

北星学園女子短期大学に於ける
英語による一般教育科目の実習

AN EXERCISE IN CONTENT-BASED COURSES
AT HOKUSEI JUNIOR COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

Content-based courses (in English Bible) have been a part of the curriculum at Hokusei Gakuen Women's Junior College for many years. For the past several years, classes in Comparative Cultures and History have also been offered as electives. In 1994, Sociology, Psychology, and History entered the curriculum as liberal arts core courses. These classes' instructors are making use of the content-based language teaching method (teaching a subject other than English itself through the medium of English). While many have come to recognize this as a new technique for teaching English, others point to a number of problems related to it which remain to be solved.

This paper introduces each class and how it has evolved up to the present. It also attempts, as much as is possible at present, to measure its success or failure. Points of similarity in the five courses mentioned above include the use of audio-visual materials (including computers), field work, and a variety of other supplements to traditional lectures. Students have responded in various ways to the new curriculum, many indicating how difficult they felt it to be and others showing they had developed an academic interest in these fields of study. Several matters for future consideration have emerged. One is the difficulty involved in continuing to use native-level North American college texts. Another is the lack of a format for exchange of opinions in these classes between (a) students and (b) teachers and students. Such a system would help ensure that teachers actually receive the feedback students attempt to give. It would also provide a vehicle for strengthening cooperation among teachers. Thus it would appear to enhance the students' overall learning experiences.

要 約

北星学園女子短期大学英文学科では長年にわたり、英語による聖書の指導（イングリッシュ・バイブル）を行ってきた。数年前から選択科目として英語による比較文化や歴史などのクラスができ、1994年度には一般教育科目として社会学、心理学、歴史を英語で指導するようになった。これらのクラスで用いられている Content-based language teaching method（英語以外の科目を英語で教える語学指導方法）は大学に於ける新しい英語教授法として注目されているが、同時に解決すべき様々な問題点も指摘されている。

本論文では各クラスのこれまでの経過を紹介し、さらに現時点で可能な限りの自己評価を試みる。上記の5つのクラスは共通して、講義以外にコンピューターを含む視聴覚教材を使ったり、フィールド・ワークなどの実習を導入するなど、多様なアプローチを試みている。また学生の反応としては、多数の学生が難しいと感じる一方、その分野の学術的な興味を育てている学生もいる。さらに今後の課題として、現在用いられている北米の大学生用テキストをこれらのクラスのテキストとして継続して使う事の難しさや、学生同志または学生と講師の間に意見の交換がなかなか見られない事、またより充実した指導のために学生からのフィードバックが容易に講師に届くようなシステムや講師間の協力体制の強化が求められている事などが指摘されている。

INTRODUCTUON

English education has been an important part of the curriculum at Hokusei Gakuen since its founding in 1887 by American missionaries. This tradition has continued at Hokusei Gakuen Women's Junior College since its founding in 1951. Content-based language teaching in classes such as English Bible has been part of its curriculum for many years.

In 1994, the English Department at the women's junior college put a new English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum into effect. Content-based language teaching is the centerpiece of this new curriculum. This paper describes six of these content-based classes: Sociology, Psychology and History (liberal arts core courses); English Bible I and II (required of English majors); and Comparative Cultures (an elective).

For the past 14 years, students have taken liberal arts core classes taught in Japanese as well as studying English during their first year of study. In their second year, they chose one of four minors: English Literature, English Culture, Practical English or Secretarial English.

At times, students were not able to study in a minor field of their choice. The minor system also limited the number of elective classes available to second year students. A number of factors led the English department to reevaluate its curriculum: student dissatisfaction with the minor system, a concern with TOEFL scores, the increasing number of students wishing to continue their studies abroad and the challenge to junior colleges that came with the decreasing population of high school graduates. A more

intensive course of study that would give students a more liberal selection of classes, expose them to authentic English language lectures and texts, increase the opportunity for self-study and prepare them for study overseas was decided upon.

In the new curriculum, students are engaged in a more intensive study of English during both years of their junior college experience. Liberal arts core courses, three of which are taught in English, are taken in the second year. Rather than taking required classes in only one minor area, second year students have a wider choice of electives. First year students have new classes in reading and vocabulary building. These first year classes were designed in order to prepare students for their second year EFL content-based classes. Liberal arts core classes, traditionally taught in the first year, are now taught in the second year. Students must choose three of these liberal arts core classes from the EFL content-based offerings.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The effectiveness of the content-based teaching method has been researched and discussed by numerous language teachers and linguists. Krashen (1984) clarified the rationale for content-based language teaching in that language learners understand the given material efficiently when it is presented in a comprehensible context, rather than in fragmented examples of sentences and words without providing a proper context. His point was reiterated by Swain (1985), who further argued that the learners develop communicative competence when they acquire meaningful use of the target language.

The comprehensive groundwork on content-based language teaching was completed by Briton, Snow and Wesche (1989), who provided the practical guidance for the use of the teaching method in post-secondary educational institutions. Three models for content-based instruction- a theme-based model, a sheltered model and an adjunct model were proposed by Briton, Snow and Wesche. These have been used as a framework to design language instruction which aims to combine language teaching and subject matter. The experiences of the language teachers who teach content-based classes have been reported, and further support the usefulness of this teaching method (Crandall 1987, Dubin and Olshtain 1986).

