Abstract

The present paper describes Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) programs which have been carried out since 1999. The number of participating universities has grown rapidly over the years and in 2010 we had 91 partner universities in 24 countries. Focusing on the importance of CCDL programs in the incommensurable world, we report educational merits of the CCDL programs in terms of Motivational enhancement and acquisition of social skills which are required in the age of global competition. Due to the increasing number of applications from oversea universities, Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) Partner Search Site was opened as a part of WOCW project.

1.0 Introduction to Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) programs at Waseda University

It has become our mission in the 21st century to educate our university students as Global Citizens so that they can say their opinions in English about not only global issues but also the more immediate issue of Coexistence in Asia. It is also important for young generations to build human network in the world. How can we help our students to be able to solve real problems in the world? The easiest way is to provide discussion opportunities in their daily life by making use of Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and Multi-Point Distance Communication System. The recent technological advancement enabled our students to discuss contemporary issues with oversea partners, every day, day and night, beyond the borders of space and time.

Since English began to be used as a common tool of communication in accordance with globalization, the most common local problem in Japan is a student’s lack of English oral proficiency required to discuss the current problems in the world, such as climate change which inherently contains such irrevocable dilemmas about national interests as opposed to lengthy process of idealistic consensus-building towards global solutions. In addressing other current problems in the world without resorting to the military powers, we need to realize that global solutions can be reached at with our firm recognition that this is the age of dialog. In this sense, English Education has been highlighted as a means of promoting dialog more urgently now than before. In order to overcome the local problem mentioned above, Waseda University adopted the three stages of English Education, as shown in Figure 1: tutorial English to promote communicative competence, cross-cultural distance learning to promote inter-cultural competence and cyber seminars among Asian students to promote discussion ability on complex issues.
Communicative Competence is summarized by Kramsch (2005) as Melting Pot View; i.e., you are accepted once you conform to the main stream of American or British Culture and Societal norms embedded in Native Speaker (NS) English. Without being melted into the mainstream NS norms nor blindly following their norms, communicative competence can be introduced in Asia: we need to know NS values and how NS speakers behave, but we do not need to mimic them. Once Asians are accustomed to detach ourselves from the authority and social norms, and to test ourselves as individuals, we would begin to trust our instincts and feelings and could think outside the box. For this reason, our programs at the first stage of Educational goal are based on communicative competence. In the second stage, we conduct one-to-one cyber seminars in which Intercultural Competence is introduced. Intercultural competence is metaphorically summarized by Kramsch as Salad Bowl View in which differences are respected as diversity, but the sense of unity may be difficult to achieve. English Language Education at this stage is called CCDL (Cross-Cultural Distance Learning) programs at Waseda University. We use videoconferencing system (Polycom) and/or the PC chat system (LiveOn) and conducts exchanges with students from partner overseas universities in English. Exchange tools between Waseda students and oversea partner students are either TV conferencing system and/or oral chatting system, shown in Fig 2.

CCDL promotes understanding of different cultures and provides opportunities to gain practical communication abilities in English, which leads to links with Asia and steps to the world. This is the age of Dialog. Conflict resolutions had better be reached at by dialog rather than military powers. At the tertiary level of Education it is better for us to give Dialog training to our students. The role of English in Global Literacy should transform itself and the nature of English Language Education should be shifted from NS-oriented to Englishes-oriented.

At the final stage, cross-cultural competence is focused in our education: Cross-Cultural Competence represents a set of social and emotional intelligence to cope with incommensurable world views. Multi-point Distance Learning System is utilized and the students need to cope with multiple points of views such as historical perspective, socio-economic perspective, political perspective involving not only the point of view of a global citizen but also that of an expert in a given area. In the second section of this paper, our educational outcomes are briefly
described in terms of motivation, and social skills. The following figure summarizes our educational efforts in Asia.

Table 5 CCDL classes at Waseda University

<table>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>No. of subjects</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of students at Waseda</td>
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<td>3,211</td>
<td>3,379</td>
<td>3,477</td>
<td>3,543</td>
<td>3,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of students at Overseas</td>
<td>1,181</td>
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<td>3,058</td>
<td>3,882</td>
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Table 6 Oversea Participating Countries/Universities

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<tr>
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<td>55</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>86</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Fig. 3 Changes in the number of CCDL classes and participating Countries/Universities

Fig. 4 Multi-point Distance Learning Seminar

Fig. 5 International Student Forum
2.0 Some educational merits of CCDL in terms of Motivation and Social Skill Enhancement

In order to test our educational methods, we ran two experiments. The experimental findings are reported in Nakano et al. (2008) and Nakano & Yoshida (2008). This final section briefly outlines these experiments. Generally, Program Assessments can be done by looking at the following two points:

- How much a program can promote a learner’s motivation to learn
- How much a program can improve a learner’s social skills (communication skills + intercultural knowledge)

We compared and contrasted three Class Types:

- Theme-based CCDL programs (+ textbooks about intercultural communication skills + oral-chatting; see Section 1.2)
- Global Literacy course (learner-centered CCDL): participants choose topic of discussion and reading material + weekly TV conferencing followed by individual oral chatting
- Regular English Lessons (oral or text chatting outside lesson hours)

