
Kyoto Studies: Local to Global Education

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As Japanese universities internationalize, instructors must redesign content courses to meet new curricular requirements and to suit students with a variety of language backgrounds. This paper examines these issues through a case study of the evolution of “Kyoto Studies.” Starting as an EFL content course for Japanese students, it was redesigned for a Japanese studies program, and then revised to become a regular course in an English-medium-instruction department in a “Global 30” Project university. The paper focuses on conditions imposed from outside by “globalized” administrative requirements and from inside by the dynamics of multicultural, multilingual students.

日本の大学が国際化するに従って、講師達はコース内容を新しい科目要件に見合うよう、そして多様な言語背景を持つ生徒に沿うよう変えなければならない。この論文は、これらの課題を「京都研究」という科目が進化していくケーススタディーを通して検証する。それは日本人生徒のためのEFLを含むコースとして始まり、日本研究プログラムとして再構築され、「グローバル30」プロジェクト大学の中の中級英語講座の通常講座になるよう改訂された。この論文では、「グローバル化」した管理要件によって外部から課された条件と、多文化で多言語の生徒たちの多様性によって内部から課された条件について論ずる。

This paper will discuss the evolution of a course in three different teaching environments. The course on Kyoto’s society and culture was originally created for an EFL class where the students were all native speakers of Japanese. Several years later the same subject was used for a course in which half of the students were native speakers of Japanese and half native English speakers. Finally, it was further developed for a class of international students. The paper discusses the challenges presented and the changes made to the course by institutional goals (top-down), and the demands and interests of the students (bottom-up).

In the first section, I describe how the course,

Kyoto Studies and Tourism, developed at Doshisha Women’s College (DWC). The next section will outline the changes that this course underwent when it was taught at the same institution but in a new setting, DWC’s Japanese Studies Program, with a very different make-up of students. In the third section, I review how the course changed again when it was taught at the Institute for the Liberal Arts at Doshisha University for a group of international students. The teacher had to reinvent the course each time to balance the wishes of the institution and the students. In the final section I give an analysis of this experience and explain how with each version of the course, the materials changed but the fundamental style of teaching did not.

Carty, P. C. (2015). Kyoto studies: Local to global education. In G. Brooks, M. Grogan, & M. Porter (Eds.), *The 2014 PanSIG Conference Proceedings* (pp. 23-27). Miyazaki, Japan: JALT.

Kyoto Culture and History at Doshisha Women’s College

This two-semester course is taught for third-year

students as an advanced class in the CASE program (Career and Academic Studies in English), which is a three-year English as Foreign Language (EFL) program in the Department of Social System Studies at DWC to allow students to study their major in English. This allows students to “deepen their understanding of their courses and offer a different perspective on them” (Fujiwara, 2008, p. 31). One of the majors in the Social Systems Studies Department is Kyoto Studies and Tourism (Doshisha Women’s College, 2011a).

The main institutional goal for my course was to help students understand the relationship between tourism and Kyoto and to study how Kyoto’s unique attractions make it one of the premiere tourist destinations in the world. In addition, by studying the city in English, students could both reinforce their knowledge from and gain a new understanding of the other classes they were taking in Kyoto Studies and Tourism.

The students were all native speakers of Japanese with upper intermediate skills in English. Their writing and reading skills were stronger than their speaking and listening skills. The challenges I faced were to teach content while making it engaging, and while practicing and improving their English skills. One advantage to this course was the year-long time frame with one theme that allowed the teacher to incrementally develop the students’ understanding of difficult concepts over many classes. Understanding the demands of the institution and recognizing my students’ abilities, I had to create a syllabus and materials for each class. The guiding principle to consider what information is most necessary to explain Kyoto to a visitor and what questions tourists would most likely ask. Since there was no appropriate textbook, I had to create my own materials.

I will give one example of what students were/are required to do for homework and classwork. Tourists often ask, “Why did Kyoto become the capital?” To answer that question we explored in detail Emperor Kammu’s move from Nara to Kyoto. For homework all students were given a reading of approximately 800 words. Students were also given 10 to 16 questions each week about the reading. The students are divided into two groups, A and B. “A” students had to answer

the even questions and “Bs” had to answer the odd questions. In addition, students were given a list of famous characters from the Heian Period. They had to choose and write a short essay about one of those characters.