Recently, the content-based language teaching method has been adopted into the university language instruction curriculum in Japan (Swensen 1991, Biegel 1991, Hagen 1991). The effectiveness of this method was examined by Kiji and Kiji (1993), who reported the results of an experiment investigating vocabulary retention among students in a content-based anthropology course and those in a non-content-based English language course. Their results demonstrated a higher level of vocabulary retention in the former group. They, therefore, conclude that content-based instruction has merits as a viable methodology (1993).

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT-BASED EFL CLASSES

Content-based EFL classes at Hokusei could best be categorized as belonging to the sheltered model of Briton, Snow and Wesche (1989). Second language learners are taught a subject in the target language, with authentic second language lectures and educational materials, but are not mixed or mainstreamed with native speaking students as they might be at a university in an English speaking country. This allows the teacher to adjust *methods and materials to the second language learners' needs, and at the same time cover content material similar to what would be covered in a class taught in the students' first language.* The teacher is required to teach the content subject and to offer students training in understanding and using the target language.

The size of all six of the classes described in this paper is large. Class size is usually between 45 to 60 students. Classes meet once a week for 90 minutes. Comparative Cultures is taught as a one semester class (14 times). The others are taught for two semesters (28 times).

English Bible is required for English majors. Although students can technically choose any three EFL liberal arts core classes, in 1994, only History, Psychology and Sociology were offered, thus making them de facto required classes. Comparative Cultures is an elective.

Each teacher of the content-based class was selected for his/her qualifications and skills both in the content area and in teaching English as a foreign language.

The students are women, most between the ages of 18 and 20, who have entered college directly from high school. Japanese is the first language for almost all of the students, English is the second or third language for all, and more than half of the second year students have studied abroad in an English speaking country: 15% for three months, 40 to 50% for three weeks.

All students take the Institutional TOEFL before starting their first year, at the end of their first year, and at the end of their second year. The average scores for the class of 1993, the first students to experience the new curriculum, are as follows:

Test	Class average before 1st year	Class average after 1st year
Listening	40.64	44.66
Structure / Written	39.73	45.38
Vocabulary / Reading	39.07	41.88
Total TOEFL	398.32	439.73

The class of 1993 will take the TOEFL and the McGraw-Hill Comprehensive English

Language Test (CELT) at the end of the second semester. It is hoped that the new curriculum will have a positive effect on test scores.

Each description of the classes which follows this introduction is divided into three sections: "Objectives," "History, Description and Content," and "Reflections." The five teachers who have participated in this study come from a variety of cultural, educational, individual and professional backgrounds. Each, of course, has strong feelings about education in general as well as about English language education in her or his content field. Because of this, the reader will find a different style and focus in the individual discussions of classes that follow this introduction. Our hope is that this will be an enriching experience.

SOCIOLOGY

MASAMI IWASAKI-GOODMAN

Objectives:

The main emphasis in this course is to provide an overview of the major areas of study in sociology, while enhancing the English language listening, reading and writing ability of the students. Consideration of the English proficiency level of the students is an important factor in designing this course and significantly influences the framework of the course in terms of the content of each lesson and the amount of material introduced in each lesson. The course ultimately aims to encourage the students to develop intellectual skills that are necessary for fostering critical thinking concerning the understanding of human social behavior.

History, Description and Content:

A first year university textbook used in North American universities provides the basis for the class lectures. The students are expected to read a collection of papers on relevant topics. A tentative course syllabus was prepared at the beginning of the first term that included an outline of lecture topics and a list of reading assignments. The students and the instructor agreed that the course syllabus would be modified as the course proceeded to ensure satisfactory understanding of each topic.

The first part of the term was spent introducing various theoretical perspectives which have been used extensively in recent sociological research. Because of the abstract nature of the topics, presentation of the material was done by lecture. The students were expected to listen attentively. In delivering each lecture, the instructor had to alleviate any ambiguity, providing easy-to-understand examples in order to ensure sufficient understanding of the given material.

During the early part of the course, the instructor encouraged the students to provide

comments on how to improve the class. The instructor made an effort to be open to any feedback. The major suggestion made by the students was that the teacher use the blackboard to provide key statements in written form to supplement their listening.

Reading assignments were given approximately bi-weekly. To assist the students in reading the sociology papers, the instructor prepared questions to help the students focus on the topic sentence in each paragraph, thereby summarizing the main points in the paper. A small group of students was assigned to orally present a summary of each reading assignment. Recognizing that lecture comprehension in each class period was sufficient to build a basis for further study of sociology, the instructor did not place a high priority on the reading requirement at this stage.

Within a few weeks after the term began, it became apparent that it was taking more time to cover each topic than was planned in the syllabus. Furthermore, it became clear to the instructor that repetition of the discussion on each topic drastically increased the students' understanding. Therefore, she decided to alter the lesson plan in order to provide sufficient time for both the discussion and the repetition of the discussion for each topic.

The general feeling toward this class among the students at the beginning of the first term was mixed because some of the students found the material and the method of teaching unfamiliar and difficult. However, their attitude toward the class was extremely positive and their focus during lectures was most noticeable. Several students indicated a growing academic interest in sociology.

The instructor maintained the same style of teaching, namely lecturing in class, in order to help the students familiarize themselves with the newly-introduced content-based instruction method. As a way to ensure that the lectures were sufficiently understood, the instructor established a feedback system whereby the students were asked if the teacher should continue the lecture, if more repetition was necessary or what percentage of the lecture they understood. This was done on a casual basis during the class to evaluate their level of understanding.

