

## Notes for a Paper on Integrating Language and Culture

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These notes are related to three projects: a TESOL 1993 presentation, a general review of the IIEP, and a short paper on teacher preparation and evaluation in cross-cultural/language programs. The reader will quickly recognize these as notes, not as a complete and integrated paper

There is a standard way of beginning academic papers in English, but I will ignore it and begin with an anecdote.

The English department I work in was approached in the fall of 1992 by a joint venture company in Tokyo. The American executives of the company were frustrated with their Japanese counterparts. The Japanese, said the Americans, don't know how to act at oral presentations. Oh, they sit politely and listen attentively, but when the presentation is over -- silence! Nothing. No questions. No comments. No debate. No discussion. Certainly no disagreement. Not from the Japanese at any rate.

We of course wanted to know how we could help.

Improve their English, was the answer. The Japanese just don't speak English well enough. We want you to help them speak out. Give them the confidence in their English that they need to take part in oral presentations.

This anecdote leads me to a couple of points that are central to this paper:

1. We teach (or should teach) English culture when we teach the English language.

2. English teachers, because they speak English, or because they hail from English-speaking countries, automatically know what English culture is -- and are able to teach it.

Let me say now that I totally disagree with both points, and in this paper plan to dismiss the first point and suggest a way that EFL/ESL teachers can more effectively deal with cultural issues (but not English culture) in the foreign language and the "transcultural" classroom, which is defined in a later section.

There seem to be two vague and conflicting points of view about the question of whether or not we teach English culture when we teach the English language. The first is somewhat Whorfian, and suggests that we automatically teach English 'ways of thinking' when we teach English. It's difficult to imagine just where in the language these 'ways of thinking' lie, but they seem to embrace aspects of English culture, (ignoring kinesics and oculesics --and unconscious mannerisms and gestures -- which may carry meaning in the culture, but which do not necessarily imply thought). (Those who suggest that we don't teach cognitive modes when we teach English fall back on the argument that we should teach English modes of

expression, for instrumental and integrative reasons, but more about that later.)

Obviously this is nonsense. Certainly we may be exposed to new ideas when we learn another language, particularly in content-based instruction, but who can claim to enter a new cognitive world when switching languages, or of entering a new culture when doing so? And who would claim any degree of cultural expertise in another culture based solely on the ability to speak or understand its language? This seems far-fetched in multi-cultural societies, or even societies in which language variation signifies gender, class, or ethnic background, much less across clear language or cultural boundaries.

Which leads to the argument of why English speakers should not assume that they can teach English culture, however it is defined. Should they try, whose English culture would they teach? Whose expression? Suppose the native-speaker were assigned to teach the hapless joint venture employee how to behave at the oral presentation. The American English speaker might praise the overall presentation and politely raise questions about the conclusions drawn by the speaker. The English native-speaker might aggressively question the assumptions of the presentation. The Australian might raise questions about the implications of the presentation. More importantly, scores of millions of Asian, South American, African English speakers, native and otherwise, might behave more like the employee of the Japanese joint venture.

This paper takes the point of view that we should not suggest to our students that modes of expression common to some varieties of English, or to any variety of English, are a result of that expression being an English one, determined by the structure, vocabulary, or even conventions of the English language. To do so carries two risks: (1) we risk riding on the coattails of European imperialism by joining the misguided bandwagon that insists that money, professional satisfaction, information, and truth are available to those who are proficient in the English language, in other words, the very nature of English itself creates attitudes and behavior that in part explain the economic and political dominance of English and English-speaking countries, and (2) we risk suggesting that those who do not speak English do not have access to the the finer points that an increasingly capitalist world has to offer.

To illustrate my point: at a recent conference in Tokyo I overheard a debate about whether or not we should teach Japanese students to express themselves directly, if not forcefully, in their written compositions. The main speaker held the point of view that Japanese students should be required to express themselves directly because that is the norm in English. And a paper read at the same conference suggested that by expressing themselves directly Japanese students will learn to think about, learn how to think about, new ideas and topics. The former point of view suggests that Japanese should be taught to express themselves as native speakers do. The later suggests that Japanese students should express themselves about the same topics that we native-speakers find compelling. (Incidentally, as proof that students were learning to express themselves the author of the paper listed examples of the students writing openly about their private lives, but I don't think the author meant to suggest that private lives exist only in English!) But the underlying argument of both insists that "we" native speakers do things in English and "we" expect non-native speakers to do the same.

