt, tourist culture knowledge to supplement basic language learning activities, reinforcing stereotypes and cultural imperialism, without fostering any kind of understanding or relevant engagement. If the goal of applying cultural content to language teaching is to create more flexible and inter-culturally minded communicators, then with whom does the responsibility for the impetus of change lie? Are teachers solely responsible for the outcome of their student's communicative abilities? How much of this rests with students alone or with curriculum designers, educational planners, textbook writers and editors? A significant part of this problem involves the fact that most teachers are not sufficiently trained to teach cultural content, are not sure what they should include as

cultural content and are unaware that they are often presenting dangerously biased, stereotype reinforcing examples of cultural imperialism, which are of little or no interest and of limited usefulness to the students. Upon analysis of teacher's perspectives regarding these issues, it becomes clear that the crux of this problem is due partly to the limited nature of materials and texts that are available to teachers, as well as a result of inadequate training or explanation necessary to create a vision for effectively developing cultural awareness.

Given that the range and type of language skills, which students in today's world require, is becoming more comprehensive and diverse. The skills and methods of teachers must also be modified to reflect these changing needs and requirements. Historically information came at a premium, as it was difficult to obtain, skills of memorization and recall were valued. In this new era however, the problem with information is that it is cheap, superfluous and often irrelevant. As a result, being able to remember, reproduce and access information has become secondary in importance in favor of skills of analyses, critical evaluation and effective processing, as essential communication tools. Similarly, the native speaker as role model is no longer the optimal target, as mastery of linguistic forms, native like pronunciation and mimicking of phrases are not a necessary criteria for successful communication in the increasingly multicultural world (Alptekin 2002). Learners and consequently teachers need to be aware of differences in communication styles open to ambiguity, flexible in negotiating meaning and able to adapt to unexpected changes in even the most basic communicative situations (Takanashi 2004). Although language learners quickly become aware of these issues once they leave the classroom and enter the real world, in the form of culture shock, discrimination or total communication breakdown, can teachers prepare students for these situations? Can we eliminate the obvious pitfalls in intercultural communication by including awareness raising content and strategies in the regular curriculum? Much has been written on the difficulties of teaching cultural

awareness in connection with English as a Global Language (Merryfield 1993, Widdowson 1998). This report will focus on determining viable solutions for pedagogical reform by considering teacher's perspectives.

Key questions which need to be addressed in implementing any kind of cultural training or education include:

- How can teacher's best introduce cultural content without reinforcing stereotypes, engaging in cultural imperialism or projecting their own personal bias and agendas on to their students?
- Can cultural awareness be developed and taught objectively?
- What is the role of the teacher in facilitating awareness, navigating differences and harnessing/developing cultural diversity as a resource?
- How should teachers begin to use their experience and intuition effectively?
- How should new and inexperienced teachers be initiated into such a paradigm?
- How can teachers introduce intercultural learning strategies that can be extended beyond the classroom?
- Is it beneficial to train non language, content teachers to teach specialty language and ESP courses? How would this be done?
- What are the pros/cons, logistics, feasibility, goals and potential outcome of such training and consequent teaching?

Perspectives in Practice; A Survey of Teachers Needs Method and Procedure

A total of 46 teachers were surveyed in order to gain insight into their teaching contexts, preferences, abilities, experiences and concerns regarding the teaching of cultural content. The instrument (see Appendix A) a short survey, consisted of simple yes/no or likert scale type ranking questions. All teachers were given as much time as necessary and told that the surveys were for research purposes only and strictly confidential. All questionnaires were completed quickly and without difficulty or additional explanation.

Consequently the survey maintained a 100% response rate for all questions fielded. After completion of the questionnaire, several teachers were asked questions (unofficially interviewed) regarding their views, understanding and concerns wit the subject matter. All though these responses are purely subjective and qualitative in nature, with no statistically significant value, they did help in providing a deeper understanding and overall perspective regarding context and more personal concerns, valuable insights which a blunt instrument like a survey is incapable of recording.