After completing discussions on theoretical issues of modern sociology, the students were given an examination in order to objectively evaluate their understanding of the material. After consulting with the students, it was decided that the instructor would prepare a take-home examination which would include multiple choice questions and essay questions. Since this was the students' first experience of taking an essay examination, the instructor explained a method of outlining their ideas as a way to effectively organize their answers. The students were given one week to complete the examination.

The test results were quite satisfactory, averaging approximately 75 percent. It was noted, however, that there was a great disparity in the quality and length of the answers to the essay questions. There were some students who answered extensively on each question, demonstrating a high degree of comprehension of the material and application of

their knowledge to issues outside of the class discussion. On the other hand, there were others who apparently failed to understand the main points that were introduced in class.

The instructor continued lecturing on the topics reflected in the syllabus after the take-home examination. She maintained the same teaching method, since the students had become used to listening to lectures in English. By the end of the first term, the instructor had only covered approximately one-third of what she had planned in the original syllabus. At the end of the term, another take-home examination was given to the students.

For the second term, the instructor reduced the number of lectures and introduced field research in which the students were asked to conduct a small-scale research project and subsequently to write research papers.

Reflections:

Reviewing the classroom conduct in the first term, the instructor is content with the result. However, there are areas where some modification will improve the quality of the course. One such area is the reading material, which is beyond the reading ability of most students. The instructor intended to maintain content-based Sociology as academically suitable for university classes. Although supplementary material was provided to help the students with their reading assignments, the students have expressed that the reading material was extremely difficult.

Another difficulty that the instructor encountered was that the students were reluctant to participate in discussions during class. Ideally, the study of sociology should include the students' participation, through presentations of their own views on various issues raised in class. However, the students were simply not used to taking an active role in class, and chose to be passive.

There were positive outcomes of the content-based Sociology class. There have been obvious signs of increasing academic interest in sociology, stimulated by the experience of taking a content-based sociology class. The students seemed to appreciate the experience of learning the subject matter (of sociology), through English, which they have studied for over seven years.

Despite some anxiety at the beginning of the term, the content-based Sociology class has been stimulating and rewarding for both the instructor and at least some of the students.

Objectives:

In creating the framework for the Psychology content-based course, I was aware of two factors. First was that the technical terminology used in explaining, and the subject matter might prove difficult for students to comprehend and to retain, and second that English, the language itself, would only be the medium through which they would learn the content of this course. Therefore, initially I focused more on conveying the content rather than on perfecting the medium of instruction. After planning a few lessons I realized that the two criteria of language and content cannot be separated nor one neglected in the pursuit of the other. One is the direct means to the other's end especially in a content-based course aimed at students whose *second* language is English. If the means is not adequately understood, the end becomes lost. I wanted to try and avoid this.

However, I also wanted to avoid any stumbling blocks the students might encounter due to the technical jargon, which might further discourage them from paying attention during lectures. With this in mind, I revised the text and the content of the lectures and further simplified the English used in explaining the basic points of each lesson. As my guide I tried to use the terminology, vocabulary and grammar they were familiar with from the Oral English and Reading courses they had taken during their first year. I felt this to be a great advantage and an indispensable tool in creating the syllabus and more specifically the text for this course.

History, Description and Content:

In this course the students were introduced to the basic principles underlying the subject of psychology. I felt this topic in particular might prove to be a subject which would provide a base from which they could be more observant and insightful about their lives and the world around them and therefore be interesting and thought-provoking. I hoped this insight would take place not only in the classroom, but in the realm of their everyday lives. In this vein, I hoped their interest might provoke independent studies which might further their knowledge of psychology.

Though this Introduction to Psychology course was a college-level course, any American college textbook designed for first year students of psychology would prove to be too difficult; therefore, textbooks were not a required purchase. One was kept in the library for reserved reading. The text was created using an introductory-level American textbook as a guide to introduce the subject of psychology. I also used this textbook as a form of reference to create the text and any illustrations necessary for each lesson of the

course. I selected the topics that the textbook had outlined as the rudimentary principles of psychology. I further simplified the text that was extracted from the textbook.

In preparing the lectures for each lesson I tried to use real-life experiences that the students might be able to relate to. These examples were given during the introduction of each lecture. I hoped the simplified, real-life examples would ease the students into the more abstract theory and the technical terms that followed. If they could apply the real-life examples to the abstract and general theories, retention might be achieved. In this way the topic was introduced practically, using situational examples and later moved into the general theory. By going from the specific to the general, students were more open to and interested in the subject matter and as a result were more receptive to the abstract theory that followed.

Retention became my key focus. By relating a theory or an idea to their personal experiences, students would gain new knowledge and would be able to apply it to themselves and therefore remember it. Furthermore, I hoped they would retain this information not only long enough to take the comprehension quiz that followed at the end of the lecture but also for the lecture the following week. Each lecture was designed to provide a continuum to the next lesson. This knowledge might also be recalled later when they actually saw themselves in a similar experience or situation to one that was used as the example in class. This I hoped would further reinforce the learning and might even create the impetus for them to independently study a particular topic in greater detail. By doing this I hoped my course would leave the two-dimensional rigid learning of the classroom where knowledge is transferred from teacher to student and later the knowledge is transferred from student to test, without ever leaving the confines of the classroom. I hoped the learning acquired in the classroom and through the text would be applied outside the classroom to reality itself. If this was achieved, it might be a building block for their success in answering essay questions.

