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TRANSFORMATION OF ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM THROUGH POSTMODERN THINKING

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Abstract

The modern age, which sounds as if it would last forever, is fast becoming a thing of the past. Industrialization is quickly giving way to post-industrial, factory labour to home and office work and, in the arts, the Tradition of the New is leading to the combination of many traditions. Even those who still call themselves Modern artists and architects are looking backwards and sideways to decide which styles and values they will continue (Jenecks, 1986).

Keywords: *arts education, curriculum, postmodern thinking.*

A. INTRODUCTION

There are new directions towards new beliefs and changes in thinking across the various disciplines has an impact towards the development of arts education in schools. For a long time the core of modern thinking has been fundamental to the discipline of arts education especially in Malaysia. Arts teachers are complacent and comfortable with what they have teaching and produced. The question of the awareness of teaching arts in the 21th century should raise the question of meaning of art and how we teach arts in schools. It involves the interpretation and changes in pedagogical aspects, the art works and also issues of teachers. Currently the development of postmodern thinking can be seen in new works. Sometimes a friction occurs in thinking based on the development of knowledge that needs change and development. Looking at the environment as well as technological advances and the needs of the society there had to be some existence of new thoughts that resulted in the manifestation towards new creative works in schools.

The course of postmodern thinking is not a new style in the arts but it is part of modern thinking. There is a production in the works of art that represents the time, which corresponds with new beliefs, thus, there is a need for awareness in the delivery of arts education. Arts teachers should be aware of the development in current thinking so that the process of creation of artwork by pupils meet the development in new knowledge. Due to the development of postmodern thinking, it should be observed in teaching and delivery process.

This paper invites teachers especially arts teachers in Malaysia or Indonesia to discuss and realize how we can respond to this issue. It is hoped that at the same time there will be efforts towards the achievement of awareness in the current changes in the development of artwork as well as the delivery in arts education in our schools so that it is relevant to current needs. Curriculum planning will enable the realization of the teaching and learning process of arts education. The awareness towards traditional values that are embedded in the development of curriculum forms the core of the arts education curriculum in Malaysia. This can be noticed in when knowledge on traditional crafts is applied in the arts education curriculum in Malaysia. It aims to delve into the traditional values and basic beliefs of the Malaysian people. Apart from introducing and learning the visual form that becomes one of the activities in schools, the main component to be emphasized in traditional arts and crafts is the Malay values as well as the foundation towards the identity and awareness amongst the Malaysian students. In Malaysia we agreed that cultural should form the basis of national culture, and it is written into the constitution that Islam is the official religion of Malaysia, whilst of course tolerating the existence and practice of other religions amongst the non-Muslim section of the population (Syed Ahmad Jamal, 1993).

Aspects that portray balance in the development of student personality are listed in the objectives of the Malaysia arts education curriculum. There are ten main objectives listed in the arts curriculum. The core objectives of national arts education are listed as below:

- to appreciate the beauty of nature created by God,
- to foster a research culture in the process of producing visual art works,
- to enhance knowledge, creativity, innovation, discipline as well as skills in the field of visual arts practiced in life and career,
- to use variety of skills, media, techniques and technology to design arts and crafts and quality visual arts products,
- to describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate visual art works,
- to obtain added value in science, technology and other subject disciplines,

- to appreciate contributions and influence of visual arts renowned figure in the contexts of the history of development of visual arts in Malaysia and international level,
- to make visual arts as a career prospect,
- to appreciate the field of visual arts in the environment and its relation to a comfortable living and
- to build self esteem towards the development of a national state.

In addition, curriculum planning should be based on the needs of modern society and the appropriateness of the performance in visual arts. The core of education based on the education philosophy also plays a part in the development of aims and approaches in teaching and learning in education especially in arts education. Thus, arts education in schools practiced modern thinking in art as well as the preservation of traditional art. It is hoped this will preserve the fundamental and noble values of the society.

B. GLOBAL ISSUES AND VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In Malaysia the development of education is undergoing transformation. It is the nation's main agenda in all aspects which includes education as the core matter for the future. The ministry and the government are also concerned about the current issue in current development which is based on the interpretation of post modern thingking. Something must be done in the field of education so that this transformation will yield excellence in future national education. The teaching and learning in the field of arts education within schools in Malaysia should be in line with current ways of thinking and interpretation. It is apparent that in the development of arts in Malaysia, there exits strong modern characteristics. It is indeed a strong foundation in the development of education, especially by art teachers who had received education from abroad and also through the formation of the curriculum.