Class began with a short introduction on the topic for that day. All “A” students gathered together and checked their homework, as did all “B” students. Once they were sure of their answers, then each “A” student partnered with a “B” student and they asked each other questions. After students had filled in their question sheet, they met in groups of four and shared information about the Heian Period character they had researched. While one student was speaking, the others listened and took notes. In the next step, students found a new partner and reviewed the original homework questions. They had to answer without looking at their paper and competed to see who could answer more questions correctly. Finally, we had a full class discussion and a short PowerPoint presentation of the key points from that lesson. By doing these exercises, students were actively practicing all the language skills. At the same time they were learning about Kyoto. The key point is that the students are engaged. In the official course evaluation and in-class evaluation, students have rated this class above average in most categories.

To test the students I have two oral quizzes each term. Students are given ten essay questions for homework. In the next class, I interview one student at a time for five minutes and ask each student three questions. The results of the oral quiz show that the vast majority of students are able to produce clear and well-organized answers.

This course can be most accurately characterized as Content Based Instruction (CBI) (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003). In addition a Sustained Content Teaching (SCT) approach is used. This is when language teachers research a subject and teach it themselves. They offer the learner their experience and understanding of learning languages; in other words, they can teach the content but also recognize and manage the language difficulties students might have (Pally, 2000). These two labels best describe how this course responded to both institutional demands (CBI)

and student needs (SCT).

Japan Studies C: Kyoto Culture and History in the Japanese Studies Program at Doshisha Women's College

After teaching the above course for several years, I was asked to teach a Kyoto Studies course for exchange students mostly from the US; DWC students could also enroll. DWC has several affiliated colleges overseas at which its students can study abroad. The JSP program was initiated in 1992 to offer a chance for students from those affiliated colleges to spend the fall semester studying Japanese language and culture at DWC. In addition, it allows for students at Doshisha Women's College who have achieved a high level of English to take classes with the visiting students (Doshisha Women's College, 2011 b).

This is an important program for the college. The institutional message was to make the class academically challenging and engaging for the visiting students and make sure the "classmates," the term used for the Japanese students who attended the class, were able to participate. My first consideration was to find the right materials. The materials I had previously created for the CASE program were content based but with language practice in mind. The content in the original materials was not extensive enough for an L1 student. Fortunately, John Dougill's *Kyoto: A Cultural and Literary History* (2006) covers the history and culture of Kyoto very well. The one problem was that for a majority of the Japanese students in class, the book was very difficult and reading one chapter required hours of work. If the material was too hard for the Japanese students, they may not have participated actively in discussions, and might have been hesitant to ask questions.

My challenge was how to assist the Japanese students to manage the difficult textbook. In the first few weeks, I matched a Japanese native speaker with a visiting L1 student. There were a few reasons for this. First, they had to do a museum poster presentation

project together. They were required to visit the museum together; therefore, they had to exchange emails and often be in contact with each other. This poster presentation took place in the 6th class, but they had to plan the trip to the museum right from the first class. They were required to interview one staff member at the museum and speak to one visitor. The visiting student needed the Japanese speaker to help conduct the interview, and they both used their language skills in translating the interview into English. This was an efficient way to combine the students' strengths, to make the pair realize that working together is truly beneficial, and to make a classroom that has a lot of connections among the students.

The second reason to match a visiting student (L1) with a native Japanese speaker (L2) was to have them assist each other with the text. Before class each week, I required the partners to contact each other and ask questions about the chapter we had to read for the following week. This helped both L1 and L2 students to understand the chapter more deeply. The L1 students sometimes had questions about Japanese society or history that the L2 student was often able to answer; meanwhile, the L2 English learner had many vocabulary questions. Even though the students were very busy, a class survey showed that roughly 80% were able to contact their partner. Making these partnerships was a good strategy to encourage the formation of strong bonds among the students even though there were distinct fluency differences.

Compared to the first course described above, this class did not focus nearly as much on language practice. We had no exercises for repeating sentences. We had no cloze exercises to help with listening skills. This course raised the academic level while taking steps to bond the two different groups in the class and help the Japanese students overcome difficulties with the text. The poster presentation project is an example of a task-based learning activity used to create an atmosphere that allows the L1 students to contact the L2 students outside of class and makes it natural for the students to rely on each other for assistance.

