

Introduction

Intercultural education in Japan and beyond: The reshaping and representation of memory and identity

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As globalization has increased worldwide, the field of education has become more diverse, reflecting increasing conflict in society. What are the communities' values? What is the common knowledge? What is the next generation supposed to be? How does society deal with the increased political polarization of conservatives and liberals recently?

The role of education in developing good citizens has become less of a priority in such polarized societies. The members of those communities are so diverse that it is difficult to reach a consensus regarding what constitutes ideal education. It is important to identify who those members are and what make them part of their societies. Identity and memory become key concepts in addressing this.

In the educational front where cultures coexist, students' identity is always questioned. When you are faced with questions regarding who you are and where you come from, memory become a valuable concept. Memory is not written history; rather, it is developed and shared with others in the community. As a result, memory is interpreted repeatedly and identity is always reshaped by such memory. In this journal issue, education is defined as the process of reviewing, reshaping, and representing memories and identity. To accomplish this, we will focus on the area of intercultural education.

Kazuhiro Ebuchi (1933-2007), the authority on intercultural education in Japan, in his works defined the goal of intercultural education as 1) identifying the structure, process, and effect of interrelationships between two or more cultures, 2) pursuing influence and significance on human development². This is not a discipline designed to teach about other cultures. Rather, intercultural education investigates multicultural situations; this discipline is broader than multiculturalism education. The discipline discusses various spheres of education, including students studying overseas, students returned from overseas, foreign students, second language programs, intercultural communication, and minority education. The various issues involve multiple disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, foreign language education, and international relations. Ebuchi stated that an interdisciplinary approach is one of the main characteristics of intercultural education. To consider these issues, researchers observe and interview immigrants, sojourners, refugees, ethnic minorities, and international and intranational migrant worker families. Their research is expected to improve actual classroom experience. Intercultural education is also recognized as the study of practice.

An interdisciplinary and practical approach for such study is reflected in our articles. The academic backgrounds of our authors are Japanese Linguistics, Philosophy, Sociology, Area studies, and Cultural Anthropology. The interests of our authors are varied, including pedagogy, ethnicity, history, multiculturalism, and cultural studies. Their fields are inside and outside of Japan, from Asia to North America. What we have in common is a shared interest in intercultural relationships in various environments, such as class room experiences, student activities, and everyday life beyond schools.

² Ebuchi 1994 *Ibunkakan Kyouikugaku Josetu* [An Anthropological Study on Intercultural Education] Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press.

Ebuchi, ed. 1997 *Ibunkakan Kyouiku Kenkyu Nyumon* [An Introduction of Intercultural Education] Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press.

The first five articles discuss Japanese language education in four countries. The first three provide more productive and meaningful strategies for second language learners. This suggests the importance of cultural background between natives and learners of the target language.

Pen recommends that Japanese language teaching should be adapted to reflect the native language of the Japanese language learners. This shows that language education need to be localized and focused on learners' cultural background. Kuriyama and Schwartz advise that introducing authority literature for beginners helps them to develop their ability progressively. This suggests that the learning experience in a second language should be based on cultural and historical awareness. Araki investigates students in college-level Japanese language courses who volunteered as tour guides for Japanese tourists in Taiwan. This shows that such opportunity enriches students' learning experience.

The next two articles analyze which background issues with Japan affect second language learners in other Asian countries. Harris explores the barriers between Chinese and Japanese students who are learning each other's language and identifies the historical background between those countries as a main issue in second language education. Nakamura identifies the effect of the current social and cultural situation, rather than historical background, on the Japanese language education environment, based on her recent college teaching experience in Korea.

Papers six through eight focus on the process of reviewing memory and developing identity in terms of multicultural experience. The authors use historical examples to identify conflict and adaptation in multicultural environments.

In explaining the development of multiculturalism in Canada, Kawano examines the evolution of official Canadian policy. This research explores the interaction between authority and civics. The next paper focuses on the confrontation between the religious majority and the minority. Harada discusses the relationship between Buddhists and Catholics in Thailand, in terms of religious persecution in the 1940s. In the final article, Kamizuru examines the perception regarding when the post-war era started in Japan by analyzing textbooks in the former Japanese colony Taiwan. Official history and memory become key concepts to analyze multicultural environments.

In considering the educational environment, the eight articles taken together demonstrate that it would be helpful to examine both cultural and historical backgrounds. These articles provide a forum for discussing the conflict and dilemmas in education today.

Some of the authors here have been influenced directly by Ebuchi. I personally was encouraged by his energy and passion for his research and education. Since I knew him, he always introduced me to challenging projects including a filming project. This project involved filming museums and cultural centers of the Kwakuwaka'wakw and interviewing on Vancouver Island, Canada¹. He always prepared and encouraged us for a good work. His expectations were high, but he was also very forgiving. He was fun to be around. He was exactly what a professor/teacher is supposed to be.

Many would remember that Ebuchi told “This is INTER-cultural education. If you forget ‘inter’ it means ‘fool!’” Well, in Japanese, “inter” is pronounced “kan” also “ma”, and “falling out” is pronounced “nuke.” “ma-nuke” means a fool. Ebuchi planned to put multi-disciplinary work together to develop a new discipline. This journal is not intended to extend the theoretical foundation for that new discipline; rather, it provides additional applied research supporting and extending Ebuchi’s previous work.

ⁱThis fieldwork was for developing a part of the textbook: *Bunka jinruigaku –Dentou to gendai [Cultural Anthropology: Tradition and Modern]* and the visual material for cultural anthropology class in the Open University of Japan. Ebuchi directed the team, which included a photographer, soundman, and coordinator during the traveling.

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