

A Topic-Based Syllabus for a Cross-Cultural Communication Course: The Case of a University in Japan

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Universities across Japan are including courses entitled “Cross-Cultural Communication” for students majoring in English. This broad topic presents many challenges to the course designer. Cross-cultural communication is an important skill, but how do we as teachers teach this to our students? Content can focus on social differences, cultural history, or values. Design formats can be task-based, issues-based, or a lecture series. Focus can be the home country, one target country (U.S. or U.K.), or many countries. If the students are mostly from one culture, how can ideas be exchanged to expose students to different ways of thinking? After a brief overview of definitions of cross-cultural communication, this paper will describe a “topic-based syllabus” used for the past three years at a Japanese women’s university. Some topics that were studied were gender differences, politics, business practices, proxemics, and education systems.

Many universities across Japan are introducing the class “Cross-Cultural Communication” (herein after CCC) to their program. In Hiroshima, Japan, four such courses were discussed and compared at a local Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) meeting in spring of 2009. Not surprising, all four teachers presented logical, informative, and very interesting perspectives on this topic. One teacher presented a two-country comparison cross-cultural perspective, where historic eras in Japan and the USA were highlighted and cultural differences were compared and observed. Another teacher went all the way back and discussed various creationism beliefs with Japan and other countries. Another teacher, from a business school, had a unique experience of having students from many countries in class and used this opportunity to present business cross-cultural practices with practical workshops and debates. The fourth presentation, by myself, was of a cross-cultural, topics-based syllabus at a women’s university. This meeting was the most popular one to date for the chapter, with a high rate of attendance. This popularity shows how important this topic is to teachers and the challenge of designing a CCC course. This paper will analyze and explain a topic-based, year-long CCC course syllabus for third- and fourth-year English major students, which met once a week for a 90-minute-long class.

The course description of this CCC class has been stated as:

Language is culture. You cannot understand a language well without understanding its cultural background. Some forces shaping culture are nationalism, education, and especially beliefs. Religion plays a major part in many cultures. In this course, we begin by studying the major religions in the world then relate them to cultural topics for a variety of countries. As this is a collaborative course, students will become educated in a particular country/region and present to the class a particular aspect of the lesson’s topic. Guest speakers, presentations, movies, and reflection classes will

be used to compare these topics with Japanese society and will educate the student to become culturally sensitive and therefore able to communicate appropriately in different cultural situations.

Using the above course description as a basis of discussion, this paper will be divided into six sections. First, a definition of CCC and its components will be created. Second, CCC syllabus styles and examples resulting from the previous analysis of the prior section will be discussed. Next, reasons for using a topic-based syllabus at this university are given. Fourth, a typical class format will be described. The fifth section will present a typical class format and examples of lectures and activities. Finally, an analysis of topics in the CCC course is presented.

Definitions of Cross Cultural Communication

To define CCC, we can start by separating and defining each word. “Cross” is defined in many ways, but the definitions that are relevant to our discussion are: to intersect, or to meet and pass. We do exactly this when we engage in CCC; we meet and exchange a message, an intersecting point in our lives.

“Culture,” too, has many definitions. One of importance is from Hall (1977), who states, “All ‘countries’ have their own identity, language, systems of nonverbal communication, material culture, history and ways of doing things” (p. 2). There is also another definition, which divides culture into two concepts (Moran, 2001). The first is called the “big C,” which is the traditional, objective culture (for example, food, theater, art, dance, or music). Then there is “small c” which is called the subjective culture. This has no existence except in human behavior. “Small c” culture is an abstraction produced by thought and can define characteristics such as body movement, how we live, how we learn, how we work, and how we express love, in response to similar events and experiences.

