

# Teacher's Practice and Reflection on International Understanding Lessons: From Study of Integrated Studies at a Japanese Elementary School

Natsuki Watanabe  
Kansai University  
watanabenatsuki125@gmail.com

Kenichi Kubota  
Kansai University  
author@email.com

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process in which an experienced elementary teacher reflected on her classes of international understanding education and lead to the next lesson. The teacher had to design a lesson on international understanding. However, inexperienced teachers cannot design the class by themselves. Therefore, it is important to identify how an experienced teacher designs and develops lessons of international understanding education so that other teacher can utilize the lesson design. The author conducted an interview with one teacher and analyzed it by grounded theory. It identified five stages of her developing competencies. From these processes the author identified that, in order to design international understanding education, teachers need to reflect after lessons, by comparing it with philosophies of how children learn. In this way, teachers can make children more interested and motivated.

**Keywords:** International Understanding Lessons, Teacher's Practice and Reflection, GTA

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the process in which an experienced elementary teacher reflected on her classes of international understanding education and how it led to the next lesson. This purpose of the class was for learning various things about other countries such as culture, living and sense of value. The teacher had to design an integrated study lesson on international understanding as described by the Ministry of Education (2017). However, inexperienced teachers cannot design international understanding class by themselves. According to Omae (2015), teachers say that they don't understand how to make lessons plans.

On the other hand, experienced teachers reflected on their classes, finished the class and thought about next class (Sasaki, 2015). In other words, they understand how to make lessons plans. Therefore, it is important to identify how an experienced teacher designs and improves classes of international understanding education so that other teacher and inexperienced teachers can utilize this class model.

## METHOD

### 2.1 Participants

In this study, the author interviewed the teacher who was conducting international understanding lessons in Osaka, Japan for ten years. The class that

performed lessons of international understanding lessons consisted of 30 sixth grade students. The teacher was selected because she conducted international understanding lessons for a long time.

### 2.2 Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was conducted over a video chat and lasted about 2 hours. The author asked the teacher the following questions about teacher's experience and lessons. Table 1 showed the detail item.

Table 1. Interview contents.

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|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why did you start international understanding lessons?</li><li>2. What did you do in class?</li><li>3. Have you had any problems in class?</li><li>4. Is there anything important in class?</li></ol> |
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### 2.3 Data Analysis

The Grounded Theory Approach (GTA) Method of Data Analysis was used. The author analyzed the data using following steps.

- 1) Transcribe the recorded interview into written form
- 2) Separate the data into main ideas. Each piece has an independent meaning
- 3) Use open coding to classify the pieces of data into labels, extracting the property and dimension information and naming the labels.

- 4) Combine the similar labels into Categories and naming the Categories
- 5) Integrated the Categories into theory

For example, one paragraph from the data was “ I want to make lessons that students can have an international perspective. For example, To interact with the Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. Then students can know who is working in the world”. The author summarize and named the label as [She will make lessons that students interact with residents abroad and students will educate to have international perspective]. Then the author created the category {the teacher initiated international understanding education with strong ambitious}. In this way, the author combine the similar labels into categories and naming the categories. Table 2 showed the detail.

Table 2. Analysis sheet.

category	the teacher initiated international understanding education with strong ambitious
label	She will make lessons that students interact with residents abroad and students will educate to have international perspective
data	I want to make lessons that students can have an international perspective. For example, To interact with the Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. Then students can know who is working in the world.

## RESULT&DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to analyze the process in which an experienced elementary teacher reflected on her classes of international understanding education and led to the next lesson.

It is evident from five stages of her developing competencies that in order to design international understanding education, teachers need to reflect after lessons, by comparing it with philosophies of how children learn. Five categories are as followings: (1) the teacher initiated international understanding education with strong ambitious; (2) she failed to make effective international understanding education; (3) she then tried to start a second attempt of international understanding education with support from outside experts; (4) she succeeded in making international education with the external support; (5) she realized that it was important to have external assistance. In addition, she found that the teacher herself must be interest in the culture, language and tradition of overseas countries. From these processes the author identified that, teachers compared their thought with classes, and continued to give classes reflecting their thought.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the author proposes that teachers should reflect on their thoughts about how their lessons motivate students and encourage them to learn in order to teach classes of international understanding education. Their reflections can motivate them to continue teaching classes that are sometimes difficult to continue.

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