and saved, each student will need access to every other student's account URL and password in order to view their pages and comment on any posts. This is not an issue if the account is used as a private repository of writing accessed primarily by the student and the instructor, but if the intention is to encourage dialogue and students commenting on each other's posts, this information will have to be provided to all.

Another problem—one shared by all online resources not provided by the university—is the danger of losing login and password information. If the account is made without registering an email, there is no recourse if login and password information is forgotten, so it is advised that instructors collect and store this information in a secure way.

Conclusion

Fakebook is an online resource that can be utilized for general and target language writing practice. By being aware of its strengths and weaknesses, instructors can use the website in a way that best serves their course and provide a more familiar and intuitive place for students to accomplish their writing. Those interested can email the author to receive an initial student handout with instructions on how to set up and save a Fakebook account. The official Fakebook Startup Guide can be found here: https://www.classtools.net/_FAKEBOOK/docs/fakebook_startup_guide.doc and an official Generic Marksheet can also be found here: https://www.classtools.net/_FAKEBOOK/docs/fakebook_marksheet.doc

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[JALT PRAXIS] YOUNGER LEARNERS

Mari Nakamura & Marian Hara

The Younger Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editors at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

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Simple Ideas and Strategies for Promoting Intercultural Understanding in Schools and L2 Classes

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Intercultural understanding is one of the aims of foreign language (L2) study in Japanese schools, and we can find images, videos, dialogues and passages related to culture in most textbooks from year 3 of primary school and upwards. Larger projects and virtual exchanges have been introduced in previous *TLT Younger Learners* articles this year. However, there are also strategies and activities we can implement in our everyday L2 classes to enhance intercultural understanding and create an overall learning environment that fosters cultural awareness. Thus, the focus of this article is to share activities, ideas, and resources for younger learners to extend and complement the culture content of textbooks without inviting speakers, designing big projects or events, or participating in virtual or real exchanges.

Intercultural Understanding and Awareness

Norms, behaviors, and beliefs within our own cultures are acquired from the surrounding socio-cultural environment, internalized, and passed along from one generation to the next. Intercultural understanding involves knowing one's own culture

and having an awareness of other cultures. What do we consider normal and familiar? This question is difficult to answer until we experience a reaction during intercultural encounters—at home or abroad—and realize that while some things are similar, other things are done differently. As we are interconnected on numerous levels, intercultural understanding is required in order to understand, reconcile, and respect these differences to function effectively in our complex global society.

Hill (2006) defines intercultural understanding as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, pointing out that schools should go beyond simply teaching knowledge of a language or culture. Rather than viewing intercultural understanding as merely a means of conducting business across borders effectively, intercultural education in schools should educate young people to be willing to learn and benefit from each other, and ultimately, become adept at living together (Hill, 2006; Neuner, 2012). Thus, intercultural education in schools and L2 classes should be directed towards the following in our day-to-day lives or when we encounter people from other cultures:

- fostering awareness of how one's own culture and other cultures operate
- encouraging a willingness to seek and participate in cross-cultural encounters
- building communication and interpersonal skills
- promoting critical awareness
- encouraging curiosity, and open-mindedness about other cultures
- developing empathy, flexibility, tolerance, and the ability to see things from different perspectives
- being mindful of cultural differences

We should ensure that these aspects are built into our lessons and curriculum, and that we encourage students to create connections between their worlds and the worlds of others.

Culture Content Found in Textbooks

The iceberg analogy put forward by Hall (1976) is frequently used to highlight the visible and hidden aspects of culture, and can be used as a starting point to consider the complexity and dynamic nature of culture. Culture includes architecture, literature, and food at the visible or material level, whereas the deeper or invisible level includes behaviors, communication styles, interaction and thought patterns, along with beliefs and values.
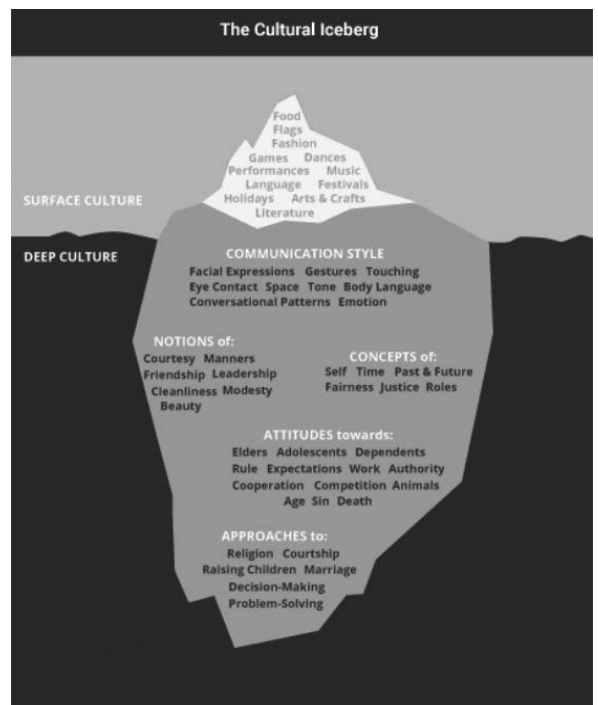