At the same time, the availability of new communication technologies and mass media communication raises new issues in the development of national art. There are nine approaches of modern arts in art development and education that affects the delivery of arts education in Malaysian schools and education in the nation. Among the things that are modern arts oriented are:

- Artist as heroes or the significant of self-expression.
- The role of the Avant Garde
- 'Art for art's sake'
- Fine art
- The assumption of the western university
- The role of critics
- Art history as linear progression
- Gender and modernism
- Optimism

The implementation of teaching and learning arts education in Malaysia approaches are based on the orientation as mentioned above. Modern thinking is clearly portrayed through this orientation. However, not all of the orientation may be applied as teaching and learning approaches in Malaysia. Only a few approaches are used in the teaching methodology to carry out visual arts activities in schools and even than it is not carried out as a whole.

This is also true amongst the art activists exposed to creative works based modern thinking that has still not been well developed. Some of the orientation as listed is found in the Malaysian arts curriculum. It is of importance also to note that the process of teaching depends on the person who is teaching it. If the strength of the said art teachers to be able to interpret the curriculum, then the teaching will become more relevant. Transformation in arts education in schools must take place so that it becomes relevant with the development in the international level.

C. GLOBALIZATION AND ARTS EDUCATION

The rapid growth towards globalization influences the social system. Prior to this, the system of life has been influenced with modern thinking to form the modern lifestyle of the society. The developments in thinking are based on the relevance in life with the changes in time. The issue of modern thinking that influences lifestyle undergoes the process of developments towards postmodern thinking. Such developments have an effect towards the developments in visual arts. Development in a borderless world based on new technologies aids, develop new thinking that is rapidly spread through out the world.

Globalization with unbalanced news within nations and new order information of the world has become a widely discussed issue in the communications arena. Issues based on postmodern thinking with borderless communication, informed and knowledgeable society have become new issues in discussions at international level. This happened very quickly and is shared worldwide with state of the art technology.

The world in the 21st century is a new world. The world now is not merely identified based on the political ideologies but via its economic stability. Economic powerhouse with its capitalist system strives to create a global market. World trade organization is the mechanism used to realize the global dream. In the area

of communication, globalization can be realized with the existence of global media that plays the role of not only to disseminate information but also to shape and influence public thinking and opinion. The field of arts has also not been spared from the influence of current thinking.

The issue of globalization brings about postmodern thinking so that we will undergo a process of transformation in several aspects. This will enable us to be relevant in the current contexts. However, all changes must maintain the basis of our value system to become a fundamental Malaysian or Indonesian society.

Amongst the subjects that are usually mentioned during the transformation towards postmodern are:

- The individual in context
- Aesthetic pluralism
- Art for meaning
- High and low art
- Multiculturalism
- Viewers as critic
- Art knowledge as non-linear
- Gender
- Skepticism and postmodern doubt

The subjects listed become topics of discussion as well as to review the world in the contexts of positive development. However, the issue is how far should we support and adapt the developments in national art and education. It should be based on the appropriate direction and need of the nation where the new values are at an intersection. This is something to be given thought of together.

The question is; are we aware of the development? How do we overcome it and make it relevant? Consequently, what is the form we want based on current development that is capable to maintain the fundamental values underlying our society. In the face of postmodern polemics, we need to view with a broad mind and evaluate the implications towards national education. As a result we are unable to prevent the rapid development of postmodern thinking.

With the advent of new communication system based on modern communication technology the minds of the new generations will always be challenged with the new thinking. We also need to monitor critically to allow us to provide a suitable respond towards the developments in arts so that it is appropriate with the national religion, culture, identity, economic background and politics.

In order to enable us to monitor the issue of traditional, modern and post modern thinking critically, we must have the interest and capability to identify the developments and the performance of art now. Apart from that, we must be able to follow the developments in education and arts as well as aspects in curriculum planning in our country at school level. This knowledge will enable us to effectively analyze the impact of postmodern and globalization amongst national artists and art educators.

D. UNESCO–ARTS EDUCATION ROAD MAP

Malaysia and Indonesia are countries that had represented the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on arts education at international level. It was also organized by the UNESCO in dignifying world arts education as well as its heritage in world culture. Several aspects were listed to be brought to the conference in Portugal to determine the projections for world arts education in the Asia Pacific Regional Conference that had taken place on the 23rd -25th of November 2005 in Korea and some of the areas listed are as the following:

Understand the challenges to cultural diversity posed by globalization, and the increasing need for imagination, creativity and collaboration as societies become more knowledge-based.

