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Elina Wainio (ed.)

Kulttuurikirjon sadonkorjuu / Intercultural Harvest

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Elina Wainio (ed.)

**Kulttuurikirjon sadonkorjuu /
Intercultural Harvest**

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Introduction

I have always had an insatiable appetite for learning about life in foreign countries. The small village where my family had settled did not offer opportunities for sniffing out international breezes in real life. Books, documentaries and foreign TV series and movies offered ease to my urge to explore the world: hearing people talking strange languages and wearing fanciful clothes, living in unusual homes, making exotic food and having peculiar traditions and manners. I owe thanks to my fifth grade English teacher for my first real cross-cultural contacts: she introduced me International Pen Friends. It is a global network providing with pen pals all over the world (International Pen Friends). The correspondence with girls from France, Northern Ireland and Canada took me to the next level of learning languages and understanding culture-specific phenomena. I would consider this as some sort of pre-stage of Internationalization at Home (IaH), two decades before the term was actually proposed to educational institutes. Simply put, the aim of IaH is to increase knowledge of diverse cultures and bring international dimensions to learners not going abroad, in any form of internationally related activity (Crowther, Joris, Otten, Nilsson, Teekens & Wächter 2000).

After completing the compulsory basic education, with a matriculation certificate in my pocket, I was finally able to unleash the cultural curiosity within me, so I headed to visit and live in countries near and far, becoming overwhelmed and charmed by the diversity of cultures. The more I learned about other cultures, the deeper I dug into the roots of my own cultural identity. I could never have guessed how strongly all my cross-cultural encounters would shape my worldview and my self-perception. Such encounters form a space for acceptance of uniqueness and differences. To deepen my cultural understanding, it has been essential to create awareness of my own stereotypes and prejudice, and to learn about my own biases. Moreover, turning that awareness into practice is a mental learning process - including both cognitive and emotional level of mind - that affects not only my thinking and behavior but also effects my identity.

CULTURAL AWARENESS AND GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Culture is a complex pattern of values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and systemic practices shared by a distinct group of people within the same social environment. It can be seen as collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from others. Culture affects personality, how we believe and feel, think and solve problems, look, talk, move, eat, dress, relate to others, express our thoughts and emotions and much more. It substantially influences how we behave and how we understand other people's behavior; behavior acceptable in one culture might be interpreted as offensive in another. Culture has both visible and invisible factors. The cultural manifestations we can recognize with our senses are easiest to notice and get used to, while the hidden ones are more difficult to detect, comprehend, and effectively deal with. (Dolan & Kawamura 2015, pp. 73-75; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, p. 6; Wilson, Hoppe & Sayles 2018, pp. 1-2.)

In order to figure out the invisible mental map that guides visible action of others, it is vital first to become aware of our own cultural value preferences and unconscious patterns that guide our interpretations of the sentiments and behaviors others express. We can expand our knowledge of cultures by studying their specific features, but it cannot help us with the part our own culture has in real intercultural interaction. We are so embedded in our own culture that we are often unaware of its impact. Learning from authentic cross-cultural experiences effectively provides us with way to understand the beliefs and values that underlie in the actions and reactions of people from other cultures. (Wilson, Hoppe & Sayles 2018, pp. 1-4.)

Recognizing and questioning our own cultural prejudice and stereotypes that pervade our perceptions and judgments helps us to act, communicate and behave skillfully in culturally diverse environments. Cultural awareness means the ability to be observant, conscious, appreciative, and even accepting of differences and similarities among and between cultures. It involves people being mindful of how their own cultures affects their values, beliefs, biases, judgments, and, especially, behavior. When we have cultural awareness, we can acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, sociocultural, and linguistic diversity. Cultural awareness is the first fundament in achieving cultural competence. (Dolan & Kawamura 2015, pp. xvii, 72-74.)

In the increasingly interdependent and interconnected world, it is an imperative to be globally competent. Global competence is a multidimensional capacity, a set of values, mindsets, skills and knowledge that help us thriving in a diverse, globalized society. With global competence, we are able to understand different world-views, interact effectively with others, examine local, global and intercultural issues as well as and take actions toward sustainable collective well-being (figure 1). (PISA 2018 Global Competence Framework, p. 4-11.)

Developing global and intercultural competence is a lifelong process that requires emotional openness to divergent cultural experiences and practices. Furthermore, our personal experiences and self-reflection play a vital role in building our intercultural understanding. Intercultural contacts influence peoples and reshape their identities and images of each other. This never-ending learning journey becomes more interesting the more we engage ourselves in cross-cultural experiences that foster an appreciation for diverse peoples, cultures and languages.