Figure 1. The Iceberg of Culture. Adapted from Ashman (2018). Creative commons.

At first glance, most of the cultural content in the textbooks seems to concentrate on the visible level; that is, aspects of culture we can see, touch, taste, hear, and feel. Examples of these include flags, festivals, architecture, food, traditional clothing, and sports. Some of the video contents in the primary school resources also offer visual input on how things are done in different cultures; for example, how to greet and to count in other languages. Secondary textbooks include a wide variety of content that is related to culture through text passages, dialogues, and images. It is important to provide links between linguistic or visual content and the deeper and dynamic features of culture. This can be achieved by first of all building awareness and subsequently encouraging discussion and reflection through careful selection of tasks.

Ideas and Strategies

The following sections introduce some ideas and strategies to enhance intercultural understanding. Regardless of the activity or strategy implemented, it is important to allow students to give their own opinions and views and to encourage reflection. Links for resources helpful for implementing the following ideas and strategies can be found in the online appendix.

The School: Displays, Signs, and Books

The classroom, school walls, and library provide an ideal space to promote intercultural understanding. A permanent culture corner could feature a world map or an iceberg of culture, while culture-related projects could be displayed. Classroom and school signs in different languages reflecting the nationalities of the school community can give students of non-Japanese background a sense of inclusion. Pins or notes on the world map can highlight community demographics while both the iceberg and map could be used to reinforce textbook content. Library books could be selected for cultural diversity. Kikuchi (2018) showcases how a public primary school in Kanagawa has built on its multicultural student population to make the school culturally inclusive. There is also a documentary about the school titled 10ヵ国の児童が学ぶ　驚きの多国籍小学校 on YouTube (Every 6:15, 2019).

Raise Awareness of Increasing Cultural Diversity in Japan

Japan is becoming more diverse, with the number of foreigners at an all-time high of over 2.8 million people (Yamashita, 2019). We can facilitate inclusive discussions about the presence of people and things from different cultures within the school, community, and Japan. If students from different cultural backgrounds are happy to talk about their own knowledge and experience of culture, this is a good opportunity to learn and benefit from each other. School lunches sometimes feature non-Japanese dishes, which could encourage a lunchtime/after-lunch discussion about food from different countries, while a photo of a multilingual sign can raise awareness of non-Japanese residents or tourists in the area. News items or documentaries pertaining to multicultural Japan or global issues can function as a warm-up activity, and asking questions like: *If you were...how would you feel? What would it be like to...?* can foster empathy and hopefully aid in developing an inclusive attitude towards others.

Realia

Realia from any country brought into class by students or teachers can initiate classroom discussions and raise curiosity and awareness. Many items can be incorporated into daily "small talk" or "show and tell" type activities or be matched to textbook content.

Adding Interest to Textbook Content

There are different ways in which teachers can add interest to textbook content. *Google Maps* and *Street View* can add an interactive component to textbook content. You can take a virtual walk around the Taj Mahal or the Statue of Liberty and comment on what people are doing and wearing. *Google Earth* and *Google Expeditions* are further options for a virtual experience. There are also a number of web sites dedicated to enhancing cultural awareness and understanding, including *Empatico,* the *Peace Corps, Kwintessential,* and *World Vision.* These sites often provide visuals, ready-made worksheets, or stories which can be used as is, or scaffolded and adapted to suit the class.