Culture can also be identified even further as having three layers (O’Neil, 2006). The first layer includes the cultural traditions that identify you as being part of a particular society (for example, “Japanese”). The second layer is the subculture. Here, complex societies can be labeled even further as having a cultural tradition, within which one may identify oneself as a part of that group with further defining characteristics, such as the Ainu of Japan or Italian–Americans. The third layer contains human cultural traits. These traits are shared among all cultures. Here are 12 examples of such traits:

1. communicating with a verbal language, using a limited set of sounds and grammar rules;
2. using a classification based on age and gender;
3. classifying people based on marriage and relationships;
4. raising children in a family-like situation;
5. a concept of privacy;
6. a sexual division of labor;
7. rules that regulate sexual behavior;

8. a definition of good and bad behavior;
9. a definition of humor and playing games;
10. a definition of body adornment;
11. art (part of the “big C”);
12. a kind of leadership role for deciding upon community issues (O’Neil, 2006).

Another definition of thinking of culture is to compare it to an onion (Trompenaars Hampden-Turner, 2009). Here are three layers defined as follows:

1. Outer Layer: Associated with the visual reality of behavior, clothes, food, language, housing, and so forth. This is the level of explicit culture.
2. Middle Layer: Basically like the “small c” (something you cannot see), it refers to the norms and values which a community holds; for example, what is considered right and wrong (norms) or good and bad (values). Norms are often external and reinforced by social control. Values tend to be more internal than norms. Society doesn't have many means of controlling their enforcement. These values and norms structure the way people in a particular culture behave.
3. Inner Layer: This core consists of basic assumptions, a series of rules and methods to deal with the regular problems that people face every day unconsciously. These basic assumptions are automatic, like breathing. We do it automatically and do not think about it.

From all these definitions stated above, I have combined portions of the “small c,” the second layer, third layer, middle layer, and inner layer to choose the criteria for analysis in the CCC course.

Communication is the transmitting and receiving of a message. The ways of transmitting or receiving are via one or several of the five senses: speaking, hearing, touching, seeing, or even smelling. Are all of these sensual perceptions universal? Are their interpretations—for example, a pretty woman or a delicious taste—the same across cultures? The answer to this is “no” in some situations, and “yes” in others. There are many examples of this theory, for example, in Richard E. Nisbett’s on-going research and his book, *The Geography of Thought* (2003). Cross-cultural perception is another topic presented in the CCC syllabus.

When we combine these three words—cross, culture, and communication—into one concept, we must define it as a very complex term. To live in a global world with intertwining cultures, we need to understand why these communication messages are interpreted differently. We need to know which messages are positive ways of communicating and which are perceived as negative. Even if we do not have direct contact with another culture, a student needs to be aware of these differences and, taking it one step further, understand why these messages are different. CCC can be defined as an “understanding and sharing of meaning between people from different cultures in a verbal and non-verbal context” (Nakamura, 1998, p. 2).

Since the context of the CCC class is in Japan with mainly Japanese students, my question is, “How can we present topics that will have personal meaning and raise awareness?” Parameters that need defining with CCC syllabus design include:

- Do we focus on one country (for example, the USA)?
- What aspects of culture are to be presented? Big C, little C, 3 layers?
- Do we take into consideration world religion, since the current political climate emphasizes this as a conflict?
- Are there specific cross-cultural circumstances that we concentrate on? Business, travel, education?
- Do we introduce cultural non-verbal ways of communication (for example, eye contact, proxemics, or gestures)?
- Which skills are required of the course? Writing reports, reading cross-culture studies, oral communication, or listening to cross-cultural dialogues?
- How will the students implement this knowledge after the course is completed?

The list of parameters to define is extensive. We, as teachers, first need to reflect on the student’s use of the information that they are exposed to in the CCC course and ask how they will apply this knowledge to their life experience. Are they international business students, students going abroad for a period of time, or students returning from a homestay? In the context of the class under present study, most students have returned from a one-month to one-year homestay in America or the United Kingdom. The CCC class is a chance for the students to reflect on and share their unique experiences.

Gnōthi Seauton (Know Thyself)

Part of understanding another culture is to know your own culture to compare and understand the mechanisms that form this belief or action. This means looking within yourself for credibility, or asking why you act in certain ways. I have found that many Japanese students do not know the answers to basic questions about their beliefs, cultural values, or actions. Many times when I ask “Why?” the answer is, “Because we have always done it that way.” To be a successful cross-cultural communicator, you must be able to have a dialogue that goes *both* ways. This dialogue or conversation must meet the following criteria:

1. Participants must have a common aim, be it indifference or a difference.
2. Contributors should be mutually dependent.
3. There should be some sort of understanding between the participants.

