

Global Leadership : Intercultural Leadership Camp - A Case Study

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Abstract:

Creating, holistic, authentic, meaningful intercultural opportunities can help students develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to succeed in global settings. This case study will examine a three-day intercultural leadership camp aimed to foster Intercultural Communicative Competence for both a group of 12 Canadian High school students and Nagasaki Junior College students. Although it is clear that Communicative Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence are multifaceted and complex constructs developed over a lifetime rather than a short period, this paper will discuss ways in which this type of program may benefit students looking to develop as global citizens. Discussion and conclusions are based on a broad range of qualitative data such as participant questionnaires, informal interviews, program meeting notes and program leaders' observations.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), Intercultural Leadership camp, Communicative Competence (CC), Holistic Intercultural experiences, Authentic Learning experiences

1. Introduction

A major challenge for the NJC Global Communication Department is achieving wide-ranging goals in only two years. One major goal is to develop practical language skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help students work towards their individual life goals. As such, we aim to foster Communicative Competence (CC). As a globally focused department, specific effort is also made to improve Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Several authors have helped to create a model for CC that shapes our current understanding of the concept. Canale and Swain (1980) initially proposed four main competencies: Grammatical, Sociolinguistic, Discourse and Strategic. In essence, they describe communicative competence as effectively utilizing the grammatical rules of language, adapting language use appropriate to the social context, combining a variety of types of texts, and using verbal and non-verbal strategies. See Table 1 below for more details about competency areas.

Table 1. Communicative Competencies as suggested by Canale and Swain (1980).
(adapted from Celce-Murcia, Donryei and Thurrell (1995))

Competency	Knowledge, Ability, Skill
Grammatical	The language code: grammatical rules, spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation
Sociolinguistic	Sociocultural code: appropriate use of vocabulary, register, style
Discourse	Appropriately combining language structures in to different types of cohesive texts
Strategic	Verbal and non-verbal communication strategies

Others such as Canale (1983), Bachman and Palmer (1996), and Celce-Murcia, Donryei and Thurrell (1995) have a built upon and refined Canale and Swain's initial work. Their models attempt to further clarify and categorize the complex construct into five competency areas: Linguistic, Strategic, Sociocultural, Actional and Discourse. Strategic competency, not included in the Table 1, incorporates metacognitive strategies such as assessment, goal-setting, and planning (Celce-Murcia, Donryei and Thurrell, 1995). Perhaps of more use to teachers and educators, CC can be viewed in terms of how individuals demonstrate "fluency, flexibility, coherence, precision, and range and in terms of grammatical lexical, phonological and orthographic accuracy in spoken and written language" (de Jong, 2000 as seen in Sercu, 2002). Clearly, a daunting task for educators, developing CC requires both Linguistic, Strategic, Sociocultural, Actional and Discourse knowledge as well as the skill to demonstrate fluency, flexibility, coherence, precision and range.

In an increasingly globalized world, communication between speakers of different languages and cultures takes on other challenges. One area that CC does not address is communication knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in intercultural situations and as such, effort has been made to define intercultural communicative competence (ICC). According to Sercu (2002)

becoming an interculturally competent user of a foreign language not only involves the acquisition of communicative competence in that language. It also involves the acquisition of particular skills, attitudes, values, knowledge items and ways of looking upon the world (63).

The table below, describes briefly the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to ICC.

Table 2. Overview of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes related to ICC (Adapted from Deardorff, 2006).

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural self-awareness: understanding of how one's worldview and identity has been shaped by one's own culture. • Cultural specific knowledge: analysing and explaining basic information about other cultures such as history, values, politics, economics, communication styles, values, beliefs and practices. • Sociolinguistic awareness: acquiring basic local language skills, articulating difference in verbal, non-verbal communication and adjusting one's speech to accommodate other language learners.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, observing, evaluating: using patience and perseverance to identify and minimize ethnocentrism, seek out cultural clues and meaning. • Analysing, interpreting and relating, seeing out linkages, causality and relations using comparative techniques of analysis. • Critical thinking: viewing and interpreting the world from other cultures' point of view and identifying ones' own.

Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect: seeking out other cultures’ attributes; value diversity; thinking comparatively and without prejudice. • Openness: suspending criticism of other cultures. • Curiosity: seeking out intercultural interactions, viewing difference as a learning opportunity, self-awareness of ones’ own ignorance. • Discovery: tolerating ambiguity and viewing it as a positive experience; willingness to move beyond one’s comfort zone.
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Clearly, both CC and ICC are complex concepts that include a wide-range of extensive competencies that are learned over a lifespan rather than in the short term. However, educators can endeavor to create rich, authentic, meaningful learning opportunities for students to develop both CC and ICC competencies. Although NJC strongly encourages study abroad and work abroad, those types of programs are not always possible or practical for students, so efforts are also made to create opportunities on campus. Deardorff (2011, 69) explains that ‘internationalizing’ campus, such as creating intercultural and global opportunities on campus or locally, is one effective way programs can foster ICC. Globalizing campus can provide increased opportunities, for more of the student population, both inside and outside of the classroom.

2. Global Leadership Program : Intercultural Leadership Camp

In order to create mutually beneficial intercultural opportunities, NJC collaborated with the Greater Victoria High School District (GVHD), located in, British Columbia, Canada. The purpose the collaboration is to:

1. Promote educational opportunities for students and educators that create authentic and meaningful intercultural learning experiences.
2. Share educational resources and create opportunities that benefit both institutions.
3. Create opportunities that encourage and foster international friendships that will enhance student learning and allow students to gain intercultural competency skills.
4. Improve the second language proficiency of students and educators participating in study abroad and exchange programs.
5. Consistently communicate and collaborate in the creation of learning opportunities that benefit students and staff of both institutions.

In July 2017, twelve GVHD students, 7 female and 6 male aged 16-18, and one program leader travelled to Nagasaki, Japan for a twelve-day immersive intercultural program that incorporated Japanese language, culture lessons, sightseeing, and a variety of intercultural activities. To focus on creating many meaningful ICC opportunities throughout the 12-day program, both Canadian and NJC students participated in a variety of intercultural activities such as survival Japanese lessons, wearing kimono, Japanese tea ceremony, seminar classes, community intercultural events and much more. Most Global Communication Department students had the opportunity to interact with the students from GHSD. More notably, a core group of twelve NJC students, both 1st and 2nd year students (11 Japanese and 1 Chinese exchange student, 7 female and 4 male) were chosen as NJC student ambassadors. Most NJC student ambassadors had previous study abroad experience (6 had done a 12-week study program in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada within the past 16 months). Organizers felt this would be ideal, as the ambassadors had previous experience interacting with

Canadians and had sufficient CC to communicate with the Canadian students who had very little Japanese language experience. The NJC ambassadors helped facilitate the overall program and as such, were able to attend extracurricular intercultural social events such as dinners, a BBQ and an intercultural leadership camp with the Canadian students. The remainder of this discussion will focus on the intercultural leadership camp.

The intercultural leadership camp was held in resort-style cottages. All 12 GVHD students and 10 NJC ambassadors participated in the camp. During the leadership camp, both NJC and GVHD students shared a single-sex living space. The mixed intercultural groups had to negotiate sleeping arrangements, shared washrooms, baths/showers etc. in hopes of giving both NJC and GVHD students insight into the often invisible homelife of other cultures. Furthermore, participants were responsible for meal preparation and cleaning in mixed-culture groups. Students also participated in voluntary recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, bike riding and paddle boat rides. To make the camp student-centered, program leaders acted mostly as facilitators and encouraged students to problem solve when communication issues or other challenges arose. It was hoped that the intercultural leadership camp would create both structured and unstructured intercultural tasks and activities. As Bok (2006) expresses, often the richest intercultural learning comes from informal social interactions.

3. Data and Results

To gain insight into the effectiveness of the intercultural leaders camp, several types of information were gathered and analysed.

1. Post intercultural leaders camp questionnaire
2. Program leaders and organizers intercultural leaders camp meeting notes
3. Informal discussions with camp participants
4. The researcher’s own observations and reflections

Both Canadian and NJC students were asked to complete a questionnaire following the program. Completing the questionnaire was voluntary and done using a popular online software. The questionnaire contained two closed questions ranked on a 5 point scale from 1- Not at all to 5-Completely. The questions and results for these can be seen in Figures 1-4 below. The questionnaire also had 4 open-ended questions. Table 3 outlines the open questions and student responses. Nine of the twenty-two participants completed the questionnaire: six Canadian and 3 from NJC.