Subjects and Context

Of the 46 teachers, 78.3% taught at Universities and 21.7% were High school teachers. 17.4% were female and 83.6% were male though gender differences did not appear to play a significant role. 60.8% were Japanese teachers and 39.2% were Foreign. This distinction was significant in terms of length and type of experience. Most foreign teachers had had teaching experience in a variety of contexts whereas Japanese teachers had mostly taught only in Japan. However Japanese teachers on average had more teaching experience. The combined average for years experience was 16.7 years (10.7 years standard deviation) with a range of 2 years to 41 years. Although there is much variation in reflected results, it is yet unclear what impact these differences had on the data and definitely warrants further research. The majority 91.3% stated that they taught intermediate level students with the remaining 8.6% teaching either advanced (4.3%) or low level (4.3%) students. Within these groups, 60.9% said that they taught mostly skill based classes and 39.1% stated that they taught more content based classes. This distinction also mirrors the type of institution as most High school teachers (94.3%) taught only skills which met entrance exam requirements.

Perspective and Practice

In order to better understand teacher's perspectives on classroom practices involving cultural content and intercultural communication skills, several questions were geared towards highlighting teacher's preferences, fears and frustrations in the classroom. 82.6% of teachers felt that the most important skills required by Japanese students today are not being taught effectively. These skills included basic oral communication, critical thinking, IT training, networking, analyzing information, expressing opinions, negotiating meaning, overcoming anxiety and building up confidence and motivation. A further 47.8% were not satisfied with texts or materials stating that material did not engage learners focused on trivial tasks and information exchange were generally repetitive and failed to motivate or generate a personal relevance in the learner. The remaining 52.2%, who were predominantly high school teachers, although satisfied with there texts did not offer any praise for materials other than that they adequately elicited the responses required by learners taking the English Language component of entrance tests.

Evaluating teachers attitude towards cultural awareness raising (CAR) in general, on a scale of 1-10, 1 being unimportant and 10 being very important, 69.5% ranked (CAR) 8 or higher with 43.5% ranking (CAR) at 10 and no respondents ranking below 5. Similarly, the evaluation of the importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) was ranked favorably, with 69.5% ranking (ICC) 8 or higher with 30.4% at 10 and no responses below 5. In correlation to these trends, 87% considered it the teacher's responsibility to provide cultural content. 87% also felt they were qualified to do so. However only 69.6% had received any kind of training in Intercultural Communication or Cultural Awareness Raising with an identical 69.6% stating that they would like to receive training in this field. Considering these patterns, only 73.9% responded that they include cultural content in their classes and of these 95% were university teachers.

Results and Discussion

There were several significant correlations which became apparent upon further analysis of the basic data. These suggested a strong dichotomy between:

Table 1: Summary of Combined Results

Total Subjects	46				
Male	83.6%	Female	17.4%		
Japanese	60.8%	Foreign	39.2%		
University	78.3%	High school	21.7%		
1-10 Experience	43.4%	10+ Experience	56.6%		
Content Based	60.9%	Skill Based	39.1%		
Low	4.3%	Intermediate	92.4%	High	4.3%

Are important skills being taught effectively?		
Yes 17.4%		No 82.6%

Are you satisfied with text books?		
Yes 52.2%		No 47.8%

Do you receive any teacher training?		
Yes 69.6%		No 30.4%

Would you like to receive teacher training?		
Yes 69.6%		No 30.4%

On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?	
9-10	47.8%
7-8	30.5%
5-6	21.7%
1-4	0.0%

On a scale of 1-10, how important is Intercultural Communicative Competence?	
9-10	52.2%
7-8	26.1%
5-6	21.7%
1-4	0.0%

Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach culture?		
Yes 87.0%		No 13.0%

Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?		
Yes 73.9%		No 26.1%

Do you feel you are qualified to teach cultural issues?		
Yes 87.0%		No 13.0%

Do you feel you are qualified to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence?		
Yes 69.6%		No 30.4%

experienced and inexperienced teachers, teachers who have taught in various contexts and those who have only taught in Japan, High school and University teachers and teachers who teach skill based or content based classes. In summary, these four categories provide valuable insight into the diverse nature of teachers contexts and personal preferences as well as their concerns, perspectives and attitudes towards teaching cultural content.

