

# Intercultural Communication Concepts and Implications for Teachers

Anne M. Shibata

*State University of New York, New Paltz*

This article explains the concept of intercultural communication (IC), discusses the need to treat intercultural communication classes as a specialty in foreign language education, and examines some of the conceptual frameworks that are useful for teaching IC in Japan. The author focuses on the premise that intercultural training is ultimately transformative and that cognitive training alone is not enough to help students reach the goal of intercultural competence. In addition, this paper examines teacher competencies necessary for IC training in Japan and presents examples of experiential activities that can be implemented in the IC classroom.

本論では、まず異文化間コミュニケーション(以後IC)を定義・説明し、外国語教育カリキュラムの中にIC授業を取り入れる必要性について言及する。次に、日本においてICを教える際に有用と考えられる概念的な枠組みについて考察する。IC教育は、個人の感情や価値観等の多様な内容にかかわるので、単に異なる文化を学習者に認知的に理解させるだけでは、十分な異文化適応能力を養成することはできない。本論では、上記の内容に加え、日本におけるIC授業を担当する教師の教育能力、IC授業で実際に利用できる授業活動の例についても言及する。

**M**ore and more, we are hearing the term intercultural communication (IC) used in the language teaching field. Universities are beginning to offer IC classes, and textbooks that are ostensibly for IC training are being published. But just what does this term mean, and how does “intercultural communication” as a field of study differ from merely adding international and cultural components to our language classes?

The development of intercultural competence involves both language and intercultural skills. Language teachers often overlook the task of developing intercultural skills, whereas interculturalists often overlook the task of developing language competence. Since language helps shape our world view and is a construct that aids the development of

culture, language and culture are inextricably intertwined and therefore should be understood holistically insofar as possible (Fantini, 1995). Therefore, it is necessary for language teachers to familiarize themselves with the conceptual frameworks that can be used to guide students to intercultural competence.

Language departments and language teachers must consider a variety of issues. For example, how can we, as educators, constantly improve our own intercultural competence? How can IC training best be incorporated into language programs? Aren't we doing a disservice to students who must live in and compete in a global environment if we do not adequately prepare them to communicate with those who are culturally different from them? Can this preparation be accomplished solely through language courses, without a firm grasp of communication theory and an understanding of how culture affects the communication process? Can or should language teachers who have had no formal training in the theoretical/experiential methods of IC be expected to teach it?

### **Intercultural Communication Defined**

Many of those teaching IC courses both in the United States and overseas have had no formal training in IC as either undergraduate or graduate students (Beebe & Biggers, 1986). In Japan, numerous course designs and syllabi are grouped under the rubric, "Intercultural Communication." There are also many books being published with the words "intercultural communication" in the titles. Upon examination, however, they often compare two cultures in a culture-specific manner or attempt to give students an oversimplified taste of cultural differences. While these texts and courses have varying degrees of usefulness, they are not teaching IC *per se*.

The term intercultural communication refers to the process of communication that takes place between people of different cultural backgrounds, whether they are from different countries or different subcultures within the same country.

A common misconception is the difference between the meanings of the terms intercultural communication and comparative culture. Comparative culture courses, for example, comparing the similarities and differences between the United States and Japan, should be distinguished from those teaching IC. IC education is not comparing culture A to culture B, although some of this does take place. Instead, it focuses on how culture affects the communication processes between people from different cultural groups and should include comparisons of people from groups A, B, C, D, E, and so on.

As a field of education and research, IC encompasses the study of non-verbal as well as verbal behaviors, theoretical cultural constructs, and perceptual frames of reference. Although there is naturally a broad overlap, the distinction between interpersonal communication and IC is that IC treats *culture* as having a major influence on the communication process (Hoopes & Pusch, 1979). Just what takes place when people from different cultural backgrounds interact? How is communication accomplished under optimal circumstances? What are the variables that can contribute to miscommunication, and how can they be minimized? How does the difference in cultural mind-sets and habits affect these interactions? This is what the field of IC explores.

