

VII. ACHIEVEMENT OF THE THREE-YEAR HIROSHIMA PROJECT

Viewpoint and Method of Developing Curriculums for Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

1. Review of the Three-Year Research

Hiroshima University Association of International Understanding Education has conducted "Research on Curriculum Development for Understanding of American Society and Culture" as a three-year project from 1993 till 1995.

The purpose of this research is; (a) to study American society and culture with cooperation of local partners; (b) to develop teaching materials for mutual understanding of American and Japanese societies and cultures; and (c) to establish a human network between American and Japanese teachers, through field-studies and workshops in the U.S. carried out by social studies and English teachers of elementary, junior and senior high school in the five prefectures of Chugoku Area. By doing this, we have eventually aimed to find new viewpoints and methods to develop a curriculum for cross-cultural understanding education, which is the main concern of international understanding education.

The below is the list of the research organizations, research themes and developed materials of the three-year Hiroshima Project.

(1) Research Organization of the Hiroshima Project

<1> The First Year (1993)

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(2) Field-Study of the Hiroshima Project

<1> The First Year (1993)

- Studied Cities: New York - Greenville (NC) - Washington D.C. - Minneapolis
- Viewpoint: Comparison of Japanese and American Lifestyles
- Characteristics: Problem-finding-style research

-- The Research 1993

- Team A: "Life of Elementary School Students in USA and Japan"
- Team B: "Life of Junior High School Students in USA"
- Team C: "American Ideas in Child-Rearing: A Comparative Study"
- Team D: "Community Life in USA"
- Team E: "Life of Farmers in North Carolina"

<2> The Second Year (1994)

- Studied Cities: Greenville (NC) – Washington D.C. – Minneapolis
- Viewpoint: Comparison of Japanese and American Historical Tradition
- Characteristics: Hypothesis-testing-style research
- The Research 1994

- Team A: "Comparison of National Sports between the USA and Japan"
- Team B: "American Lifestyle: A Comparative Study Life Style Revealed through the Use of Electrical Appliances and my Summer Vacation"
- Team C: "Comparative Study: After-School Life of Junior High School Students between USA and Japan"
- Team D: "America as a Multi-cultural Society"
- Team E: "A Comparison of American and Japanese High School Students' Life During Summer Vacation"
- Team F: "Cross-Cultural Communication Through Comparison of Food Culture"

<3> The Third Year (1995)

- Studied Cities: Minneapolis – Washington D.C. – Greenville (NC)
- Viewpoint: Comparison of Japanese and American Attempts to solve problems
- Characteristics: Problem-solution-style research
- The Research 1995

- Team A: Comparison of Recycling between the U.S.A. and Japan
- Team B: Let's Play Games Done by American and Japanese Children
- Team C: The Cycle of Water and People's Life: Water-Friendly Ways of Life in U.S.A and Japan
- Team D: Education for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency: Focus upon Education for No Smoking in America
- Team E: Real International Understanding Supporting 'Peace'
- Team F: Search for Comfortable City Life: Through Comparison of Japanese and American Cities

(3) Material Development of the Hiroshima Project

<1> The First Year (1993)

- Focus: Lifestyle
- The Material Development 1993

- Team A: "Let's Compare! American Students' Lives and Japanese Students' Lives"
- Team B: "Comparison of Junior High School Life between USA and Japan"
- Team C: "American Ideas on Child-rearing: A Comparative Study"
- Team D: "Volunteer Activities in Greenville, N.C."
- Team E: "Agriculture in North Carolina: Large Scale Farm and Family-run Farm"
"Large Scale Agriculture in USA: A Comparison with Japanese Agriculture"
"American's Diet and New Trend in Agriculture"

<2> The Second Year (1994)

-- Focus: Historical tradition

-- The Material Development 1994

Team A: "Let's Understand Each Other through Baseball and Sumo"

Team B: "The Homestay Experiences of Lauren, Shannon and Harrison:
My Homestay in Japan"

Team C: "Comparative Study: After-School Life of Junior High School Students
between USA and Japan"

Team D: "America as a Multi-cultural Society"

Team E: "Quiz: Summer Vacation of High School Students in U.S.A."

