

## Global citizenship in motion: Dance and dialogue for intercultural learning

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### Abstract

Japanese universities often experience difficulties in providing extensive opportunities for authentic intercultural learning experiences. As part of a broader initiative to nurture students with a 'global mindset' at the Japanese tertiary level, the current project encourages experience-based learning through the medium of dance as a means to cultivate intercultural communicative competence. Drawing on the insight that the arts can help us to re-imagine and engender alternative possibilities for transforming culture and society (Hannah, 2008), this project explores dance as an aspect of interaction in a course aimed at fostering cross-cultural communication between local and foreign students. We present an overview of the course design and procedures aimed at the development of intercultural communicative competence. Using diaries and reflective reports as investigative tools, we explore student learning and report on linguistic and interactive patterns, intercultural skill development and cultural intelligence (CQ) gains. Implications for future research in this area are offered.

**[Keywords]** : *intercultural communication, dance, cultural intelligence, global citizenship, experiential learning*

### Introduction

Globalization has highlighted the need for institutions of higher learning to provide authentic cross-cultural experiences as part of student education. The growth of this type of education, which has broadly included the many ways of learning outside the traditional and local boundaries of one's own nation or country (such as undertaking studies abroad) is now considered a type of developed socio-cultural skill that is increasingly regarded as vital for the workers of tomorrow. In the growing literature surrounding this area, it has become known as *global mindedness*, or *global citizenship*. This notion, which is still undergoing theoretical refinement in terms of its exact conceptualization and practical operationalization,

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is defined by Morais & Ogden (2010, pg. 5) as: "... a multidimensional construct that hinges on the interrelated dimensions of *social responsibility*, *global competence*, and *global civic engagement*" (our italics). The authors remark that all three of these highlighted elements are crucial to develop a global citizen and that a global citizenship education should require their inclusion in curricula and clearly set out corresponding standards of practice and assessment.

To further explicate the notion of a global citizen for our purposes here, we rely on *The Global Citizen's Initiative (TGCI)* definition of the concept, namely: "... someone who sees himself or herself as being part of an emerging world community and whose actions help define this community's values and practices" (TGCI, 2018). TGCI propose six responsibilities for cultivating global citizens, namely: "to ...

- 1) understand the ways in which the peoples and countries of the world are interconnected and interdependent;
- 2) understand global issues;
- 3) understand our own perspectives and the perspectives of others on global issues;
- 4) advocate for greater implementation by our countries of international agreements, conventions, and treaties (ACTs) related to global issues;
- 5) promote and advocate for greater international cooperation between our countries and other nations; and,
- 6) adopt lifestyles and values that reflect our commitment to building a sustainable planet and demonstrate respect for the world's cultural diversity" (Adapted from TGCI, 2018).

Put another way, this outline of personal responsibilities might also be expressed as a set of personal skills that can be cultivated, and can include social, intercultural, political, and economic understandings and experiences that might be required for successful adjustment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The idea that meaningful exposure to knowledge and experiences foreign to our usual situations could help to instill new ways of responding and learning is widely accepted as 'learning from experience'. Continuing in this vein, we can assume that with time and repetition, the adjustment required in response to the additional exposure to new/foreign situations and experiences, a person develops a certain flexibility in their mindset. This reasoning appears to underpin the notion of a global mindset, which has recently been linked to the idea of *cultural intelligence (CQ)* (Ang, VanDyne & Tan, 2011). Specifically, Lovvorn & Chen (2011), suggest that the growth of CQ gradually assists in the

formation of a global mindset.

*Cultural intelligence (CQ)*, a concept developed by Early & Ang (2003), describes the ease and efficiency with which a person is able to adapt their views and behaviour cross-culturally. Similar to understandings of general intelligence and emotional intelligence, there are certain factors that describe the notion of cultural intelligence. In CQ, four factors are involved: meta-cognition (or awareness), cognition (or thought), motivation (or interest) and behaviour (or action). In cross-cultural situations, a person with a high CQ has the ability to appreciate, formulate and behave in ways that are quick, smooth and sensitively accurate when confronted with the complexity of intercultural interactions. Livermore (2011, pg. xiii) extends the traditional borders of cross-cultural situations to include national, ethnic, organizational and generational ones. CQ is considered as a set of capabilities that can be improved to help make a person successful in personal and professional areas and was identified by *Harvard Business Review* as a core capability essential for success in 21st-century business (Livermore, 2010).