Recognize the need for countries of the Asia-Pacific region to develop educational and cultural strategies and policies that transmit and sustain cultural and aesthetic values and identity, so as to enhance and promote cultural diversity and to develop peaceful and prosperous societies;

Recognize the value and applicability of the arts in the learning process and their role in: developing cognitive and social skills; promoting innovative thinking and creativity; and encouraging behaviours and values which underlie social tolerance and respect for diversity;

Recognize that arts education brings about improved learning and skills development;

Acknowledge that art in Asia-Pacific societies was traditionally part of everyday life and played a key role in cultural transmission and in community and individual transformation;

Recognize that the convergence between the traditional conception of arts in Asia-Pacific societies and the more recent understanding that learning through the arts can lead to improved learning and skills development;

Acknowledge that arts education, like all types of education, must be of high quality to be effective.

Understand that arts education, by engendering a range of cross-cutting skills and abilities and raising student motivation and active participation in class, can contribute to increasing the quality of education, and thereby to achieving one of UNESCO's six Education for All (EFA) goals.

E. RESOLUTION OF THE 1ST WORLD ARTS EDUCATION CONFERENCE – 'ROAD MAP FOR ARTS EDUCATION'

This conference identified the main objective of developing creative foundation amongst the young generation in this 21st century. Emphasis can be done through teaching approaches in arts education with clear and solid guidelines for the future. A theoretical framework known as 'Road Map of Arts Education' was portrayed in the conference. The 'Road Map of Arts Education' aims to explore the role of arts education in meeting the need for creativity and cultural awareness in the 21st Century, and places emphasis on the strategies required to introduced or promote arts education in the learning environment. In terms of its practical aspects, it is meant to serve as an evolving reference document which outlines concrete changes and steps required to introduce or promote arts education in educational setting (formal or non-formal) and to establish a solid framework for future decisions and actions in this field.

Philosophically there is a question being raised in relation to the meaning and what is meant by arts education. The question raised is whether arts education aims to teach only art appreciation or help upgrade the teaching and learning of other subjects. Does arts education focuses only towards the field of arts or form a body of knowledge related to skills and values? Another question is whether arts education is meant only for certain group of people or is arts education for all. It has been the main issue to arts practitioners, teachers, students and policy makers. The Road Map attempts a comprehensive response to these questions and emphasizes that creative and cultural development should be a basic function of education. The aims of arts education – UNESCO:

- Uphold the human right to education and cultural participation
- Develop Individual Capabilities
- Improve the Quality of Education
- Promote the Expression of Cultural Diversity

F. POSTMODERN THINKING AND ARTS EDUCATION

1. Concept of Arts

Every group of the society in this world will always find a way to show their culture to the world. Therefore, one of the ways is through the role of visual arts that can portray their existence wherever they are. The identification of other society's arts is very important in the current world and it should be done through arts education. It is the same with arts existence in our country, either Indonesia or Malaysia. It must be exposed so that the value of thinking behind the artwork can be understood by all members of the society and the future generation. In a culturally rich society, there is a distinctive art that should be understood via art education. It is unique as each culture owns a variety of interpretation and understanding as well as own beliefs. Arts education should be the foundation to education to understand the way of life of various societies.

2. Approaches to Arts Education

Imagination, creativity and innovation are natural characteristics that exist in every individual. It takes place systematically to produce creative individuals. As Sir Ken Robinson has noted, imagination is the characteristic feature of human intelligence, creativity is the application of imagination, and innovation completes the process by utilizing critical judgment in the application of an idea.

Another important area in the approaches of teaching art is the awareness of culture. It should be the fundamental beginning each time there is the process of teaching and learning art whether it is used as a setting to recognize one's own culture or the beginning of a setting to understand other cultures. Central to this is acknowledging the perpetual evolution of culture and its value both in historical and contemporary contexts. Educational content and structure should not only reflect the characteristics of each art form but also provide the artistic means to practice communication and to interact within various cultural, social and historical contexts. There are two questions to the approach that can be undertaken in teaching of arts:

- Firstly to teach art with an artistic focus or more to theme, material, process and technique as well as appreciation,
- or focus on aspects of teaching and learning as well as artistic and cultural dimension that becomes the core of the whole learning.