Researchers and educators in IC are now working to help people develop *intercultural competence*. This is the ability to communicate with people of other cultures by minimizing the potential for conflict and misunderstanding. One of the key components of this is gaining what is referred to as “cultural self-awareness.” Culturally self-aware people learn to recognize the effects that culture has on their perceptions and values. Thus they can work to shift their frames of reference in new situations in order to accommodate different cultural perspectives.

### Conceptual Frameworks of Culture and Intercultural Communication

Many important concepts that support the IC field come from the anthropological research of Edward Hall. Hall’s work on what he referred to as “the hidden dimension” (Hall, 1966) laid the foundations for the modern field of IC. Specifically, Hall explored the various cultural uses of space, time, and how culture influences communication. In fact, Hall says that culture *is* communication (Hall, 1976). He means that everything about us communicates; we cannot *not* communicate. Since so many things about us are culturally determined, our culture thus becomes our mode of communication.

#### *Conceptualizing Time*

Although elucidating the many paradigms used in teaching cultural concepts is beyond the scope of this paper, an in-depth example of one such construct and the impact it can have on an intercultural encounter is illustrated below.

Hall’s (1976) model for the cultural uses of time identifies two types of organization: monochronic (M-time) and polychronic (P-time). Although there is an overlap between M-time and P-time characteristics in cultures, and the model itself is not perfect, the M-time and P-time framework helps us to conceptualize various approaches to time.

Most cultures utilize predominantly one style or the other as conceptualizing and organizing frames for activities. In an M-time culture, such as the United States, we find time valued as a commodity. "Time is money," "Don't waste my time," and so on are linguistic metaphors that shape Americans' worldviews. Americans see time as something to be spent, saved, conserved, or used constructively.

In polychronic, P-time based cultures members see time as intangible. Most Middle-Eastern, Latin, and Asian cultures utilize P-time as a cultural frame. Human relations, rather than adherence to a particular schedule, are most important. There is little perception of "wasting" time in these cultures, as time is seen as fluid and unending. People are in step with natural rhythms, rather than ruled by an artificially imposed time-consciousness.

Many polychronic cultures are also collectivist-oriented; that is, groups are important and human relationships are highly valued. Monochronic cultures tend to be more individualistic, and goals and schedules take precedence over relations between people.

Japan exhibits both polychronic and monochronic characteristics. Business or professional meetings often last far longer than would be tolerated in the time-conscious West. However, the time used is not considered wasted (although some members of Japanese culture will complain about this to a sympathetic Westerner), as this use is intended to promote harmony and good feelings among the group members.

Why is understanding this framework important? Here is an application of how this different time-orientation can affect perception and communication cross-culturally. Last year this author was employed as a cross-cultural consultant by an American firm that was holding contract negotiations with a large Japanese trading company. At a business meeting in Tokyo, all participants were requested at the behest of the Japanese side to sign the notes from the meeting in order to facilitate clear communication on what had been discussed/decided at the meeting. However, Mr. Tanaka, one of the members of the Japanese side and a minor player in the negotiations, had left the room earlier but requested to be called back to sign at the end of the meeting. This frustrated the Japanese manager who was running the meeting because he felt that it was not important to have Mr. Tanaka's signature. But in order to save the man's face, we waited for over 20 minutes for him to return and sign the meeting notes so that we could all receive our copies. The Americans had been completely unaware of these undercurrents of frustration, due to the lack of overt display on the Japanese side and the language barrier.