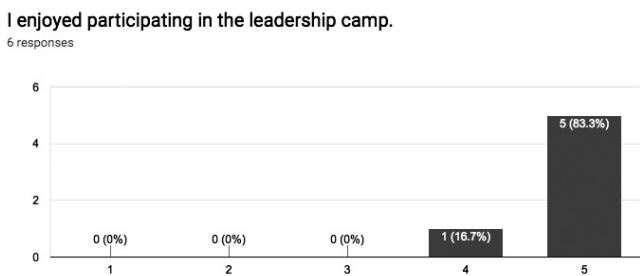


Figure 1: Canadian participant responses Q1

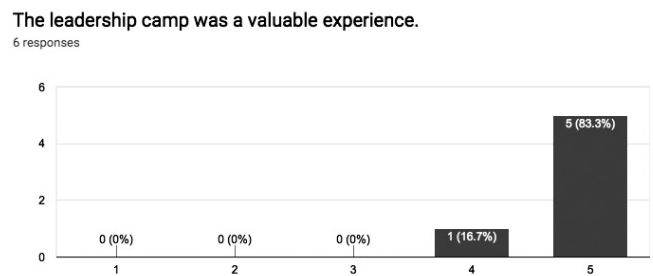


Figure 2: Canadian participant responses Q2

楽しめた？ I enjoyed participating in the leadership camp.
3 responses

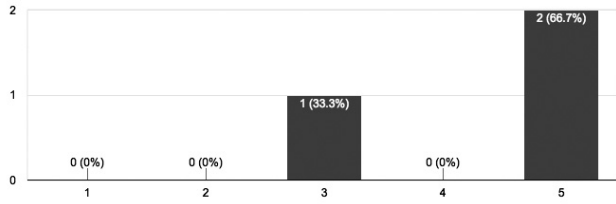


Figure 3: Japanese participant responses Q1

貴重な経験だった？ The leadership camp was a valuable experience.
3 responses

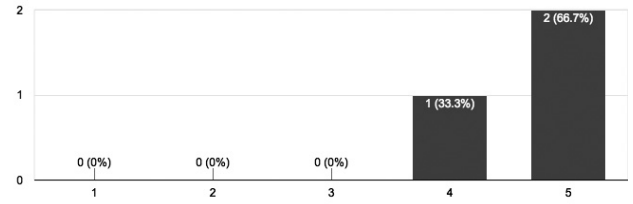


Figure 4: Japanese participant responses Q2

Table 3: Participant Questionnaire Responses

Question	Canadian students comments	Japanese students comments Paraphrased
If applicable, what do you feel are some of the benefits to participating in this type of intercultural leadership camp?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A great opportunity to make intercultural relationships and learn about another country's • Got to be with Japanese students with no distractions like phones or wifi • Getting to know the other students and being able to hang out with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a good opportunity to speak English and improve my English skills by communicating with Canadian students. • 日本に興味を持っている海外の方に日本の文化を料理や着付け体験茶道など実際に経験してもらいながら伝えられたこと。 • I could make good friends in this camp.
If applicable, what did you enjoy about participating in the intercultural leadership camp?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really enjoyed not only spending time with the other Canadians, but also getting closer with some of the Japanese students • I enjoyed that we were outside • The food and getting to know the other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 様々な種類の日本料理に挑戦してもらったこと。 • 着付け体験で着付けをしたこと • バーベキューしたこと • スワンボートと一緒に漕いだこと • UNO やトランプなどのカードを使いながら日本にはない遊びを経験したこと • 高校生たちの日本語が少しずつ上達したこと • I was very fun to cook with, and talking Japanese anime. I had really amazing time!
If applicable, what did you NOT enjoy about the intercultural leadership camp?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though it was cramped quarters, I felt like sometimes Japanese students would be doing one thing while the Canadian students would be doing another instead of hanging out together • How short it was. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing special • Nothing
If applicable, what challenges did you encounter during the intercultural leadership camp and how did you deal with them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitely trying to talk and communicate to the Japanese students and becoming more comfortable with the language/culture barrier • There were sometimes language barriers but you could work around them by using gestures or writing to communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was a little surprised by cultural differences. For example, while Japanese were cooking or doing dishes, Canadian students were just sitting and talking. I know we should've asked some help or what we want them to do but I couldn't do that. I found how difficult to express my feelings and what I want to say in English. But I think it was a really opportunity to communicate in English and now I realize how important it is that convey my feelings. • 日本語を勉強していない子との会話が難しかったです。 • 私たちも英語も十分に話すことができずでしたがその場の空気やジェスチャーや楽しい雰囲気です本当に楽しい時間が過ごせました。

