

# Multinational Students' Cooperation and Agency: Theoretical Issues in International Students' Internship Working with the Local Society in Japan

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## Introduction

This research examines the theoretical issues of cultural paradigms of international exchange students' experiential learning in the university education in Japan by focusing on the international students' agency through an internship practicum working with the local people in Japan. Intercultural education for multinational exchange students who are studying in a Japanese university entails significant theoretical issues to be examined. In addition, international experiential learning that can connect international students with people outside the university is an educational area that needs to be developed more for the fulfillment of international students' learning while studying abroad. The real interactions, communications, and actual dilemma have not been analyzed sufficiently in situations where the multiculturalism of international students meets the localism in Japan.

As an important step of analyzing the actual human actions and communications in the internship practicum site, in this article, I shall focus on the significance of agency of international student interns who carried out a project to revitalize the local society in Japan in the course titled the "Globalization Support Internship (GSI)" offered to the international exchange students from North America, Europe, Oceania, Asia, and South America who participated in the Hiroshima University Study Abroad Program (HUSA Program).<sup>1</sup> In the internship practicum of the GSI, culturally diverse international student interns have become active agents by closely working with local industries, local administration, and local associations since I shifted the paradigm of the GSI course to a project-type internship in 2012. This article focuses mainly on the interns' involvement with the local administration office and local organizations that have cooperated with the student interns' project in the practicum.

When multinational students form a team for the practicum and begin working together,

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<sup>1</sup> From now henceforth, I will refer to "Hiroshima University Study Abroad Program" as "the HUSA Program." The Hiroshima University has concluded exchange agreements with 66 universities in North America, Europe, Oceania, and Asia in approximately 24 countries and two consortiums in the world (as of November 2015). Since October 1996 until November 2015, approximately 700 students have participated in the HUSA Program. Approximately 40 international students attend the HUSA program annually from partner universities, and a majority of them study at the Hiroshima University for one academic year. I will refer to the participants of the HUSA Program as "HUSA students," and I will refer to the HUSA students who took the internship course as "HUSA interns."

the cultural paradigm in the practicum scene variably shifts, depending on how the involved parties define the meaning of the project in its relation to the cultural learning. The involved parties, including the local officials and student interns, define each other's identities and power relations, and the operating cultural paradigm fluctuates in various situations, although the major paradigm is the Japanese culture in which interns work with the local administration office. When the multiculturalism of international exchange students and the localism in Japan meet, the monolithic Japanese culture may not be necessarily the major cultural paradigm. When multinational exchange students exercise their agency by valuing each other's identities and cooperate toward the goal in order to carry out a project, a new cultural paradigm sphere is created by their encounter with the local society in Japan.

The cultural paradigm of the local society in Japan is usually defined according to the customs, rituals, and behavioral codes that have been prevalent and practiced by the people. However, I have also observed fluidity, complexity, and fragility of the cultural paradigm when international student interns take initiatives and exercise their agency in the practicum scenes. Human interactions among the culturally diverse student interns and the local people whose lives have been deeply embedded in the conservative Japanese culture create a place where the involved parties experience a cultural dilemma and incongruence of different value systems. This scene differs greatly from the situations where international students are invited as "guests" in international exchange events in schools or local gatherings where students are warmly welcomed. In these events, international students are treated as special guests, a different position accorded by the local people; therefore, they do not stand on equal terms with the local people. The international students whose Japanese is not advanced tend to be valued only for the opportunities for English speaking practices or the introduction of their culture in cross-cultural exchange events.<sup>2</sup> These positions make international students stand in the distant position as outsiders. On the contrary, when international students stand on equal terms with the local people via an internship practicum, it creates situations where different behavioral codes inevitably meet while carrying out the project, and people experience incongruences and apprehensions through their real encounters of different values and behavioral codes. The real work in the project creates a place for real interactions that cannot always be artificially friendly.

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<sup>2</sup> The students in the HUSA Program 2015-2016 engaged in a group project titled the "Development of Multicultural Local Society Practical Research Group Project" from October 2015 until July 2016. Without the assistance of professors, HUSA students successfully completed the projects, such as holding a seminar to introduce students' cultures in English either on campus, in local schools, or in a public facility, holding international exchange events, and discussing Japanese culture. It is very difficult for international students to enter the world of Japanese local schools, administration offices, and local organizations that function according to the Japanese cultural norms, unless a professor plays the role of an intermediary, or a Japanese organization recruits these foreigners for international exchange events, among other events.