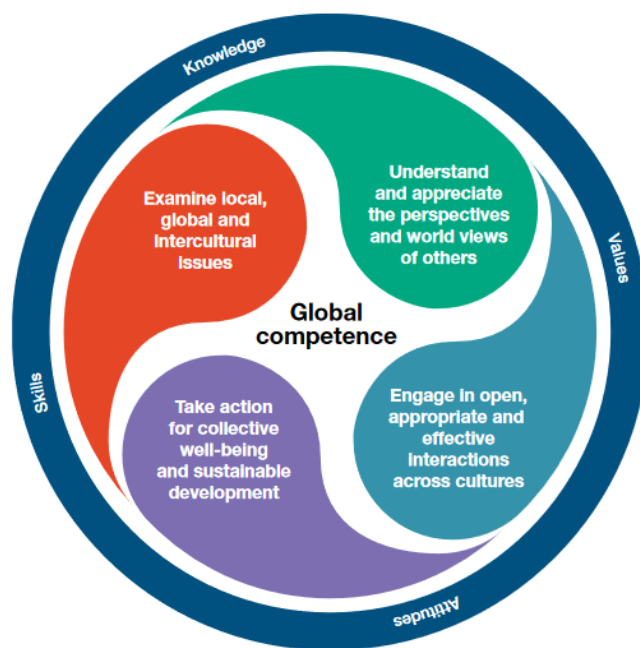


Figure 1. *The Dimensions of Global Competence. (Preparing our youth... p. 11).*

HARVESTING INTERCULTURALLY

In this compilation of papers, the authors take us around the globe to harvest ripe crops in diverse forms such as memorable moments, encounters and learnings as well as self-reflections experienced in intercultural environments and situations. They were given the freedom to decide their own perspective and content within the intercultural framework to fill the silos with the most varied and abundant harvest possible. This enables readers to recognize how different occasions can increase cultural awareness and understanding.

The structure of the publication is divided into three parts. The first one, Crops in Higher Education Institutions focuses on the internationalization of universities. The second part, Personal Grain Silos, includes writings of authors' personal intercultural experiences that have had an impact on their personal and/or work lives. In the third part, we savour Assorted Fruits from an intercultural garden: various ideas and thoughts that the intercultural theme has awoken in the authors' minds.

PART I Crops in Higher Education Institutions takes us harvesting on the fields of higher education in which various intercultural activities play an important role in internationalization of students, academics, staff, and whole institutions.

The first article discusses the globalization developments from the perspective of the Institute of Economy and Trade of Tajik State University of Commerce (IET TSUC). The authors, **PhD. Docent G.B. Komarova** and **PhD. A.I. Komarova**, point out how vital increasing cooperation between countries, enterprises and educational institutions are for the renewal of university in order to educate globally competent graduates.

The article written by **PhD Lecturer Florin Nechita** and **Professor Hiromasa Tanaka** examines whether Hofstede's cultural dimensions are effective to describe the participants' behaviour in an intercultural project-

based program, Transilvania Creative Camp, the 2nd edition of the summer school on creative destinations and heritage interpretation. The paper is based on the results of a project initiated by two universities, Transilvania University of Brasov and Meisei University Tokyo. Hofstede's six dimensional cultural model provides a framework for understanding the differences in cultures of different countries. This study focuses on the dimensions of individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence a Japan and Romania are placed in the same cultural group.

The COVID-19 pandemic, starting early 2020, threw massive challenges on universities' international activities from student and staff mobility to joint projects as physical traveling and encountering became almost impossible. In the next articles, we learn how certain HEIs have tackled the situation.

Professor Takanori Kawamata tells about Online Transborder Practice during the Pandemic in Japan: The Meisei Summer School Project (MSSP), an international educational project based in Meisei University Tokyo, was initially planned on face-to-face interactions that the pandemic hindered. The project was therefore conducted by using information and communication technology (ICT) tools. The study investigates potential learning opportunities through online active-learning projects.

On the opposite side of the globe, in Brazil, U.Experience counsels and promotes the improvement and expansion of the internationalization of numerous Brazilian private universities. In their article, **Professor Me. Felipe Flausino de Oliveira and Márcia Agostini Ribeiro** present a resumed view of the planned and pandemic-changed activities within U.Experience and the partial results of its actions for the internationalization processes of its associated HEIs.