Textbook contents often focus on students from other countries visiting Japan or vice versa, and the life of children in different countries. This content can be supplemented by suitable YouTube videos or websites. For example, the documentary 世界がもし１００人の村だったら (Nakamura, 2009) looks at the life of children in various countries, and the bilingual picture book of the same title (開発教育協会, 2020) also features worksheets. The website for the documentary 世界の果ての通学路 (世界の果ての通学路, 2013) has photos and stories to discuss schooling, and is a good match for units in *New Horizon 5 and 6* (Allen-Tamai et al., 2020). However, it is important to draw the students' attention not only to differences, but also to similarities. For example, when looking at videos or photos of school life in different cultures, we can point out that students carry a bag, walk or ride a bicycle, use a textbook or blackboard, and maybe eat a school lunch, just like children in Japan. Lastly, it is important to encourage students to consider why there are similarities and differences in the way things are done, and their cultural significance.

Ideas and Strategies for Primary L2 Classes

Intercultural understanding can be implemented from an early age, and classes can include materials from around the world to supplement any designated resources at the lower level or textbooks at the upper levels. We can help children make connections between the ideas conveyed in these and their own world.

Students can be encouraged to look up different countries and cultures to match textbook content. For instance, the "*Over the Horizon*" section in *New Horizon Elementary 5* and *6* (Allen-Tamai et al., 2020) and certain units, for example, Unit 3: *I want to go to Italy* in *New Horizon Elementary 6* lend themselves to projects, posters, or card-based activities related to different cultures.

Carefully chosen picture books, folktales, songs, visuals, and games provide a wealth of opportunities

to support the development of intercultural understanding at the primary level. Picture books and folktales use oral/aural/visual/cultural elements, while songs add a melody. Two examples are the Sesame Street picture book "*We're different, we're the same*" (Kates & Mathieu, 1992) and the Sesame Street song "*We all sing in the same voice*" (Fun English, 2014). The picture book focuses on parts of the body and feelings and goes well with Year 3 and Year 4 content. As the students will be familiar with most of the language, it does not require much pre-teaching. During the reading, actions like touching the relevant part of the body or expressing feelings reinforce the language content. Students can also be encouraged to predict or add to the answers, for example, the line "Our hair is different" can be expanded by students adding various adjectives like long, short, brown, black, or blond. The song is similar to the book in the way it draws attention to similarities in the refrain "My name is you." However, the language is possibly more suited to the upper primary level. There are numerous versions of this song on YouTube. Folktales from different countries are available on *World of Tales* or on *FairyTalez. com*. While these sites do not have picture books, students could be encouraged to make their own illustrations in groups. *Google Earth* has interesting resources in the culture section, for example *Google Earth Folktales* from around the world. Lastly, similar games are played throughout the world, but often with different names. For example, *Piñata* / スイカ割り and 福笑い / *Pin the tail on the donkey*. The message is: We are different, but we are also the same!

Ideas and Strategies for Secondary L2 Classes

As students' language skills and social awareness increase, a greater variety of authentic resources and activities can foster intercultural understanding.

Design Sample Sentences and Worksheets with Cultural Awareness in Mind

Many of us give students additional handouts, focusing on the sentence structures taught within units. These can be designed to stimulate different aspects of intercultural understanding. For example, Lesson 1 in *New Crown 2* (Negishi et al., 2016) focuses on what students did in the spring vacation. A worksheet could include information and a gap-fill activity on worldwide spring vacations. Lesson 5 in the same textbook focuses on Uluru, a rock formation in the center of Australia sacred to the Anangu people, and sentence structures related to expressing feelings. Since emotions can transcend language, regional, cultural, and ethnic differences (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003), a worksheet could include faces from different cultures expressing these feelings to highlight the existence of universal emotions. A simplified worksheet or flashcard version could also be used in primary school classes.

The use of modals, for example, in Lesson 5 of *Vision Quest* (Nomura et al., 2012), lends itself to reflecting about cultural norms while practicing the structure of modals through readings, true/false or gap-fill type activities or writing of skits. For instance, if practicing the modals "must/have to" or "should/had better," a worksheet could include *Choose the correct option* / *True False* sentences like: "You have to/don't have to take off your shoes when visiting someone's house in Japan." "You should not touch a stranger's head in Thailand." A skit could include the reasoning behind these norms in different cultural contexts, for example, a skit where a Japanese student explains to an Australian homestay student why Japanese take off their shoes when entering a house.