Differences in Teaching Experience

In order to better understand differences created by length of teaching experience, subject's responses were divided into two groups. These were teachers with less than 10 years experience (43.4%) and teachers with over 10 years experience (56.6%). After correlating various levels of experience including 5 and

20 year distinctions, the 10 year division emerged as the critical benchmark at which teacher's perspectives and practices begin to differ significantly. Variations in length and type of experience may seem obvious factors effecting teaching ability, style or attitude. However in relation to teaching cultural content, the results appear to be opposite from what might be expected. Typically older and more experienced teachers are set in their ways and not open to experimentation with new methodologies or innovations, to the extent that new teachers might. Especially in Japan teachers tend to teach in the same way they were taught and this invariably leads to the perpetuation of grammar translation, reading and rote memorization (Takanashi 2004). Although both groups felt strongly that essential skills were not being adequately developed (less experienced teachers 71.4% more experienced teachers

88.9%), they differ greatly, in perspective, as to what this dissatisfaction actually entails. One would expect that less experienced teachers would be more aware of the deficiencies of a traditionally structured approach and be open to more communicative methods which would better serve the students in the future. In actual fact the results of this survey indicate that older and more experienced teachers place a higher value on teaching cultural content and developing cultural awareness and Intercultural communicative competence than less experienced teachers. The reasons for this are yet unclear, however from subsequent interviews the following trend immerged.

Less experienced teachers reported that they are still unsure of themselves in the classroom and prefer low risk methods which have a predictable outcome. They may not agree with the merit of their methodology but the need for a safe and dependable lesson seems to over shadow what would be most beneficial for the students. Fear of the unknown seems to be the strongest factor influencing less experienced teacher's attitudes and perspectives. As a result their indication for the need for training was significantly high at 85.7% compared to more experienced teachers at 66.7% as was there significantly higher satisfaction with textbooks (71.4% to 44.4%). Support for this also comes from the indication that 85.7% of less experienced teachers felt it was their responsibility to provide cultural content instruction and their ranking of the importance of cultural awareness raising (CAR) and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) were higher than more experienced teachers (57.1% (CAR) & 71.4% (ICC) to 44.4% (CAR) & 33.3% (ICC) respectively) yet only 57.1% actually included any cultural awareness activities or felt they were qualified to do so. There appears a discrepancy in the ranking of importance for (ICC) as 71.4% of less experienced teachers felt they were qualified to teach (ICC) but from subsequent interviews, this seems to stem from a lack of clear understanding of the exact nature of (ICC). Perhaps with more explanation or training, this result would become consistent with other data. In the case of more experienced teachers,

they appear more secure in the classroom are more aware of the deficiencies in traditional methodology and are therefore more open to innovation and high risk activities which include cultural content and the less predictable aspects of natural communication. More experienced teachers do score lower in their ranking of (CAR) and (ICC) and feel they do not want relevant training, however they overwhelmingly agree (100%) that it is the teacher's responsibility, that they are qualified (100%) and that they actually include cultural content and activities in their classes (88.9%). Again an unclear understanding of the concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence is evident in the extraneous score of (66.7%) for this category. Further research would need to explain this concept in greater detail to insure validity of results.

Differences in Teaching Context Diversity

Similarly type of teaching experience seems to have a profound effect on attitude and practice towards cultural awareness raising. Following length of experience, type of experience is a strong factor in determining teacher preferences. The survey responses were correlated based on distinctions between local (LE) (60.8%) and international (39.2%) teaching experiences (IE). All of the local experience only teachers were Japanese and all but two of the international experience teachers were non-Japanese. Nationality did not seem to be a factor influencing teacher's preferences and was therefore not taken into consideration. However further research and analysis, though beyond the scope of this survey may prove otherwise. As with the correlations regarding length of experience, one might expect that teachers with more diverse experiences would be more open-minded to change and innovation, than teachers with only local experiences. In many responses this is evident however several answers reveal a less consistent trend. Teachers with international experience, though unsatisfied (88.9%) with the effectiveness of teaching important skills were much more content than local teachers with text books (66.7% to 42.9% respectively). The (IE) group was more positive towards receiving training (77.9% to