On the train on the way back to our hotel, the vice-president of the American company said, "I realized today who one of the most impor-

tant people at X company is: Mr. Tanaka." When I asked him in surprise why he thought this was so, he said that since we had waited for 20 minutes for him to sign the notes, he must have been an important member of the other side. He was quite surprised when I explained what had actually taken place and that the waiting had been merely a matter of letting Mr. Tanaka save face. One of the keys to the misperception was the time factor. For a Westerner, time is a commodity, and it only gets "spent" on people who are important. Therefore, through his own cultural lens, the vice-president assumed that anyone who was worth a 20-minute wait must be rather important. Without someone to explain and correctly interpret the situation, this misunderstanding could easily have led to some problems at future meetings. This is but one example of the many ways our unexamined cultural assumptions can affect our interactions.

### *Culture as "Software of the Mind"*

Other culture-general and communication-specific constructs come from Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of cultural variability. He categorizes cultures as collectivist or individualist, large or small power distance, masculine or feminine, and high or low uncertainty avoidance. These constructs allow us to define cultural perceptions and other variables in a quantifiable and understandable, though necessarily oversimplified, manner. Hofstede calls culture the "software of the mind" and asserts that we cannot achieve intercultural competence without understanding this software and how it interacts with other software.

Japan is identified as having a collectivist (group-oriented) culture that tends to value the harmony of the group over the rights of the individual. Likewise, Hofstede classifies Japanese culture as "high uncertainty avoidance," which means that Japanese people in general feel more comfortable with specific cultural boundaries of behavior in which to operate. Following established precedent is more comfortable than being spontaneous. This is one explanation for why Japanese students are reticent about giving their opinions in class and tend to be afraid of being "wrong." The United States and some European countries, for example, which are seen as low uncertainty avoidance cultures, in general feel more comfortable with spontaneity and new ideas.

### **Goals of Intercultural Communication Education and Training**

Ideally, IC course content should incorporate both intellectual learning and experiential learning. Experiential learning is usually facilitated through the use of simulations, case-studies, small group discussion,

and field-based contact. Suggested course objectives might include increasing participants' understanding of how culture influences communication and their ability to explain cultural similarities and differences in communication; understanding of cultural issues that affect intercultural effectiveness and their knowledge of ethical issues involved in communicating with someone from a different culture or ethnic group; understanding of the role of communication in intercultural adaptation and improving their IC skills; and knowledge of how to transcend cultural and ethnic differences to build community (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Wiseman, 1991).

The culture-specific approach is useful for participants who are moving to the target culture and need specific training in its language and customs—for example, students who are going to study overseas or participate in a homestay program.

However, most successful IC training encompasses a *culture-general* approach. That is, rather than teaching only about specific cultural traits, a wide variety of cross-cultural frameworks are covered. Since we don't know what cultures our students will eventually encounter, our purpose is to teach our students *how to learn* about cultures. To do this, we need to teach cultural similarities and differences; how to recognize and transcend racism, prejudice, and discrimination; and cross-cultural variables in non-verbal behavior, values, and belief systems (Milhouse, 1996). By using specific examples from a variety of different cultures from around the world, students learn to identify broad cultural frameworks that they can apply in future situations.

One of the basic premises of this training, as stated earlier, is that in order to communicate and interact effectively with members of another culture, one must develop cultural self-awareness. This begins with the understanding that each of us is the product of a particular culture, and our thoughts and beliefs are influenced by a cultural filter. This filter screens all we see, feel, and communicate. While this would appear to be obvious, it is not. Culture is taken for granted. We "know" things about the world and we assume everyone else "knows" them too. Certain things "go without saying." We unconsciously expect others to share our beliefs about our personal uses of space and time, what is clean or dirty, what is acceptable or unacceptable. All of these things are culturally imprinted and affect our interactions with others.

Growing up within a particular culture programs us to think a certain way, but most of us are unaware of how deep within ourselves these influences reach. Optimally, achieving intercultural competence allows us to go beyond the limitations of our singular world-views. "If you want to know about water, don't ask a goldfish," is a popular saying in

the intercultural field. In other words, it is difficult to see our own culture objectively, because there usually is no reason to do so. Most of us are completely blind to our cultural imprinting, and learning how profoundly this imprinting influences our experience of the world is the first step toward integrating it.

### Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Components of Intercultural Communication Education

Cognitive aspects of the IC curriculum should include and expand upon some of the theories of culture mentioned previously. Of course, communicative patterns and theories can also be introduced. The difference in communication patterns, not language itself, is often the cause of misunderstandings in intercultural interactions.

For example, Japanese communication patterns tend to be circular, and therefore the message is more contextualized and subtle. Japanese communicators expect their listeners to be sophisticated enough to realize the existence of *tatemae* and *honne*, the superficial message and the real one, and distinguish between the two. In interactions between Japanese and people from English-speaking countries, Japanese will often refrain from saying "no" directly, even when speaking in English. Instead, he or she will usually employ a vague sentence like, "I'll think about it." People familiar with Japanese communication patterns understand that this is the Japanese way of politely but indirectly saying "No." Conversely, in Euro-American linear communication patterns, the focus is on "the point" (Althen, 1988). "What's the point?" "Get to the point." "He made a pointed remark." Americans are comparatively direct in their communication, and generally expect others to be as well. (Again, however, this varies by degree depending upon the individual speaker's gender and cultural background, and the circumstances.) For example, in a business situation with Japanese, Americans will likely assume a positive response to be forthcoming after the Japanese side "thinks about" their proposal, because a direct negative response was not given. When this is not the case, an American may interpret the behavior of the Japanese side in a negative way, because communicative expectations were not met.

A third communication pattern is evocative communication used in some African cultures. This style utilizes storytelling to illustrate the point to be made, rather than directly addressing a particular point. The purpose is to evoke a feeling of empathy in the listeners. When people of such varying communication styles gather together, it requires a mutual understanding of cultural patterns to ensure that com-

munication is effectively facilitated. Miscommunications between peoples of different cultures are often caused by differences in communicative styles and expectations.

An awareness of non-verbal communicative style is also important for effective intercultural communicating. Gestures, touching, and smiling all convey messages that are culture-specific. Some cultures expect displays of emotion; others are uncomfortable with them. Some cultures encourage a wide range of volume and tone in speech, and others do not. When we are faced with a cultural style that is different from our own, we can become confused, disoriented, and even hostile. We must learn to adapt our communication patterns to those of others. To do so, we must first learn that there are different patterns, and second, what those different patterns are. This can be done cognitively in a classroom through lecture and study, but real understanding requires experiential techniques to bring this knowledge into the affective and behavioral realm.

Understanding the underlying conceptual frameworks of communication and culture from an intellectual standpoint is a good starting place for intercultural training, but it does not end there. What sets intercultural training apart from other fields of study is that, at its best, intercultural training is transformative (Paige & Martin, 1983). Instructors help students to alter their thoughts, feelings, and behavior by transcending their cultural boundaries. We are asking students to make psychological shifts away from the dualistic "us and them" ways of thinking to a more inclusive and accepting state. Through a better understanding of ourselves and others, we can cross the boundaries of language, culture and communication that divide us and experience a sense of true community, an awareness of ourselves as interconnected beings sharing the same planet.

### Skills/Strategies for the IC Classroom in Japan

Although there are many minorities in Japan, (the large ethnic Korean population, *burakumin*, Ainu, Okinawans, and various non-Japanese residents, as well as handicapped, homosexuals, mixed-race citizens, *hibakusha*, and the aged) they are not always recognized as such. Japan is therefore often categorized in a very general way as a "monocultural" society, and many Japanese see themselves as such as well (Creighton, 1997). Thus, Japanese in general are at a disadvantage globally due to a lack of experience in dealing with different races and communication patterns. This makes IC training especially desirable and appropriate in Japan.