Students then must be prepared to answer questions about themselves, which they have just inquired about another culture.

Since Japan is a mix of religions (Shinto and Buddhism), I always start off the semester by inviting a Buddhist priest to talk to the students about how Buddhism affects their daily modern life. We do not have time in the semester to invite a Shinto priest, unfortunately.

After this presentation, students always have many questions about their own lives and family customs. The student comments are very positive and it starts the semester with a personal reflection of their own beliefs and culture.

Cross-culture communication involves many aspects of verbal and non-verbal messages across different cultures. Knowing your own distinct culture characteristics and values is the first step in achieving CCC. In addition, being aware of the differences will help a student gain cross-cultural competence.

Cross-Cultural Communication Syllabus Styles

In addition to the usual syllabus design criteria, such as grading, student major, and so forth, a teacher should identify the area of student involvement that will be required for the CCC course.

Brislin (2001, p. 445) demonstrates good examples of three approaches to cross-cultural training in Table 1.

The “Low” involvement training is aimed at understanding the behavior that is appropriate in other cultures. These behaviors can include but are not limited to greetings (non-verbal messages) and distances (proxemics).

“Moderate” involvement for cognitions is training for expanding people’s thinking about another culture or the cross-cultural experience. One of these examples is “attribution training” or analyzing problems from different viewpoints. This activity will lead trainees to adjust and adapt successfully in a cross-cultural communication situation. Also “cultural relativity” can be used to look behind negative forces such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, or ethnocentrism. In the affect category, cross-cultural anxiety can have a severe effect on feelings. Techniques to address these emotions deal with self awareness. In cross-cultural situations, people are sometimes challenged within themselves about their beliefs and values, something taken for granted when living at home. More complex behaviors are also analyzed. For example, students list things they find pleasant or unpleasant. The students then analyze these lists and discuss which items they can give up or adjust to in another culture. Experiences, such as field trips, can also expose students to “mini” cross-cultural situations, such as visiting an ethnic restaurant.

“High” involvement utilizes more sophisticated training methods. An example is the analysis of the rules of social interaction (male-female, boss-subordinate, sales clerk-customer, etc.). Daily situational routines that are done without conscious thought can be viewed as rude or anti-social behavior in another culture. In the affect area, class simulations can be utilized. An example would be a business meeting role play with customers from different cultural backgrounds. Behavior approaches in the high context training can be done in depth. This is accomplished by setting up actual situations, such as a mock company or school using people from the target country, which can lead to awareness and changes of key behaviors. This is “intense training” which can be exhausting for the trainee. For the university classroom setting, this would be difficult to implement.

Table 1. (Brislin, 2001, p. 445)

Approaches to Cross-Cultural Training

| Trainee Involvement | Cognition | Affect | Behavior |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| Low | lectures from experts; assigned readings | lectures from “old hands”; films; viewing cultural presentations | presenting trainees with models who demonstrate appropriate behaviors |
| Moderate | attribution training; analysis of critical incidents | self-awareness; group discussions or prejudice, racism values; participation in guided encounters | cognitive/behavioral training; field trip assignments that demand new behaviors |
| High | applying sophisticated concepts from the behavioral and social sciences | role-playing; simulations of real-life demands | extended experiential encounters with another culture or complex approximations of another culture; guided practice of newly learned behaviors |

After deciding the student involvement for the syllabus, there are three additional approaches that need to be specified. Rosen (1977, p. 1) states, “research in the field of CCC seems to have taken one of three approaches, 1) linguistic, 2) anthropological, and 3) psychological.” The linguistic approach looks at the rules of communication. An anthropological approach concentrates on the cultural meaning, communication concerned with ideologies, world views, and ways of thinking and understanding. The psychological approach analyzes subjects in relation to cognition, perception, anxiety, depression, culture shock, emotional needs, personality orientations, and so forth, across cultures.