Team F: "Food Culture in U.S.A. and Japan"

<3> The Third Year (1995)

-- Focus: Attempts to solve problems

-- The Material Development 1995

Team A: Recycling Now

Team B: Let's Play Games Done by American and Japanese Children

Team C: A Journey of Mizuki and Walter to Water World

Team D: We Want to Be Smart Adults: Clues to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency

Team E: Let's Think about Peace!

Team F: Search for Comfortable City Life: Through Comparison of Japanese and
American Cities

2. Viewpoint and Method of the Curriculum Development for Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

We would like to consider the objectives, contents and methods for cross-cultural understanding education, and the viewpoints and methods of the curriculum development, based upon the achievement of the three-year Hiroshima Project conducted under the theme of "Research on Curriculum Development for Understanding of American Society and Culture".

(1) Objectives, Contents and Methods of Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

<1> Objectives of Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

-- Knowledge and Attitude --

In the age of life-long education, school education is required to develop children's basic attitudes to actively cope with the progression of the internationalized society. In other words, international understanding education has become the key term in school education. The main concern of international understanding education, though it includes peace education, human right education, developmental education, multi-cultural education, global education, environmental education, international education, communication education, etc., seems to be cross-cultural understanding education.

The Hiroshima Project has also dealt with cross-cultural understanding education, as its theme represents. It may be possible to define the objectives of cross-cultural understanding education as that of knowledge and attitude formation as below.

-- Knowledge Formation

[1] Knowledge and skill to recognize the characteristics and backgrounds of the

societies and cultures of other countries or races

- [2] Knowledge and skill to recognize the characteristics and backgrounds of the society and culture of one's own country
- [3] Knowledge and skill to solve crucial problems facing human beings such as environmental problems and nuclear threat

-- Attitude Formation

- [1] Interest and willingness concerning society and cultures of one's own or other countries and races
- [2] Attitude to mutually understand and respect societal and cultures of one's own and other countries and races
- [3] Practical skill to make decision about the solution of various social problems arising as internationalization proceeds

<2> Contents of Cross-Cultural Understanding Education -- Dual Approach --

Two approaches will be necessary to achieve the objectives of cross-cultural understanding education, namely, "cultural understanding approach" and "problem solution approach".

"Cultural understanding approach" is the learning of the contents concerning understanding different or other cultures. This consists of discovering differences (uniqueness or characteristics) and similarities (cultural universality) by comparing one's own and other cultures and lifestyles; finding the causes of the differences by investigating their cultural, geographical, historical and social backgrounds; finding cultural universality through the similarities of lifestyles between one's own and other countries or races; and making judgement as to what the good point of each culture is and how to mutually understand.

On the other hand, "problem solution approach" deals with the crucial problems awaiting solutions at the global level, including environmental problem, multi-cultural and multi-racial problem, North-South conflict, over-population, food shortage, and resource/energy problem. We need to consider; "What are the problems?"; "What caused those problems?"; "What are being done as a solution?"; "How better can we solve the problems?"

<3> Methods of Cross-Cultural Understanding Education -- Research --

It is considered highly effective to adopt "research activity" by students as a method to learn the above stated two contents of cross-cultural understanding education. Students will be able to encounter intellectual questions (whys) and practical questions (what to do, how better to do) by interacting with the materials through concrete learning activities and experiences. Discovery of questions or problems leads to consideration or decision making to solve them. They will learn different culture by themselves in this process of problem-finding and consideration/decision-making.

This learning process of cross-cultural understanding may also be termed as "a process of researching different cultures by students".

(2) Viewpoints of Curriculum Development for Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

<1> Contents of Cross-Cultural Understanding

The first viewpoint of curriculum development is to identify the contents of cross-cultural understanding, in other words, "what to understand in cross-cultural understanding". The Hiroshima Project has defined the following five basic contents of cross-cultural

understanding under the notion that understanding other cultures is understanding human beings.

- (a) To understand the attempt to solve problems by human beings (individuals, groups, organizations)
- (b) To understand social or cultural uniqueness and characteristics represented by human problem solution
- (c) To understand the identity underlying the uniqueness or characteristics
- (d) To understand the core of human relationships underlying social or cultural identity (what comprises human relationships)
- (e) To re-discover the social or cultural identity of Japan, and the core of Japanese human relationships through understanding the above four points

<2> Methods of Cross-Cultural Understanding

-- Three "Questions" and "Activities" --

The second viewpoint of curriculum development is to identify the methods of cross-cultural understanding, in other words, "how to understand other cultures". That is to establish basic "questions" and "activities" for cross-cultural understanding. The Hiroshima Project has identified the following three "questions" and "activities" for the learning of the two approaches for cross-cultural understanding, namely, "cultural understanding approach" and "problem solution approach".