Table 2: Differences in Teaching Experience

1 to 10 Years Teaching Experience (43.4%)		Over 10 Years Teaching Experience (56.6%)	
Are important skills being taught effectively?			
Yes	28.6%	Yes	11.1%
No	71.4%	No	88.9%
Are you satisfied with text books?			
Yes	71.4%	Yes	44.4%
No	28.6%	No	55.6%
Do you receive any teacher training?			
Yes	71.4%	Yes	66.7%
No	28.6%	No	33.3%
Would you like to receive teacher training?			
Yes	85.7%	Yes	66.7%
No	14.3%	No	33.3%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?			
9-10	57.1%	9-10	44.4%
7-8	42.9%	7-8	22.2%
5-6	0.0%	5-6	33.3%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
9-10	71.4%	9-10	33.3%
7-8	28.6%	7-8	22.2%
5-6	0.0%	5-6	44.4%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach culture?			
Yes	85.7%	Yes	100.0%
No	14.3%	No	0.0%
Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?			
Yes	57.1%	Yes	88.9%
No	42.9%	No	11.1%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach cultural issues?			
Yes	57.1%	Yes	100%
No	42.9%	No	0.0%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
Yes	71.4%	Yes	66.7%
No	28.6%	No	33.3%

64.3% respectively) even though they overwhelmingly responded that they were qualified to teach Cultural Awareness Raising (CAR) (88.9%) and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (100%) and seemed to have a much better understanding of the concept. This preference for training may stem from a higher appreciation or sensitivity to insider/local knowledge and a visceral understanding that the more you know about a learning context/environment/culture/community, the better you will be able to function. (IE) Teachers also ranked the importance of (CAR) (66.7% to 35.7% respectively) and (ICC) (55.6% to 50.1% respectively) much higher than (LE) teachers and differed significantly on their perceptions of teacher's responsibility for providing cultural content (100% to 78.6% respectively). (IE) Teachers were

similarly more inclined to include cultural content in their lessons than (LE) teachers (88.9% to 64.3% respectively). From these results and subsequent interviews, it appears that a more diverse experience has a positive effect on teacher's perspective and approach to innovation and change. (IE) Teachers are perhaps more accustomed to accommodating differences and are therefore more flexible and sensitive to communicative problems and needs. Having taught in various contexts these teachers have a unique perspective on the importance of deeper cultural understanding for successful communication and thus hold those aspects of language teaching and learning in higher regard.

Differences in Context and Method

The final criterion for comparison, considered

Table 3: Differences in Teaching Context Diversity

Local Experience (60.8%)		International Experience (39.2%)	
Are important skills being taught effectively?			
Yes	21.4%	Yes	11.1%
No	78.6%	No	88.9%
Are you satisfied with text books?			
Yes	42.9%	Yes	66.7%
No	57.1%	No	33.3%
Do you receive any teacher training?			
Yes	64.3%	Yes	77.8%
No	35.7%	No	22.2%
Would you like to receive teacher training?			
Yes	64.3%	Yes	77.8%
No	35.7%	No	22.2%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?			
9-10	35.7%	9-10	66.7%
7-8	28.5%	7-8	33.3%
5-6	35.7%	5-6	0.0%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
9-10	50.1%	9-10	55.6%
7-8	21.4%	7-8	33.3%
5-6	28.5%	5-6	11.1%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach culture?			
Yes	78.6%	Yes	100.0%
No	21.4%	No	0.0%
Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?			
Yes	64.3%	Yes	88.9%
No	35.7%	No	11.1%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach cultural issues?			
Yes	78.6%	Yes	100.0%
No	21.4%	No	0.0%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
Yes	57.1%	Yes	88.9%
No	42.9%	No	11.1%