The next three papers deal with internationally composed projects and methods at Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

In her paper, Head of Social Services Degree Programme, **Project Researcher Tiina Wikström** addresses the pandemic's effects on European universities as well as Erasmus+ projects, such as UNICAC project, since spring 2020. The main aim of the project is to increase international and cross-regional cooperation potentials for HEIs in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China by capacity building activities and thus enhancing international networking and cooperation in Teaching, Learning and Research.

In the other article, **Senior Lecturers Minna-Kaisa Lehtilinna and Tiina Turku** present Caito project and an award-winning teaching method Multisensory Space. They give practical examples of how student integration into international projects can serve as powerful means for Internationalization at Home, by offering global perspectives and language skill practicing to students who don't leave for abroad.

Senior Lecturer Sari Myrén and Master's degree student Sarah Gaessler describe the Course Assistant Programme pilot in French language courses in Laurea in academic year 2019-2020. The programme aims to integrate international students to the university community, give international students a possibility to meet local students, provide internationalisation at home for the Finnish students and bring new aspects into language teaching and learning. The paper presents how the foreign student assistant enriched the learning environment by bringing her own background, culture and current topics to the classroom.

PART II Personal Grain Silos is a scene for personal grain reaping, storing and spreading: members of HEIs share the personal intercultural experiences meaningful to them, at personal and/or professional level.

A person's personal interest in history of a region can turn into a motivation of research, attests **PhD Senior Lecturer Ana-Maria Bolborici** from Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania, in her Israeli experience. She had studied Middle-East region and its peace process a lot before her doctoral studies but being on the spot helped her to deeper understand many aspects of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that becoming the topic

of her doctoral thesis. In addition to the professional impact, the Israeli experience effected the author on a personal level: visiting the Holy Places helped her finding herself and understanding better her Christian roots.

Academics, staff members and students from Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Finland, share their memorable and pivotal moments in environments culturally different from their own in the following five papers.

"It's great to be able to serve others while improving your own quality of life" quotes **Senior Lecturer Teija Fontell** as she narrates her own story about how staying in another country, surrounded by different natural and built environments as well as fascinating cultural traditions can revitalize and energize a person. Furthermore, during her stay in Spain, she realized that participating actively in voluntary activities was a powerful means to create more meaning to one's life, gain back one's own strength and the joy of learning and teaching.

Senior Lecturers Teija Lehto and Hannele Moisander describe, based on their own colorful experiences, how international exchanges bring along increased international cooperation and various collaborative projects, expansion of networks, increased teaching in foreign languages, consideration of multiculturalism in teaching, and active use of technology in lecturers' work. They encourage going beyond own comfort zones and self-confidently encountering foreign cultures in a foreign language.

Principal Lecturer Susanna Kivelä tells about her intercultural volunteer activity in West-Nile region in Uganda. The paper describes peer coaching and collaborating with local head teachers in detail. To the author, it was a period of experiential learning and a starting point for further reflections. She finds three weeks in new culture to be too short time to make any deep-reaching conclusions, but long enough to start an ongoing learning process. Writing this article was part of that process.

An internship abroad and living among the locals offers a prime cultural learning environment, as told by **student Janica Virkkunen**. During her stay in a village in Kenya, she experienced the tribally, religiously and ethnically colorful Kenyan culture with innumerable deep-rooted beliefs that bring challenges to daily life. The collectivistic lifestyle, hospitality and respect for differences made a great impression on her.

Päivi Haapanen, Planning Officer in International Services examines intercultural competences in general and as linked to her responsibilities at work. She also tells about overcoming her own cultural prejudices and stereotypes while expanding her cultural horizons during her time in Vietnam. She points out that knowing deeply one's own culture, basic knowledge of cultures and languages as well as an understanding of global issues and trends, help to adapt to a foreign culture.

A cross-cultural friendship is a fruitful seedbed for cultural learning. Through conversations and shared stories and experiences during the years of youth, **student Rebecca Kärkkäinen** and her Vietnamese best friend learned to know the values and traditions in each other's cultures. The paper presents a comparison of Finnish and Vietnamese culture based on the Hofstede cultural index model, reflecting and examining the cultural features in Finnish and Vietnamese families, upbringing and everyday life.

PART III Assorted Fruits, ripe and juicy, from an intercultural garden are picked and served by a Principal Lecturer, Senior Lecturers and students of Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Their articles display well how multidimensional the intercultural theme is as it allows the writers to choose their own unique perspectives to it.

Principal Lecturer Ville Saarikoski's free flow of thoughts arisen from the phenomenon called culture awakes each reader to cogitate and reflect her/his personal relationship to culture, with a comforting utterance: in the global stream of cultures, it is only natural and human to feel a little bit lost.