Question	Activity	Content of Activity
How?	Description	To ask "How?" questions about the issue and present its process and characteristics elicited from documents.
Why?	Explanation	To ask "Why?" questions about the issue and explain it by guessing its purpose-method, condition-result and cause-effort relationships
What to do? How to do?	Decision-making	To ask "What and how to do" for problem solution, and determine the most rational method to achieve the goal

The first and second year project developed materials with "cultural understanding approach" that attempted to enhance cultural understanding through comparing Japanese and American lifestyles and historical traditions, where the following "questions" and "activities" were emphasized.

- (a) To describe the similarities and differences of lifestyles and historical traditions ("What are the similarities?" "What are the differences?")
- (b) To explain the background, reason, condition and cause underlying the similarities and differences ("How come those differences arise?" "How come those similarities exist?")
- (c) To make decision about mutual understanding ("What are the good points of each other's lifestyle and historical tradition?" "How should we understand each other?")

The third year project developed materials with "problem solution approach" to encourage students to find solutions through comparing Japanese and American attempts to solve problems, where the following questions and activities were emphasized.

- (a) To discover similarities and differences of problems and attempts to solve problems

("What are the differences and similarities?")

(b) To analyze the background, reason, condition and cause underlying the similarities and differences ("Why do those similarities and differences exist?")

(c) To make decisions about problem solution (How best to solve the problem?)

<3> Viewpoint of Material Research and Development

The third viewpoint of curriculum development is to identify the viewpoint of material research and development for cross-cultural understanding. The Hiroshima Project has established five places of human social life (school, family, community, workplace and state/nation), and two aspects of cross-cultural understanding ("cultural understanding" and "problem solution"). The following chart shows the location of each material developed by the Hiroshima Project within the framework of the above two viewpoints for curriculum development.

		School	Family	Community	Workplace	State/Nation
Cultural Understanding	Lifestyle	"Let's Compare! American Student's Lives and Japanese Student's Lives"			"Agriculture in North Carolina"	
		"Comparison of Junior High School Life between USA and Japan"	"The Home-stay Experiences of Lauren, Shannon and Harrison"		"Large Scale Agriculture in USA"	
		"Comparative Study: After-School Life of Junior High School Students between USA and Japan"				"Food Culture in USA and Japan"
	"Quiz: Summer Vacation of High School Students in USA"					
Historical Tradition			"American Ideals in Child-rearing"	"Volunteer Activities in Greenville, N.C."		"Let's Understand Each Other through Baseball and Sumo"
		"America as a Multi-cultural Society"				
	"Let's Play Games Done by American and Japanese Children"					
Problem-Solution			"Recycling Now"		"Americans' Diet and New Trend in Agriculture"	"Let's Think about Peace!"
			"A Journey of Mizuki and Walter to Water World"			
	"We Want to Be Smart Adults: Clues to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency"					
				"Search for Comfortable City Life: Through Comparison of Japanese and American Cities"		

(3) Method of Curriculum Development for Cross-Cultural Understanding Education

<1> Material Structure

Considering the objectives, contents and methods of cross-cultural understanding education, and the viewpoints of curriculum development, how should we develop materials?

The first question on curriculum development is that of material structure, or in other words, what contents to teach through what materials.

Material structure for cross-cultural understanding education needs to integrate learning contents (achievement objectives) that will be learned by students. Below is a possible structure model of learning contents that integrates the four learning aspects in the teaching digest; "interest, willingness and attitude", "thinking and decision-making", "skill, expression", and "knowledge and comprehension": and three activities for cross-cultural understanding; "description", "explanation", and "decision-making".

