Student-Centered Instruction and Its Implementation: In the case of the Japanese language program

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Topic of Discussion

• How to promote student-centered-instruction, or

• How to encourage 'autonomous learning'

Organization of Talk

1. Theoretical Background: 'student-centered-instruction' from the point of view of 'learner autonomy'
2. Two Projects
   - Podcasting Project (by Hideki)
   - Social Issue Project (by Shinji)
3. Summary - Discussion

Japanese Language Program 09

• Enrollment
• Native Language
• Major

Table 1: Total Enrolment (Fall 2009) - 228

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>English JPN</th>
<th>Chinese JPN</th>
<th>Japanese JPN</th>
<th>Other JPN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Survey on Students' Information (native languages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thanks to Ms. Nakamura (our TA)
### Table 3: Survey on Students' Information (Majors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EALAC</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science (biology, neuroscience)</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature/Linguistics/ Language</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics/Political Science</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science/Engineering</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Anthropology</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Engineering</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objective of Foreign Language Teaching/Learning: Develop Successful Language Learners

1. Proficient in the language
2. Act independently as well as intentionally
3. Motivated to participate in the community of the target language
4. Help others, or learn from or with others
5. Can make use of resource for their learning

**Autonomous Learner**

### Table 4: Learner Autonomy (Oxford 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Highlighted Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>• physical situations for independent learning situations (e.g., a classroom, a home setting, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>• mental and emotional characteristics of learners (e.g., attitudes, ability, learning strategies, styles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>• self-regulation gained through social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• participation in the community of practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political-Critical</td>
<td>• having one's own voice, ideological position, choice of cultural alternatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher's Roles

- 'Expert'
- 'Facilitator'
- 'Resource Person'
- 'Manager'

### Table 5: Japanese Language

Approximate learning expectations for a number of languages based on the length of time it takes to achieve general professional proficiency in speaking and reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Length of Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Languages closely related to English (575-600 class hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French, Italian, Spanish... (German: 30 weeks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Languages with significant linguistic and/or cultural differences from English (1100 class hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russian, Hebrew, Hindi...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Languages which are exceptionally difficult for native English speakers (2200 class hours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic, Chinese, Japanese*, Korean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Languages preceded by asterisks are typically somewhat more difficult for native English speakers to learn than other languages in the same category.

### Keys for Learner Autonomy

1. Learners’ Individual differences
2. Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning
3. Learning in and beyond classroom
4. Active and positive learning process
5. Teachers as ‘facilitator’, ‘resource person’ and ‘manager’

The Foreign Service Institute of the Department (FSI) of State
Table 5: Target average for speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Level</th>
<th>ACTFL Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>Intermediate Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>Intermediate Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Year</td>
<td>Advanced Plus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Podcast Project: 1st-Year Japanese

- Groups of students created podcasts and the teachers have put them online.
- **Podcast**: Audio/movie files (e.g., TV/Radio programs) that you can download through the Internet (e.g., iTunes)

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Podcast: Kono Seikatsu (This life)

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Podcast: F4 no Ichinichi (A day of F4)

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Blog

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iTunes

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Podcast Project: 1st-Year Japanese

- **Target Audience**: Worldwide audience of Japanese speakers interested in New York, Columbia University, life at an American university and classmates.

Fall 2008 Semester 1st-Year Japanese

- **Textbook**: *Minna no Nihongo* (Everyone’s Japanese)
- **Participants**: 66 students
- **Duration**: 1 semester (65 min. x4/week)
- **Other homework assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.**
- **Language lab @ LRC (Every week)**
- **Grammar** that students knew at the point of the project
  - Existential expressions (There is a book on the table)
  - Counter suffix (a glass of water)
  - Adjectives etc.