Now to the second point. To suggest that native-speakers of English, even when professionally trained to teach English, are at the same time able to teach English culture is to overlook the extent to which (1) English speaking countries are now remarkably multicultural, (2) multicultural differences extend beyond national and linguistic boundaries, and (3) English is used between non-native speakers of English.

The first point asks: If I teach about English culture, whose culture am I describing? The second asks: When I describe this as part of my culture, am I overlooking the fact that what I am describing is a part of other cultures as well? The third asks: Wouldn't I better serve my students if, instead of insisting that they express themselves a certain way in English, because it's English, I taught them to discover how to become sensitive to the cultural and communicative expectations of their listener or reader? (Notice I don't say "teach them" these expectations. This would bring us right back to teaching "how to communicate with Thais" or "writing English letters for an Arab audience.)

### Language teachers and the transcultural program and teacher

For this paper I would like to use the term "transcultural." A transcultural program or approach to teaching culture in the language classroom is one in which five conditions are met: (1) the course provides students with learning and expressive challenges similar to those they will face outside their own culture and similar to selected challenges they face in their own language and culture; (2) the cross-cultural component is both related to cultural differences in general and provides students with an information and activity base to explore differences between specific cultures; (3) language and language teachers are used to help identify and explore cultural differences, (4) students are encouraged to see the program as a foreign environment that they must analyze, manage, and deal with on a daily basis; (5) the program gives students the tools for asking the right questions about the program, thereby giving them the tools to ask the right questions in another culture. Obviously this definition has implications for the language teacher, as well as for curriculum design, teacher training, program management, and program evaluation.

For the language teacher the program also makes a couple of distinctions: one between two types of students and their preferences vis a vis language and culture learning, and the other between approaches to dealing with questions of teaching culture in the language classroom.

Language teachers are more than familiar with the student who is eager to learn English, but not eager to speak it, or with students who perform well on grammar and vocabulary tests, but who cannot use English effectively. In Japan these students are often the ones who know a great deal about English, but have no experience with having to make sense of it in a situation where neither the student, nor the teacher, is calling the shots.

There is a parallel in the cross-cultural classroom, where some students want to learn about a culture, particularly when learning about a culture means asking questions and getting clear answers. Raw data, percentages, business statistics, historical dates, interesting if not quaint 'facts' about the culture appeal to these students. Such students with

strong preferences in this area are apt to confuse facts with the culture itself, just as some language students confuse the grammar of a language with the language itself. In extreme cases students actually prefer the data to the culture, or the grammar to the language!

This paper will refer to these students and the exercises they prefer as 'data' driven, as opposed to 'practice' driven students and exercises. 'Practice' students tend to be more motivated by interactive and communicative exercises. They are more receptive to practicing the language than their data colleagues, and in an ironic sense are aware that in the language or cross-cultural classroom they are only 'practicing' the language or pretending to experience or learn about another culture. For these students the 'real' learning comes later, or at least outside the classroom.

The paper will also distinguish between two types of teachers, with particular reference to cross-cultural training, but with implications for language teachers as well. The first type of teacher I will call the *cross-cultural* instructor. Such teachers recognize the need for students to learn about another culture. In a language classroom this other culture is typically related to the target language. These teachers recognize the need to talk about the target culture in the classroom.

At one extreme they may limit this teaching to sharing their own personal experiences in the culture, or relating typical attitudes toward a variety of subjects (politics, popular culture, gender roles...etc.) in the target culture. At the other extreme the teacher might create a culture island in the classroom by lining the classroom walls with posters related to the culture, assigning names and roles from the culture to the students, formally studying the music, art, or other aspect of the culture, and asking students to prepare presentations or other projects about the target culture. Clearly the emphasis is on learning about the culture, in most cases a particular culture, and generally about the differences between cultures.