differences in context and style of teaching. Responses were correlated based on distinctions between University (UT) (78.3%) and High School teachers (HT) (21.7%) as well as differences between content based (CB) (39.2%) and skill based (SB) (60.8%) instruction. For the purpose of this study, skill based instruction was interpreted to include any kind of teaching which focused on language structures or practicing the skills of reading, writing, listening or speaking. Content based instruction referred to the teaching of a subject in English, with little or no attention to language structure or usage. These cases were analyzed together as only (5.7%) of (HT) teachers used (CB) instruction, indicating that type of institution tends to dictate the method and nature of

instruction. Considering this strong correlation, there is a significant difference in preferences between High School teachers and teachers who use skill based methods. The results of (CB) teachers closely parallel those of (UT) teachers; however on no two elements do (SB) and (HT) teachers even remotely agree. There may be several reasons for this, all of which call in to question the reliability and validity of the survey. Teachers may have exaggerated or understated their preferences, answered according to what they felt the researcher wanted to hear, or they may have misunderstood the distinction between skill and content. From post survey interviews, however it seems more likely that subjects distinguished between what they actually do in practice and what they feel they should

be doing. Teachers felt they had to teach a skill based curriculum and would have preferred to include more relevant content materials, sensing a gap between teaching only arbitrary skills out of context and preparing learners for real world communication. This is further supported by other responses to the questionnaire which indicate that these teachers have a high preference for teaching culture but do not actually include any in their classes. 57.1% of (SB) teachers and only (40%) of (HT) indicated that they include any cultural content in their classes. However as one would expect, 100% of (CB) teachers and (83.3%) of (UT) teachers include cultural content. Furthermore, (100%) of (HT) teachers and (78.6%) of (SB) teachers indicated that they would like to receive more training and felt they were much less qualified to teach (ICC)

or (CAR) than (UT) or (CB) teachers (refer to table 4 and 5).

All groups felt fairly strongly (80-89.9%) that it was the teacher's responsibility to provide cultural content and training. Consequently ranking for (ICC) and (CAR) activities is quite high with little distinction between (CB) or (SB) teachers and a large gap between (HT) and (UT) teachers. This result probably stems from (HT) teachers strong (80%) dissatisfaction with materials and texts and the overall effectiveness (60%) of skills being taught. These results suggest that teachers are highly aware of learner's needs and pedagogical shortcomings, realize what is required but lack the freedom, resources or autonomy to initiate changes. (UT) teachers in contrast are more or less

Table 4: Differences between High School and University Teachers

High School Teachers (21.7%)		University Teachers (78.3%)	
Are important skills being taught effectively?			
Yes	40.0%	Yes	11.1%
No	60.0%	No	88.9%
Are you satisfied with text books?			
Yes	20.0%	Yes	61.1%
No	80.0%	No	38.9%
Do you receive any teacher training?			
Yes	80.0%	Yes	66.7%
No	20.0%	No	33.3%
Would you like to receive teacher training?			
Yes	100.0%	Yes	61.1%
No	0.0%	No	38.9%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?			
9-10	60.0%	9-10	44.4%
7-8	40.0%	7-8	27.8%
5-6	0.0%	5-6	27.8%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
9-10	80.0%	9-10	44.4%
7-8	20.0%	7-8	27.8%
5-6	0.0%	5-6	27.8%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach culture?			
Yes	80.0%	Yes	88.9%
No	20.0%	No	11.1%
Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?			
Yes	40.0%	Yes	83.3%
No	60.0%	No	16.7%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach cultural issues?			
Yes	40.0%	Yes	100.0%
No	60.0%	No	0.0%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
Yes	20.0%	Yes	83.3%
No	80.0%	No	16.7%