The issue of gaining self-awareness particularly needs to be addressed in the intercultural classroom. The Intercultural Self-Disclosure Scale (Seelye, 1996) is a useful tool that helps students identify what topics and in what depth they are willing to self-disclose. This can be administered to students and then used as a basis for discussion. Barnlund (1975) described the differences between Japanese and American communication patterns, and his scales comparing the self-disclosure and body contact of the two cultures are relevant even today. My students found them fascinating, and when we talked about body contact in particular, students had a lively discussion about whom, when, and in what circumstances they would allow someone to touch them.

Gudykunst (1994) adapted a scale of individualistic and collectivist tendencies. When I administered this to several IC classes, the students overall scored higher in individualistic tendencies, contrary to the commonly held perception that Japanese display more collectivist tendencies. This led to some interesting discussions about the changing values of young Japanese, how they differ from earlier generations, and whether or not their results would be the same in five years when the students are out in Japanese society and under more pressure to conform. Using self-rating scales allows students to become thoroughly involved in the process, and they really seem to enjoy learning more about themselves. This is absolutely necessary as a precursor for learning how to communicate effectively with others.

This involvement can be achieved in a variety of ways. Usually, it is facilitated by using case studies, small-group discussion, interviews, or movies. The goal is to nurture students' ability to empathize with other groups. There are many experiential activities that can help students to shift their perspectives. Role plays and simulations are becoming increasingly available. The simulation game *Barnga* (Thiagarajan & Steinwachs, 1990) is one activity that helps students to experience firsthand the frustration involved in cross-cultural interaction. This clever card game simulates the experience of going to another culture where the cultural rules are different from the ones the students expect. Students sit around tables in small groups and are given decks of cards and instructions on how to play the game. Unknown to each of them, however, they are given *different* sets of instructions. After the students read and understand the instructions, the teacher removes them and the game begins. It is played silently, and students are left to try to communicate non-verbally (simulating the lack of a common language) but confusion gradually mounts. The facilitator calls time and then the "winners" and "losers" rotate to different tables and the play recommences. As the play continues, frustration, exasperation, and sometimes anger mount. No one is clear about what is happen-

ing, but at the same time each student is quite sure that he or she understands the rules, and all of the others playing the game are confused! Finally, after about 20 minutes or so, students are gathered together to debrief. This gives them an opportunity to let out the frustration they felt about the others who were not playing by the "correct" rules, their expectations not being met, and their inability to communicate with the other members. Students who have yet not figured out what happened are finally told that they each had different sets of instructions. The facilitator then helps them discover how these same types of reactions occur in real cultural interactions. Because participants are sure they are playing the same "game" and are sure they understand the "rules," it is the other person who is wrong, impolite, or has no common sense. It is an excellent, powerful tool because it actually generates the same kinds of frustrations that occur in real situations, as opposed to simply talking about them. As a variation, I sometimes allow English majors to speak English only about halfway through Barnaga to give them an opportunity to try to straighten out a cultural misunderstanding in English. This gives them a good sense of what it can be like to speak another language in a stressful situation, which we often encounter in another culture. It also gives each of them a great understanding of just how adequate or inadequate their language skills are!

An extremely important component of experiential exercises is the debriefing process. The debriefing is a discussion, facilitated by the trainer, to help students make sense of their experiences, validate their feelings, and integrate their new thinking patterns. Without this all-important aspect of the activity, students will be unable to fully comprehend the meaning and purpose of the activity, and much of the experience will have been wasted. To this end, I always debrief in the students' native language. Although I often use materials in English for IC classes for English majors, the lecturing and discussion is conducted primarily in Japanese, because it is important that the students understand the *concepts* being presented, and they are allowed to ask questions and give opinions without being hindered by a language barrier.

Interviewing is another useful technique. Although interviewing is difficult in Japan because few ethnic groups are represented, the subcultures mentioned previously could be utilized. Some intercultural educators in Japan have their students interview their elderly relatives to find out their perspectives on changes in Japanese society and how things used to be. This helps young people understand why the elderly have a different viewpoint.