Kyoto Society and Business at Doshisha University's

Institute for the Liberal Arts

The Institute for the Liberal Arts at Doshisha University offers a B.A. conducted entirely in English. It “combines a private American liberal arts college atmosphere and educational approach with an emphasis on building partnerships between students and professors in small classes conducted in English,” (Doshisha University, 2014). This institute is a response to the “Global 30” program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). By increasing the number of Japanese students studying abroad and the number of visiting students in Japan, MEXT hopes to create “an academic environment where international and Japanese students can learn from one another and build lasting international bonds...” (MEXT, 2009-2014). In keeping with these principles, I was asked to offer a class that was academically rigorous with a focus on critical thinking and writing skills. The students in this class were from all over the world.

Faced with the clear directions from the institution and a very diverse student composition, I had to find materials that challenged the students academically while making the best use of their diverse backgrounds. The question of materials was complicated by the fact that there is no textbook in English that covers society and business in pre-modern and modern Kyoto. The Sustained Content Teaching approach seemed most practical for this course (Pally, 2000). First, topics were chosen that would be most relevant and engaging to a broad range of students: education, art, technology etc. After establishing the topics an extensive search was undertaken through academic journals, books, newspapers, and the Internet to find appropriate materials that would provide a deeper understanding of those topics. The questions for the readings were formulated so that the discussions would allow students to share their various cultural backgrounds.

The English language level of this class was the highest among the three classes, with a very high percentage of fluent or nearly fluent students. The percentage of time devoted to lecturing increased in

this class. However, the largest percentage of time was still devoted to discussion by students. With a class of 38, I broke the students into groups of five or six each time. Those groups were carefully constructed to make sure that a variety of ethnic backgrounds were represented in each group. Each class had a topic, such as education, textiles, or movies in Kyoto. For each topic the readings followed a pattern: explanation of the historical background and description of a contemporary company or institution practicing that trade. The discussion questions reviewed the reading and also asked the students to share knowledge from their own country.

One example is a class on textiles. We had a reading that described the transformation of *kimono* into artwork in the Meiji Period, which led to the development of the department store. A second reading explained the collapse of the textile industry in the 1980s and 1990s. Another article explored one traditional *kimono* maker now using their textile skills to produce high-end automobile seat-covers while still making *kimono*. After discussing the content of the readings, students were given more open-ended questions such as: Do you have a traditional garment in your country? Do you think it is important to protect traditional clothing? The goal of such questions is to establish an environment in which international students and Japanese students can learn from each other.

The other main issue with this class is the question of English ability. I do not focus on teaching English language skills. For the final paper, I give guidance on the style and basic outline of the paper. During class, however, I do not go into the group discussions and correct English. I tell the students it is important that if you do not understand something said by a classmate, you can politely ask them to repeat or rephrase it. In whole-class discussion, I try to model this when I do not understand clearly what a student has said. This class can be best described as English as a Lingua Franca in an Academic Setting (ELFA). English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has been defined by Jenkins as “English when it is used as a contact language between people from different first languages (including native English speakers)” (2014, p. 24).

Conclusion

As the institutions where we teach become increasing global, we need to carefully weigh the goals of the institutions with the aspirations and abilities of a more diverse student population. The popularity of content courses that visiting students and L1 Japanese speaking students both attend will require language teachers to develop certain skills. Those skills will include an ability to find materials to create new courses. The most helpful guide in creating new material has been the concept of a student-centered communicative classroom. Students need to make discoveries by discussing the material and expressing their own opinions. One essential lesson that has been learned for a successful international class is the creation of exercises and projects that help L1 students and L2 students work together and avoid any chances that these students will not interact in a meaningful way. In addition, the materials should be crafted so that students will be able to share their experiences and backgrounds with each other. This is fundamental for a successful international educational experience, which helps students attain a global perspective. It is equally important to use the diversity of the classroom as a positive resource. The final lesson for a class composed of a great variety of international students was to learn the importance of the concept of ELF. The full ramifications of ELF for global education is beyond the scope of this paper, but in short, it has become a helpful guide in assisting students to understand that the most important point in their discussions is that other members understand the ideas they are trying to express. Students must learn to negotiate meaning

among themselves in a world in which the majority of their English interactions will be with L2 speakers of English.

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