A report on current Technologies for E-Learning:

Introducing ESL Japanese students to a web 2.0 learning environment

ESLクラスにおけるE-ラーニングの取り組みに関する報告書

― 環太平洋大学でウェブ2.0導入の取り組み―を基に ―

環太平洋大学非常勤講師
グジョン・ルック
GOUGEON, Luc
International Pacific University

次世代教育学部国際教育学科
オチャンテ・カルロス
OCHANTE, Carlos
Department of International Education
Faculty of Education for Future Generations

Abstract：近年，教育におけるICT（情報コミュニケーション技術）の普及が，インターネットや端末の進化によって力を増している。先進国の教育現場では特にE-learningやWeb2.0を用いたクラス作りや指導の効果が初等教育から高等教育にかけてあげられている。一方，技術の面では先端にたつと言われる日本は他の先進国に比べ教育におけるICTの取組や普及が遅れている。この報告書では，ESLクラスにおいて様々なICTツールを用いて，英語学習におけるICTの重要性とICTに対する学生の反応を調べた。

Keywords：ESL, Web 2.0, E-learning, educational technology use.

Ⅰ Intro

Are we in a position to teach anything useful? In a fast changing world, the role of the teacher is in a constant redefinition. In the specific case of Japan, our role is to focus our attention on catching up with other countries with well established ICT practices. Mastering these skills is essential to compete in this new technology rich world. But, what is the situation of Japan? The Japanese ministry of education, culture, sport, science and technology published a report on ICT (Research on the development of ICT in education, 2011) where it shows that Japan's ICT development is slow with only a 40% of deployment compared with UK 100%, USA 90 % and Korea 70%. For this reason Japan is starting to put more efforts on the use of ICT for their education.

This report aims to present a pilot ESL educational structure that uses ICT tools and the use of Web 2.0 to create a better learning environment. It introduces different interactive tools like Facebook, Google docs, podcasting, etc. where ESL students can improve their overall skills and practical knowledge of English.

Ⅱ Methodology

1．IPU background, ICT state

This study has been done in the International Pacific University (IPU) located at Okayama, Japan. All ESL classes targeted in this research belong to the Department of International studies. The targeted university has a standard environment. However ICT and specially the use of web 2.0 has not being totally used and it's limited. All classes targeted in this study are conducted in English and some of them count also with the attendance of international ESL students.

2．Tools (Web 2.0) introduced in targeted classes

In this research we used the following tools:

a. Google drive (docs, sheet, slide, form, etc.)
b. Facebook
c. Wiki
d. Podcasts

e. Piktochart

3．Pc's and tablets usage

We experimented with replacing a whole media cart with a single iPad which greatly facilitated carrying digital material and sharing it with students or colleague on the fly. The iPad can easily be connected to the digital projector with the use of a single connector. While it's not always a perfect solution, the students can see in real time how we access different sources and information.

Using an iPad which content is projected on a screen is also a great way to share with the students practical apps like the TED app or the online news reader ZITE.

We were aware that the majority of students had some experience working with these tools but at the same time we knew of the consequences of a bad usage could lead to some issues. For example beginners would find managing of personal information and privacy of the use of technologies difficult to understand. In order to provide a correct usage of this web tools we assisted our students with a set of rules to make sure they understand the risks of data sharing on internet.

The classes tried to give students a competitive edge in the global sphere as well as to nurture their ICT skills so they can thrive in the profession of their choice. The initial resistance of students toward ICT was not surprising since it has already been observed by other similar studies.

Ⅲ　The use of web 2.0 tools on ESL classes

1．Facebook as a communication tool (Class A)

Specific Facebook groups for ESL classes
The target in this case is an ESL class that involves reading and discussion of world current issues. The class develops the vocabulary and eventually they are required to write their opinions using Facebook. In order to create a network where ideas and opinions could be shared Facebook groups were an option. The process of creating a group was simple since all students were used to it and had already their own accounts.