Given the conceptual proximity evident in the notions of global mindedness and CQ, we support the proposition by Lovvorn & Chen (2011), that the growth of CQ gradually assists in the formation of a global mindset, and thus assists in the personal development of a global citizen. This stance has further relevance for our present purpose, given that the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has given particular attention to the development of graduates' global citizenship in recent years, notably in projects such as the *Global 30*. This funding project aims to: "... promote internationalization of academic environment of Japanese universities and acceptance of excellent international students studying in Japan" (MEXT, 2018). Since the program's inception in 2009, and in an attempt to attract funding, many educational institutions have been introducing intercultural communication courses, encouraging study-abroad programs and supported internationalization activities on campuses; activities that have now been incorporated as an accepted part of higher education.

### **Project outline and purpose**

Given the relative newness of the notion of a global citizen however, there is a dearth of existent scholarship on the topic, creating a two-fold challenge for educators: firstly, to find or create suitable and appropriate course pedagogy and content, and secondly, to design and/or find opportunities for practical, real-world experiences that would support the development

of global mindedness and its associated social- and intercultural communicative skillset in students. For the purposes of this project, our position is that the development of a 'global mindset' comes about - at least partially - from experiences involving cross-cultural exchange. Such opportunities increase the chances of intercultural communication, and, if thoughtfully structured or incorporated in a curriculum, can further educational goals and be of personal benefit to participants. Intercultural dialogue is defined by UNESCO as: "... equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures, is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations".

In keeping with the idea of creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and thus increasing the chances for intercultural dialogue (and learning) to occur, we drew inspiration from existent educational research on dance, well-articulated by Hannah (2008, pg. 491) in pointing to the power of the arts to "re-imagine and engender alternative possibilities for transforming culture and society". Hannah (2008) draws on educational research emanating from the work of John Dewey that has established the significance of the expression of "... aesthetics, agency, creativity, lived experience, transcendence and learning through the body ..." (pg. 491). Further inspired by Hannah's (2008) contention that the relationship between culture and dance is reciprocal, we reasoned that creating opportunities where dance can be employed as a form of expression, it might act as a creative catalyst to help bring together social, personal, and cultural aspects, thereby creating a rich foundation for intercultural skill development.

In other words, we aimed to create experiences or opportunities that would bring about and/or support the development of *global-mindedness* and increase the *cultural intelligence* of learners, seen as necessary for the development of *global-citizenship*. We therefore formulated the project goal to explore dance as one dimension of the dialogue in a course aimed at fostering cross-cultural exchange between local and foreign students. The use of the terms 'exchange' and 'dialogue' are significant here and reference the two main modes of communication: nonverbal (nonlinguistic) and verbal (linguistic). As part of a broader goal of nurturing in students a 'global mindset' at the Japanese tertiary level, the project aims to encourage learning through the creative process of dance as a means to enhance the development of intercultural communicative competence.

## Course design and implementation

Since the broad goal was to encourage intercultural learning through the medium of dance, the design of the course reflected the following goals:

- 1) to connect intercultural pedagogy with dance instruction to support intercultural skill (or CQ) development;
- 2) to support and develop non-verbal communication through dance; and,
- 3) to support and develop verbal communication through using English as a *lingua franca* (ELF).

To set in motion and achieve these goals, a multi-cultural group of students at our university attended classes which included intercultural learning and dance instruction. They further attended weekly dance-fitness practice and were required to actively engage with one another through semi-structured conversations. A central task of the course required students to work together in multicultural groups of 3-4 to design, create and perform an original dance-fitness routine. Observations regarding dance instruction and skill development, as well as the required verbal engagements had to be diarized (in the form of e-diaries) with the purpose of studying verbal and non-verbal developments, difficulties and accomplishments.