Table 5: Differences in Class Type

Content Based (39.2%)		Skill Based (60.8%)	
Are important skills being taught effectively?			
Yes	22.2%	Yes	14.3%
No	77.8%	No	85.7%
Are you satisfied with text books?			
Yes	44.4%	Yes	57.1%
No	55.6%	No	42.9%
Do you receive any teacher training?			
Yes	44.4%	Yes	85.7%
No	55.6%	No	14.3%
Would you like to receive teacher training?			
Yes	55.6%	Yes	78.6%
No	44.4%	No	21.4%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?			
9-10	55.6%	9-10	57.2%
7-8	22.2%	7-8	21.4%
5-6	22.2%	5-6	21.4%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
On a scale of 1-10, how important is Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
9-10	44.4%	9-10	42.8%
7-8	33.3%	7-8	35.7%
5-6	22.2%	5-6	21.4%
1-4	0.0%	1-4	0.0%
Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach cultural?			
Yes	88.9%	Yes	85.7%
No	11.1%	No	14.3%
Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?			
Yes	100.0%	Yes	57.1%
No	0.0%	No	42.9%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach cultural issues?			
Yes	100.0%	Yes	78.6%
No	0.0%	No	21.4%
Do you feel you are qualified to teach Intercultural Communicative Competence?			
Yes	77.8%	Yes	64.3%
No	22.2%	No	35.7%

free to choose their own materials, methods and are therefore more satisfied, yet rank the importance of (ICC) or (CAR) skills slightly lower. Regardless of this however, both (CB) (77.8%) and (UT) (88.9%) groups feel important skills are not being taught effectively. Despite the presence of confounding and erroneous results from the correlation of these four groups, there appears a common call for for more autonomy and flexibility regarding teacher's roles as change agents and leaders of innovation.

Conclusion

Considering the patterns illustrated by the survey results, several conclusions emerge which could be applied to ELT practices and the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence. All teachers,

having once been students themselves, seem to know what they want and what they should be doing in order to maximize the effect of the classroom experience and their student's potential. The problem lies in changing passive attitudes towards innovation and experimentation and resistance to paradigm shift (Hyde, 2000). Teachers need to feel confident that they are able to take initiative and experiment, going against traditional practices to do what they feel is best for their students in their particular context. If teachers do not lead by example or refrain from taking risks by experimenting in the classroom, then students cannot be expected to demonstrate the same risk and experimentation strategies required in communication. In order to break this chicken/egg cycle of teachers only teaching what and how they were taught, a system of

top/down cooperation, guidance, leadership and training needs to be implemented. More experienced teachers need to take on new roles as mentors, trainers, curriculum planners and materials writers engaging in action research, to better understand the constantly changing context of the classroom. To turn the"old school" obstacle of diversity into a "new school" resource, a cycle of ethnography should be introduced on all levels. In this way the teacher is transformed from a passive recipient of information and innovation to an active researcher and producer and is consequently in a better position to engage the learners in a more meaningful and relevant way (Widdowson 2005, Ellis 1997). Initial teacher training therefore needs to be more practical and personal, addressing teacher's needs, insecurities and fears and provide teachers with tools, confidence and motivation required to be autonomous change agents. Teachers must be on the forefront of this paradigm shift and therefore a comprehensive ethnographic method needs to be applied in order to understand the complete environment, influences, variables and participants which are language learning. Such an ethnographic approach will bridge the gap between theory and practice helping teachers and researchers understand each other and work for their mutual benefit. Teachers can in turn make the transition to active researcher by applying ethnographic methodologies to their classes in order to better understand and adapt to the diversity of their students (Frank, 2004). Ultimately these skills should be transferred to language learners, who can apply ethnographic methods to discovering, evaluating and understanding the fluid nuances of context, language and individual differences, all of which are essential components of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Goals and Aims for Accommodating and Addressing Teachers Needs

- Increase awareness of teachers and learners background in order to eliminate bias, reinforcement and fossilization of stereotypes and general subjective enculturation and cultural imperialism.

- Initiate new teachers into this paradigm through collaboration, team teaching and other joint efforts in order to benefit from others experiences.

- Empower all teachers regardless of nationality, native/non native proficiency, type or length of experience, type, style or level of instruction and institution as well as other affective and contextual factors, to experiment with innovation, utilize diversity and provide the most appropriate methods for their particular context.

- Strive towards equalizing; balancing and democratizing the Language Class so that all members can participate equally in an ethnographic cycle of heightened awareness and mutual understanding.

- Provide tools, knowledge and support to assist teachers in becoming Intercultural Role Models, Mentors, Guides and Facilitators.