The process of creating a Facebook group was as follows:
a. Create the group. (name the group, set managing and privacy settings, etc.)
b. Add students to the group. (Add manually or send group links)
c. Set group rules. (Guidance on how to use the group)

Since Facebook has been related to the fact of being distractive and it may negatively affect the academic performance of students (Pollara, Zhu 2011) the follow rules were created in order to stimulate a correct use of the group:
a. All posts must be related only to the class.
b. Students must check other classmates' posts.
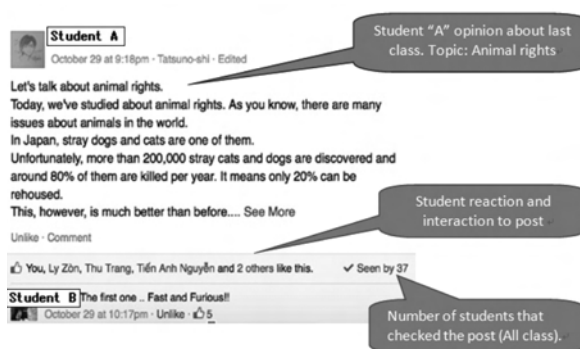c. Only English usage.

Figure 1　Students interaction in Facebook.

Facebook is currently being used to quickly communicate with the students since all of them are using smartphones. We created various groups where teachers and administrators can post important messages and often more trivial content related to the life of our students. Teacher can share pictures taken during different activities.

These pictures when shared again by the students themselves on their personal wall create a bigger community and spread the message and the mission to families and friends. It's a great way to reinforce a positive school spirit.

Facebook has also been used for students writing assignments where they have to respond to a question in the class group. Their answers are seen by the whole group and it encourages them to write quality answers.

1．1 The use of Piktochart: making infographics (Class A)

We asked the students to create infographics using the Piktochart website. This website provides online software that allows the creation of presentations and posters. Many websites uses infographics to present information in a more simple and visual way. It's interface uses tools similar to that of Power Point making students familiar to the software. For this class, they picked their own topic, created an account on the Piktochart website. Once they finished their infographic, they presented it in front of the class. All the students also shared their infographic on Facebook.
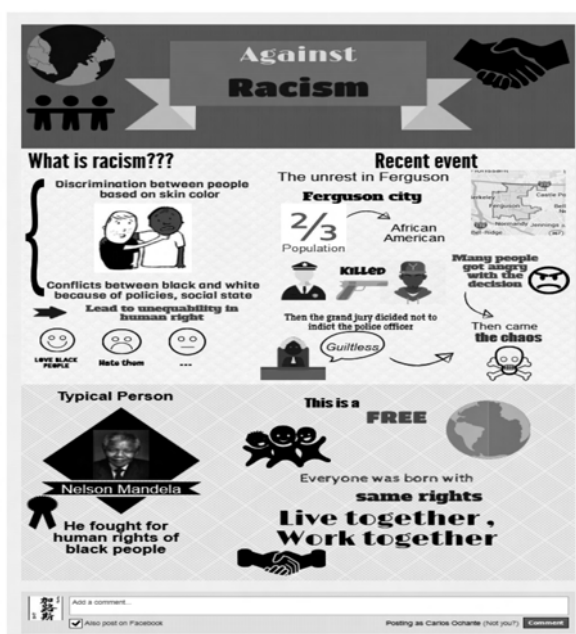

Figure 2　Student's Infographic about "Racism". Made in Piktochart.

2．The use of Youtube and other free sources of media (Class B)

Youtube was mainly used for the Movie and Television class. Youtube and many other sources were also use for the extension classes.

We decided early on to embrace an open source mentality and use as many free tools we could find.

Since our ultimate goal is for the students to regularly consume English language content in their free time, it is essential that we facilitate the access to all content. We understand that free is not always synonymous with quality, but it the teachers role to act as a "media" curator.

While the WIFI network at IPU is reliable, it's always a good idea to have some back up material which has been previously downloaded.