The second type of teacher I will call the *transcultural* teacher. Despite the language used in the classroom, this teacher does not focus on a cultural dichotomy between the target language and the culture(s) of the students, but on the diversity of world cultures and the experiences common to contacts not with other cultures, but with other peoples. Hence the emphasis on *trans* as opposed to *cross* or even *inter*, as in 'intercultural.' This teacher is just as likely to explore the internal differences within the students' culture as she is to emphasize the differences between their culture and the target culture. More importantly, the teacher focuses on the similarities among cultures, and initiates discussion of other cultures by asking students to explore the tensions and divisive characteristics of their own, sometimes seemingly seamless culture. This teacher also uses the classroom cultures, particularly the underlying assumptions of the language classroom, to investigate cultural differences.

At one extreme the transcultural teacher will be widely read or travelled, sensitive to the multicultural nature of all societies, and able to make students aware of the multicultural nature of society through her personal experiences or through activities and methods used by many cross-cultural instructors. Another type of transcultural teacher, however, is herself the focus of the transcultural learning. In the transcultural classroom this teacher is the conduit through which cross-cultural

differences are experienced. This teacher is aware of cross-cultural differences and transcultural similarities, but consciously manifests and applies these differences in the classroom and in the curriculum.

In the transcultural classroom, then, students:

1. explore the assumptions of their own culture
2. explore the variety, differences, and contradictions among these assumptions
3. explore how these differences arose, or how they came to believe them
4. explore their assumptions about another culture/other cultures
5. discuss why these assumptions exist or how they came to hold them
6. through a variety of analytical, experiential, intuitive, and reflective exercises and activities, explore how assumptions about the target culture are formulated, suggest ways of verifying their legitimacy and of modifying, or rejecting them.

In more concrete terms, a class of German students might first explore stereotypes of Hamburg and Munich Germans. This would take them through point three above. One such difference might include the assumption that Munich Germans are more emotional than their northern brethren. Students would explore both sides of this question, and the discussion would then shift to Italians (points 4 - 6), with the focus remaining of the emotional question. The point is that the Germans are likely to be quite sensitive to the shades of the distinction when applied to their own country, but somewhat blunter in their analysis of another culture. With luck the activity would point out to the German class the elements of German culture that make Italian culture seem emotional, and vice versa, but the explicit transfer of 'facts' about another culture is only part of the aim of the transcultural course. More importantly, the course encourages students to arrive at ways to asking the right questions, of themselves and of the new culture, to determine how to behave toward and exist in it.

## Curriculum

The transcultural curriculum must offer activities that fit the learning styles, the needs, the expectations, and the fear of data driven and practice driven students. The curriculum must also fit the needs of cross-cultural and trans-cultural teachers.

### The Intensive International Executive Program (IIEP)

The IIEP strives to be a transcultural program, in the sense that (1) the course is designed to provide students with challenges similar to those they will face outside their own culture; (2) the cross-cultural component of the program focuses on language and cross-cultural (and business management) issues related to cultural differences in general, and provides students with an information and activity base to explore differences between specific cultures; (3) teachers and what they teach and how they teach it are used to identify and explore cultural differences, (4) students are encouraged to come to grips with the program and to see it as a foreign environment that they must recognize, manage, and deal

with on a daily basis; (5) the program is designed to give students the tools for asking the right questions about the program.

IIEP students come primarily from Japanese companies. In 1992 the program consisted of 29 company students and one private student, who was the only woman in the group. Four days a week the students met for three hours in the morning in classes of eight or nine. For two of these hours students focussed on English, using International Business English, published by Oxford University Press. The third hour floated; sometimes the class continued with the morning lesson, other times students worked on group assignments related to the afternoon classes.

Major cross-cultural and management activities were reserved for the afternoon, though these issues cropped up in the naturally in the Oxford text and by design in the morning as well. Afternoon classes met four days a week, leaving one morning and one afternoon a week free for syllabus change, but especially for supervised group preparation for major program presentations and activities.

The teachers in the morning classes chose four parts of the world on which to build culture islands, and students from these classes organized 45-minute presentations based on the materials they received about these parts of the world. Mid-way through the program students regrouped according to four cross-cultural topics, and again there was a 45-minute presentation of this topic in the afternoon. At the end of the program the morning teachers experimented with other ways of grouping students, but this was not done systematically or at the program level.