A course highlight included a one-day immersion experience at a local Latin-American cultural center, *NPO Tiempo Iberoamericano*, where students participated in language classes, received instruction from professional dance teachers and performers, and were introduced to the diversity, food and cultural expressions of Latin America. The immersion was intended as a cross-cultural experience to support intercultural learning and exchange and relied on the center's diverse group of artists and dancers and the breadth of their artistic expression to deepen the sensory and creative experience of participants. It also provided a venue to showcase the original dance routine that students developed. In line with our project goals, the immersion was strongly experiential and required a personal engagement. The course ran for 15 weeks and included weekly practice, with intercultural exchange between local and foreign students that had to be diarized for the purpose of studying verbal and non-verbal aspects. At the end, students had re-assess their diaries and the immersion experience and write a full reflective report with an emphasis on the verbal, non-verbal and intercultural learning they experienced.

## Research design and discussion of procedures

The research design hinged on the course goals, namely a tracking and analysis of verbal, non-verbal and intercultural learning elements. Using a classroom based, action-research model, we utilized student diaries and reflective reports as the objects for investigation, aiming for a qualitative understanding of their development and growth in the identified areas. For our purposes here, we draw on the analysis of nine participants' work: 4 male students and 5 female students with ages ranging from 20-22. They were a multi-cultural group of Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Chinese speakers with varying levels of English proficiency.

To understand the scope and extent of their learning, we read, discussed and developed a coding system based on the thematic contents that emerged from their reflective writing. To complement and make sense of their intercultural skill development, we analyzed these 9 reflective reports using the CQ model. The coding system thus contained three sets of codes that could be arranged along course learning themes: the *CQ model* (intercultural learning), *movement* (non-verbal and dancing content) and *language* (interaction and linguistic development). The system is summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: A coding system for intercultural skill development through dance**

Set 1: CQ Model	Set 2: MOVEMENT	Set 3: LANGUAGE
<input type="checkbox"/> CM – Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> DM – Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> LM – Motivation
<input type="checkbox"/> CK – Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> DI – Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> LK – Knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/> CS – Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> DK – Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> LP – Practice
<input type="checkbox"/> CA – Action	<input type="checkbox"/> DP – Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> LF – Affect
	<input type="checkbox"/> DF – Affect/Feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> LB – Body Language

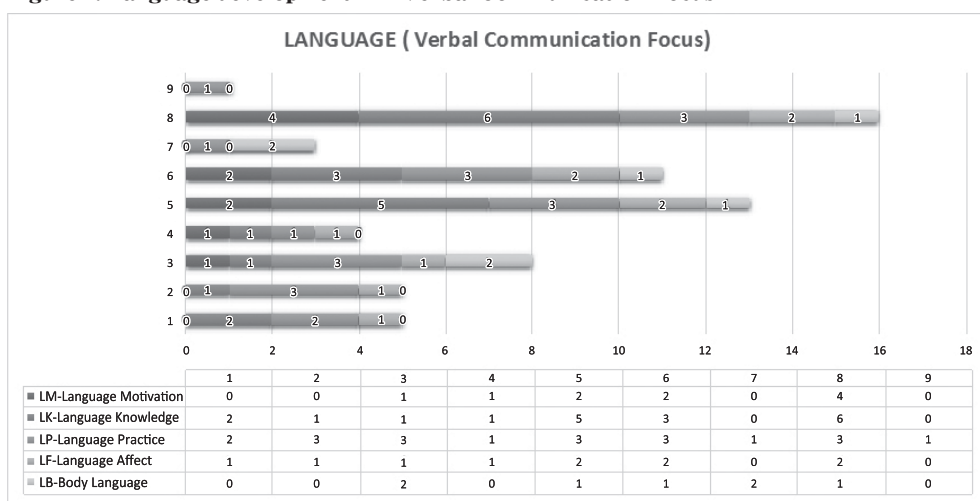
## Results

Based on an application of the coding system, we were able to graphically depict a number of the themes that emerged from the self-reflective reports for this small group of participants. Note that this is presented here in graph-format, mainly to explicate the system we developed, and in an attempt to help compare and demonstrate each participant's unique engagement with the course and to gain a sense of their self-expressed development across the period. We provide a few short comments with each graph, and following the graphs, a short summary of the emergent themes and some examples of student comments and reflections.