Cultures go shopping with **Senior Lecturer, Mobility Coordinator Elina Wainio** who examines the behavioral patterns typical to certain national cultures in a shopping situation. The theory and the case show that there actually are recognizable culturally distinct groups with interesting culture-specific characterizations within a culturally diverse clientele.

Beauty and cosmetics is internationally a significant sector, writes **Senior Lecturer Auli Hietanen**. She describes how one can dive into an international network of raw material suppliers, product manufacturers and service providers, and participate in international seminars and fairs to collect new ideas and trends in the global beauty industry.

Based on his own experiences and observations while working at a university in Florida, **Senior Lecturer Kari Halme** describes the functional framework of university sports in the United States. From a Finnish perspective, he considers its significance to university brand, in promoting racial and gender equality, and in uniting people.

Senior Lecturer Tiina Leppäniemi discusses the potential of Airbnb platform economy both from a tourist's and from a university lecturer's perspective. The first handles joy of traveling, the latter professional growth and competence development. She insightfully enlightens what kinds of professional skills could be increased and strengthened in higher education –especially in business and hospitality programs - through Airbnb experience services.

Mesi Lähteenkorva leads us to hostels to learn how they can offer an arena for intercultural encounters and confluences. As a social benefit of staying in hostels, travelers have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with new cultures when meeting other tourists in an environment that encourages social interaction.

The last paper compiles well many aspects in the intercultural framework. **Student Laura Lignell** presents briefly contents of five interesting articles that help capturing key features of intercultural competence and leadership. She emphasizes, based on the writings, the importance of cultural awareness and knowledge in the globalized world, both at work and in personal life.

Thank you!

What clearly seems to be common to the writings is that cultural interconnecting can be a tremendous enrichment to a person's personal and professional life, to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and to sectors of business. The authors have also approached the intercultural theme from many interesting perspectives, making the harvest versatile and abundant.

The ripening period from seed to harvest with each author was incredibly rewarding. It broadened my cultural perspectives and deepened my understanding of intercultural phenomena. I would like to express my deepest thanks to the authors for their excellent contribution.

It's time to enjoy the ripe yield!

Vantaa, 22.1.2021

Elina Wainio

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2 Framing an International Summer School Project in Transylvania into Three Dimensions of the Hofstede's Model

Florin Nechita & Hiromasa Tanaka

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural and cross-cultural communication involves people from different cultural background interacting and communicating with each other. The cultural dimensions were developed by Geert Hofstede based on the data from the worldwide subsidiaries of the multinational corporation IBM more than five decades ago. The theory established based on the study results is still used to explain differences between cultures. The original model included four dimensions (Power Distance Index, Individualism vs. Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Masculinity vs. Femininity), followed by Long-term Orientation vs. Short-term Orientation, and later introduced (2010), Indulgence vs. Restraint. However, Hofstede approach has been criticised because of, for example, its data collection method, and rather outdated data (Eringa, Caudron, Rieck, Xie and Gerhardt 2015). Handford (2020) warns that Hofstede approach may develop a stereotype image of others. This article examines whether the six dimensions are effective to describe the participants' behaviour in an intercultural project-based program. Use of these dimensions are believed to provide "objective" description of national cultures and help people in raising awareness of their styles and stance to deal with different culture(s). The development of the paper is based on the results of a project initiated by two universities, *Transilvania University of Brasov* and *Meisei University Tokyo*, which aimed to cover some objectives in order to provide a framework for an extracurricular project-based learning for their students (Nechita & Tanaka 2017).

Transilvania Creative Camp, the 2nd edition of the summer school on creative destinations and heritage interpretation, took place between August 29th - Sep 5th 2016, and aimed at creatively promoting a Romanian rural destination. It was organised by *Transilvania University of Brasov*, Faculty of Sociology and Communication, in partnership with *Meisei University* (Japan), *The Alternative School for Creative Thinking* Bucharest, *Universita Politecnica delle Marche* (Italy), *Salzburg University of Applied Science* (Austria), *Universidad de Extremadura*

(Spain) and *Instituto Politecnico di Leiria* (Portugal). The 26 participants, students from Romania, Japan and Italy, together with 12 faculty members and communication professionals, 2 representatives of the *Tourism Information Center Târgu Lăpuș* explored the area in order to find insights for the creative promotion of the mentioned destination. During the 6 full days of the creative summer camp, the participants combined workshops and lectures with actively experiencing the daily life in the villages of Lăpuș Land. The students were to be set up for creating a promotion strategy for tourism destination by learning photo and video technique, marketing, digital media, heritage interpretation, anthropology. In exchange for hosting the participants, the local councils of Târgu Lăpuș and neighbouring villages were to receive the promotion strategy, a presentation film in Japanese language and the ongoing promotion of Lăpuș Land (Țara Lăpușului – in Romanian) on social media and academic conferences. *Transylvania Creative Camp* (TCC) was mainly a cultural tourism experience combined with a heritage interpretation project, but observing how the five intercultural teams of participants interacted gave to TCC a strong intercultural communication dimension. The participants were fully informed about the project and its aim to make their experience open to the public through numerous media for promotional and research purposes.