Podcast Project

**Objectives**:
1. Actively express opinions to a real Japanese audience by using Japanese language and other modalities (tone of voice, body language, pictures, color, font, etc)
2. Consider first-hand how big media operates and presents information

**Keys to Incorporate Learner Autonomy into the Classroom**
1. Learners’ individual differences
2. Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning
3. Learning in and beyond classroom
4. Active and positive learning process
5. Teachers as a ‘facilitator’ ‘resource person’ and ‘manager’

**Evaluation Criteria**
1. Language
2. Content
3. Presentation
4. Consideration
5. Goal/Purpose/Idea
6. Effort
7. Openness to Comments from Others

**Evaluators**: The teacher and classmates

Procedure & 5 keys for learner autonomy

1. Form groups and brainstorm ideas.
   - Learner’s individual difference
2. Discuss what constitutes a good podcast in order to create the evaluation criteria.
   - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning
Procedure & 5 keys for learner autonomy

3. Write proposal

4. Read classmates’ proposals and make critical comments

5. Revise proposals based on classmates’ comments
   - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning
   - Active and positive learning process

1st Proposal

3Otaku: A group of 3 students

Content
   - A typical student at Columbia

Type
   - News Show/Documentary

1st proposal

1. What message do you want to convey? (Remember what kind of audience you are targeting to relay your message.)
   - We would like to reveal a day in the life of a typical student at Columbia University.

2. Please explain in detail why you would like to convey this message.
   - We are curious about the experiences and lifestyles of students in universities across the country and even the world. Therefore, we would like to share our own experiences.

3. What type of format (e.g., interview, documentary, fiction) do you think would the best to convey your message? Why do you think this type of program would be best?
   - Type: News show/ documentary
   - Reason: This format is dynamic and interesting. It allows us to capture the perspective of a Columbia student.

Comments on the 1st proposal from classmates

   - Can you provide more details about how you can show the experiences and lifestyles of Columbia students in NY? What will you film? What will you focus on?
   - What specifically do you mean by life at Columbia, New York, etc?
   - The purpose and the message you are trying to convey seem vague. Try to narrow down.
2nd proposal

1. What message do you want to convey? (Remember what kind of audience you are targeting to relay your message.)

- We will be documenting one typical day in the life of Mary.
- She will be shown walking, studying, eating in John Jay, interacting with friends, entertaining herself, etc.

2nd proposal

2. Please explain in detail why you would like to convey this message.

- Specifically, we’d like to portray the dynamic excitement and overwhelmingly busy atmosphere of Columbia.
- We’d like our audience to understand and appreciate Columbia in the same ways that we do personally.

2nd proposal

3. What type of format (e.g., interview, documentary, fiction) do you think would be the best to convey your message? Why do you think this type of program would be best?

- Type: Documentary of a life. The podcast will feature voices of narration.
- Reason: This format is also the most capable means of accomplishing our goals.

Procedural & 5 keys for learner autonomy

6. Write scripts

- Teachers as ‘resource person’
Procedure & 5 keys for learner autonomy

7. Practice reading the scripts
   - Active and positive learning process

8. Videotape the podcast
   - Active and positive learning process
   - Learning in and beyond classroom

9. Watch classmates’ podcasts and make comments
   - Teachers as ‘resource person’

10. Correct and improve the scripts
    - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning
    - Active and positive learning process

Commentson the 1st podcast from classmates

- Add music
- Add visual aspects
- Add other students’ role
- Add more expressions with adjectives
- Make the music less intense while talking
- Make the narrations more lively

11. Videotaping for the second time

Procedure & 5 keys for learner autonomy

12. Watch podcasts, including their own, and evaluate
    - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning

Podcast: Mary-san no Seikatsu (Mary’s life)

Evaluation of the Project

Active and positive learning process

- Meeting up with classmates and discussing the project made us learn the language in a fun way. For example, about Japanese culture, for the videos, but also more colloquial Japanese, for the dialogues or whatever we were doing.
- I actually learned lots of vocabulary and grammar that I couldn’t memorize before.
- Since I want to perform well in the speaking part, I have to prepare and learn more
- Podcasting allowed me to use Japanese in real-life situations.
Evaluation of the Project

Suggestions to improve the project

- If possible, the project could be started earlier in the year, and the students would thus have more time to make it.
- Some editing software or little techniques could be briefly introduced.
- It will be great if we can have feedbacks from Japanese audience!
- It will be more interesting if the instructor assigns different topics for each group.