The course focused on employing two basic skills: listening and reading, which would contribute to the understanding of the subject matter. The first 45 minutes was in lecture form. Taking notes was prohibited. Listening was essential. While writing notes in class, students are able to write some essential points of the lecture but they invariably miss another point. This can be especially problematic with EFL students. Each student received a copy of the notes at the end of each lesson making it unnecessary to take notes during class. During the lecture any and all technical terms were written on the board to facilitate recognizing and understanding the difficult vocabulary.

In preparing the lecture, I made certain the sequence of introducing the example was followed by the abstract theory. This became the general framework for each lesson. The real-life/situational examples were followed by the theory or terms that defined them. The second 45 minutes of the class took place in the computer room, where students would

read the text from the same lecture. Following the reading, they would take a test (created using Hyper Card) on the computer. Upon selection of the answer the student would immediately know if her answer was wrong, and what the correct answer was. The computer would then tally the score and keep a personal score log for each student to keep track of her progress. This test was conducted as an open book test. Students were allowed to go back to the text to scroll for information that would help them answer the questions.

In addition to the quizzes I wanted to evaluate their understanding using essay questions. However, this might prove to have a negative effect in their learning while they were still getting accustomed to the difficult nature of the subject matter. Essays were used for the second semester, when students might feel more confident in employing their understanding and using their resources.

Before leaving the class, they received a copy of the notes that they had read on the computer. The students read these at home at their leisure. This gave them the opportunity to bring in any questions or points of interest to the next class.

The second semester of the course followed the same general framework. In addition to the computer quizzes, evaluations included outside projects. They were given case studies to research by doing survey questions or doing an independent study based loosely on any number of theories learned in class. Students were also tested in essay form using a broad range of topics from which they could answer. They were permitted to use the prepared notes from the lectures as references to answer the essay questions.

Reflections:

The results of the first half of the semester proved to be very encouraging for both the students and the teacher. Comprehension and retention seemed to be achieved as shown through the quiz scores of the students and through after-class discussions with a few students. Some students had ventured as far as doing independent projects outside of class on particular topics of interest, and had involved their family members in their learning. A few students explained some of the more interesting topics to their parents and siblings who had a peripheral interest in psychology and sometimes brought their inquiries and opinions to class. These discussions were primarily based on whether they agreed or disagreed with certain hypotheses or theories of psychologists discussed in class. The students were asked to give personal examples for the reasons why they agreed or disagreed. These discussions sometimes did not include the entire class but were more intimate discussions with a group of five or six students at a time.

The field studies proved to be fun and interesting for the students. It gave them a respite from the classroom and started what I hoped would be their three-dimensional

thinking, that is the application of the material outside the rigid format of the classroom. By doing the field studies the students were forced to interact with people not necessarily their peers or relations. They could also apply the otherwise two-dimensional textbook learning in theory to living and actual examples of people, their lives and society as a whole.

The essays proved to be the most problematic and the most discouraging for the students. Because of the poor results some had even requested to do a time-consuming outside study instead of the required essay. It is this area of evaluation that I have felt to be the most troubling in teaching this content-based course. Multiple-choice questions are very linear methods of testing students. The knowledge of the students is tested verbatim to the text. The possibilities are already selected for them and by the process of elimination they can arrive at an answer. The thinking is applied from the text to the questions (two-dimensional), and may not be testing the students' understanding of the subject matter, but only their reading abilities.

The failure of the essay questions proved that students may have not had a well-rounded understanding of the topic and might not have felt confident in using references from the text and lecture in expressing their opinions. The results of the multiple choice quizzes proved otherwise.

Discussions between students and teacher about the subject matter greatly contributed to breaking students out of the rigid linear thinking process of teacher to student and students to test. By eliciting the students' opinions in discussion, the students were forced to apply and personalize what they learned abstractly in class, and as a result their thinking process reached a more advanced level. This form of discussion was an adequate substitution for the essays. However, due to the enormity of the class, the frequency of these discussions was low and the willing participants represented only 10% of the class.

In the future I hope to develop and refine other more challenging and thought-provoking methods of evaluation that allow the students to gain further insight into their learning. In doing so, they can feel more confident in evaluating themselves in essay form beyond the multiple choice scenario.

HISTORY

ROBERT GETTINGS

Objectives:

The course is task oriented. Each task has language and content area objectives. The language objectives cover all four skill areas: listening, reading, speaking and writing, but listening and writing are emphasized. The content objectives fall into two categories: retention of information related to US History and development of social studies skills.

History, Description and Content:

All Culture minors (before 1994) and all second year students (1994-1995) were required to take History. In the first class of the year each student was asked to interview another student and report her feelings, interest, or lack of interest in studying US History. Students also had to report on their interests in another assignment.

About one-fourth of the class expressed a particular interest in US History. The most frequently discussed topics included: Native Americans, racial problems in the US, ethnic and racial minorities, music, presidents, John Kennedy, the Civil War, sports and violence (guns).

About one-half of the class reported that they disliked either history in general or US history in particular. Most disliked the subject because of the difficulty of memorizing names and dates. Others listed a lack of background knowledge in foreign history, or interest in another area than the US (Japan, China, etc.). Others expressed anxiety about studying history in English. A few students were no longer interested in studying English. They had lost the enthusiasm of their freshman year and were interested only in finding a job, getting out of school and working.

Some students were highly interested in the content or language focus of the class. Though most students did not have a particular interest in the class, they expressed a willingness to do their best. Some clearly stated that they did not want to be in the class, however, attendance was required to pass the course. There were only a few students who were uncooperative in or hostile to active participation in class.