3. Dimensions of Arts Education

Arts Education is structured through three complementary pedagogical streams:

- Study of artistic works - the student gains knowledge in interaction with the artistic object, with the artist and teacher.
- Direct contact with artistic works - the student gains knowledge through artistic practice.
- Engaging in arts practices - the student gains knowledge through research and study of an art form, and of the relationship of art to history.

G. ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE ARTS EDUCATION IN 21 CENTURIES.

1. Education of teachers/arts educators and artists
   - Education of teachers of general subjects
   - Education for arts teachers
   - Education for artists
2. Partnerships
   - Ministerial level or municipality level
   - School and higher institution level
   - Teacher and lecturer in higher institution level

Fostering creativity as well as awareness towards respecting culture is very important and it is the main national agenda in the 21st century. All parties should cooperate in determining that the younger generations in this country have knowledge, skills and more importantly; value, attitude as well as ethics in the face of the new era for the common thought to be relevant in the current contexts.

It also answers to the challenges towards a sustainable future. Exposure of education more openly with good quality in teaching and learning from pedagogical aspects especially in the subject of arts education is of utmost importance. It will open new perspective which is more creative, initiative, reflective to fulfill the needs of future. It is hoped that with the understanding of current trends in thinking with a strong fundamental knowledge based on religion as well as culture will be a backbone towards the process in the transformation of arts education as a whole to meet universal interest.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING AND CHARACTER-BUILDING: THE EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING INDONESIAN IN AUSTRALIA

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A. INTRODUCTION

To learn a foreign language is to learn that there are other ways of using language than those that we are used to. This can be a shock for people learning a second language for the first time. This teaches students that there are other ways of organising a language and other ways of constructing meaning than those that they were brought up with. As well as providing knowledge about the new language, it teaches learners to see their own first language in a new light. This provides a greater maturity about the state of the world, and about one's own first language. Whatever the method of language education, this should always apply.

Secondly, as the traditional grammar-translation method of teaching foreign languages has been replaced over the last sixty years by more active methods in language education, the new emphasis on listening and speaking has created a new atmosphere of performance in the language classroom. Successful language teaching and learning will create greater poise and confidence, a pleasure in performance. This became evident from the introduction of the audio-lingual method of language education from the late 1960s, leading to a time during the 1970s when it was dominant. For these character building effects to be achieved, the classroom must be active, and students must use as much language as possible in the time available.

To learn a foreign language is to learn that there are other ways of using language than those that we are used to. This can be a shock for people learning a second language for the first time. This teaches students that there are other ways of organising a language and other ways of constructing meaning than those that they were brought up with. As well as providing knowledge about the new language, it teaches learners to see their own first language in a new light. This provides a greater maturity about the state of the world, and about one's own first language. Whatever the method of language education, this should always apply.

Secondly, as the traditional grammar-translation method of teaching foreign languages has been replaced over the last sixty years by more active methods in language education, the new emphasis on listening and speaking has created a new atmosphere of performance in the language classroom. Successful language teaching and learning will create greater poise and confidence, a pleasure in performance. This became evident from the introduction of the audio-lingual method of language education from the late 1960s, leading to a time during the 1970s when it was dominant. For these character building effects to be achieved, the classroom must be active, and students must use as much language as possible in the time available.

Since the 1980s there has been a new emphasis on the creative aspects of language learning, with more real-life situations and real-life materials, an emphasis on creating meaning. Imaginative teachers have used a range of classroom techniques to stimulate creativity and imagination. It is most important that students are active in the learning process, and that teaching materials are challenging.

Each of these points enhances character building. But the most important aspect is the way that language learning provides access to and empathy with other cultures. Teachers have not always found it easy to build the cultural aspects into their language teaching. In this paper I would like to illustrate these points with reference to the evolution of teaching Indonesian in Australia.

B. THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY – TEACHING INDONESIAN IN AUSTRALIA IN THE LAST CENTURY

The first phase of Indonesian teaching in Australia was the grammar-translation phase, from 1958 to 1968. The core components of a typical grammar-translation lesson were the presentation of a grammatical rule, a study of lists of vocabulary, and a translation exercise. There were occasional comprehension passages. Few were conversations.