The international student interns' agency in the internship practicum in cross-cultural settings in Japan entails critical issues of intercultural communication in real life contexts, which has not been analyzed sufficiently in the research of internationalization of higher education in Japan. The experiential learning of international students in Japan still needs to be developed further, not only to expand educational opportunities for international students, but also to create opportunities for authentic intercultural interactions in Japan. The real dilemmas of cultural differences among people from different cultures, the inadequacies of multicultural students positioned in the local Japanese cultural context, and the lack of understanding of both parties, namely the international students and the local people, need to be discussed more openly in academic discourse.

When universities become more competitive internationally, the universities in Japan are also faced with the need to develop strategies to become more internationally prominent. Under such circumstance, a voice warns of this current situation. Yonezawa, Akiba, and Hirouchi (2009) proposed that promoting the positive image of Japan to the outside world, and bringing economic benefits to the country are some internationalization strategies in Japan. Additionally, Whitsed and Volet (2011, p. 147) contested that intercultural development at the institutional and individual level has been lacking in Japanese higher education, which is reflected in the higher education policy literature as well as the constrained professional situation of foreign English teachers. The argument that more focused attention needs to be directed toward the development of intercultural competence at both institutional and individual levels is plausible when we observe the lack of attention to the pedagogical issues and the paradigm shift of the educational framework for the development of intercultural education. Rather, a university's internationalization strategies tend to be directed towards increasing the number of international students, via short-term programs and the number of Japanese students going abroad, as well as increasing the number of foreign professors or teachers with foreign degrees.

Intercultural competence and intercultural understanding cannot be developed by merely increasing the number of international students. Unless educational settings are created where intercultural interactions and academic discussions take place, such as classrooms or seminars, intercultural interactions at a deeper level affecting students' sense of values and worldviews do not easily occur in a university. We need academic settings that can question students' worldviews and their global perspective framework. Similarly, cross-cultural interactions between international students and people outside the university do not happen naturally without educational interventions. The internship practicum of the GSI course has created such educational settings where culturally diverse students meet the conservative Japanese culture in the process of achieving their project goal. By forcibly creating "local" and "global"

encounters as class settings through the internship practicum, the student interns and the local people experience authentic challenges of intercultural understanding in real life contexts. The practicum scene becomes a place of new learning not only for the international student interns but also for the local people.

### **Globalization Support Internship: Situating Multinational Students in Local Japan**

I offer the “Globalization Support Internship (GSI),” which is a project-type internship course, every year for international exchange students who participate in the HUSA Program. Annually, approximately 40 international students attend the HUSA Program and study at the Hiroshima University for two semesters starting from October through July in the following year. Among them, several students would register for the GSI internship course. Students who take the internship course are from various countries, such as China, Korea, Taiwan, USA, Australia, Poland, Germany, and so on, depending on the cohort. One of the prominent characteristics of the HUSA students is the diversity of their cultural background, their major field of study, and their Japanese language ability, ranging from elementary to advanced level. The common characteristics of the HUSA students are their strong interest in the Japanese language and culture and their strong desire to be connected to Japan in their future career. HUSA students’ major fields of study are Asian Studies, Japanese literature, Japanese language, English literature, anthropology, gender studies, business, home economics, information technology, multimedia, engineering, biology, biochemistry, and so on. The major fields of study of the students who take the GSI course also vary, such as Japanese language, Japanese Studies, anthropology, IT technology, history, international business, and so on.

In the GSI Internship course, students engage in a group project to work with local industries, the local city hall, and local associations by cooperating in a multinational team. Through the practicum, students develop leadership skills, learn to work in multinational teams, and acquire skills and knowledge to work with the local administration and organizations in Japan. I, as the professor in charge of this GSI course, bridge the international student interns with the local city hall, local industries, and local associations so that the student interns can engage in international experiential learning in Japan. The professor’s intervention has been mandatory in order to create a practicum for students to experience the situated cognition of interacting closely with local officials in public settings in Japan. I need to negotiate with local industries, the local government office, and local associations and request for their cooperative participation to create meaningful educational opportunities from a long-term perspectives. This practicum creates a place where

multicultural international students encounter the Japanese local culture in real life contexts, and this brings new intercultural experiences as well to the local people who tend to live in a monolithic culture. Without the educational intervention of a lecturer, the collaboration of the multinational students and the local people whose lives are totally immersed in their local culture could not have happened naturally.