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with a child who did not study Japanese was difficult. • We could not speak English well enough, but we had a really fun time with the air, gesture and fun atmosphere on the spot.
Do you have any other comments about participating in the international leadership camp?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was such a great experience, thanks for all the hard work you guys put into this trip, it was a trip of a lifetime) • I think that it should an extra day longer • It was great fun and I really enjoyed getting the opportunity to participate in the leadership camp. 	

3.1 Additional Qualitative Data

During and after the leadership camp, the program facilitators had informal discussions with participants to get feedback about the program. The discussions were not a formalized interview but rather casual conversations with the participants to get some insight into their thoughts about the experiences they had or were having. Participants were asked simple open questions such as:

1. What has been the most fun or most interesting so far?
2. What has been the most difficult?
3. What have you learned about the Japanese/ Canadian students?
4. Has anything surprised you?

Next, at a the final intercultural group event of the program, several Canadian students gave a short self-reflection speech about their experiences. Through these informal discussions with students, facilitator observations and student reflections, several themes emerged as the benefits to and challenges faced by participants. These themes are outline in Table 4.

Table 4: Benefits and Challenges Faced by Students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants, both Canadian and Japanese enjoyed making new friends and getting to know people from other cultures. • The language barrier was a real barrier but when participants could communicate, it was very rewarding. • Participants noticed cultural differences. • The tasks participants enjoyed the most, and that were the most valuable, was preparing and eating meals together. • Often, they didn't know "what to talk about" with students from the other country. • Participants enjoyed doing activities together where there wasn't stress to communicate and were "fun" oriented such as hiking, paddle boat rides, UNO, jenga etc. • Some participants expressed that they needed to learn more about their own culture, in order to explain it to others better. • Some GVHD participants expressed difficulty in discussing what was "Canadian." : such as foods and traditional things. • Some participants enjoyed being disconnected from Wi-fi because "it is easier to talk to someone when they are not on their phone."

4. Discussion

As can be seen above, questionnaire respondents both enjoyed and felt that the camp was a valuable

experience. This program was voluntary and was sure to have attracted individuals that were interested in seeking out these types of experiences. However, as responses were positive, this may indicate that the intercultural leadership camp was successful in that it provided positive experiences and matched participants hopes or goals.

Of more interest are the open-ended responses, discussions with participants and personal observations. When asked about the benefits of participating in the intercultural leadership camp or what they enjoyed, both Canadian and NJC respondents expressed “making friends” as a benefit. This is of importance because the potential positive intercultural relationships have at increasing future opportunities to develop knowledge, build skills and foster positive attitudes. Namely, the more intercultural relationships one has, the more opportunities one has to develop their ICC. Furthermore, as one student said that she was able to learn more about Japan and Japanese people, this relates specifically to ICC cultural knowledge (Deardorff, 2006). Surely, due to the short time period of this type of program, how deeply one can learn about another culture is limited. However, the experiences gained in this short program may influence future choices that could greatly lead to the development of ICC.

Next, one Japanese participant response indicated the camp provided her an “chance to communicate in English with native speakers.” Often Japanese students don’t have opportunities to practice outside of class time and the comment may point her awareness of lack of opportunity. It would be interesting to gain further insight into how increased awareness may impact future ICC.