Besides production of promotion tools such as video, an educational objective embedded in overall project to develop the participating students' awareness of working interculturally. Making the participating students understand the particular nature of the representational processes across cultures was also essential for achieving the overall objectives of the project (Burlacu 2017). In the following sections, we will briefly discuss Hofstede's three dimensional cultural indexes followed by relating cultural features discussed in past research on Romanian Japanese culture.

METHOD

In order to explore the intercultural work by comparing Romanian and Japanese participants' cultural behaviour, we attempted to frame with Hofstede's cultural dimensions in which Japanese and Romanians are categorised in the same group. In this particular study, we mostly used their written feedback out of other data collected for further exploration. For supplement of our analyses we used the photos taken by the participants and provided to the authors. They are used to visually explain and illustrate concepts displayed. This study pays a particular attention to the participants' culture. A linguistically oriented analysis of the video recorded data was presented in Tanaka and Nechita (2020). The data were analysed by the two authors initially separately. Then the interpretation of the data was discussed online by the two authors. The first author is Romanian and the second, Japanese. Each author used his own perspective. The synthetic interpretation constructs valid analyses of the participants' cultural behaviour.

Hofstede six dimensional cultural indexes provide a good framework for understanding the differences in cultures of different countries. The Hofstede's six dimensional cultural indexes are power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation, and indulgence. The present study focuses on the dimensions of individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and indulgence in which Japan and Romania are placed in the same cultural group.

ANALYSES

In this section we provide our analysis of the data showing the nuanced differences in the same cultural tendency group.

Individualism

This dimension addresses the basic matter of the degree of interdependence that a society has to maintain among its members. In 'Individualistic' societies people are much more oriented to themselves and their direct families, whereas in the 'Collectivistic' societies, loyalty is offered in exchange for care taking. The index scores of Romania and Japan are both high. The strong group-orientation of Japanese culture was described with the different features of collectivism specific to Japan. Romania has to be considered a collectivistic society with a "close long-term commitment to the member 'group' (family, extended family)". One explanation of this score came from the fact that Romania was a rural society where cooperation is important.

From the collectivist notion of confrontation avoidance, the Japanese preferred indirect strategies such as asking polite questions or avoiding direct or - Interpersonal communication and relationships across cultures (Cocroft and Ting-Toomey, 1994). Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, and Petrova (2005) found that, of the groups they studied, the Japanese participants from the groups they studied, were less likely to show anger and contempt. In Japan, a high-context culture, people tend to look carefully at another's eyes for unspoken information about what she or he is feeling (Yuki, Maddux & Masuda 2007).

In order to analyze the Japanese - Romanian interaction at the TCC from the perspective of *Individualism* dimension, it has to be stressed that almost the entire experience of Japanese students in Romania took part in a rural area that still preserves a lot of their centuries-old tradition. So, the way of living and behaving in small rural communities is still alive as one Japanese participant remarked: *I felt the relationship between people here is so strong (M.T.); The people here have a community harmony that impressed me, in Japan we do have a huge personal space. Here is the community space (M.S).*

The characteristic of the close long-term commitment to the community, such as preserving old practices and rituals, including gender and age roles by spatial arrangement in a rural Orthodox church was caught with a camera by a Japanese student (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Spatial arrangement by gender and age inside an rural Orthodox church. Photo: Yuka Kuwashima, all rights reserved.

Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance is related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future (Hofstede, 2011). Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding countries. Natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, volcano eruptions) made Japanese prepare themselves for any uncertain situation. Surprisingly, Romania scores go on this dimension and thus it has a very high preference for avoiding uncertainty, at least if the explanations given for Japan high score are translated to Romania.