- Create a top/down cycle in which the teacher can act as Ethnographer, Researcher and Change Agent as opposed to a passive recipient of innovation.

- Engage in action research to continually evaluate and reevaluate contextual elements and participants needs, thus creating a culturally sensitive and appropriate methodology.

References

Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT,
ELT Journal, Vol. 56, (1), 57-64. Oxford University Press.

Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative
Competence. Clevendon: Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, R. (1997). SLA Research and Language Teaching. Oxford University Press.

Frank, C. and Frederick, L. (2004) Ethnography for

Teacher Education. Journal
of Teacher Education, 55, (3), 269-283. American
Association of Colleges for
Teacher Education.

Hyde, B. (2000). Teachers as Learners: Beyond
Language Learning, ELT
Journal, 54, (3), 265-273. Oxford University Press.

Jordan, S. A. (2002). Ethnographic Encounters: The
Processes of Cultural
Translation. Language and Intercultural Communication.
2, (2), 96-110. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in
LanguageTeaching*. Oxford
University Press, Hong Kong.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1998). Perspectives on
Language Learning and Teaching
in Japan: An Introduction. *Language, Culture and
Curriculum* 11, (1), 1-8.

Littlewood, W. (2000). Do Asian students really want
to listen and obey? ELT
Journal, 54, (1), 31-36. Oxford University Press.

Merryfield, M. M. (1993) Reflective Practice in
Global Education: Strategies for
Teacher Educators. Theory into Practice. 32(1), 27-32.

Moran, P. (2001). *Teaching Culture: Perspectives in
Practice*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Roberts, C., Byram, M., Barro, A., Jordan, S. and Street,
B. (2000) Language
Learners as Ethnographers. Clevedon: Multilingual
Matters.

Takanashi, Y. (2004). TEFL and Communication Styles
in Japanese Culture. .
Language, Culture and Curriculum 17, (1), 1-14.

Widdowson, H. G. (1998b) Skills, abilities and contexts
of reality. Annual Review
of Applied Linguistics, 18: 323-33.

Widdowson, H. G. (2005) Teaching English as a Global
Language. British
Council, Tokyo, November 20th, 2005. Oxford
University Press

Appendix A: Teachers Needs and Perspectives Survey

The answers to these questions will be used for private research only to try to understand the general perspectives of teachers in Japan as well as the overall teaching context. All information herein is confidential and will not be used for any type of marketing or other ulterior motives. Thank you.

Years teaching experience.	In Japan:		Other:	
Type of institution	University	High school	Other:	
Type/name of class(es)				
Level(s)	Low	Intermediate		Advanced

What are the most important skills required by Japanese students today?

Are these being effectively taught or developed?	Yes	No
Are you satisfied with the text books available to you?	Yes	No

What sort of changes would you like to see? (titles, content, methods)

What are the most important issues in language education in Japan?

Do you receive any teacher training?	Yes	No
Would you like to receive teacher training?	Yes	No

What sort of training would be most helpful for you?

On a scale of 1-10, how important is cultural awareness raising?   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you feel it is the teacher's responsibility to teach cultural issues?	Yes	No
Do you feel you are able/qualified to teach cultural issues?	Yes	No
Do you do any cultural awareness raising activities in your classes?	Yes	No

On a scale of 1-10, how important is teaching Intercultural Communication? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you feel you are able/qualified to teach Intercultural Communication?	Yes	No

What sort of cultural information do you think is necessary for language learners to know?

文化を発見する力を伸ばすために必要とされる教師の役割と見解

Andrew Reimann

概　要

コミュニケーションと国際交流の要請や本質において、国際的及び局地的変化は日本での言語教育のうえで忘れられがちである。本稿は英語教育（EFL）の一環としての文化的内容指導において、教師のニーズ、直面する困難や可能性そして見解を明らかにすることを目的としている。文化的内容指導の目的は、学習者が相違点を理解し、よりよくコミュニケーションを行う事ができるよう導くことにある。本稿はより良く教師の見解を理解することによって、文化間コミュニケーション能力（ICC）を発展させるための最良の方法を見つけ出すことに重点をおいたものである。