Considering the above approaches in addition to the course description and student characteristics will help the teacher design a syllabus that will be more controlled and focused. There are times when a syllabus is too general and will cover areas that are already being taught in other courses. For non-native students, too much information will make them feel overwhelmed with the language and risks misunderstanding of the concepts of culture being taught.

Why a Topic-Based Syllabus?

Nakamura (2002, p. 66) states, "Globalization does not mean westernization and neither does modernization mean westernization." This is very true for Japan, which can be described as a country that has learned and borrowed, but kept its unique spirit (Nakamura, 2002). To globalize, Nakamura suggests, Japan needs to understand culture more than technology. This will enable them to be ahead of the competition. Culture needs to be taught via "awareness, respect, communication, and reconciliation from your cultural strength." Using these characteristics, a content-based education with an academic approach raises motivation in the students dramatically.

Because of the importance of non-verbal communication in Japan, students need to know the reasons why people from other cultures communicate the way they do, in addition to verbal communication skills. Studying topics that interest students and making them aware of why these differences exist is the first step in overcoming stereotypes, prejudices, and ethnocentrism. These beliefs come about by lack of information. Morgan goes further by stating, "In order to understand culture (understanding the value systems and frames of meaning), the ability to empathize and the relativisation of one's own culture require personal commitment and engagement and could be linked to sympathetic understanding and understanding from the viewpoint of the respective peoples" (1993, p. 43). She goes on to write that values need to be explored and understood as well as the institutions and conventions which enshrine them along with some sociology-based topics.

Methods

The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2003) stated that one of the goals of English education is to "nurture a positive attitude towards communication." Innovative programs are needed in order to satisfy this requirement. Topics such as human cultures, human rights, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, feminism, and so forth need to be studied. In addition, the majority of the students in my CCC class have had experience abroad and can heighten their motivation by talking about their direct experiences. Topics are also chosen based on their experiences and difficulties.

In addition, the students have Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores that range from 275 to 840, with a mean score of about 424. There are a total of approximately 25 classes in the school year at 90 minutes each, with an average of one class per week. All of the students are Japanese, with an occasional exchange student and/or teacher assistant. Since this is an advanced-level English class, emphasis was put on all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, the only language component specifically addressed in the class was the learning of new vocabulary to supplement the already extensive grammar training a Japanese student receives in secondary education.

The above criteria have led to the design of a task-based syllabus that has a moderate to high involvement of the student and a mix of sociological, anthropological, and institutional topics. Japanese students, in my experience, are not exposed to various cultures or different ways of thinking. The local area contains different cultural groups that work in the

entertainment or factory sector. The student's attitudes towards them are not very positive and at their age, they do not have direct contact with them. By assigning students into country groups and then having them present information pertaining to the topic of the class, awareness is built throughout the semester. Countries that are assigned are geared towards the multi-nationals that are in the local community, and at least one from each continent was included.

In addition to group work, each student is required to keep a blog. This blog will contain the student's answers to questions I propose after each topic presented in class. Students are then required, as part of their grading, to read and anonymously comment on classmates' blogs.

As Nakamura (1998) states:

Allowing students to immerse themselves in cross-cultural issues in the four macro-skills and visual areas, results in a deep understanding and cultural background knowledge of content areas. (p. 5)

Class Format

The first class of the semester starts with the distribution of weekly topics. In addition, students discuss countries that they would like to study for their group presentations. I try to lead them in the direction of each continent being represented and encourage them to include non-native, English-speaking countries. The reason for this is that it will give a variety of viewpoints and expose them to countries that they are less familiar with. In the past, some of the countries studied by the students were Ghana, Turkey, Philippines, Denmark, South Africa, Brazil, Spain, France, Thailand, Austria, and India. These presentations were always received with positive feedback from those presenting and the students listening. All presentations are in English.

