

International Cultural Communication: The Application of Baha'i Principles to Language Education

Brenda Watts Memorial Presentation

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Abstract:

Language education in the world is changing from traditional, grammar-centered language teaching to communicative language teaching. This is reflected in the increasing number of research publications on the communicative approach. In the field of teaching English as a second language, various approaches have been presented on the use of teaching strategies for multi-cultural communication.

At all levels of the English ability, it is important to improve the ability to communicate across different cultures, to cultivate effective communicative competence. The basic strategy for multi-cultural communication is exactly the same as the principles of the Baha'i Faith. Application of the Baha'i principles to language teaching will make it easy for learners to develop their ability to carry out multi-cultural communication. In other words, learners will be able to communicate across cultures without wasting the time used for language learning.

Baha'u'llah stresses the importance of education by stating, "Man is the supreme Talisman. Lack of a proper education hath, however, deprived him of that which he doth inherently possess...Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures and enable mankind to benefit therefrom" (*Gleanings*, p. 259-60). What we see in education in Japan is a situation that Baha'u'llah deplores. Most English language learners cannot communicate in English. They waste their time because of the inappropriate educational system. This unfortunate situation deprives the English learners of the opportunities to dedicate themselves to understanding the other people in the world.

I propose the use of a communication activity check list for measuring the learner's degree of world citizenship. Answering the questions in this check list will lead the learners to be aware of and think of Baha'i principles. This check list will also help teachers share learners' positive opinions and deepen their understanding of the Baha'i philosophy.