### Result 1: Language development – A Verbal Communication Focus

The data presented here is based on participants' reflective reports – i.e. a personal estimation of their engagement, learning and experience. The numbers used to create the graph indicate number of instances that a particular theme, in this case, a verbal communication, was recorded based on the reflective report. The numbers 1-9 on the vertical axis represent the 9 participants. The differences in the self-assessed ability of the students are very obvious and although this analysis should be seen as a very superficial way to understand actual engagement, it does give an indication of the range and depth of students' self-assessed focus on verbal interaction. An interesting point to note is that a significant emotional component related to linguistic expression emerged from the student reports, which we labeled as 'language affect', to give a sense of the emotive element present in the exchanges.

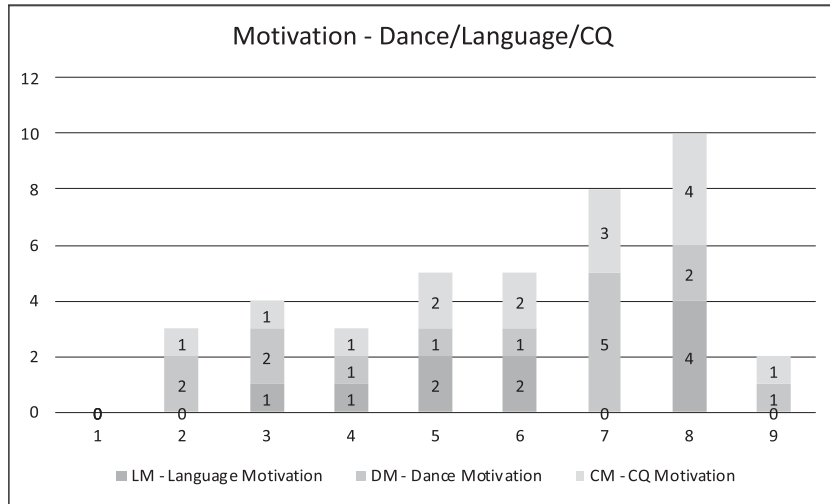
**Figure 1: Language development – A Verbal Communication Focus**



### Result 2: Motivation – Effects on language, dance and cultural intelligence (CQ)

The reflective reports indicated varying levels of engagement and motivation to participate. Since an overarching aim of the course was to support the development of CQ (which emphasizes the importance of motivation for cross-cultural interaction), we reasoned that it might also be necessary to consider the impact of motivation on language and dance – the verbal and nonverbal elements of the course. Figure 2 below shows the 9 participants' (see horizontal axis) recorded instances as indicated. These show varying degrees of motivation and could be assumed to have fluctuated as they progressed. It should also be clear that each participant's profile is markedly different, depending on their giving lesser or more priority to

**Figure 2: Motivation – Effects on language, dance and cultural intelligence**

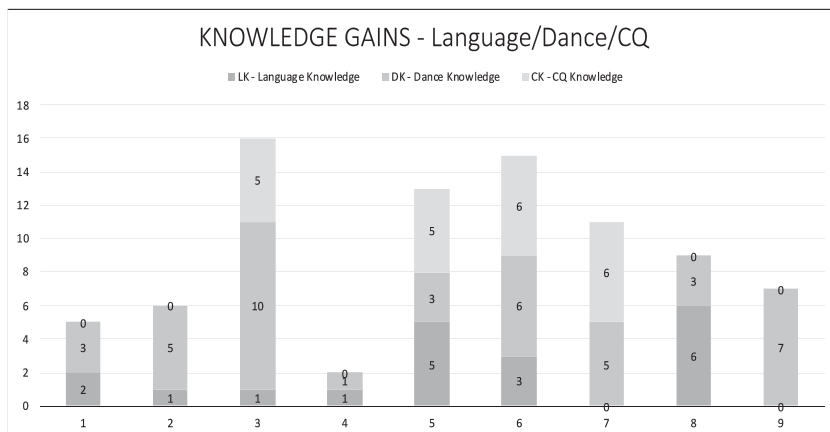


the stated course goals.