How the interaction and intercultural communication between Japanese participants at TCC, Romanian participants and local people from Lăpuș Land can be interpreted from the perspective of Uncertainty avoidance dimension of Hofstede's model? The preparatory tasks relating to the project was done in Japan by the Japanese participants. It was observed that they were documented about the area (in particular), and Romania (in general). Answering to a questionnaire about who they are, what defines them and the place from where they come from, some of the answers were: *name, nationality, and the environment around me defines me. Individual, well organized, and prefer the convenience* (Y.K.); *I am living in a town near Tokyo, country side like. In my home town people are doing agriculture, but a different kind if agriculture, with machines, so everything is standardized* (W.I.); *Tokyo is a too busy city. People work very hard and the city doesn't sleep* (M.T. 1); *Tokyo is a really crowded city, but technology is everywhere. I like my city* (M.T. 2). And what was different compared with Japan was considered when answering to the question regarding what fascinated them during the trip, as well as what makes them feel comfortable: *The amazing views and the animals – street dogs – this is unconceivable to see in Japan – we have pets, but they don t walk on the streets* –Y.H.1 ; *I experienced the life in a dorm for the first time* –Y.H. 2; *I was fascinated by the hospitality of the people living in the Lapus Land. They don't even know where Japan is, but they accepted us kindly. The main reasons why I felt so comfortably staying here* –T. M.

Listening to local people's stories that sound exotic to his/her own culture or interacting with them will cultivate a tolerance of general matters and help them have a positive image of the foreign culture. By reviewing photos already published in the book of the project (Nechita & Tanaka, 2017), made that most of them could illustrate that the explanations and discussions on Uncertainty avoidance as the main purpose of the project was to understand a foreign culture. A collage of 6 photos was chosen for the **figure 2**.



Figure 2. Japanese–Romanian cross-cultural interaction at TCC. Photos: Mio Takahashi, Yuuma Hyodo, Miho Murakoshi, Miki Takahashi, Yuika Suzuki, all rights reserved.

Indulgence

Indulgent (weak control) or Restrained (strong control) dimension points out that in contrast to Indulgent societies, Restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. Japan has a culture of Restraint. Japanese have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are Restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somehow wrong. Romanian culture, as well, is one of the very Restrained.

As our description indicates, each dimension may not have the same meaning for various cultural groups. Each of the dimensions may relate to a specific cultural group's historical valued developed through its history.

As Hofstede's model reported for Romania a very low score of 20, and considering Romanian culture as very Restrained, the perception of Japanese participants of Romanian people was rather opposite. Their post project remarks can confirm this supposition: *...happy music (Y.H.); palinka makes people happy (Y.S.); We can have fun together with local people by dancing and drinking (T.M.); And the sound I will always remember is the clapping hands, in a burst of joy (Y.H.)*. The photos from Figure 3 underlined the above remarks.



Figure 3. Relaxing moments after a hay-making work. Photo Mizuki Tanaka, all rights reserved.

As the TCC project included a visit of one village inhabited entirely by gypsies, perception of locals by the Japanese as being Indulgent can be synthesized by this written testimony of T.M.: *I didn't expect to cry when I saw the gypsy life. They live their life with happiness and it is so completely different from what we experience life in Japan*, and M.T.: *...(gypsies) don't have money, but they look happy. They have a savage beauty, impossible to forget*.

CONCLUSION

For successful cultural understanding, recognizing and avoiding breakdowns in intercultural communication is necessary. Our analyses demonstrates that the Hofstede six dimensions are able to give us general tendency of the cultural behaviour. We have demonstrated, however, in the same cultural group, for example, of collectivists, that there are similarities as well as various levels of differences. Thus, it is not enough to explain the behavioural and perceptual differences among the participants referring to the six dimensions. Their behaviour is influenced by various social, contextual and environmental factors. In order to develop the

participant's awareness of differences that are significant in the intercultural project, first we need to remove various barriers. Barna (1997) has developed a list of six such barriers: anxiety, assuming similarities instead of difference, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice, nonverbal misinterpretations, and language. We think the result of this study suggest that TCC was an adequate place to remove stereotypes. The result indicates that various differences were not generated by their national cultures but individual contexts. Linguistic competence also influences their behaviour. Culture-general communication can also affect intercultural friendship formation. One of the most prominent aspects of communicative competence is language proficiency.

DISCLAIMER

All the photos used in this chapter were published in the book of the project: Nechita, F. and Tanaka, H., 2017. *Creative Destinations and Heritage Interpretation: The Story of Transilvania Creative Camp 2016*. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, available at <http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/www/ro/ebook2.php?id=2044>.