However, as I have mentioned above, inviting international students as guests or guest speakers does not really create an intercultural communication. International exchange events in Japan have tended to be held by placing international students in the position of invited guests to local schools to present about their home country's culture, present some cultural performances, and play games to enhance cross-cultural understanding. These activities are meaningful at least to the extent that they create some encounters with people from different cultures. However, they tend to lack the context of realistic interactions since they are conducted unilaterally without interactive situations involving accidental happenings. Therefore, an educational intervention is prerequisite to go beyond the framework of a cultural exchange event where foreign students are mere invited guests, namely, the outsiders.

We also need to question the Japanization of international students in the internship practicum. Just merely Japanizing international students in the internship practicum does not value the identities of international students who have the agency to take action on their own. This can disempower student interns who have agency to influence other people, including the local people with whom the interns work. From postmodern perspectives, in today's global age, people interact with each other not in a monolithic way, but in a context where multiple languages and cultures are operating concurrently. The formation of postmodern multilingual communities has inspired new ways of conceiving a community, and people from diverse locations share the same geographical space (Canagarajah, 2012, pp. 27–128). Similarly, multinational student interns are situated in multicultural contexts where different cultural values meet through interactions in complex ways in the process of achieving the practicum's goal. The fundamental criterion for proactive cooperation among culturally diverse student interns is their motivation toward achieving a shared goal and not their unique values and characteristics. The statement that what holds people together is their motivation toward achieving a shared goal, and not the unique values or an exclusive set of characteristics depicts aptly the way the culturally diverse student interns cooperate with each other to achieve their set goal. These student interns are situated to deal with intercultural communications among themselves and with the local people in Japan. They are inevitably placed in a situation to communicate with real people who are not trained to deal with cultural differences and cultural complexities.

The term globalization is still perceived as a phenomenon happening in remote areas from

the perspective of the local people in Japan. A balanced management of localization and globalization has been raised as an important topic of discussion in the field of global business since its management is crucial for the success of global businesses. As discussed in Harry, Wes, and Collings (2012, pp. 47–52) on the advantages of developing localization policies and localizing human resources, the prioritization of the local sense of values and invisible rules is an inevitable theme when I bring international students to the local society. However, these issues have not been examined sufficiently in the field of higher education in Japan. Even if the internationalization has been raised as a significant theme for universities today, issues pertaining to developing intercultural communication and balancing globalism and localism have not been adequately addressed. Cultural dilemmas, real hurdles, incongruences, and misunderstanding in intercultural communications in actual contexts, either in university or daily life settings, need to be analyzed more openly. This will create further discussions of real life issues which people have not had the opportunity to express honestly and publicly.

### **Students' Agency, Empowerment, and Motivation in Experiential Learning**

In the context of higher learning where student interns engage in student-centered projects in the internship practicum, international students' agency and empowerment are central to increasing students' motivation. When students are motivated, their potential is fully explored in achieving their goal. I cannot overemphasize the importance of making international student interns stand on equal terms with the people with whom they work so that the students can exercise agency and become empowered if the practicum should offer meaningful learning opportunities for them. This differs from the “guest position” of foreigners who are invited with great hospitality and care as often done in Japan as well as from the “powerless position” of students as mere recipients of special favors from the intern employers. When student interns engage in meaningful work and are valued by fully utilizing their knowledge and skills, they become empowered, and they try to make their work even more interesting and appealing.

Just working as a student intern who passively does some work without being able to express themselves in a practicum site is not empowering, but rather, disempowering. When students feel they have their own autonomy in their work by maximizing their potential, they feel they become a part of the community involved, as expressed in an intern student's comment, “I could feel my existence in Japan is significant even if I am a foreigner, by doing something useful for the Japanese people.” While studying abroad in Japan, expanding one's horizons through involvement with real people outside the university creates a sense of

special connection to Japan and its people.