URLs of the podcasts

- Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/columbiajp
- Blog: http://nyjapanesetime.blogspot.com/
- Also available on iTunes: ニューヨーク日本語の時間～ただ今特訓中～
Social Global Issue Project (Intermediate-level)

- Outline
  1. Course & Class Overview
  2. Social Issue Project
     - Objectives
     - Procedure
  3. Actual Student Works

Spring 2008 Semester 2nd-Year Japanese

- Participants: 7 students (one of 4 sections)
  - Native Language: 5 English, 2 Chinese
  - Major: 1 East Asian, 1 Creative Writing, 2 Math & Economics, 1 English & History, and 2 Biology
  - Heritage learner (?), Learned Japanese at a high school

- Duration: 1 semester (65 min. x4/week)
- Textbook: *Hiyaku* (Columbia Original)
  - Conversation session
  - Social Global Issue Project

Social and Global Issues Project

- Objectives:
  By using Japanese, get involved in social and global issues
  1. Gather information by reading, listening, or watching (both in Japanese and English),
  2. State opinions, and
  3. Interact with the (actual) world and society actively as well as critically

Social and Global Issues Project

Procedure

1. Each student choose a social or global issues that interests them and create a vocabulary list

Social and Global Issues Project

Topics that learners chose

- Sea pollution
- Endangered species
- Health damage from tobacco
- Puppy Mill
- Traditional culture in modern society
- Medical system

Social and Global Issues Project

Procedure

1. Choose a social issues that interests you and create a vocabulary list
2. Submit the outline and revise the outline based on the comments made by:
   - Class instructor (individual meeting)
   - TAs (native speakers of Japanese)
   - Classmates
Project Outline
(Questions originally in Japanese)
1. What is a social or global issue that interests you?
2. What is the relationship between the issue and you? Why are you interested in it? Why is it important for you?
3. What messages would you like to convey? What is the significance of your conveying this message in Japanese?
4. In order to convey your message, which media do you think would be effective? Why is the media you choose suitable?
5. What do you think should be done in order to solve the social or global issue you chose? What are some of the actions you could take by using Japanese?

Social and Global Issues Project
3. Create final evaluation criteria
- Objects of Evaluation
  1. Project (blog, video)
  2. In order for the project to be seen:
     - What kind of effort did you make
     - How many people actually read or watch your project?
  3. What did you actually do to solve the issue?
- Evaluators
  - Instructor
  - Student himself/herself
  - Teaching assistants
  - Students at partner schools in Japan

Social and Global Issues Project
Evaluation Criteria for the Project
1. Language: Grammar, Chinese character etc.
2. Design: Photos, design etc.
3. Content: Theme, structure, flow, interesting, easy to read, new information etc.
4. Awareness of the audience: Consideration for the audience, what are the merits to the readers?
5. Originality and creativity
6. Acceptance of comments from others

Example
- Project work
- Exchanges with TAs and partner school students on the blog
- Final evaluation

Student Work
Elizabeth
- Junior
- Biology Major
Topic
- Sea Pollution
Medium
- Video (on the blog and YouTube)
Individual Meeting with the Instructor

Focused on originality

- Narrate the story from the viewpoint of creatures in the ocean
- Link the topic to her own experiences

Solutions Suggested (by Elizabeth)

1. Demand the government to restrict the sewage dumping by the cruise ships
2. Stop dumping garbage into the ocean
3. Save energy and water (by discarding old machines and purchasing new and more energy-efficient ones)
4. Become a vegetarian (so as to save energy and reduce pollution)

Comments to the draft (from TAs)

- I would like to know if there are other methods besides becoming a vegetarian. (MI)
- What should those who can’t eat vegetables do? Please think of something that all of us can do by not restricting your solution to such a narrow target. (KS)
Comments from the Viewers

I was surprised when I watched the video because it was the first time for me to hear that becoming a vegetarian would lead to preventing sea pollution. As you rightly pointed out, certainly, raising the cattle in order to eat meat, processing meat, and cooking meat would mean that we consume a lot of energy.