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3 Online Transborder Practice During the Pandemic in Japan

Takanori Kawamata

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the process of learning through the alternative approach of online transborder educational projects. In the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 strongly impacted the world, affecting important areas such as society, economics, and education. On 7 April, the Japanese government issued a state of emergency, and it continued until 25 May (Cabinet Secretariat, 2020). All educational institutions, from elementary to tertiary education, were prohibited to attend face-to-face classes. Many of the classes were conducted via an online platform (Asahi Shinbun, 7 April 2020). In addition, many educational institutions were postponed or cancelled to conduct international mobility programmes. Even in this pandemic environment, there is an international educational project available online.

The Meisei Summer School Project (MSSP), which is an international educational project based in Meisei University Tokyo, was initially planning face-to-face interactions. However, under these circumstances, the project organizer, Professor Hiromasa Tanaka, decided that the project would be conducted using information and communications technology (ICT) tools. This study investigates potential learning opportunities which utilise online active-learning projects. Most of the research on project-based learning assumes the inclusion of face-to-face interactions and those involved being physically present to meet and discuss certain topics or work. However, because of COVID-19, it is hard to physically meet, so most of the lectures and educational projects were conducted online at Meisei University. Consequently, a majority of the conventional project-based learning projects at Meisei University were postponed or cancelled. Although there might be several issues and improvements, the MSSP would continue the online platform. In contrast, there are many advantages of running the international project because there is no limitation for physical distance; moreover, the

participants do not need to pay the transportation and accommodation fees. They will be able to more easily participate in the project.

Several studies regarding online learning have two approaches: drill or machinery learning and blended learning (Warschauer, 1998 ; Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015; Enfield, 2013; Lonergan, 2016). These approaches are effective for learners' autonomy and lexico-grammatical knowledge. However, there is also a limitation of online learning based on dialogues with participants concerning project-based learning. Autonomous learning and flip learning tend to be a one-way approach, or at least there is an answer. Furthermore, there is a significant amount of research on project-based learning which indicates that one of the project-based learning tasks is problem-solving or how the participants manage the issue with regard to human relations, time management, and quality of the task achievement. Therefore, the MSSP's new attempts allowed for the possibility to merge with project-based learning in online settings. This paper describes the process of project-based learning in an online platform through the emic view of learning by using the participants' voices.

RESEARCH SITE: MEISEI SUMMER SCHOOL PROJECT (MSSP)

The MSSP, which was launched in 2002 as a pre-teaching practicum for junior high school students (7th to 9th graders) and is inspired by the Foreign Language Partnership Project of Hawaii (Davis, 1999). It is designed to be a dynamic project that annually evolves; in 2004, it began using a communicative approach to teach English to elementary school students. In 2005, the MSSP engaged in an international volunteer project known as the Youth Action for Peace (YAP), an international non-governmental organisation (NGO). Also involved was its affiliate, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), which collaborated with the MSSP to provide educational opportunities for young students worldwide. Through their experiences with the MSSP, all participants – both international volunteers and Meisei students – learned multiple aspects such as teamwork, leadership, intercultural communication, and risk management through social interaction among themselves. By social interaction and negotiation concerning the solving of these conflicts, the participants unearthed the learning embedded in the MSSP.

Firth and Wagner (2007) described the English interaction of interlocutors who have different mother tongues and how they accommodate each other using appropriate forms and the necessary pragmatic strategies for effective communication. English is used as a shared working language – that is, as a lingua franca. Notably, the MSSP views English as a foreign language (ELF) as a social practice rather than a teaching approach. Therefore, English is used in an authentic situation and for communicative purposes. Meisei students and international volunteers learn to negotiate meaning in order to gain mutual understanding.

In 2020, the MSSP was held from 2 August to 9 August through the use of the Zoom application. The MSSP utilises three web-based applications: Zoom, Slack, and Google Drive. Zoom is used for team meetings, oral discussions, and actual online lessons. Slack is used for intra-information sharing and mostly for sharing teaching plans and materials. The Google Drive is an online storage application for each teaching team, and they recorded online team meetings and actual lessons in August. With the advantages of online sessions, people from all over the world could participate. These places included Hungary, Belarus, Italy, Morocco, Mexico, Wales, Cambodia, Belgium, Romania, Slovakia, Russia, and Georgia. The teaching team was formed by Meisei students and international volunteers, which totalled around six to seven participants. The Japanese children were not just from Tokyo, but they were also from different parts of Japan such as Tochigi and Okinawa. In addition, through the online platform, the MSSP invited children from the Republic of Georgia. One teaching unit was comprised of four Meisei students, six or seven international volunteers, four or five Japanese

se children, and four or five Georgian children. In regard to the time difference, the teaching session started in the evening in Japan and correspondingly, the morning in Georgia. The teaching team started creating a lesson plan in June 2020 while using Zoom and Slack. It is convenient for both Meisei students and international volunteers to meet online based during their free time and post to Slack their teaching ideas, results of their discussions, and their lesson plans in their channels.