TED Talks and Songs

Both TED Talks and songs can offer additional cultural content. TED Talks are a very useful resource for higher-level students, and the textbook *Perspectives* (Landsford et al., 2018) gives some ideas for how to scaffold TED Talks. There are many culture-related TED Talks to choose from, but I recommend "*See how the rest of the world lives, organized by income*" (Rosling Rönnlund, 2017). The message can be easily understood from the photos and visuals used, and the Talk has Japanese subtitles if needed. Another great TED Talk is "*Cross cultural communication*" (Riccardi, 2014). Even though this talk only has English subtitles, there are some interesting comments and visuals that can act as discussion topics for lower to higher secondary levels.

Songs with more complex themes and melodies are suitably challenging and interesting for older learners. Most secondary textbooks feature songs, and while students may not be too keen on singing these in class, they do like listening to music (or singing karaoke). Some of the featured songs are related to culture and can also be linked to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, which have become quite prominent in Japanese schools lately. For example, "*Do they know it is Christmas?*" by Live Aid and "*We are the world*" by USA for Africa are songs from the 1980s, but the message has remained essentially the same, and students can discuss what part of the songs relates to which SDG. "*Where is the love?*" by the Black Eyed Peas has powerful lyrics and video images and can

be linked to current issues, including the Black Lives Matter movement and the role of the media in terms of how countries and cultures are portrayed.

Most TED Talks and songs can be used in L2 classes in the following ways:

- Elicit a student response about the title, and if available, the cover. What do they think the Talk/song is about? Also, ask questions related to the topic.

- Show students the video/Talk or get them to listen to the Talk/song. Ask for their initial reaction and check their understanding.

- Give students a copy of the script/lyrics and ask them to highlight important words/themes.

- Watch or listen. Discuss and reflect. How can students link the content/lyrics to their own experiences or to current issues?

- In their shoes: How would you feel if…? writing activity.

- Gap-fill, True/False type activities: These can be used for predicting words or grammar patterns or as listening practice and for checking comprehension.

- Vocabulary quizzes (paper-based or PowerPoint). Students can also make their own quizzes or word searches based on the song.

- Students could also write and record their own TED Talk or culture song.

In Conclusion

Opportunities to go beyond language content and delve into different concepts and issues abound in L2 classes. As illustrated above, there are myriad things we can do to promote intercultural understanding in schools and classes, ranging from minor tweaks to more substantial additions. Nevertheless, we do need a creative, informed, and proactive mindset, and it is essential to take into account the students' linguistic repertoire, interests, and cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development before augmenting textbook content. In this increasingly interconnected world, it is important for all to develop an informed and positive outlook towards other cultures. Let's do what we can to support this in our teaching. After all, the world is like a mosaic, created from different pieces to make a beautiful whole.

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Appendix

An appendix of links to resources mentioned in this article and other culture-related resources can be found in the online version of this article at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/younger-learners

[JALT PRAXIS] BOOK REVIEWS

Robert Taferner & Stephen Case

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received *column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.*

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This month's column features Peter Ferguson's review of Exploring Language Teacher Efficacy in Japan.

Exploring Language Teacher Efficacy in Japan

[Gene Thompson. (2020). Multilingual Matters. pp. xv + 183. ¥4,644. ISBN: 1788925386.]

Reviewed by Peter Ferguson, Kindai University

Exploring Language Teacher Efficacy in Japan is an indispensable book that combines a comprehensive review of the theoretical framework of language teacher efficacy (LTE) with up-to-date research in one volume. The book is one of nine in the series *Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching* by Multilingual Matters, and constitutes an essential volume which provides a clear and concise investigation into the complexities of measuring LTE in an English as a foreign language context.

Self-efficacy refers to the belief a person has towards their ability to successfully complete certain tasks, both individually and collectively in groups. This self-assessment is influenced by both experience and environmental factors, along with perceptions of failure, anxiety, and self-doubt. In terms of education, "teachers' beliefs in their efficacy affects their general orientation toward the educational process as well as their specific instructional activities" (Bandura, 1997, p. 241). With the increasing demand for communicative language teaching and the use of English as a medium of instruction, there is an expanding interest in teacher efficacy in the fields of applied linguistics and teacher education. Nevertheless, teacher efficacy and collective efficacy remain complex constructs to measure (e.g., Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Walter & Sponseller,