If I could argue back, today we do so many things in order to grow vegetables and fruits throughout the year. I do not know about the US, but in Japan, I have heard that we turn on the heater (to grow vegetables and fruits). We also use a lot of water. Therefore, I do not think that becoming a vegetarian necessarily contribute to the ecology. (Hula Girl April 20, 2009 1:17 PM)

Elizabeth’s Response

In general we do not use the heaters to grow vegetables and fruits in the US. Even if we use electric power, we do not use it as much as (in Japan?). In order to raise the cattle, we consume not only the energy but also wheat. We could have given the wheat to the hungry people instead. (Elizabeth April 20, 2009 2:18 PM)

Comments from the Viewers

I have a question concerning your solution. Even if you say “Please become a vegetarian!” don’t you think that some people wouldn’t listen to you? I still want to eat meat and fish. … It is OK to buy new and energy saving electronic house appliances, but how would you dispose of the old ones? Wouldn’t we produce more garbage and pollute the environment? (Near Rice April 20, 2009 1:19 PM)

Comments from the Viewers

… After watching this video, I have been putting an effort in recycling, because I thought that I should do what I can even if it was little by little, …

On the other hand, I read the comment by Near Rice with much curiosity. Certainly it is a good idea to suggest people to become vegetarians. But is it a realistic solution? For example, couldn’t we suggest to focus more on the development and research of clean energy such as solar and wind in order to reduce the use of the energy based on sources such as petrol? (Wrap Middle April 24, 2009 11:41 AM)

Evaluation of the Project

Self Evaluation

I put a lot of effort into my project, so I learnt a lot from it. I think it’s a good idea to talk about the issue from the perspective of animals. This project made me want to work for animals in Japan one day. But I didn’t post my project so much on the internet. I may post more messages in the future.

Evaluation of the Project

I think this project is good. It’s great that we use this project to think about global issues. And I think it was good that students were allowed to choose the medium. I can’t think of a negative point about this project.

Evaluation of the Project

I learnt a lot about sea pollution. I also learnt many new vocabularies in Japanese. I am happy that now I can discuss about one of the global issues.
The good point about this project is that you get to use Japanese a lot. It was challenging to write about difficult things in Japanese, but it was fun. It is necessary to take Japanese out of the classroom and use it in real life, and this made it enjoyable to study Japanese (Student A).

I learnt a lot about endangered species. And because this project was a good practice of Japanese, I learnt a lot about how to write. (Student B)

I learnt a lot about how to write. And I learnt many interesting things about Japanese tobacco. (Student C)

I think it is too difficult to solve global issues. It is good to learn about something that we are interested in, but aren’t there easier projects than trying to solve global issues? However, I learnt vocabularies that are important for doctors, so I learnt a little bit about how to communicate in Japanese. (Student D)

I learnt about the current condition of traditional cultures. Especially, I came to understand the complexity of this problem. Of course, my Japanese improved a little. (Student E)

This project was challenging, but I learnt a lot. It was a lot of fun to do research on puppy mills. And it was interesting to learn other people’s opinions on puppy mills. It took a lot of time to work on this project. But it taught me a lot of things. (Student F)

1. Choose a social issues that interests you and create a vocabulary list
   - Learners’ individual differences

2. Submit the outline and revise the outline based on the comments (individual meeting)
   - Active and positive learning process
   - Teachers’ role as ‘resource person’

3. Create evaluation criteria (among the students and the instructor)
   - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning

4. Submit a draft of the project two or more times (individual meeting)
   - Active and positive learning process
   - Teachers’ role as ‘resource person’

5. Present the final project on the blog

6. Think about what you should do to make the target audience read/watch your project and execute the action
   - Learning in and beyond classroom

7. Read the blogs and exchange comments and opinions on the blog
   - Learning in and beyond classroom
   - Active and positive learning process

8. Take actions to solve the problem
   - Learning in and beyond classroom

9. Final evaluation
   - Engage in planning, monitoring, evaluating and modifying their learning

Learner Autonomy in the Project
Summary

- Encourage Learner Autonomy and Create Life Long Learners
- Engage the Learner in the process of Learning
- Motivate the learner to participate in the community

URLs of the podcasts

Podcast Project
Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/columbiajp

Social Issue Project
Blog: http://gungunninensei.blogspot.com