Sen (1985, p. 206) defined agency as “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important.” Sen (1999, p. 19) argued that an agent is “someone who acts and brings about change.” In the practicum, student interns are agents who actually perform the action and bring something new to the life of the people in the practicum site. In the framework of the practicum that I have set up through negotiations with the local government officials and local associations, students are given the autonomy to propose their ideas to them. Before deciding on the project content for the student interns in the GSI course, we will conduct the “International Open Seminar” as part of the GIS course where I will invite local officials, city assembly members, and personnel from local associations to discuss the feasibility of the proposed project with the international student interns.

According to Alsop et al (2006, p.10), empowerment is defined as “a group’s or individual’s capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.” The most valuable asset of the practicum in the GSI course is the fact that international interns have a choice to propose, examine, and decide what they believe as an effective project to achieve the set goal; furthermore, they can see the result by actualizing the plan. Each student intern exercises his/her agency and plays his/her role to cooperate in a multicultural team. One of the previous research studied on the internship practicum in Japan (Tsunematsu, 2016a) proposed that international student interns are empowered by various factors through international experiential learning. New sources of contact outside the university, which is a new experience to which other international students cannot easily get access, empower them with a unique asset because they can be connected to the people working in real society. With their access to the city office and legitimately recognized local associations, students experience the situated cognition in official settings where they must apply their Japanese language ability and their theoretical knowledge on Japanese society in a very formal way. The hurdle for their challenge is very high, but since the practicum’s inception, some interns have felt very excited and empowered to undergo these precious experiences.

One of the driving forces for the success of the internship project is the student interns’ empowerment by valuing who they are and exercising their agency. Their status as exchange students allows them to be courageous enough to challenge themselves to do something new and what seems to be beyond their capability. Compared with graduate students who are seeking to obtain a degree in a very strict academic environment, international exchange students have more flexibility and freedom in their choice of what they intend to achieve educationally in a study abroad environment. Further, the exchange students’ strong interest

in the language and society of Japan as well as their dream of being connected to Japan in the future can motivate them to go beyond the limited boundaries and engage in challenging experiential learning in Japan. In fact, some previous students, who had eventually become true leaders in the internship practicum in the GSI course without registering for the course due to their lack of Japanese proficiency or their busy schedule, expressed that, “for me, obtaining credits is not important, but rather, I just want to challenge myself with the new things I can only experience in Japan.”

Alsop et al (2006) highlighted, as one of the components of empowerment, an expansion of agency, that is, the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value. Narayan (2002, pp. vi–vii) emphasized the four main elements of empowerment, namely, access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity. These elements also play a significant role in empowering the interns in the GSI course. They have access to precious information to which most international students do not have access, and they work together with public officials and a practicum professor who guides them about how courtesy and the behavioral code work in the Japanese society. Lived knowledge, which student interns gain through situated learning by interacting with real people and becoming part of a joint project, is a precious asset for them. Since the practicum in the GSI course has a clear goal to achieve, such as working as an international tour guide in a historical museum, or researching university students’ perceptions of a product for a global marketing strategy of a local industry product, the interns’ accountability is valued in terms of their engagement in a legitimate work as part of a multinational team supported by the academic and educational support of the professor. I also request that the local officials be involved in the evaluation of the students’ performance after the practicum; their involvement provides strict views and assessment by working professionals on the interns’ performance.

Regarding the local organizational capacity, student interns organize a multinational team with the project student leader, under the guidance of the professor who connects the interns with local officials. Interns learn how to organize projects by observing the professor’s management and negotiation with local officials, and the way she gives instructions to student interns. Students also learn to acquire the practical knowledge on the appropriate way to behave and speak in public places, and eventually learn the importance of acquiring these manners if they want to collaborate with people in Japan publicly. This is not to say that international student interns need to be “Japanized”; however, it teaches the lesson that knowing the Japanese way and courtesy is one of the important assets in opening opportunities to work with the local people in Japan.