DATA COLLECTION

Under these circumstances, the data was gathered regarding how the students fostered their learning from this online project. The collection involved two interviews of a particular student along with daily report papers. I interviewed Ami (freshman, first-time participant) and Remika (second-year student, second-time participant) two times each around August and September. The daily report paper consists of material from all the MSSP participants who took daily journal notes about what they had done during the project. This included their emotions and reflections from each day, from 28 July to 9 August 2020, which was during the time MSSP 2020 was being held. By using these two sets of qualitative data, the initial analysis was performed with regard to how the students cultivated their learning through a project-based online platform.

ANALYSIS

The interviews and daily report papers indicated the awareness of transborder identities. Tanaka (2020) argues that the process of bordering practices in the MSSP is that awareness of English as a lingua franca could change the MSSP discourse. Ami had the opportunity to exchange their language, and it triggered transborder identities by the practise of English as a lingua franca. Regarding this matter, Ami stated the following:

"It was a good meeting. After the mock lesson, we taught our language to each other. It was so fun!!" (Ami, Daily report on 2 August, 2020)

"I was really nervous before the team meeting started. I like English, but I do not have much confidence in speaking English. At that day (2 August), Viktoria and Erik and I exchanged our language. We spoke very randomly, mixed with English, Russian, Belarusian, and Japanese, but it was really fun. After that, I have little confidence in speaking English, a little". (Ami, interview, 29 September 2020)

Before Ami participated in the MSSP, she had a strong idea of an ideal English speaker. However, she interacts with international participants and realises the notion of practising English as a lingua franca.

Remika participated in 2019, and in the following statement, she compared the 2019 and 2020 MSSPs:

"It was hard for me to do MSSP this year. I prefer to do face-to-face, but this year we must do online. It was sad. However, I talked a lot with international participants and Georgian children, and I thought this is a great opportunity. Last year, I did not talk English much, but this year, I tried to speak English more. I did not feel any 'walls'." (Remika, interview, 23 September 2020)

Remika admitted the advantage of an online session and triggered transborder identities. She did not feel the 'walls' among the international participants and children. Transborder identities are also seen in the platform itself; moreover, she pointed out that their learning goes beyond the dichotomies of online/offline.

"I have decided to participate in MSSP again. This was a very great moment in my first semester. I do not feel any discontent for MSSP because I have practiced a lot to use English and think so many things, materials, and children. It was like an online study abroad." (Ami, interview, 29 September 2020)

"I like face-to-face class, but in team meetings, online is better for me. I can check the dictionary soon and I can show the pictures when I cannot say the word in English. I did not feel the struggle of the online class so far. I can text to Vika immediately, and she replied to me in Instagram." (Remika, interview, 23 September 2020).

This online project-based learning introduced a new style of education, but according to them, there was not a huge difference in online/offline project-based learning. They can utilise several online applications to talk to each other and foster their online learning.

This study requires more data collection and analysis; however, the platform was not established to learn something new from the situation. Online platforms will be able to relate and connect with each other, and the epistemology of knowledge and transborder space (Hornberger, 2007) will be able to foster learning, even during a pandemic.

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4 U.Experience: Sustaining Internationalization of Brazilian Private Higher Education Institutions in Times of Pandemic

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U.Experience offers advice and specialized consultancy in Internationalization for Brazilian Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), in order to contribute to the development of projects that may improve their articulations on the international level. During the year 2020 higher education institutions from all over the world have faced the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects on their internationalization processes were dramatic, and it has forced the Internationalization Departments to rethink their strategies. U.Experience had to reinvent itself, throughout these turbulent times, to ensure the consistency of its work, and to continue giving support to its associates. This article presents a resumed view of the changes within U.Experience and the partial results of its actions for the internationalization processes of its associated HEIs.

INTRODUCTION

U.Experience is a company specialized in advising and consultancy in internationalization of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions and seeks to promote the improvement and expansion of the internationalization of higher education in the country. It was founded in December 2018 with the main objective of providing support to the HEIs and, through constant contact and focus on the specific goals of each of these institutions, has undergone many transformations in the last two years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each associated institution pays an initial participation fee, as well as a monthly fee for the supervising of the actions. Thus, the associated institution has access to information ranging from the orientation of how to organize the internationalization department (space, documents, etc.) to contacts with international institutions that have the same profile and share the same interests. Today, U.Experience counts with twenty-six institutions, located in all regions of Brazil, as seen in Figure 1.