The typical class will start with a poster from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) campaign ("Local Knowledge") that was shown in most airports in 2003. These posters are a good introduction to how people perceive the same situation. After a five-minute discussion, there is a presentation and definition of the class topic by the teacher. Because I am an American, I usually present the American point of view. Afterwards, two student groups conduct presentations. If there is time, a movie segment pertaining to the topic is shown or a guest speaker will be invited into the classroom. Some guest speakers take the whole class period.

To make up for the class time of the speaker's presentation, every three classes a reflection period is planned. This class may include any presentations that were not completed, cross-cultural games such as Barnga, and/or a movie particular to a topic studied, shown in its entirety. An example would be *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* for the topic of weddings. See Appendix A for a list of movies shown and sample syllabus for the spring and fall semesters. Blog homework is due on the reflections class about three times a semester.

Guest speakers range from experts to alumni. As stated previously, a Buddhist monk talks about Buddhism in Japan. We have also had an American Muslim woman, a Japanese

woman director working for an American company, a Japanese politician with embassy experience, an alumna in an international marriage with two children who has lived in both Japan and Australia, and the local principal of the international school. We have also had special one-time guests such as visiting scholars from Vietnam and the United Kingdom, the UNITAR Hiroshima office director and 50 students from a university in New York. All of the guests have been met with positive feedback and an increase in motivation.

The text “People Like Us” by Simon Greenall (2004) is also used on occasion. Students can refer to questions or activities if absent. This text is a good base for discussion topics and can be supplemented with topics that are relevant to the Japanese university student’s experiences and attitudes.

When researching CCC syllabus design at universities across the world, the text *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, by Larry Samovar and Richard E. Porter (1994), was often used. For the undergraduate EFL students in this class, the level of English and the “reader” format of the text was not appropriate. However, it was used as a reference when preparing for classes.

Topics Presented During the Course

During the year-long CCC course, there are 18 topics studied. These topics are divided into five thematic groups.

The first theme of the spring semester is always world religions. As stated above, the definition of culture contains a belief system. Some of these beliefs are so implicit in a culture that it is hard to separate the social norm and the religious norm. In Japan this is the case where two different religions are practiced side by side. It is not surprising today to see a family Buddhist altar and a small Shinto shrine in the same household. Weddings are often performed in a Shinto ceremony and funerals are generally Buddhist. In addition, with the current political climate and the negative images of Islam and Judaism, it is important to remove these media-cultivated stereotypes by studying additional beliefs. Three classes are devoted to the study of the top five religions in the world: Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. If possible, I try to find a local person to talk about their personal beliefs.

The next theme of topics relates to first impressions: greetings, names and addresses, time, and the language of clothes. As the old saying goes, “First impressions are always the most important.” We judge someone before they even open their mouths. The “language of clothes” is very important in Japan’s image-conscious society, and since this course is taught at a women’s university, the topic is very popular. A book of the same name is used as a reference to teach the students about how color and fashion make certain impressions. Students learn not to “judge a book by its cover.” Not only are international fashions studied, but students analyze their own clothes. We end the class with a lively discussion about not judging people by their outer qualities rather than by their inner ones. The next topic is the concept of time. Meeting at a certain time is very important in certain cultures, especially Japan. Most students initially feel this strict compliance to being on time for all situations is universal. After this class, students are more understanding of the different concepts and their

meanings. The final topic is the studying of greetings and the meanings behind them, or “cross-cultural social etiquette.” In addition, understanding a name is also important. Some cultures have very interesting and exciting methods for naming their children. Students also have a chance to explain the meaning of their own names. Sometimes students do not know why their names were chosen and are thereby made aware of their own family stories. This information is important for beginning cross-cultural conversations. Addresses are also another excellent topic to introduce housing and weather conditions. Google Earth is an excellent tool for this, and exchange students in the class use it to show us their homes and schools. We talk about floor plans and of homestay families’ houses. Students share difficulties and positive experiences with each other.