**Results 3: Knowledge gains – Contrasting language, dance and cultural intelligence**

Figure 3 below presents a major course component, i.e. the development of knowledge across the 3 identified themes/goals of the project. The analysis indicates that ‘dance knowledge’ (DK) appears most prominent in terms of development. Perhaps this result is to be expected given the emphasis on dance instruction, but when contrasted with the recorded instances of language knowledge gains (LK), the two aspects emerge as two important markers of course engagement. Of note here is the CQ knowledge instances, since these elements were implicit in the course, but not explicitly taught; the underlying pedagogic assumption being that the

**Figure 3: Knowledge gains – Contrasting language, dance and cultural intelligence**





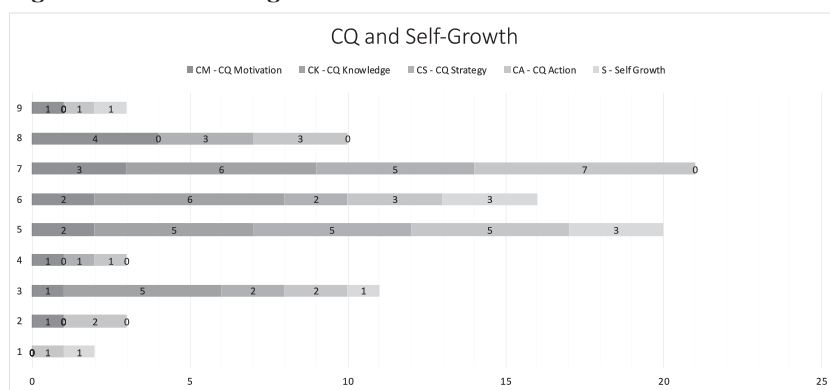
provision of a cross-cultural opportunity would be beneficial in itself, leaving participants to employ and explore their own communicative devices.

#### Results 4: Cultural Intelligence and Self-Growth

The analysis of this overarching goal of the project shows that all four of the CQ constructs (motivation, knowledge, strategy and action) could be identified as themes from the self-reflective reports. This is welcome result considering that the intercultural element was directly and indirectly promoted through various course structures and requirements for engagement. The plentiful presence of the CQ factors are also a testament to the usefulness of the CQ model and its possible future applications in projects such as these.

We further noticed an additional, somewhat unexpected trend in the reports, namely that a number of students made reference to instances of self-reflections regarding knowledge and/or experiential gains that could be tied to self-growth. We interpreted these instances as positive indications of educational and self-development successes that came through participation in the course. Given the broad range of influences in the course and the nature of self-expressed reports and their reliability as research tools however, it remains a cautious interpretation. Figure 4 below depicts these aspects and their observed occurrences for the nine participants (participants numbered on the vertical axis).

**Figure 4: Cultural Intelligence and Self-Growth**



#### Results 5: Student reflections

Table 2 below contains a number of selected instances from the student reports to illustrate the nature of the comments and observations. These also provide a sense of how the thematic contents emerged to form the basis for the coding system we developed. In

summary, these quotations represent some of the emergent themes of the project, namely developments in terms of intercultural exchange and skill development, movement (nonverbal interactions) and language development (verbal interactions).

**Table 2: Student Reflections**

### **1. Verbal communication and intercultural exchange**

- *Because one person... keep skipping class, it was hard to contact her... for another... even though she come to the class, hearing an idea from her was rare... So, I have to learn the dance style from the video and bring it ... to them, so I could know their opinion and sometime improve or adjust the dance from that.*
- *I feel like I still have a lot to learn... In my hometown, there are still people who think that using English is a shame... Who uses English correctly is a person who do not love their own country... Who change their behavior... who has forgotten their roots... (Thai)*
- *I learned how to make an appointment and how to decline softly... how to maintain a friendship & make new friends using English*