Agency and empowerment are closely linked to motivation. Pink (2012) highlighted that autonomy, mastery, and purpose are three important motivation factors. Having a sense of



autonomy along with the person's mastery of knowledge and skills makes a person feel that he/she is an active agent who can do something according to his/her own will, and this can be empowering and motivating. Student interns need to be given the autonomy in a project, such as expressing their ideas and propositions to the local people with whom they are working. Their opinions need to be considered and valued in the project, and interns need to feel their work in the practicum has some influence on the society and people's lives. Interns need to feel that they have "mastery" in some aspects. For example, just expressing their views, from the perspectives of a foreigner, for the internationalization awareness of the local society creates a sense of value in them with regard to their contribution in Japan. Their lived knowledge as a foreigner in Japan and observation of the society are precious assets of international interns, and these insights are exclusive to them.

In order to help the interns develop mastery of socialization content and teamwork knowledge, the professor's educational involvement and instruction to students become crucial. Educational intervention plays the role of setting up the practicum in which multinational students can express their mastery in meaningful ways. Besides, the professor's involvement bridges the multinational student interns and the local people to whom these international students would not have a chance to be connected on a daily basis; this is often due to their lack of knowledge on how to gain access to them. Academic involvement possibly creates a unique educational location where the message and opinions from the international student interns and the local people can be exchanged and valued. This can eventually lead to meaningful action and practice as evidenced in the continuous internship practicum in the GSI course.

The third factor, namely, the purpose, needs to be clearly defined for interns to be motivated. It is important to state clearly the meaning of their work, goal, and learning outcome to the student interns. As one of the means to convey the learning outcome to them, I have been conducting interviews with interns on their performance in the practicum every year. Before I conduct an interview with each intern, I will request the interns to grade their performance on an evaluation sheet as their mid-term self-evaluation, which is in the middle of the practicum, and a final self-evaluation after they complete the practicum. In the evaluation, there are several categories, such as usage of formal Japanese language, Japanese cultural understanding, social skills, leadership skills, intercultural communication skills with other interns and local officials in Japan, and so on (Tsunematsu, 2016b). As a student intern expressed, "I could clearly understand what my experiences mean and what I have learned by this evaluation," clear indicators facilitate interns to understand the meaning of their hard work, and help them make sense of their efforts. For students to complete a challenging project, they need to be notified clearly of its purpose and learning outcome, which must be

meaningful for their future goal.

### **Communication in Global Age: Shift of Multicultural Students from a Minority Status**

Marginson (2014, p. 6) highlighted that international education tends to be understood as an adjustment to a host country's norms in cross-cultural psychology, and students tend to be seen as in deficit of these norms with the assumption that the student's home country identity is a barrier. This analysis can be applicable when international students are in the minority position in the location of their study abroad tenure. In the case of the HUSA Program, students from a wide range of countries, such as North America, Europe, Oceania, Asia, and South America, constitute one big global community on campus, and they are characterized by their multinationalism. This places HUSA students in a non-minority position. When students from a wide range of nations form a global community, and they function as one body in various activities, such as the orientation program, group projects seminar, and excursions among other events, students develop a strong sense of being part of the global community with a strong international identity. Further, when their main communication language is English, the distinctively international characteristics as a legitimate group are created. This even makes the community stand out as a group with their strong home country identity. This type of group is not defined as a group in deficit, especially when the students do not try to adjust themselves to the Japanese norms in their behaviors, although they do share a common strong interest in the Japanese language and culture.

The HUSA Program, which was initially started with universities in North America as exchange partners in 1996, has been strongly characterized by students from North America, Europe, Oceania, and Asia. With the expansion of partner universities, the HUSA Program now has an increasing number of students from Asian countries, and there have been students who were proficient in Japanese but not in English from China, Taiwan, and Korea. However, among the HUSA students, the exchange students who are non-English proficient are still considered a minority. The major cultural paradigm of the HUSA Program remains the Western paradigm, and this has been characterized by the majority of students who communicate in English, which Japanese students often highly regard as an indication of internationalization. The international character of the HUSA community is strong enough to the extent that the host country norms, that is, the Japanese way in this context, are not actually the dominant norms; therefore, students do not feel that they are in deficit because adjustments to the host country norms that are based on the Japanese cultural code are not necessarily required when multinational students form such a big international community on campus.