Grammar translation had been a very powerful method of language teaching; first used as the traditional method of teaching Latin and Greek in Europe, it had come to be used in teaching 'modern' languages such as French, German and English in the nineteenth century. At its best it produced students with a fine and detailed knowledge of the workings of the formal language, and a subtle capacity to access and to translate great works of literature, hardly skills to be scorned.

The greatest problem of the grammar translation method was that its most valued and practiced skills were reading and writing. It was not clear when students would listen to the language, much less speak. So it

was an appropriate method for students who might never visit the country whose language they were studying, but who sought to access the riches of that society through its novels, poetry, short stories and plays, the 'languages and literatures' tradition.

From around 1968, in Australia, grammar-translation was relatively quickly replaced by the Audio-lingual method, with its emphasis on dialogues, real-life situations and pattern drills, speaking and listening rather than reading and writing.The advent of wide-bodied planes and cheaper fares in the 1960s marked the start of mass tourism; students were now much more likely to visit the countries they had studied, to want and need to talk to native speakers. For Southeast Asia, the great wave of interest generated in schools and universities was a product of involvement in the Vietnam War. The stakes were more urgent than a cultivated interest in literature. If students were to visit the countries of Southeast Asia, then they wanted to be able to discuss a range of social and political topics.

Also permitting and causing the shift to audio-lingual was the relatively cheap availability of language laboratories. Here was a shift from pen and book, to mouth and machine. In the hours in the language lab, a whole class could be talking their heads off. 'Talking to a machine!', said later critics scornfully, pointing to the distance from the strains, tensions and negotiations of real-life conversations. They were right, but that later insight should not obscure what a great change this methodological shift entailed at the time.

The key elements were: pattern practices; speech habits; meaningful units in context; articles with thematic titles – e.g., 'An Outing', 'An Accident', 'Entertainment', 'Going Shopping'; the 20 'dialogue sentences' comprising the core of each unit; the visual aids; more realistic formats; the shift from writing and translating to imitating and transforming oral cues; native speaker recordings as models; and always the tapes to be used in the classroom and language laboratory – the golden age of the language lab.

The language teaching texts of this time for Indonesian had a richness of classroom exercises, including an elaborate technique for the exploitation of dialogues, covering and uncovering the text, listening, repeating, chanting as whole-class, or by groups and individuals. There were reading passages with comprehensions, and exercises of at least seven types: substitution, transformation, fill-in, complete, matching, true/false and scrambled sentences; there were special notes and remarks, songs and games.

These texts envisaged the task of the Australian student as learning about Indonesia, not learning how to discuss Australia in Indonesian. Several texts took the new idea of building their book around Australian visitors to Indonesia. But when Tom Johnson of the Australian Dairy Company meets business colleagues in Surabaya, they discuss the history of Majapahit rather than business (Sumaryono, Book Three, 1974).

Although fresher elements were appearing, the old didactic high-literature tradition remained. Some of the readers had a 'high literature' feel, with the exclusion of daily life. When daily life was covered, it was the village and its folktales. Collins' *BungaRampai*looked to the future, drawn from Indonesian press articles, rather serious. And Sumaryono'sBook Three made much use of real-life material from magazines and newspapers, including cartoons, anecdotes, advertisements, jokes and articles. The current debates on realia are in fact some 40 years old.

Methodological innovation did not come until 1988, for Indonesian learning texts,, when Ian White started publishing his notional-functional text series, *Bahasa Tetanggaku*. This method had come earlier for other languages in Australia, and the 1980s saw new lively texts for Italian, German, French and Japanese. Low student demand postponed such initiatives for Indonesian, so that the new methodologies of functional-notional and communicative language teaching occured side-by-side from around 1988.

Functional-notional methodology demonstrated a shift from language form to language use. Functions were defined by asking 'what does the speaker want to do?' The answers to this question, almost always ending in '-ing', were the functions, such as 'agreeing', 'apologising', 'asking for'. A further question elicited the particular 'notions' that the function was about. The key factor in teaching and text-writing was to ask what function was needed, and then to choose between the easier and more difficult ways in which that function might be realised in real life.

In White's texts, the contents page for each 'topic' is laid out on a grid, displaying language functions, and grammar points. One good example is the language functions for Chapter Four, on 'shopping':

Colours
Asking about price
Identifying objects
Expressing surprise and shock
Bargaining: Offering a price
Refusing a price
Agreeing on a price
Describing quality
Comparing two objects
Comparing more than two objects

Indicating wants and needs
Transport
Personal language: my chores.