TED talks are freely available to be downloaded in their entirety therefore enabling the teacher to use such a resource without a readily available internet connect.

Students were also encouraged to listen to podcast and download them into their smartphones. We made the students aware that they could download specific content for studying English from the Japanese iTunes store.

These free sources of content will need to be organized and made available to all students in the near future.

3．The use of Google Drive (All classes)

This tool was use in the extensions classes and could be use in all type of classes in the future.

The Google Drive productivity suite which includes a word processor (Docs or Documents), a spreadsheet (Sheets) and a presentation tool (slide) is both free and easy to use　(Figure 3).　It was also chosen for the facility in sharing documents between the students and the teachers and it has also proven precious in many collaborative projects between teachers, including the redaction of this report.

Figure 3　Google Drive

3．1 Creation of a school wiki and FAQ page (Class C)

Students were asked to work on an English language wiki project about the university and the surrounding area. With the increasing number of foreign students, we asked the Japanese students

to write about the university, the area around the university, Japanese culture and visiting Japan. Google Drive was used to gather all the relevant articles. It's also used as a pre publishing platform where the students can comment on each other's article and the teacher can then suggest corrections and changes. Setting up a proper work flow was the first challenge of this exercise. We started working in a classroom where the majority of the students were working on their personal computers, but some decided to use their smartphones instead of bringing their computer from home. To remedy to this situation, we moved that particular class to the computer room where everybody had access to a full size computer.

Proper research methodology was discussed with the students, since most of them don't have an instinctive knowledge of ICT. The task had to be partitioned and the steps clearly identify.

Once the content will be created and edited. We will publish it on the school main webpage. The wiki platform hasn't been decided yet at the time of the redaction of this report, but by working in Google Drive, we can easily cut and paste the content into any platform we decide to use.

Considering that a wiki and a FAQ page are work in progress, we will ask future classes to help improve the content of the school wiki and add any new information that could be needed.

Things that will need to be taken into consideration for the next classes working on the wiki:

- Improving research and redaction skills
- Learning how to use collaborative tools more effectively
- Learn how to create a flowchart and create a proper work plan.

3．2　Google Drive as a coordination tool (Class D)

The students in this class were asked to prepare a visit to a local Elementary school. The main goal of this activity is to share with the young students their experiences of studying at IPC.

From the start, they use a Google Doc to coordinate their activities and input all the research they were doing.

They decided on which activity they would do. For example, a group preparing a quiz used the Google Doc to write all their questions and downloaded the appropriate images from Google Images straight into the document.

We insisted in this class on cutting and pasting any original material relevant to their activity straight into a Google Doc so they could organize their ideas.

3．3　International class:

In this particular class, students from Japan, Vietnam and China are collaborating on presentations. They are using Google Drive for sharing information and working on the actual presentation using Google Slides.

We took the large group to the computer room, but found out that the multipurpose room is much better suited for this project where all the students can sit in circle and one or two students are acting as note takers.

The hardware became a challenge in this class since most of the students were using different computers and it proved difficult to connect their computer with the projector. When a student forgot to bring a connector for is Mac Pro, we ended up asking the student to email his presentation to the teacher and used the teacher's iPad for the presentation.

In this specific case, the use of cloud computing has proven itself to be a way to simplify presentation and we can use any computer available to connect it to the projector.

How the students responded to using Google Drive?

Most students were not familiar with the numerous Google Drive tools, but they proved to be quick learners. The Google Drive tools were easy to use on multiple platforms and some of them used their smartphones to input information. It was also easy for the student to provide real time assistance by correcting mistakes or helping out with the layout of the document.

Some students decided early on that it was much easier to work from a laptop computer since it offered them more functionality.

By color coding the comments from the teacher

for example, the students knew instantly who was editing their text.

We haven't explored yet all the possibilities of online collaborative tools and we are looking forward expanding the use of these tools to as many classes as possible.