This affected class management. Students could not be expected to have an intrinsic interest in the content matter or in tasks that the teacher designed for the class. The teacher had to design tasks which did not depend on the students possessing a high intrinsic desire to participate.

Students' attention span was affected by their interest level and language ability. As a result only some students were able to concentrate on a task for the entire class period. Others had difficulty concentrating for even short intervals. It seemed easiest for students to concentrate on lectures and note-taking. Reading and speaking activities were the most difficult.

Each History class is taught once a week for 90 minutes. This time is divided into two consecutive 45 minute periods. The first 45 minutes is taught in the Macintosh computer lab. Reading and writing are the focus. The second 45 minutes are in an ordinary classroom, with television, VCR, and an overhead projector. Listening, note-taking and small group tasks are the focus. Lectures and note-taking activities were easiest for the teacher to manage. The tasks were very simple and easy for students to understand. Use of an overhead projector made it possible for the teacher to walk through the classroom, check on

students' note-taking and give them individual assistance.

Reading for information, pair work, and small group discussion tasks were very difficult to manage. The students needed more explanation, individual assistance and encouragement to stay on task. The large class size made individual attention by the teacher difficult. Students were easily distracted by noise, conversations, or the opportunity to escape from the task and chat with their friends in their first language. The more complex the task, the more supervision and individual assistance were necessary.

This was especially true of in-class reading assignments. On the other hand, computerized reading tasks were simple and structured, had built-in individualized support for students (such as an electronic glossary) and made supervision easier because the teacher could check if students were on task by a quick glance at the computer screen. During the second semester most of the in-class reading took place in the computer lab (Gettings 1994).

One of the goals of the liberal arts core classes is to expose students to authentic college level English texts. During the first year of teaching History, it was required for Culture minors. A variety of authentic English texts were selected for in-class assignments to test students' reading ability. Texts varied in reading level from 8th to 14th grade (Flesch and Fog indices). Students were not well prepared for reading in history.

During the second year of teaching the same type of informal testing was done. More texts with a higher reading level (above grade 10) were used. This time students had had extensive preparation for reading content texts in three of their first year classes (Reading A, B and Vocabulary Building). Students in the new curriculum, however, seemed to have similar problems. Specifically, they had difficulty with understanding content related vocabulary, reading for information, reading difficult texts (above 5th to 8th grade readability) and reading long (more than 300 word) texts.

Students were graded for writing tasks, lecture notes, reading reports, and other assignments in the class. To help the teacher and students to keep track of assignments, each student used a B5 size notebook as a reaction journal. All tasks other than the final paper and tests were completed in the reaction journal. Students were required to take notes in the journal during lectures. Notes were followed by summaries of the lectures and the student's reaction or impression of the lecture. Students were also required to write short reports on other class tasks in the journal.

All lectures and class tasks were numbered and each had a corresponding 19×8 cm card which contained a brief outline of the task. If a student was absent for class, she could do the make-up work described on the card for that day's lecture. The card, for example, for a library research task, listed the steps involved in the task and the requirements for the report the student had to write in her reaction journal.

Looking at the journal made it easy for the teacher to quickly assess a student's

progress in the assigned tasks. The cards and reaction journal were also visual, concrete references for student-teacher conferences. Both could look at the journals or cards and discuss the tasks involved in completing the assignment. A quick check of a student's notes could serve to monitor the student's level of understanding or help her to ask a difficult question about the content of the lecture.

Listening, note-taking and writing skills are the main language focus of the class. Although attendance is important, completion of tasks, not attendance, is stressed because second year students are often absent looking for work or doing student teaching. The make up work is usually more difficult than attending the class itself.

Each 90 minute class period has 30 to 45 minutes of lecture or video. An outline of the lecture is shown to the class using an overhead projector. Students take detailed notes based on what they hear, not only what they see on the screen. There is not enough information on the OHP for complete notes. Students keep their notes in their journal and also have to write a summary and impression of the lecture.

Academic writing skills such as summarizing information, expressing opinions, and writing a research paper are also stressed. In short summaries and impressions of lectures, library research reports, and interview reports, students concentrate on giving information and expressing themselves clearly. In a longer interview report and research paper, students concentrate on information, clarity, grammar and research paper style.

During the first year of teaching this history course, in-class individual interest reading sessions, reading for information or information gap pair work tasks were used. Students had varying motivation and success in understanding each task, completing it in the assigned time, and reporting the information during the pair work activity. Many students had low motivation for staying in the target language. The SRA Dimensions graded reading cards were one of the materials used (Gettings 1994).

At times, students were assigned readings in Japanese. The objective of these assignments was for students to summarize the information in English. These readings were chosen to expose students to subtle differences in point of view or to allow students to quickly take in large amounts of information (more than 30 pages) in a short time. Students also had to read for library homework assignments. They were free to choose research sources in any language.

During the first year of teaching the class, students had to make a poster presentation about some aspect of US history. Each poster, designed by a team of six students, had written information and pictures. It was displayed in the classroom. After all the students had a chance to see the posters, each group did a verbal presentation during class explaining their poster.

Pair work and small group discussion were also included in class tasks for the first year. Most of these tasks were information gap exercises. Of course, it is easier for

students to exchange information in their native language so it was difficult to design tasks which would maximize individual student's motivation to stay in the target language. This year, the teacher asked students to have short, fast group discussions in Japanese. These discussions were the base for activities in the target language which followed the discussions.