Content Objective		Matter (Material)	Descriptive Knowledge (Knowledge)	Explanatory Knowledge (Comprehension)	Decision-Making (Interest, Willingness, Attitude)
		Data (Information)	Cultural characteristics and attempts to solve problems	Factors to define cultural characteristics and problems	Solution to cultural friction and problems
Interest Willingness Attitude	Skill Expression	<hr/> → "What are the similarities and differences in cultures and attempts to solve problems?" (Description)			
	Thinking	<hr/> ⇒ "Why do those similarities and differences occur?" (Explanation)			
	Decision-making	<hr/> ⇒ "How can we mutually understand cultures?" "How can we solve the problems?" (Decision-making)			

In order to acquire these learning contents, it is necessary to develop such materials as to contain concrete examples that promote mutual understanding of lifestyles, historical traditions, and attempts to solve problems, in social lives such as school, family, community, workplace, and state/nation. In addition, those materials are expected to cause students to ask "why" and "how" questions, and to experience "activities" to answer them. In other words, we need to develop materials of creative "encounter and discovery".

The following is the conditions for materials of creative "encounter and discovery" and the corresponding materials developed by the Hiroshima Project.

Condition (a): Closely related to the students' daily lives as to raise their interests
 Materials -- "Difference of Elementary School Life"

- "Difference of Junior-High Students' After School Life"
- "Difference of High School Students' Summer Vacation"
- "Difference of Children's Play"

Condition (b): Controversial Issues

- Materials -- "Recycling"
 "Non-Smoking Education"
 "Peace Awareness"
 "Comfortable City Life"

Condition (c): To raise intellectual curiosity that cannot be explained by the existing knowledges and experiences

- Materials -- "American Diet and Agriculture"
 "Sumo and Baseball as National Sports"
 "Exciting Homestay Experiences"

Condition (d): Comparative studies

- Materials -- "Comparison of Junior-High School Rules"
 "Comparison of Child Rearing"
 "Comparison of Annual Events"
 "Comparison of Agriculture"

Condition (e): To promote empirical and operational learning activities

- Materials -- "Food Culture"
 "Volunteer Work"
 "Environmentally Friendly Water Use"

<2> Organization of Learning Process

The second question of curriculum development is how to organize the learning process through which learning contents are acquired.

The following chart a possible organization of learning process through which students "research" the materials for cross-cultural understanding.

[Learning Process as Students' "Research"]

Introduction (Discovery)	Development (Investigation)	Conclusion (Expression)
(a) Encounter with materials (b) Discover learning questions (c) Compose investigating questions and discuss learning methods (d) Make learning plans	(a) Research materials (b) Presentation of research results (c) Answer learning questions ● Explain intellectual questions ● Decision-making on practical questions	(a) General expression activity (Making report, brochure, newspaper, and presentation) (b) Self-evaluation, Mutual evaluation (c) Discover new questions

At the introduction stage, students encounter the materials so that they may discover their own learning questions. In addition, they compose investigating questions to solve the problems, discuss their learning methods, and make their learning plans.

At the development stage, students implement the research on the investigating questions and make a presentation on the research results. Then, they answer the intellectual questions of "why", and practical questions of "how" or "how better".

At the conclusion stage, students sum up the learning achievements through general expression activities such as writing reports, brochures and newspapers, as well as self-evaluate or mutually evaluate their works, through which new questions are to be discovered.

(Tomoyuki KOBARA, responsible for the wording)

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Hiroshima University Association of International Understanding Education has been conducting a three-year plan starting in January of 1993, titled "Research on Curriculum Development for Understanding American Society and Culture". This issue is a report on the research results of the third project implemented in 1994. This report is edited in Japanese and English.

The present research report includes the outline of the project in 1995, the research content in 1995, the material development in 1995, the research evaluation in 1995, the research summary with future tasks, and besides the viewpoints and methods of curriculum development for different culture understanding education. This report features materials for mutual understanding of American and Japanese cultures developed by classroom teachers from the five prefectures in Chugoku Area, who actively participated in the field-studies in Greenville and Minneapolis. The developed materials focus on the attempts or efforts to solve current social problems such as environmental, juvenile, racial, and peace issues, accordingly dealing with recycling, children's play, water quality, smoking education, peace awareness, and city environment. All the materials contained in this report are concrete enough to be widely used on learning opportunities at schools and public halls. We hope that this report will be made efficient use of by various related institutions.

Finally, in the age of life-long education, we hope that this report will stimulate many classroom teachers to promote education in international understanding, especially in mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S., at school and community level.

(Tomoyuki KOBARA)

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