Afternoon classes built upon the morning classes, delved into general management issues, and expanded the cross-cultural component into the realm of management. The management expertise was provided by non-language instructors hired from business programs in the United States. This business component is not an integral part of a transcultural course, but international business is one way (international relations, peace studies, and environmental issues are others) of expanding the base of the transcultural curriculum.

### The cross-cultural component

The basis of the IIEP cross-cultural component rests on four views of culture itself: the behaviorist, functionalist, cognitive, and symbolic views. The following paragraphs briefly describe each view and relate them to the overall design of the program, which encourages students to view the program as they would a foreign society.

Behaviorists view culture as discrete sets of actions, institutions, beliefs, etc. Behaviorists gather data. They distinguish, classify, and record. In the IIEP students are asked to identify their learning preferences early in the program, and to record differences and new experiences in their journals.

Functionalists of course recognize discrete entities, but focus on what the behavior accomplishes. In the IIEP students discuss functional bases for behavior in and outside their cultures, but especially on the functional bases of what they see happening inside the IIEP. This typically focuses on what happens inside the classroom.

The cognitive view of culture asks what people are considering when they do certain things. This is perhaps the most dynamic component of the IIEP cross-cultural design, for it is here that students must question

the assumptions made by their instructors concerning class and group activities. They also question the evaluative instruments used in the program, the choice of content, and other important elements of the curriculum. It is in this realm that the negotiated syllabus comes into play.

The symbolic view of culture, which sees culture as a living, breathing process that constantly creates new meaning which can then be diffused throughout and recreated by the group, is created out of the negotiation process. This is a lengthy and sometimes painful process, and one that will be discussed in greater detail below. The symbolic view is also reflected in the great deal of autonomy students are given in planning and executing social activities, in creating the language class culture islands, and in creating program t-shirt and logo designs.

### Appeal to learning styles

At the beginning of the transcultural course students should be told that they will be learning different types of material in a variety of ways that will fit a variety of learning styles. Materials to help students explore their own learning styles are available in the intercultural and ESL/EFL market. These materials are quite helpful, but teachers should explain where the material is designed, by whom, and encourage students to consider that the learning style descriptors are culturally biased. (Cultural bias is OK, largely because it is inevitable! As such, it can be deliberately interjected into the transcultural program in a controlled manner, better increasing the chance of its detection by students and teachers when it occurs unintentionally.) Whatever the choice of descriptors, students should be asked to consider the bias, or students can be asked to come up with their own descriptors based on their discussion of the descriptors.

Activities in the IIEP are designed to fit into all of the four learning styles below:

1. analytical
2. intuitive
3. experiential
4. reflective

All activities in the program try to include aspects of all four styles. But first let's look at the styles:

a. analytical: students are asked to analyze material, to break down arguments, to debate, to explain or describe statistical, numerical, or other quantifiable material. Students study alone or in small groups where each member plays a finite, defined role.

b. intuitive: given a set of materials, students are asked to come up with the big picture, or to reach a group consensus.

c. experiential: games, simulations, role plays.

d. reflective: students think back on what they have done.

Many standard cross-cultural activities fit these four styles. In BAFA BAFA, for example, students break into two groups, each of which is taught a different culture. The two groups are slowly and carefully exposed to one another (experiential), asked to describe the other culture (analytical), encouraged to try to adapt to the other culture (intuitive), and in a debriefing asked to talk about the activity (reflective.)

Even the simplest type of language teaching activity can be adapted or expanded to fit the four styles, and to fit the style of the negotiated syllabus. Take vocabulary training out of context, for example. (Though I don't recommend this.) Teachers can draw up a list of vocabulary, even vocabulary chosen at random. After students have had time to try to memorize the vocabulary, they take a quiz. The teacher calls out the answers, the students mark their papers and call out the grades to the teacher, who writes the scores on the board.

The teacher can then relate the quiz to the program as a whole. This class neatly fits a teacher-led, discrete test-based course, with all its underlying cultural assumptions. (One example, the exercise was led and directed by the students.) Students worked alone and were active only during the memorization and test-taking period. After the exercise students marked their own papers and these results were shared with the class.