Reflections:

There is room for improvement in teaching both EFL and content in future History classes. The intention was to focus on four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking, with the emphasis on listening and writing. Student performance could be easily checked by reading notes and reports in the reaction journals. Students clearly improved in listening and writing skills. Summarizing readings and lectures, organizing and criticizing ideas, and formal research writing skills need to be developed in the future.

Although new first year classes (Vocabulary Building and Reading) were designed to prepare students for the second year content classes, students were not well prepared for reading in History. Students especially had difficulty with content related vocabulary, reading strategies and reading long texts.

In the future, the new curriculum could be improved by discussion between first and second year teachers concerning reading, and targeting specific reading skills for the curriculum. More units on reading in history which focus on specific skills and which build on skills taught in the first year might be developed.

The last of the four skills, speaking, was not focused on in the second year of teaching History. During the first year, students had in-class communication and discussion tasks as well as a group poster project/oral report. This was omitted during the second year because of time considerations and complaints by students of a heavy work load. Some oral tasks should be included in the future, in place of tasks in other skill areas.

The class was successful in meeting its goals in the content area: retention of content related information and the development of social studies skills. Student reports and projects showed an improvement in social studies skills. Students had an average test score of 77% in the comprehensive multiple choice test given at the end of the first semester.

One of the content related goals of the curriculum was to offer students more selection in their choice of studies. Discussions in the English department also mentioned the need to develop Women's Studies, East Asian Studies and Third World Studies. Next year, the topic of History will be broadened-from US History to World History in an attempt to give students more choices in selecting independent study and research projects.

Objectives:

The content of these courses is the Bible. Their primary purpose is to help the student come to an understanding of the Bible as what it claims itself to be: God's revelation of himself to the world and to individuals. First year students learn the New Testament and second year students the Old Testament.

The courses integrate into this general objective two more specific ones. The first is learning English, including all of the four main skills. Work in class focuses on listening skills, as the current curriculum includes a relatively small number of classes requiring active English listening. Optional reports develop speaking skills, and required reports involve reading and writing. The other secondary objective is forming a personal set of values which the student can take into life after graduation. Most students are at an age which requires they move away from simply doing as they have been taught. They can now set out for themselves the type of lifestyle they will follow in continuing to mature as adults. These classes provide an opportunity to learn a Biblical approach to life as one option the student may take in forming her own set of values, beliefs, and opinions.

History, Description and Content:

Although this type of class at Hokusei Junior College dates back several generations, these particular ones are in their seventh year (beginning in 1988). Each year has concluded with a student evaluation of the class. Also, many audiovisual aids have become available, together with opportunities for experimenting with a variety of teaching techniques. Each of these factors has influenced the classes' evolution significantly.

The original class format consisted basically of an oral quiz at the beginning, an oral reading of a Bible story, and the teacher's commenting on the story while students took notes (Allison 1989). Having finished this in about an hour, the class spent the last 30 minutes listening to a short story or song and doing exercises with the goal of applying the Bible teachings to everyday life situations.

Evaluations by students and feedback during weekly classes indicated a very limited ability in comprehending lengthy lectures and a heavy reliance on the written text (the Bible) in order to understand lessons. As videos became available, the students responded positively to them as means of grasping the Bible stories. Participation and interest in the story and song listening exercises was high compared to the other study techniques, yet many students did not see any connection between these activities and the Bible teachings themselves.

Following the second year teaching these courses, the teacher had students complete a survey dealing with their motivation for participating in class and what they hoped to receive (Allison 1990). This provided some direction in making more specific linguistic goals for class activities (particularly focusing on listening tasks more than reading or writing). It also gave ideas for lecture content, as students wrote what they wanted to learn from the Bible (for instance, "about marriage").

Entering the fourth year, one remaining problem these classes faced was the students' inability to concentrate for the last 30 to 45 of the 90 minutes. To rectify this problem and provide more opportunities for practicing oral English, two experimental classes spent approximately half of the time outside the classroom. Students, either in the language lab or at home, did their story or song activities, turning in cassette tapes weekly on which they had recorded their answers and comments. This approach appeared to raise participation levels but required great amounts of time for the teacher to listen and respond to students' comments.

From this same year, a part-time teacher, Makito Watanabe, began to teach one of the eight Bible classes (a first year section). Whereas the format was generally the same as the other sections, this class introduced the element of a structured system for students to attend church worship services on an optional basis and afterwards write impressions reports. Since then, all English Bible classes have adopted this approach to more experiential learning.

The following year (1992), another part-time instructor, Don Frank, began teaching two sections of first year students. At this time, the three instructors began a two-year project of viewing and discussing videos of one of their classes each week. The teacher filmed his classes a week before the others planned to teach a similar lesson. The other two viewed the films, gave helpful feedback for future reference, and used this process to help them prepare their weekly lessons. This study allowed the teachers to view the classroom experience from a perspective closer to that of the students. Viewing the tapes individually, as well as the interaction during the discussions, provided a greater awareness of (a) the success or failure of, (b) time required for and (c) techniques for doing, classroom activities (Allison 1994).

For this same two-year period, Old Testament classes did the bulk of their story/music activities in the language lab (L.L.) or at home. Students were free to do work at any time during the week. However, they were required at the next class to submit written answers to the questions about the material to which they had listened. In this system, only a small group (under 10) of the students stayed in the classroom and did more discussion-oriented activities while the others were free to go to the L. L.