Under such circumstance, my GSI course provides a unique educational location where the HUSA students are expected to adjust themselves to the Japanese cultural norms by dealing with people outside the university. Some of the Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean student interns with a high level of Japanese proficiency have made efforts to speak using the honorifics in the Japanese language almost perfectly in official meetings with local administrative officials. Therefore, together with the usage of appropriate honorifics in Japanese in official settings, these interns have learned concomitantly the Japanese behavioral code.

Marginson (2014, p. 6) proposed the need to strengthen the agency and freedom of students to facilitate the education process of self-formation in the international education program. He argued against the idea of a “cultural fit,” adjustment, or acculturation to the habits of the host country (2014, pp. 8–9), which is based on the idea that the host country culture is normalized, and international student is seen as in deficit. He proposed the idea that international students form a new hybrid identity between their home country identity and the host country identity within conditions of disequilibrium. This argument realistically depicts what multinational student interns experience when they work in a multinational team in the internship practicum. They cannot simply follow the Japanese way when they have their own heritage identity from their home country. Further, when they form multinational teams in which each student’s cultural identity is valued, the Japanese culture is not necessarily the dominant culture to which students must adjust.

When they face the highly conservative Japanese culture where the majority of the people involved practice the customs and rituals in the local community, the convergence becomes a place where both parties need to balance out the different sense of values. I have observed the real incongruence between the local customs in Japan and the values to which Western students adhere. For example, conservative Japanese locals expect newcomers to greet them by showing respect to people according to the local social hierarchy, but for Western students, it is very difficult to comprehend how this should be done, and why it is so important. Most of the interns do not usually notice such observances in the practicum site even after I have given a lecture on these customs. Students can theoretically understand these cultural conventions, but they cannot practice them in real life that easily unless the person resides in the place and repeatedly practices them as part of his/her life.

Asian students from Korea, Taiwan, and China tend to understand this better due to their cultural backgrounds, which share some similarities; however, even they cannot practice it in real situations since most of the students have not had work experiences. When people with different sense of hierarchy, namely, *uchi/soto* (inside/outside) relationships, and formality/informality, are socially integrated, people feel incongruence inevitably. For

example, when I hold an international seminar for the internship practicum by inviting officials from the local city hall, industries, organizations, and students from North America, Europe, Oceania, Asia, and South America for a discussion of the practicum content, I, as a professor in charge of the course, need to balance out the different sense of values and behavioral codes by managing the interactions and communications of all parties skillfully and tactfully. Without an intermediary, it can easily become an awkward situation where people are unsure of how to behave.

Canagarajah (2012, p. 125) depicted the current situation of moving scholars away from primordial orientations of culture to social constructionist perspectives, proposing the importance of more studies on the new contexts of communication spawned by globalization and the urgent need of studying intercultural communication in the many new “scopes” of postmodern globalization, such as diaspora, outsourcing, and business and production networks, amongst others. The cultural context where a multinational intern student team is located within the local Japanese society is one of such complex situations that people may encounter in today’s global age. Realistically, what is supposed to be a legitimate cultural code in this type of complex context becomes unclear, and people need to work this out depending on the specific situation.

For example, experiential learning to work closely with the local city hall and local associations in Japan situates student interns in an environment where they are required to adjust themselves to the Japanese behavioral code. This educational environment promotes the proactive/dynamic interaction between the student interns and the Japanese people by placing student interns in a position that differs from the guest positions who are accorded the special treatment of being outsiders. On top of that, not only is the international student interns’ situated cognition through the practicum in this GSI course limited to the Japanese cultural context, but it also creates the situation where the cultural diversity of multinational students needs to be considered in the local context. In a way, student interns are going through a realistic context in postmodern global community, as Canagarajah (2012, pp. 127-128) described, because people from diverse locations share the same geographical space.

The complex part is the fact that the conservative culture of Japan does not take in different values very easily; therefore, the tendency is that students whose Japanese proficiency level is very advanced stand in the forefront of the team that interfaces with the local people when the interns’ multinational team meets them in the initial stages. However, interns develop an understanding of each other’s cultures through their cooperation in a multinational team to achieve their goal in the practicum. This type of involvement also brings meaningful experience to the international students whose Japanese proficiency might not be advanced, but they still want to challenge herself/himself in experiential learning in

Japan. Simultaneously, students with an advanced level of Japanese can learn how to cooperate with other international students, especially the Western students with whom they usually do not interact unless multinational team-work is created academically.