Popular cross-cultural issues important for the student who is studying English are presented as class topics to analyze; for example:

- Personal spaces are studied when a student has the chance to talk with a foreigner.
- Work customs are analyzed for the student that will have a job with an international company.
- Death and funeral customs are covered for the student who had a homestay family abroad and may have this experience.
- Expressing feelings is a very difficult situation when communicating with a foreigner, and can lead to misunderstandings. This class is mainly a discussion of how to translate Japanese feelings into English.
- Cross-cultural breakdown studies world conflicts such as Nazi-occupied Germany and the Holocaust.

In order to keep the class interesting and varied, a number of topics were chosen that are of interest to the 18-22 year old Japanese girls. These topics include:

- International Dating: Talking about one’s ideal partner.
- Friends: Introducing the word “taboo” and discussing what is proper to talk about between friends and family.
- Superstitions: A part of Japanese culture is studied and compared with superstitions of other countries.
- Weddings: Most of the students have dreams of their own wedding and find it interesting that foreign girls have similar dreams too.
- Table Manners: Going to a foreign restaurant in Japan or abroad is an interesting topic to share experiences.
- Family Life: Many Japanese girls dream of a foreign boyfriend. In this lesson, an alumna speaks to the class about her experiences living in a foreign country and being married to a non-Japanese national. This is a highlight of the semester and elicits many questions about cross-cultural experiences.
- Men and Women: This topic is the cross-cultural issue that interests the students most. Students analyze the different ideas, speech functions, and writing styles of men and women via newspaper articles, academic studies, and email styles.

- Food: This class is a favorite. This is the only class where “big C” culture is explored. Groups of students make or buy a representative food from the country they are studying. As we eat this delicious treat, each group presents the recipe.

The last group of topics falls under the heading of Current Affairs. Choosing cross-cultural issues from current media sources invites students to discuss issues that have direct meaning in their lives. A local election is an opportunity for students to compare elections in different countries. Many of these students see politics as an older-generation concern. The power of young people in the latest U.S. election was a surprise to students and made them understand the reactions of their classmates in their homestay environments. Also, most of these students had never voted before but, influenced by the discussion of international politics in this class, voted for the first time in national elections. They reported this event to the class. Another issue that is always in the Japanese media is education. Analyzing school systems in other countries made the students realize that the *juku* system of education is not a worldwide system. Many students in this class were surprised that it is not necessary to go to cram school to enter into an internationally-located university. Finally, bringing in a guest speaker from the international school and a teacher from Hungary opened up good discussions of school systems as well as seasonal sports programs.

There are many other topics that can be discussed and presented. In addition, if the class is a year or half-year course, choosing topics that the students can relate to and be motivated by impact outside the class and after the course is finished.

The showing of movies in the classroom is also a very important consideration. Many university libraries have an extensive movie library and audio-visual equipment available. Instead of using class time for viewing, homework can be assigned to view the movie in the library. Reflection classes are also optional and can be eliminated. When designing a topic-based, cross-cultural syllabus, the topics to consider are those that motivate and promote discussion between students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the CCC task-based course relies on the students’ evaluation of the course every year to update and improve it. Many students, at the beginning of the course, felt that some topics being studied in the class were not relevant. At the end of the semester, most students realized that the topics studied did relate to their cross-cultural experiences that they had and they will have in the future. After four years of collecting these evaluations, the favorite classes varied across all topics. The most used word in these evaluations was “interesting.”

Blogs were also looked upon favorably. The first year this course was taught, journals were written and handed in. There was no real communication between students about ideas and most were too shy to speak out in class. This is a common problem in Japanese classrooms. The use of the blogs, with a pen name, gave the students a podium to express themselves and comment freely without the worry of personal judgment by other students. Many students liked the blogging and commented on more than the required minimum. In

addition, if students received comments on their blogs, they were required to answer these questions or comments. This created a dialogue that, in some cases, lasted the semester. To find a list of the questions and current student blogs, please go to www.hjuccc.blogspot.com for more information.

CCC syllabus design is a challenge for the teacher. There are many choices and paths to explore and analyze. Analyzing students' characteristics and goals will help design a course that will not only motivate them, but also teach them life skills of understanding, respect, cooperation, and acceptance of different cultural styles.