Currently, two sections of Old Testament students are doing these listening activities on Macintosh computers. Using headphones to hear stories or word puzzles recorded into a

Hyper Card program designed for this course, class members listen while reading objective and subjective questions, the answers to which they submit the following week. Plans are to incorporate more visual images into the software, along with a complete glossary for difficult vocabulary, allowing for greater use of multi-media technology.

One new part-time instructor, Tony Evans, is teaching two sections of second year students, using an approach similar to other classes' but emphasizing reading activities during class to a greater extent.

A section of first year students is learning through an experimental self-guided course, which allows them to see Bible videos from the A. V. library and respond in written form to both objective and subjective questions through text-based assignments. They submit these for weekly grades and additional discussion with the teacher when questions, comments, or problems arise.

Reflections:

The progression of these classes suggests that a significant amount of time may be necessary for a teacher to develop materials and teaching techniques appropriate for that particular class's language abilities and needs. Particularly due to the paucity of available teaching aids for this still relatively new approach to language acquisition, a heavy course load or other factors which would not allow ample preparation time, could easily lower the effectiveness of this type of class.

As a result of the demands these courses make, difficulties may arise when only one teacher is responsible for teaching several classes of students the same subject. Therefore, it may prove beneficial to have some combination of teachers carry the course load when practicalities allow it. Encouraging cooperation among teachers in creating and sharing materials may be especially helpful in developing courses of this type. Networking and consultation among teachers would appear to be increasingly important, particularly in light of rapidly-emerging educational technology. This would provide greater opportunities *for sharing information and materials rather than each teacher creating them independently.*

Finally, this type of class is often completely new to the students taking it, as well as the instructor. This points to the necessity for a great deal of feedback from those being taught to those teaching. A system of ongoing communication among class members may be extremely useful in giving direction to the growth of the course.

COMPARATIVE CULTURES*CAROL BROWNING***Objectives:**

Comparative Cultures is a content course which has been taught in English at Hokusei Junior College since 1990. The objectives of this course are to examine early childhood socialization, the family structure, informal and formal education, marriage, the role of women and other social changes in Japan, China, the United States, India and selected countries in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The focus is upon the values, norms, philosophies, religions and educational assumptions of these different cultures, and how they affect the behavior of these countries' citizens. For example, what sort of socialization process does a Japanese baby experience in order to participate successfully in Japanese society? In what ways is that process similar and different in other societies? Some attention is also paid to the changing roles of women, the struggle in developing countries between tradition and modernization as well as how socio-economic development affects larger social change.

Education or socialization is a cultural process. Each new member of a society or a group must learn act appropriately as a member, contribute to its maintenance, and occasionally to improve it. Education in every culture is an instrument for survival. It is also an instrument for adaption and change. To understand the rationale for education in various societies one must analyze it as it is imbedded in the culture of which it is an integral part and which it serves.

This Comparative Cultures course approach to examining these various cultures is based on anthropological observation and analysis. In the process of examining other cultures the student's native culture is placed in an international perspective, perhaps clarifying ethnocentric bias, stereotypes, misperceptions and cultural preconditions. A strong emphasis is placed on being non-judgmental; that is, examining a culture for its rationale rather than placing a value judgement upon it.

The linguistic skills developed in this course are listening, some reading and also writing. Students learn to summarize long readings and share this information with the whole class. Generally they prefer to make these reports in written form rather than orally. Discussion is encouraged but it is not a primary focus; in part because of the large class size and, in part, due to the reluctance of the students. Content takes priority over linguistic development. English is a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

History, Description and Content:

The course was first offered at Hokusei Women's Junior College in 1990 as an elective

for second year students for one semester. The initial focus was on early childhood socialization in Japan, China and the United States. Because the students expressed such strong interests in other cultures as well, selected countries from the Middle East, Africa and Europe were added. In 1994, India was also included.

Since there is no appropriate textbook in English for this course, the teacher has selected readings from a variety of sources, including the series of books edited by Dr. Leon E. Clark entitled *Through African Eyes*, *Through Chinese Eyes*, *Through Indian Eyes*, *Through Japanese Eyes* and *Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. These short readings are written by nationals from the various countries and present authentic, first-hand accounts of growing up in their respective cultures. The teacher has also selected video tapes to supplement the readings and lectures about various cultures.

Each 90 minute classroom period is divided into the following segments: 1) a lecture/discussion about the particular culture being studied, 2) a video tape illustrating that culture, 3) a student-team summary of the reading for that class period. The student summaries are either written on the board or printed by the students and distributed to the whole class. From time to time a cross-cultural simulation game is played such as "Rafa-Rafa," or a guest lecturer (a national from the country being studied) shares his or her experience of growing up in that culture.

The course grading policy is based upon the following 100 point formula: 33 1/3 points for weekly attendance; 33 1/3 points for active classroom participation; 33 1/3 points for term papers. This course has no quizzes and no final examinations; rather, two term papers are required. The first one is a mother-child interaction observation based upon anthropological objective observation reporting and subjective analysis of the findings. The second paper is a father-child interaction observation report. Both term papers focus upon Japanese parents and their children. Classroom discussion often includes a comparison of mother-child and father-child interactions in Japan with other countries that are being studied in the course.

At the end of the semester students are asked to evaluate the course based on a scale from one to ten, one being poor and ten being excellent. The ratings for this Comparative Cultures course generally average eight and one-half to nine. Students seem curious to learn more about the world in which they live, and they seem to hunger for information that is not superficial. Their main criticism of the course is the difficult level of English in some of the readings and video tapes.