### **Conclusion: Social Power Structure and International Students' Possibilities**

Cummins (2001, p. 653) argued about the unique potential of educators to work toward the creation of contexts of empowerment individually and collectively through generation of power by students and educators to challenge structures of inequity within the interpersonal spaces of identity negotiation. Cummins (2001) further proposed that educators define their own identities through their practice and their interactions with students, and similarly, students also define their identities in their interaction with teachers, peers, and parents. The significant contention here is Cummins' emphasis on the creation of power and active agency of teachers and students who can define their identities and power. He stated, "this process of negotiating identities can never be fully controlled by forces outside of the teacher-student relationship itself" (p. 653). In the GIS practicum, each student intern can set his/her own goal, find his/her own way of becoming part of a multinational team, and maximize his/her learning outcome by working through the complexities of cultural diversity and the Japanese cultural paradigm. In the practicum settings, interns even seem to have shown enjoyment working through the cultural diversity among the students themselves and managing interpersonal relationships with the local Japanese society by exercising their individual agency and cooperating with team members.

In the GIS practicum, I have defined the international student interns as "students who have active agency and exercise power" through the practicum. I shifted the paradigm of the internship course for international exchange students in 2012 from the style of internship in which I sent students to local companies and local city hall toward the student-centered project type of internship in which students propose their own projects, manage them, and carry them out. We, the international student interns and I, the professor giving guidance for the internship course, define our position in our relationship to the people with whom we are associated outside the university, and when we do this, as Cummins (2001) argued, we can never be fully controlled by the outside forces. Of course, this does not exclude the influence of outside and power relationships in our negotiation in the internship practicum, and this is part of any type of social relationships when we negotiate for something to achieve. Depending on how meaningful the practicum is for the associated people, and how much time and labor would cost for the people involved, there are always power relationships that require appropriate courtesy and interpersonal management by the professor in charge who

guides student interns. Student interns' exercise of agency empowers them when their new and international perspectives are valued by the people in Japan, especially when the students have a strong interest in the Japanese society.

Cummins (2001, p. 650) contended, by reflecting on educational development, the need to challenge the exclusion of human relationships from our understanding of what constitutes as effective education, and questions the tendency to focus on achievement in our instructional technique. He proposed that a focus on human relationships opens a discussion of the negotiation of identities in the interaction between educators and students. He argued, in social conditions of unequal power relations between groups that "classroom interactions are never neutral with respect to the messages communicated to students about the value of their language, culture, intellect, and imagination" (2001, pp. 650-651). He raised the issue of the devaluation of identities in both schools and the society of minority students who are in subordinate groups. Cummins (2001, p. 652) asserted that whether minority students are empowered or disabled educationally are "a direct result of their interactions with educators in the schools," and "schools have reflected the societal power structure and constricted students' academic and intellectual possibilities" as their communities have devalued and excluded them.

The student-centered project in which international student interns worked in the GSI course creates a place where identities and power relations are negotiated in their relationship with the local government office, local industries, and local people. As I have analyzed the educator's creation of empowerment for students and the change of unequal power relationships by shifting the paradigm of the engagement with work (Tsunematsu, 2016c), international student interns can have the power not to be totally controlled by the forces outside the teacher-student relationship. International student interns are, in one sense, a "minority" group in the local society in Japan, so differently placed compared with the position of special global community that HUSA students have formed on campus. However, their minority position in the local society can shift, depending on how educators create meaningfully defined educational practicum and how students are located socially, culturally, and academically. Educators can disable international students or empower them, depending on how they view their agency and create appropriate and conducive settings for not only international students but also any other groups of people involved from a wider spectrum. Students can exercise their agency, and their academic and intellectual possibilities can develop much more when educators create educational opportunities that can transform the social power structure for international students who are in minority positions and are often excluded from major scenes in Japanese society. Small transformation and shift in the mindset among some people can have the power to affect not only international students but also the

local people who have yet to develop their preparedness for encounters with people from different parts of the world and for new human relationships that can be built in this global age.

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