After the quiz, best at the end of the class, the teacher can review what the students did by asking them what they did. For example, the teacher can ask: What did you think of the quiz? Were you surprised to receive such a quiz? Why? Why not? What made you feel comfortable about the quiz? How did you go about memorizing the vocabulary? Did you use some mnemonic trick or other method? Were the vocabulary related to one another? What kinds of language activities or use fit this type of activity, or when might you use this technique? (For example, a student might bone up on automobile vocabulary before taking her car to the garage.)

The teacher can then remind students that they analyzed how they learned the vocabulary, reflected on how they felt about the quiz, put the exercise in a larger framework, and experienced a test/grading style that was perhaps new to them.

But again, the important point for the teacher is that students become accustomed to identifying, classifying, extrapolating, and thinking about how and what they are learning, just as they would if they were learning about another culture while getting along in that culture.

The transcultural syllabus is transparent in the sense that the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of the course are shared with students from the first day of the program. Students are told how each activity fits into the curriculum, where it fits, and what is expected of the students. However, the program expects that students will be able to make sense of the program, and will then be able to negotiate changes.

## **Making Sense of the Curriculum**

Making sense of the transcultural program is challenging, fun, creative, and entirely artificial. Lessons learned by the students are artificial, in the sense that students know that they are practicing living in another culture. But putting the pieces of the program together can be rewarding and thought provoking.

The IIEP presently rests on one folk tale that was adapted for the program. Students are told the folk tale when they arrive at the program and references are made to the folk tale throughout the program.

(Following the 1993 IIEP this folk tale will change. In the interests of the 1993 program both the folk tale and its interpretation will be kept confidential!) The folk tale is essentially an encrypted version of a larger

paradigm on which the program rests, just as Little Red Riding Hood is an encrypted version of a paradigm that insists that women are inferior, cannot be trusted, and that their sexuality is powerful, deceitful, dangerous, and must be controlled. Or that the Romero film 'Night of the Living Dead' is an encoded metaphor for the Vietnam war, in that a multi-racial group of Americans, split along generational and color lines, bicker among and destroy themselves while attempting to escape from an enemy that is most active at night and can be distinguished from friends only at close quarters, when the danger of being attacked is greatest.

Whatever device is used, students should be required to try to figure out its meaning. They may do so in tutorials, in journals, or in special classes where the device is discussed. It is not important that students actually figure out the program paradigm, and no IIEP student has. But thinking about the paradigm has helped students think about the program itself, and about what they see happening in the classroom and inside themselves during the program. In that sense the paradigm is important only to get students thinking, and the negotiation of the syllabus comes as they begin to ask the right questions, and to challenge and question the syllabus itself.

### Negotiating the Syllabus

Syllabus negotiation is impossible unless teachers are willing to explain what they do in the classroom and why and unless students are given the opportunity to comment on what happens and to analyze how well the program is meeting their needs and preferences. Neither the teacher nor the student has a daunting task. The teacher must merely ensure that students understand the goal of every activity and the place of every class in the overall curriculum. This will include explaining how the activity or class meets particular learning styles, cross-cultural objectives, language goals, or student expectations. The teacher must also give the student the chance to comment on why the classroom is run as it is, given the fact that the student knows that cultural assumptions underlie human behavior, including teaching.

### **Teacher training**

Early, extensive, and constant teacher training is vital to the success of a program where the teacher herself is consciously used as a cross-cultural interface. Teachers must receive full and open explanations of the curriculum design, with enough lead time to digest the design (analytical) prepare questions based on their impressions (reflective and intuitive), and create or collect materials to fit their own cultural background (experiential).

While explaining the theoretical framework of the program is in itself rather straightforward, teachers might need ample time to realize the extent to which their own self-awareness (in terms of teaching and learning styles, expectations concerning their role in the classroom, notions about language use or learning) is crucial to the success of the program. If there is not time to run through experiential exercises to get this urgency across, I suggest using critical incidents. Two are included below. If there is time, I suggest that teachers in transcultural programs be asked to write their own critical incidents, which can then be discussed

with the teacher trainer or by the teaching staff before the program begins.