Next, when asked what they did not enjoy or what was challenging about participating in the camp, many participants mentioned the language barriers. Most certainly language was a barrier, and a lack of CC will certainly inhibit the the extent in which intercultural groups can level engage successfully. This may exemplify the need for a minimum level of CC in order for ICC programs such as these to be truly successful. However, from viewing another student comment, it could be inferred that some barriers were not only CC issue but rather one related to comfort or familiarity. In informal discussion, several students mentioned that in the beginning of the camp, miscommunications and breakdowns in communication were a major source of stress. In this case, the barrier may not have been language related but something else entirely such as missing cultural knowledge, a lack of connection between speakers, or something related to group dynamics. For future such programs, this points to the importance of icebreaker activities to maximize the short period of time together.

Although there were barriers, it was observed that towards the end of the camp, some participants were using new strategies such as using gestures or seeking out others (more fluent peers or teachers) to help make support understanding. In fact, a Japanese students mentioned it was difficult to communicate but by using gestures and due to the fun atmosphere, it resulted in positive intercultural experiences. This points to some ICC learning may have occurred within the short timeframe of the camp. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of this type of program in that participants gain familiarity with dealing with intercultural situations and this familiarity may have a positive impact on developing ICC. Of course, this observation is subjective and should be viewed as such. However, it may indicate the importance affective factors have have in inhibiting or supporting ICC development.

Next, participants also indicated that they enjoyed free time activities such as playing games (UNO, Jenga, card games), bike riding, hiking, swimming and peddle boating. These types of activities may have allowed individuals with similar interests to interact together and provided some structure and facilitated interactions. These type of activities may have helped enable interactions by providing a framework of how the interactions would be structured. Also, as one student mentioned, she felt happy to learn a card game from another country, or a game she had never played before which may be inferred that she had enjoyed gaining new cultural knowledge. Conversely, as a personal observation, most often during free time when no activities were planned, the gap between cultural groups, or a sense of awkwardness, seemed most noticeable.

Overall, it was observed through the questionnaire, informal discussions with participants and through observation that preparing and sharing meals together was the most enjoyable and positive experience for both the GVHD and NJC students. One Japanese student mentioned that it was beneficial to share his/her own culture through cooking Japanese food together with the GVHD students. It could be inferred that she/he had pride in wanting to show others how to cook traditional foods. Or perhaps, it hints to more complex reasons. It is hypothesized that cooking meals together was most authentic, holistic and motivating.

Students indicated having pride in teaching about their culture to others. Canadian students expressed satisfaction in learning how to make Japanese dishes. First of all, preparing a meal together is something that both Canadian and NJC student have shared knowledge. Although the dishes may be new, the process is well known to two both groups. For example, food needs to be washed, peeled, cut, cooked, eaten and dishes need to be cleaned. etc. Next, the roles for social engagement have some framework. A mixed-group of students are assigned the role of cooking. Within that mixed group, when Japanese dishes were being cooked, it was implied that the Japanese students would need to lead or facilitate the process and that the Canadians would follow. As a structured task with a clear desired outcome (food) and mostly defined roles, the group task of cooking is very rewarding. It can be very motivating and much satisfaction can be gained from teaching/learning or doing something new. Having successfully completed group cooking, may have given participants a sense of accomplishment at doing a real and meaningful task, all the while provided opportunities for interactions that could support the development of the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be effective communicators in intercultural settings.

5. Conclusion

Creating positive, holistic and meaningful opportunities in one way educators can help students develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that support both CC and ICC. Certainly, this case study shows the potential for programs such as the intercultural leaders camp for creating such opportunities. Through this case study, for future such programs, we will endeavor to improve by focusing on the following:

1. A focus on creating positive affective : icebreaker activities, team building activities etc.
2. Pre-preparing participants: language needed for activities, strategies to deal with communication breakdowns, increased knowledge of one's own cultural heritage etc.
3. Balance: utilizing a good balance of structure and unstructured activities.

4. Post camp reflection: participant reflection about their own ICC learning.

CC and ICC are complex constructs that are developed gradually over a lifetime through study and experience and the impact a short term program can have on developing CC is negligible. However, perhaps more importantly, positive intercultural experiences that provide new cultural knowledge, break down barriers, and perhaps even create new friendships, have the potential to have long lasting impacts that may lead individuals to seek out more opportunities to develop both CC and ICC.

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