Reflections:

From the perspective of the teacher, this Comparative Cultures course is in a continual process of development, as it has been for the past five years. The major problem has

always been how to analyze cultures around the whole world in one semester, without treating them in a superficial way. A full year course would help resolve that problem. A second problem is materials. Some of the readings are too difficult, too long or inappropriate for Japanese students who are not majors in sociology or anthropology. Some of the video tapes are also unsatisfactory for the same reasons. After each video tape, the teacher asks the students what percent of the script they understood. Generally the comprehension level is between 60%-80% of the video tapes. The teacher is constantly searching for more appropriate readings and video tapes. Since some of the readings are difficult and long, the class has been divided into teams. Each team reads a section of the assignment, summarizes its main points and reports this summary to the full class. As such, all students do not read each assignment in its entirety, but each student is exposed to the main points of all the readings. Also, this exercise helps students learn how to select the main points from an article and how to write a concise summary. So far, this learning strategy is working well. However, it does take up about one-third of each class period.

In conclusion, Comparative Cultures is a content course that has a great deal of potential. It is a subject of deep interest to most students. It is rarely offered in Japanese universities in English and thus the demand for such a course is high. For young Japanese citizens, who will spend their productive adult lives in an interdependent 21st century, it is a significant step toward understanding the world with informed empathy.

CONCLUSION:

The experience of the new classes' first months, together with that of US History, Comparative Cultures, and English Bible (which have been in the curriculum for several years), provides a basis for drawing tentative conclusions as to their effectiveness. They appear to have generally achieved their goals of exposing students to authentic English learning materials and providing a format for more intensive and comprehensive language acquisition. These classes open the door to learning not only a particular aspect of a language but a solid academic subject at the same time. They present opportunities to earn course credits in a wider variety of fields than in traditional second language acquisition programs. This learning may count more toward achieving further educational objectives in the future, also, as schools which students attend after graduation may more readily transfer credits for these types of courses than standard EFL program classes.

The new curriculum does not appear successful as yet at giving students more autonomy in selecting the content of their studies; however, if the selection of core courses grows according to the original design, this may become possible, as well. Each teacher found some students who took a very active interest in the subject of the class. However, other members of the same class found its level of difficulty detracted greatly from the

total learning experience, and others (in the case of required courses) simply attended because it was mandatory.

While classes differed considerably, a number of common points unified them. Each combined language instruction with teaching an academic subject, and six of the seven teachers used not only lecture but a wide variety of methods of instruction during each class's 90 minutes. Classroom activities ranged from student-student interviews to culture-related simulation games. The instructors also made wide use of audiovisual aids, including computers, videos, overhead projectors, cassette tapes of spoken English, and recorded music. All incorporated outside-class projects or real-life experiences into the learning process, as well.

Several common problems confronted the classes. All the teachers found that the students' English proficiency levels had a strong limiting influence on the teaching methods available. Not only the overall level but the gap between members of a class presented great difficulty. All teachers also concluded that North American university introductory level textbooks were extremely difficult for the vast majority of students. Some attempted to use them and judged it necessary to drastically reduce the volume of required readings, as well as teaching the same material repeatedly. Others simplified and adapted text-based material. Finding appropriate teaching materials proved to be a major challenge which required considerable amounts of time.

Another problem appeared in trying to include speaking components in the classes. No teacher found discussion with the entire class a particularly useful tool, and small group activities in the required classes often became problematic if done in English.

A final area of difficulty appeared in the teachers' efforts to develop systems for evaluating classes. All found a need for more feedback, both from students and fellow teachers. Methods of receiving feedback from students have included: (a) stopping the lecture and proceeding only when students indicated they were ready, (b) asking students to rate themselves, raising hands to indicate their percentage of comprehension of a section of a lecture they had just heard and (c) talking casually to students outside class.

Feedback from other teachers has consisted of co-authoring articles, coordinating efforts in preparing for conference presentations, and viewing films of each other's classes, in addition to less structured conversation in a monthly teacher's meeting. The growing body of literature related to teaching content-based courses should provide further means for mutual support, as well.

As these courses continue to develop, several potential problems call for consideration. One is the matter of individual students who cannot keep up with their peers academically and fail to complete the course requirements. While this has not become a problem to date, further development of systems for dealing with these special needs also is necessary. Another consideration is the transfer of credits to other colleges or universities. Also,

these classes' general level of difficulty puts considerable emotional and mental stress on the students, most of whom are job-hunting and have a variety of time demands. Their overall health and motivation to study, particularly in the required courses, are continual considerations.

Finally, several goals appear necessary to maintain as this curriculum develops, in addition to its basic educational goals. One is for further strengthening feedback systems between teachers and students. With workable communication channels in addition to the reaction journals, reflection reports, and class evaluations which students are currently using, the new curriculum these courses represent may be a response to student needs. Networking between content-based course teachers appears essential, as well, particularly given the fact that many come to teach this type or size of class for the first time. Increasing the teaching material resources available will likely prove beneficial. Membership in professional organizations; subscriptions to scholarly journals; and accumulating texts, software, and other teaching materials, all could contribute to more challenging and successful classes of this type.

As the first year for the three content-based core courses in Hokusei's curriculum has not yet concluded, final evaluation of their effectiveness would be premature. Student evaluations, the McGraw-Hill Comprehensive English Language Test (C. E. L. T., which second year students will take in December, 1994), as well as TOEFL testing (of both first and second year students in January, 1995), will allow for a more objective appraisal. This data will also provide information useful in giving directions to further curriculum development.

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