Julia Read's comments on communicative methodology:

There are five main aspects of communicative pedagogy that differ from earlier methodological approaches.The first is an emphasis on sociolinguistic appropriateness, the area formerly neglected in language pedagogy. The second aspect is message-focus, which means that pieces of language are treated as carriers of message rather than as exemplars of grammatical structure. On the level of receptive skills, message-focus is manifested in information transfer exercises, where students extract information from a passage (authentic resource materials created as a means of communicating content and not for some pedagogic purpose are preferred) and use it to perform a task, e.g., a reading task might be used to extract information that feeds into another task (success in the task being dependent on understanding the reading).

This task-dependency provides immediate feedback to the learner. In productive practice, students are placed in positions where they will want to say something and are provided with the means to say it. Information or opinion gap activities are the pre-eminent or archetypal learning activity in communicative pedagogy, based on the rationale that where there is a genuine desire to find out something, then there exists a communicative situation, i.e., one that takes the learners' attention away from practising structures (form-focus) and puts it on getting the message across (message-focus).

The third contribution of communicative pedagogy is deliberate stimulation of psycho-linguistic processes. Meaningful tasks tap students' own situations, experiences, opinions, feelings and preferences. The tedium of older-style exercises is replaced by genuine information exchange. All the psycholinguistic processes used in communication begin with the user's desire to convey or obtain a message, e.g., the negotiation of meaning that occurs in face-to-face interactions. Psycholinguistics provides the insight that listening is always done for a purpose and that listeners process selectively, not attending equally to every word of a message. Unlike traditional listening comprehension exercises in which the learner is made to focus on each word, information transfer exercises require the learner to attend only to those parts of the message relevant to a task.

Emphasis on risk-taking skills is the fourth contribution of communicative pedagogy mentioned by Johnson & Johnson 1998: 71. In the past, because of the emphasis on thoroughness and the desire to avoid errors, students were characteristically taught to read texts word by word. CLT recognises that this procedure not only fails to help, it positively hinders development of an important communicative skill – that of understanding a message in a linguistic context which is only partially understood. Learners who visit a country where the TL is spoken will need this skill.

Free practice techniques are the fifth contribution. In older approaches, the emphasis was on part practice, not discourse. There was virtually no free production stage or preparation for it. Communicative pedagogy recognises that spoken communication is a complex skill, requiring rapid formulation of utterances which are simultaneously 'right' on several levels, involving far more than the sub-skill of being grammatically correct. Holistic practice is thus important to allow practice of sub-skills in combination. The development of free practice techniques is a hallmark of communicative pedagogy and a major contribution to language teaching.

Some of the best teaching and learning materials used for communicative teaching made use of creative processes on the part of students: role-plays, writing and performing skits, writing small poems and songs, studying a genre eg advertisements, and then working in pairs or small groups to create one's own advertisement, or other genre. There was a welcome emphasis on extensive use of realia in the classroom, and on setting real-life-like writing tasks.

C. INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE LEARNING (IcLL)

IcLL has become increasingly accepted across Australian school curricula over the last ten years.I think it is much less well known in Indonesia, so I will quote some of the key principles as described by its major conceptualisers, Tony Liddicoat and Angela Scarino - here drawn from the Asia Education Foundationwebsite in its guide for teachers: Materials on Getting Started with Intercultural Language Learning:

Quote no 1:

Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL) connects the study of culture to language learning and sees them as integrated and holistic. IcLL requires students to reflect on the knowledge and assumptions

they make about their own cultures as well as those of the target language. It reformulates what it means to teach a language and provides new and richer ways of connecting language learning to other learning domains.

Quote No 2:

Explicit Teaching of Culture is a Central Part of Language Teaching

The ultimate goal of Languages teaching and learning is to be able to communicate in another language. Cultures shape the way language is structured and the ways in which language is used.

Cultural knowledge is not something that learners can just pick up. In fact, cultural differences may often go unnoticed by learners until they actually create a problem. If learners are going to develop their cultural knowledge about the target language group, they need to be helped, through explicit teaching, to notice when their culture is similar to or differs from that of others.

Culture is Integrated Into Other Language Skills, Not a Separate Skill

Often culture has been considered to be some sort of fifth macro-skill, which is introduced once the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing have been established. Quite often in language textbooks we see a separate section reserved for culture. However, these notes, while interesting, are not usually the elements of culture that learners typically experience difficulty with. When we use a language, we are involved in culture, whether we are speaking, listening, reading or writing.