Critical incident 1: a white, southern male from the US, age 36, is invited to teach a course on American language and culture to a group of college students from Thailand. As an example of one aspect of American culture the teacher plays a track from an Ice-T CD and explains that "black Americans" listen to this music, which he calls rap. The students are asked to respond to the message in the music and relate it to what they know of US culture.

Concerns: Why did the teacher choose rap? Does the teacher listen to rap? Does the teacher have any experience with rap music or with the issues expressed in much of rap? Where has the teacher gotten his information about rap? Why did the teacher describe rap as music that 'black Americans' listen to, when a great percentage of the rap audience is 'white'? What does rap mean to the teacher? Does the teacher realize that for many Ice-T is not a rap artist, but a heavy metal crossover? Is the teacher familiar with the expression "African American", currently used in the United States? Does the teacher know that rap is popular all over the world, and that Thai students are apt to be more familiar with Thai rap than with US rap? Did the teacher ask the students to consider Thai rap at all? Is the teacher assuming that rap expressed feelings that do not apply to Thai society? Did the teacher give the students directions about exactly what they were to discuss, and how and why? Did the teacher assume that the students would be familiar with discussion or experiential exercises, as many US students are?

Critical incident 2: a native speaker of English, age 32, from New York City is invited to teach English to university students in Japan. The teacher designs a course in which students read academic papers related to their course work, then come together in class to discuss the content of the papers.

Concerns: As a discussion facilitator, has the teacher explored what aspects of turn-taking, interrupting, politeness/rudeness, etc. the teacher is willing to tolerate, encourage, or teach? Why did the teacher choose academic papers? Who chose them? What are the topics? If the course is based on discussion, have students been told how to prepare for the discussion, what they expected to do, how they will be evaluated? Has the teacher considered alternative ways that students can initiate, lead, enter, interrupt, and end discussions?

## **Program Management**

Ideally the transcultural program should consist of a program director and at least one other coordinator. The director is responsible for ensuring that everyone on the staff understands the nature and direction of the program. She monitors all aspects of the program, making certain that whatever direction the curriculum might take out of the negotiation process, the nature of the program remains intact. In the US model of government, she is the judicial branch, carefully going over the direction of the program according to the overall program design.

The coordinators work more directly with teachers than the director. Their task is to follow what is happening in the classroom and make sure that the goals and objectives of the program are being met and that teachers are fulfilling their contracted and administrative duties.

The coordinators work closely with each other to make sure that the elements of the curriculum fit together, despite the changes that might occur during the negotiation process.

### Teacher Recruitment

Major international conferences are the best source of teachers for transcultural programs. TESOL and SIETAR are good sources. Teachers with experience or training in cross-cultural issues, with overseas experience and training that included cross-cultural adaptation or instruction (Peace Corps), or teachers who have lived overseas and returned to their home countries for an extended period are good candidates.

Also, considering the great similarity in EFL/ESL instruction around the world, it is a good idea to consider recruiting a cultural anthropologist, education major, or professional business instructor (particularly those from organization behavior) for the team. This works best in larger programs, where students and teachers can be juggled and regrouped for a variety of program and pedagogical reasons. In such cases special classes can be arranged for the non-language specialists, or they can assist in the more mundane aspects of language teaching. However used or recruited, their points of view about education, learning, materials, and course design are likely to be eye-opening for the language staff.

Also, transcultural programs may want to hire non-native staff and teachers with a variety of English-speaking and professional backgrounds. The program manager should consciously select a multi-national staff. Teachers from the same country should not be from the same ethnic group. Instead, the transcultural program should include minority teachers and teachers from other non-dominant groups.

### Materials

Transcultural programs must be able to accommodate syllabus changes based on the needs of the students and the teachers as they arise during the syllabus negotiation process. To do this the program needs a wide variety of language, cross-cultural, group building, and general training activities. The program manager should be familiar with all these materials, store them in a common area, and provide each teacher with a short description of the material and what it takes to run it in the classroom. Obviously, ordering and reviewing this material will be very time-consuming, and will require access to interdisciplinary catalogues.