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Appendix A. Cross-Cultural Communication Course (Spring Semester)

| Class Number | Topic Discussed | Notes |
|--------------|---|--|
| 1 | Culture, Language, Country Groups, Blogs, Grading, etc. | See www.hjuccc.blogspot.com for information |
| 2 | Religion: Japan Buddhism | Guest : Buddhist Priest (in Japanese) |
| 3 | Culture and Religion | Christianity, world religions |
| 4 | Islam | Show the logical progression of Judaism, Christianity, then Islam. Many resources on web. Explain radical Islam and local news and what it means (in the past we had a Muslim from America as a guest speaker) |
| 5 | Greetings | Textbook and physical touch activity from text |
| 6 | Names and Addresses | Textbook, examples of street maps, Google Earth |
| 7 | Personal Spaces | Textbook and lecture on the theory of Proxemics |
| 8 | Expressing Feelings | Compared Japanese and English words that express feelings (i.e., Shibui, enryo, genki, some are hard to express in English), facial expressions and their perceptions |
| 9 | Reflections | In 2008 we had Prof. S. Kawashima (Hunter college CUNY) speak about learning English or movie <i>Mr. Baseball</i> (scene of greetings), <i>Lost in Translation</i> (making commercial scene), with class |
| 10 | Family Life | Japanese Woman Guest Speaker (talking about the international marriage experience) |
| 11 | Dating | Textbook, typical dates abroad, big discussion of dating and what you should and shouldn't do on a first date! |
| 12 | Work Customs | Japanese women director from an American company, also started talking about the work of Hofstede (1991) |

| | | |
|----|-------------|---|
| 13 | Politics | Local city councilman speaks about young people getting involved in politics in Japan. Also discussed are different forms of government in other countries. The local news of politics. |
| 14 | Time | Textbook and discussions of situations with foreigners in Japan and abroad |
| 15 | Reflections | Clips from the movie <i>Sayonara</i> , (kissing scene at a noh play) and <i>Gung Ho</i> (Japanese work customs in American car company) |

Appendix B. Cross-Cultural Communication Course (Fall Semester)

| Class Number | Topic Discussed | Notes |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Country Groups, Blogs, Grading, etc. | CCC web quiz http://athomejapan.com |
| 2 | Death and Funerals | Book: <i>Death Warmed Over</i> , by Lisa Rogak, activity: how to write a condolence letter |
| 3 | Language of Clothes | Book: <i>Language of Clothes</i> , by Alison Lurie, Textbook, rate celebrity impressions based on their clothes |
| 4 | Friends | Textbook (explaining different levels of friends in Cultures), What is a taboo topic? Class discussions |
| 5 | Reflections | Play Barnga, Book: <i>New Ways in Teaching Culture</i> , by A. Fantini (1997) for more ideas |
| 6 | Time | Textbook, also explained time expressions, time manners (party, wedding, dinner guest, meeting, class) |
| 7 | Superstitions | Activity matching American superstition and meaning which leads to a discussion of Japanese superstitions and their meanings |
| 8 | Weddings | Textbook and personal videos and pictures, appropriate wedding gifts and student experiences |
| 9 | Reflections | Movie: <i>My Big Fat Greek Wedding</i> , cross-cultural marriages and the pressures from families |
| 10 | Table Manners | Video (White House table manners), Web site quiz (http://www.fekids.com/kln/flash/DontGrossOutTheWorld.swf) . Discuss experiences in foreign restaurants. |

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| 11 | Men and Women | Textbook, Communication aspects discussed. http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/2052/behave.html . Gender in communication behavior, body Language, facial expressions and speech patterns. |
| 12 | Education and School Clubs | Guest speaker (teacher from abroad or principal from international school) |
| 13 | Reflections | Movie: <i>What Women Want</i> , a man learns that women think differently |
| 14 | Food | Each group has to bring food to share from their country. Also teach us how to make it. |
| 15 | Cross-Cultural Breakdown | Movie: <i>Life is Beautiful</i> , to demonstrate when there is a severe prejudice of a culture and what can happen. This ends the course on a serious note of the importance of cross cultural communication and understanding. |