As a final project, my students had to interview an elderly person or a member of another subculture and write about that person's life in the first

person in English. I stressed that they must already know the person, as I didn't want them accosting strangers on the street and asking personal questions. We also talked about the need to respect others' privacy and anonymity, if necessary, particularly if they were interviewing a person who was an ethnic Korean or *burakumin*. The majority of the students chose elderly members of their families, and the students and older folks both benefited, as my students found out more about life during the war, and for most of them, it was the first time that they had discussed such things with their grandparents. Many of them said that their grandparents had welcomed the opportunity to talk about their experiences with their grandchildren. There was an amazing depth of personal revelations in my students' papers. It was particularly poignant that several of the grandmothers talked of how they envied today's young women, who are able to go to school, travel to foreign lands, and choose their own marriage partners. One grandmother talked of how she walked through bombed-out areas looking for food for her malnourished baby. A grandfather told of his experiences in a Soviet prison camp. Another grandfather told his granddaughter of his guilt and anguish over the "comfort women" problem, as he himself had thought that these women were working of their own free will during wartime. Many of the elders told their granddaughters that they could not believe that some young women today were prostituting themselves (*enjo kosai*) to have money for clothes and cellular phones. This activity was the most highly rated of all the class assignments by the students in their end-of-the-year questionnaire, and many thanked me for having given them the opportunity to talk with their grandparents in such an intimate way. It was far more successful than I had imagined it would be, and I highly recommend it as an activity to help students really see things from another person's perspective. In particular, the fact that the students wrote it in the first person seemed to facilitate this.

Researchers have shown that there are cross-cultural differences in how students respond to training. Since most of the research to date has been conducted with American groups in the United States, some techniques must be adapted for use in other cultures. For example, it has been shown that Japanese do not respond in the same manner to debriefing as Americans do. Whereas American students will usually be quite aggressive in verbalizing their thoughts and observations in large groups, Japanese rarely are. Instead, Japanese students tend to like small group discussion, and they also have been shown to favor a more extensive debriefing, slowly mulling over their observations with their fellow students in small groups outside of class (Kondo, 1993). Some Japanese feel threatened by simulations. Since simulations are unfamiliar, they also leave the participants open to psychological risks. Simulations are active rather than passive;

they challenge participants to utilize knowledge and information to make decisions, solve problems, and so on. Students from high-uncertainty avoidance cultures like Japan or Korea expect teachers to lead classes and are not used to aggressively participating in their own learning. Students from low-uncertainty avoidance cultures, like the United States or Russia expect to be aggressive and active in the classroom (Hofstede, 1986). Also, there are some warm-up techniques presented in experiential books that require participants to have physical contact as part of the exercise. These types of activities are inappropriate in the Japanese classroom, because of the relative lack of touch in general between members of Japanese culture. Rather than establish comfort among members of a group, this type of activity actually increases their discomfort. Different learner expectations influence the outcomes of various pedagogical strategies, and these expectations need to be considered prior to implementation.

Another technique that is extremely useful is to use examples of actual intercultural misunderstandings, sometimes referred to as "critical incidents." There are a number of resources for these; a particularly good one is *Multicultural Manners: New Rules of Etiquette for a Changing Society* (Dresser, 1996). After the students learn theoretical constructs, they can be put into small groups and given some examples of intercultural misunderstandings. They are then asked to describe and give an explanation of what happened, applying the theoretical concepts they have studied. In many cases, they cannot fathom the reasons for the problems, but the very process of thinking about the situations gives them practice in perspective shifting and developing flexibility and critical thinking skills. This is the whole point of the exercise.

Movies can be used successfully in the IC classroom as well. *Witness*, with Harrison Ford is useful to illustrate a particular subculture (the Amish of Pennsylvania). IC teachers have also used *The Joy Luck Club* (Chinese-American subculture) with much success. The students should be encouraged to apply the theoretical constructs they have studied to describe and discuss the cultural differences they see in these films and discuss what types of cultures are portrayed, the communication involved, and so on. *Mr. Baseball* and *Gung-Ho!* focus on differences between Japanese and Americans, and *Children of a Lesser God* portrays deaf culture in a realistic manner.