### Administration

The transcultural curriculum operates as a simulation, of sorts. Everyone in a simulation agrees to play a role, and this holds for the administration. The program manager should meet with the higher administrative levels before the program and explain the tenants and operating procedures for the curriculum. Lower level, but more vital, administrative assistants and others should also understand the curriculum and should be especially sensitive to the students during the program. This is especially true where the students and administration

share the same culture and cultural expectations, as students are likely in such cases to take complaints to the administration. All administrative personnel should be able to respond in a constructive manner and channel such interaction with students to the program manager.

## Program Evaluation

Too often programs are evaluated like this: at the end of the term or course students are given a list of questions and asked to respond by checking one point on, say, a scale of five (e.g., very good, good, average, poor, very poor). The questions typically ask the student to comment on the course, the teacher, and occasionally on the student's interest in or commitment to the course. And often the evaluation will conclude with an open-ended question that asks the students to write her general impression about the course.

In order for such evaluations to work in a transcultural course, the program manager and teachers must explain at the beginning of the course how the course will be evaluated. At the very least the program manager should let students see copies of the general course evaluation. Each question or item on the evaluation should be explained in light of the design of the course and in terms of the students own professed fears and expectations about the program. Ideally, the final course evaluation should be presented as a cultural artifact, particularly when the program teachers or management have designed the evaluation, and certainly when the teaching staff and students do not share a common cultural background. The evaluation can be changed as the course progresses. One idea is to discuss the evaluation and the direction of the course at mid-term and have the students put together a final version of the evaluation. This evaluation would then be introduced to students in the next program, to be adapted and modified for that group.

Also, students should be familiar with how to fill out an evaluation and with how the evaluations will be analyzed. Students must realize that the evaluation is an excuse to vent spleen, but they must be discouraged from the tendency to be overly critical in the sense that, for example, they understand that marking everything high or low on their evaluation will only result in their evaluation being thrown out. And of course the evaluation must be designed so that students don't find it easy to simply mark all the left column or right column responses. Students should also receive instructions about the written part of the evaluation, if any. This section should be placed first, or given to the students separately so that equal time and interest is given to both parts of the evaluation.

However the evaluation is actually designed, students must have the chance to practice and get comments on filling out an evaluation. This can be done at the beginning of the program by asking students to evaluate an ancillary activity (a movie video, for example) and then to fill out an evaluation. Statistics from the quantitative portion can be shared and explained to the students, and excerpt from the written portion read aloud or shared with the class and discussed for the length and usefulness of their content. Students can be reminded at this point that the evaluation is an on-going, culturally specific instrument, and be asked to suggest other means for course evaluation, such as evaluation by group consensus, by private interview, etc.

## Teacher evaluation

Student evaluations of teachers can be used for contract renewal or promotion only if students have fully understood the nature of the evaluations. It is grossly incompetent to evaluate teachers based on comments made by students who are unfamiliar with evaluating teachers, who are not clear as to the teacher's role in the program, and who are vague about the nature of the program itself.

However, student comments that arise apart from the normal evaluative means could be extremely revealing and should be monitored and considered very carefully. The program manager should pay special attention to who comments on a teacher, and on how and why. For example, in the 1992 IIEP several teachers made bitter comments to the program manager about a teacher at the final program party. The students had not complained about the teacher before, and no comments were made to the teacher herself. Unfortunately, it was too late for either the teacher or the program manager to act on or respond to the comments. Equally unfortunate, the program staff agreed that students had not received adequate instruction on the role of the evaluation. If they had, they would not have waited until the end of the program to express themselves over drinks with the program manager. The staff eventually agreed that the students had handled the matter in a 'Japanese' manner, without a full understanding of the role of the evaluation, which existed (perhaps) and had been handled in a way (certainly) for reasons not clear to them.]

Note: International Business English, by Jones and Alexander (Cambridge 1989) is used in the IIEP, but this paper is not specifically recommending this text or suggesting that it is ideal. However, the emphasis on British English challenges many assumptions of Japanese students, many of whom are more familiar with or prefer American English. And the situational organization of the text units lends itself well to the IIEP, given that the English curriculum of the program is built around what students have to do, in English, in the way of communications, in the management and cross-cultural components of the curriculum.