### **2. Non-verbal communication and intercultural exchange**

- *I was feeling embarrassed when I have to move my body seductively and temptingly... inconsistent with Vietnam traditional culture... I knew Arabian dance is very sexy... But Flamenco is very classic, elegant and graceful... Especially after Tiempo event, I really found I walk to another world*
- *When they present their ideas, I don't understand, they convey the body language and also a bit of Japanese... so I can understand... every country has a style and accent... I also understand the importance of body language*
- *After practice and thanks to the teacher's leading and advice, every group got better... people started to be able to teach other members of the class*
- *Even though my dance style didn't improve as much as I thought... I think having confidence is the most important thing of all*

## **Discussion of findings**

Findings from the analysis of the reflective reports can be organized along 3 main themes, which we connect with the overarching project goals. Firstly, and at the broadest level: to foster a global mindset and improve intercultural skill or CQ through a cross-cultural exchange, we found that students' motivation to learn about and from different cultures increased, as did their general knowledge and self-stated ability to navigate cross-cultural situations.

Secondly, in respect of creating opportunities for intercultural interaction and communication, student reflections indicate that they felt very well engaged, evident through the intense

emotional experiences brought about by the interactive and experiential forms of learning. These emotions ranged from an initial nervousness about what to expect from unplanned situations, to fear and uncertainty about cross-cultural situations or learning new body movements, all the way through to very positive outpourings of joy, satisfaction, confidence building and surprise.

A final, unexpected result was that a number of students recorded instances where they experienced some form of positive self-realization regarding their ability, skill development or personal growth. Although rather pleasantly surprised by this finding, we were not sure how to interpret it, but at least initially, we connect this result to the potentially transformative power latent to the approach we followed in this course and specifically, the catalytic action that was brought about through dance as a medium for creative exploration. We reiterate that these are preliminary impressions that need to be explored in further depth by a refinement and repetition of the course as presented here. A summary of findings, in relation to the original project goals, is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Course goals and the relation to findings**

**Course Aim 1: To improve intercultural skill through cross-cultural exchange**

Finding 1: Increased CQ-Motivation as an initial indication of success;

Finding 2: Increased CQ-Action (non-verbal, dance participation) toward developing the goals of CQ knowledge and CQ strategy

**Course Aim 2: To increase interaction and communication**

Finding 1: Emotional affect – the results show strong, fluctuating emotional experiences linked to dance and language learning, as well as social/peer learning experiences;

Finding 2: Observations from the self-reflective reports indicate a general, positive regard for the learning experiences post-course.

**Conclusion and future directions**

This project aimed to create experiences or opportunities that would bring about and/or support the development of *global-mindedness* and increase the *cultural intelligence* of a group of students at a Japanese university, seen as necessary for the development of *global-citizenship* in graduates. Drawing inspiration from educational traditions and the arts we formulated the project goal to explore dance as one dimension of the dialogue in a course aimed at fostering cross-cultural exchange between local and foreign students.

Findings and results from the course show promise in all aspects of the observations and

reports we analyzed. Specific evidence of the power of non-verbal communication emerged as a strong factor in cross-cultural interactions and were here usefully explored through the medium of dance. Despite being mostly novices at dance in general, let alone as a cultural expression, students engaged well with course contents and we found clear and positive indications that dance can be usefully employed to act as a creative catalyst in bringing together social, personal and cultural aspects as a potential foundation for intercultural skill and/or CQ development.

Research opportunities in this area remain broad in scope and depth. In particular, we were emboldened by student reflections that centered around self-growth and personal development gains. A striking observation by Hannah (2008) draws attention to the 'mentality' of dance in reference to the capacity for drawing together and 'intertwining cognition, emotion and kinesthetic intelligence', which we would like to link here with the personal process of developing cultural intelligence and the formation of a global mindset. In conclusion, the reflections regarding self-growth that were volunteered and recorded by students in this project emerged as an unexpected and positive result that we interpret as an indication of the potentially transformational power inherent to the approach followed here. Based on our experience and findings here, the reciprocal relationship between dance and culture (Hannah, 2008) certainly invites further investigation from an intercultural communication perspective.

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