234 Waseda university students took part in Motivation experiment and 388 students, in Social Skills experiment. We distributed online 35 Motivation Questionnaire items which are adapted from Noels et al. (2000) and DÖrnyei (2005) and modified in accordance with the CCDL environment. Motivation progresses from Amotivation via External Motivation to Intrinsic Motivation. Intrinsic motivation is triggered by quest for knowledge, the sense of Accomplishment or such physical Stimulation as English sounds and rhythm. It is assumed that Motivation accommodates self-regulation dynamics:

- Eternal/Extrinsic regulation
- Projected regulation
- Identified regulation
- Intrinsic regulation

We factor analyzed the data and extracted 5 Factors in Motivation data:

- Factor 1 Intrinsic Motivation for Knowledge
- Factor 2 Amotivation
- Factor 3 transition from extrinsic regulation to introjected regulation
- Factor 4 Intrinsic Motivation for Accomplishment
- Factor 5 transition form extrinsic to intrinsic

Note that Global Literacy class is a student-centered CCDL; the students choose the topics of discussion and presentation as well as reading materials. On the other hand, theme-based CCDL programs have textbooks and the discussion topics are predetermined by the textbooks. For this reason motivational mean scorer are better in CCDL Global Literacy Class than in the theme-based CCDL programs. It should be noted that regular English lessons elicit negative values for all the positive motivation types and the only positive value is for Amotivation, i.e., the students are unwilling to study English. The present experiment confirms that the CCDL approaches to English Language Learning suits the goal or purpose of learning among our students.

For Social Skills, We analyzed the data as in Kikuchi (1988, 2007): Firstly, Item-total correlation analysis was done, secondly, the highly correlated 3 items with the items belonging to the four categories are identified and finally we factor analyzed the 18 items. Then we calculated mean factor scores for the three class types separately.

(Shown in Fig.7)
Motivational Factor Analysis

Fig. 6 Mean Factor Scores
Blue bar stands for mean factor scores in regular English lessons.
Yellow bar stands for mean factor scores in Global Literacy class (a type of CCDL).
Wine-colored bar stands for mean factor scores in CCDL programs.

Fig. 7 Represents the mean factor scores.
Factor 1 Fundamental Skills for L2 Communication
Factor 2 Social skills with considerations for other people
Factor 3 Skills for dealing with distress
Factor 4 Planning skills
Blue bar stands for mean factor scores in regular English lessons.
Wine-colored bar stands for mean factor scores in CCDL Global Literacy class.
Yellow bar stands for mean factor scores in the theme-based CCDL programs.
As you can see, the theme-based CCDL courses are better suited in enhancing the acquisition of Social Skills. We have seen in Motivation Experiment that CCDL Global Literacy program is better than theme-based CCDL courses in raising a learner’s motivation. CCDL programs all together are a way ahead of regular English lessons. The students who participate in the CCDL programs are trying to perform up to our expectations and to stretch their ability in English to cope with an increasing number of problems whose answers come along with a dialog with their contemporary peers in Asia.

3.0 CCDL Partner Search Site

Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) Partner Search Site was opened as a part of WOCW, due to the increasing number of applications from oversea universities. The instructors register their mailing address and Time Zone in My Account first. They are asked to fill in Profile (name, affiliation, specialization and research interests). When you log in, you will see a list of previous cyber sessions in the recent years. This is useful in letting the users know the range of cyber topics and research tasks which have been carried out in the recent past. The cyber sessions include synchronous cyber lectures, asynchronous on-demand lectures, live video-conferencing lectures, graduate seminars, multi-point student discussion forums, one-to-one cyber forum, oral chat, and textual chat, etc. This list of cyber sessions includes such information as the theme, tasks, the names of participating universities, department, the person in charge, schedule, language used, the number of participating students, the methods of cyber exchange (LMS, PC-based video chat, oral or textual, one-to-one video conferencing, multi-point video conferencing and session reports. The session reports are helpful for the newcomers; some examples are provided below:

1) Please feel free to note any observation on how your students are engaged in the PC chat activities. If you have collected comments or chat log from the students, please refer to them.

Many students commented that PC chatting was very meaningful, because they didn't have any experience to exchange opinions with Asian university students until joining this program. This experience was a good training for them to convey their own opinion to others. The CCDL activities offer authentic communicative situations to our students.  

2) Based on your classroom observations, do you have any request to Distance Learning Center, in order to improve the quality of CCDL exchanges?

This program was very helpful in improving their skills to react quickly and to have confidence that their English is comprehensible enough. According to the chat log, students from partner universities were much more efficient but by learning facilitation skills, they could overcome some inferiority complex.

3) How did you integrate CCDL interactions into the entire lesson structure? How have you coped with the differences of the academic calendar between the two universities?

I announced this chat program to students beforehand in the study guidance this year. I told them that the main purpose was to enjoy the cross-cultural interactions, and through this program, it was expected to automate your passive knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, etc. I think it helped students to have motivation to join the session.

The instructors who read these reports
might be more encouraged to join the CCDL programs. They are invited to fill in “Create new session partner site” in which they specify the discussion topics, the language to be used, the dates of starting sessions, the times, the duration, the frequency of exchanges and the expected number of students. Our site indicates the cyber session partner who satisfies the session request specified.

References

Related Web sites
What is Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL) Program? Distance Learning center :http://www.waseda.jp/dlc/ccdl/partner.html