#### Directions for Educators

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the field of IC should be recognized as the separate specialty that it is. Language teaching should ideally include cultural components, so that we aren't graduating "fluent

fools" (Bennett, 1993). Teachers who wish to teach IC as a content class need to develop their knowledge and skills in this area, and language departments or cultural studies departments at universities need to recognize that it is indeed a specialty that deserves its own niche within these departments. Educators who are considering graduate schools would be well advised to consider a master's degree in IC, as universities in Japan are now beginning to look for people with such credentials. Paige and Martin (1983) have identified certain competencies necessary for intercultural training: a high degree of self-awareness; recognition of one's skills limitations; sensitivity to the needs of learners; the ability to respond to problems that culture learners encounter; awareness of the ethical issues involved in intercultural training; an understanding of conceptual/theoretical frameworks in IC; program-design skills; and research/evaluation skills.

IC training is a necessity for students to achieve intercultural competence. Through an IC course, students should gain self-awareness (What are my values? How do I conceptualize and structure my "reality?") and culture-general knowledge (What kinds of cultures are there? What other ways are there of self-conceptualization?) and learn skills that will help them to communicate effectively with persons from other cultures.

For people who already have credentials in another field, there are professional programs available to increase knowledge and skills in IC. The Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication (SIIC) is an excellent resource. Weekly summer sessions are offered by top educators in the intercultural field in Portland, Oregon, under SIIC's auspices. Professional groups, such as SIETAR (the Society for International Education, Training and Research) Japan or SEITAR International also offer opportunities for professional networking and skill building. Contact information for the above can be found in the Appendix. Perhaps a new N-SIG is needed even within JALT. Recent JALT conferences have had few workshops about IC, but the ones offered have been full of people eager to learn more and share what they are doing with other people in the IC area.

In our ongoing efforts to improve the field of language education, it is our duty as educators to keep up with the latest trends and research. As the world becomes more integrated and interconnected, the need for successful communication across borders, whether they divide countries or cultures, increases. The Internet is making the world even smaller and more accessible, but the potential for cultural miscommunication actually increases as we communicate more and more with people outside our own borders. An awareness of how different our perceptions are is absolutely essential for us and for our students. We must remain in

the forefront and continue to learn, grow, and help our students to identify and transcend their cultural limitations, even as we attempt to transcend our own.

#### Acknowledgments

*I would like to express my thanks and respect to colleagues who spend their summers at SIIC conducting workshops; especially Dr. Janet Bennett, Dr. Michael R. Paige, and Dr. Stella Ting-Toomey, whose workshops I have been fortunate to participate in. Special thanks also to Dr. Yutchi Kondo, who has provided me with valuable insights into Japanese responses to intercultural training. And finally, to the editors and reviewers of JALT Journal, whose valuable feedback greatly improved this manuscript.*

*Anne M. Shibata* lived and taught in Japan from 1982 to 1998. She is now writing, teaching intercultural communication, and doing cross-cultural consulting/training in the U.S.

#### Note

1. While acknowledging the diversity of people living in the United States, "Americans" in this paper refers to the general cultural characteristics of white European-Americans.

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(Received October 31, 1997; revised June 26, 1998)

#### Appendix: Professional Organizations

Intercultural Communication Institute  
(Host of the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication)  
8835 S.W. Canyon Ln., Suite 238  
Portland, OR 97225 USA  
Tel: 1-503-297-4622  
Fax: 1-503-297-4695 e-mail: [ici@intercultural.org](mailto:ici@intercultural.org)

SIETAR Japan  
c/o Kokusai Business Communication Kyokai  
Sanno Grand Bldg.  
2-14-2 Nagata-cho  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100  
Tel: 03-3580-0286  
Fax: 03-3581-5608