At a global level the goals of intercultural language learning are as follows:

- understanding and valuing all languages and cultures
- understanding and valuing one's own language(s) and culture(s)
- understanding and valuing one's target language(s) and culture(s)
- understanding and valuing how to mediate among languages and cultures
- developing intercultural sensitivity as an ongoing goal.

Liddicoat, A.J., Scarino, A., Papademetre, L. & Kohler, M. 2003, *Report on intercultural language learning*, p.46. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training

Understanding and Valuing Cultures from the Beginning

We need to start teaching culture at the very beginning of language teaching, because even simple language conveys culture. Whether we think we are teaching culture or not, we are actually providing cultural information in classrooms. Language is not learnt in a cultural vacuum that can be filled in later, rather learners create their own cultural assumptions as they learn. Ignoring culture does not leave a vacant cultural space which can be filled in later. Rather, it leads to a cultural space which is filled by uninformed and unanalysed assumptions.

Quote No 3: The 'Cultural' in Intercultural – Liddicoat, Scarino et al (2003):

Language Acquisition Involves Intercultural Exploration

Most learners have not had opportunities to learn about the way in which their own culture works and how their own language reflects their culture, and without this knowledge it is difficult to come to terms with a different culture. The most important cultural learning that can come about in the Languages classroom is that cultures are relative, not absolute. Exposure to another culture provides an opportunity for comparison with one's own culture, just as learning another language provides opportunities to develop metalinguistic awareness. A deeper understanding of one's own culture and the ways in which cultures vary may be a long-lasting outcome of Languages learning.

The 'Culture' in Intercultural

'A knowledge of and engagement with the systems of culture are fundamental to being able to communicate

successfully, and provide a basis for the ways in which speakers of a language establish shared meanings and communicate shared concepts and ways of seeing the world.'

Source: Liddicoat, A.J., Scarino, A., Papademetre, L. & Kohler, M. 2003, *Report on intercultural language learning*, p.45. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

IcLL draws upon the relationship between language and culture. New conceptions of culture demonstrate this relationship.

Culture

- culture is multifaceted, variable and dynamic
- culture is created through interaction rather than a pre-existing construct
- culture is fundamentally related to our understanding of who we are.

Culture Learning

- all learners already have a culture
- culture learning starts with learning that one's own viewpoint is culturally determined
- learning a new culture involves examining how the culture is constructed and enacted
- culture learning is an interaction between the existing culture and the new culture
- culture learning means reconsidering who we are: the 'third place' (see p.17 for more
- information)
- culture learning involves reflection on the self, the other and one's reactions to both.

Culture and Language

- language use is central to the construction and enactment of culture
- culture cannot be learnt independently of language nor can language be learnt independently from culture
- culture is learnt through language and through language use.

First Culture(s)

- learners have pre-existing cultural knowledge
- learners view the world through their own culture
- learners' cultural practices are often invisible to them
- learners have stereotypical views of their own culture.

The Culture to be Learnt

- learners have stereotypical views of the target culture
- the world view of the target culture may not coincide with learners' own culture
- practices of the target culture may seem deviant
- practices of the target culture are often more visible, but may be interpreted as individual rather than as cultural.

General Issues About Culture

*culture is constructed, reconstructed and transmitted by members of a group

- cultures are relative
- cultures frame our thinking about the world
- cultures frame our actions in the world: behaviour is cultural.

Source: Liddicoat, A.J. 2004, *National training, Asian Languages Professional Learning Project Phase 1*, Melbourne: Asia Education Foundation.

Static and Dynamic Views of Culture

In a static view of culture

- culture is seen as facts and artefacts

- culture learning is the acquisition of information about a country and/or its people
- cultural competence is the recall of this information.

IcLL examines culture as a highly variable and constantly changing phenomenon, and emphasises a dynamic approach to culture.

In a dynamic view of culture

- culture is seen as practices, beliefs, attitudes
- culture learning is an engagement with these practices, beliefs, attitudes
- cultural competence is intercultural competence.

These three quotes are taken from: Materials on Getting Started with Intercultural Language Learning, from the Asia Education Foundation website:
http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/teachers/professional_learning/languages/getting started/getting_started_icll.html; Accessed September 9, 2014.

D. SUMMING UP APPROACHES TO CULTURE IN THE MAJOR LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Major methodologies in Indonesian Teaching in the Australian experience	Links to Culture (& character)
Grammar – translation, 1960s	This method (a)made students aware of the nature of a second language and thus of the nature of their own language; and (b) lead on to cultural study in the reading and translation of literature, particularly short stories and poetry, sometimes novels and drama.
Audio-lingual text series, from 1968 to 1980s	This method had the benefit of (a) above but added the dimension of performance much more strikingly, although a large part of that performance was in the language laboratory, involving repetition and manipulation of sentences. Cultural material in these texts came from readings on cultural topics, or in taped dialogues related to themes.
Functional-notional, from late 1980s	The functional-notional method is a way of re-arranging teaching material, from grammar points to functions, and does not have much to say about teaching culture, except through socio-linguistic material on functions.
Communicative methodology from the 1990s	This method is largely a way of re-organising class-room activities to elicit more student talk and less teacher talk. It brings the creative nature of performance more strikingly into focus, emphasising students working together to create meaning. One of the four components of cultural competence is 'cultural competence' so this is one of the core principles. There is also attention to sociolinguistic factors.
ICLL, Inter-Cultural Language Learning, from around 2003	Cultural comparison is at the core of this method, and cultural comparison is the starting point for later language work. Themes are now used for intercultural comparison.

E. MATERIALS NEED TO BE REALISTIC AND MATURE

When we reviewed Indonesian language teaching materials some years back, we drew attention to the following weaknesses? How true are these of the materials you are using to teach foreign languages today?

1. The texts are too childish in orientation, to the exclusion of most of adult life.
2. There is a narrowness of emotional range, a general 'niceness' of tone, far from any of the strong emotions.

3. Those transactions that do not involve children involve tourists; there is little for the 'Asia-literate' Australian professionals who go to Indonesia to transact their business.
4. There is almost no material on Australia in the material produced in Australia, so that students may go to Indonesia well-prepared to converse about the *keris* or *Borobudur*, but unprepared to discuss their own society.
5. There is an avoidance of any sensitive social issue in Australian or Indonesian society, so that students may well be enabled to discuss all topics except those that really interest them.
6. Despite the various cuttings from newspapers, there is a great lack of real-life advertisements, printed handouts and leaflets, official forms, product labels and instructions.
7. The grammar is taught point by point rather than being related to actual use and to particular functions; there is a general tendency to have grammar divided up into little parcels, articles each the same length, with no regard as to whether any one grammar item may have dozens of uses or only a few.
8. The materials are inauthentic, written to illustrate grammar points (this does not mean that they are not useful, but they are not enough).
9. The exercises are work than can be done by students on their own, and don't lend themselves to communication.
10. There is almost no concern with register and other sociolinguistic issues; the language is pitched at no particular social situation; there is little to prepare even the casual visitor for Jakarta.
11. There is a lack of authentic writing tasks.

F. QUOTES ON LANGUAGE LEARNING – AND CHARACTER BUILDING

❝ If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk -to him in his own language, that goes to his heart. ❞
Nelson Mandela

❝ One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way. ❞
Frank Smith

❝ The limits of my language are the limits of my world. ❞
Ludwig Wittgenstein

❝ You can never understand one language until you understand at least two. ❞
Geoffrey Willans

❝ To have another language is to possess a second soul. ❞
Charlemagne

❝ Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own. ❞
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

❝ Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going. ❞
Rita Mae Brown

❝ Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow. ❞
Oliver Wendell Holmes

Source: **10 Inspirational Quotes for Language Learners;** Theresa Dold on 04/15/11; http://voxy.com/blog/index.php/2011/04/inspirational-quotes-for-language-learners/; accessed September 10, 2014.

G. CONCLUSION

Language learning has always had important character building effects, whatever the language teaching methodology being used. It is always helpful to greater maturity to realise that other language operate differently from one's own language/s; this also creates a new attitude to one's own first language. Language teaching methodology changes fairly rapidly, with five major methodologies playing important roles over the last five decades. These developing methods have added the important dimensions of pride in performance and

enhancing creativity, if used well. But materials need to be authentic, intelligent, challenging and relevant to the learner and to the real world – this is often NOT the case in our practice. Perhaps the most character-building aspect of language learning is its ability to create a greater understanding and empathy towards other cultures. To achieve this important effect the study of culture must be integrated into language teaching/learning in effective and meaningful ways.

David Reeve,
19 September 2014.