４．Google site to create an online syllabus

The use of Google Sites for the movie and television class.

In the specific context of a Movies and Television class where the students were shown a wide variety of Youtube clips, a dedicated course web site was created to increase the engagement of the student with the material.

A Google free website was created using the tools available at Google Sites (https://sites.google.com), this platform was the easiest and quickest way to integrate Youtube clips.

Figure 4　Web page made for the class (Google sites).

The website was updated weekly with new material so the students could watch some of the material at home and work on increasing their listening and comprehension skills. While we encouraged them to do self study and acquire the skills to find their own source of English material, the website acted both as a curated version of each topic and a guide.

The site itself was projected weekly on the big screen by connecting an iPad to the class digital projector. This set up was both quick and easy to navigate.

５．Google Form as tool to survey classes

Like we previously mentioned, this is only the beginning of an ongoing exploration on how to introduce ICT in the classroom.

We decided to survey our students by sending them a Google Form survey through their Gmail addresses which we can access through the school online Passport system. We sent the survey to all of them and received their answers which we can compile easily and create graphics for this research.

Google Forms, making surveys online.

In order to get to know our students needs we create surveys online using Google drive's "Google forms" this online tool allows easily the creation of online questionnaires which can store all responses directly into a sheet. This makes easy the analysis of the survey data.

In this survey we asked questions related to the class and about the usage of web 2.0.

By using Google Form, we didn't need to print or input any data since all the data were automatically transferred into Google Sheet.

６．Future projects:

６．１　Podcasting to improve English communication skills

It's our intention to start a school podcast to help the students improve their English communication skills. In order to familiarize ourselves with the medium of podcasting, we created our own podcast page for educators. We created www.esljapanpodcast. com using the Wordpress blogging platform and a dedicated podcasting hosting service called Libsyn.

The podcast was recorded and then edited with the Audacity audio editor which is free software.

We would like for the students to learn all the steps necessary to record a podcast; from the creation of a showpage, the recording of the voices, the editing and the posting of a podcast on iTunes.

We believe that podcasting will be a great way for the student to practice their communication skills without the additional stress of making a presentation in front of other. We hope that the option of taking numerous takes and listening to themselves with help them with their speaking skills.

６．２　Wordpress

Wordpress is currently one of the most popular

blogging platforms in the world and we would like to introduce students to blogging. We are also considering asking the foreign students to participate as well and share with everybody their experience at IPU.

6.3 Web conferencing for different classes

Most of our students are using Skype. We would like to find a way to use Skype in an educational manner.
-In class Skype call.
-Encourage them to call English speakers, etc.
-Make call to the IPC campus.

We would like to explore the idea of creating an IPU MOOC or Massive Online Open Course.
By creating this MOOC we could help our students to access precious material at their convenience. If the MOOC would be openly available to general public, it could become a precious marketing tool for IPU.
In order to create a MOOC, we will need to work on creating quality audio-visual content and explore which platform we will use to distribute our MOOC. Our current explorations of various ICT and Web 2.0 are paving the way toward the creation of a MOOC.

6.4 Encourage the creation of online syllabus

After creating a class specific website for the Movie and Television class, we would like to encourage all teachers to create online syllabus where students can access various content. This syllabus could be individual pages created with Google Drive or take the form of a school wiki.

6.5 Create a best practice guide

We believe that it is important that our students use the internet safely, so we would like to create a guide of internet best practices and an official IPU online publishing guideline. This would be an additional incentive for the students to have a responsible and respectful attitude toward the internet.

6.6 Twitter

In our survey, Twitter proved to be popular and we haven't used this SNS yet as a teaching tool. It's our intention to teach our students how to use Twitter in English for educational purposes. Twitter is a powerful tool and writing a message in less than 140 characters will a challenge for them.

6.7 Software and Freeware

We already mentioned that free softwares were a great way to introduce our students to these new technologies, but we are quickly facing the technical limits of these freeware. We need to reflect on which software or freeware suits the need of our students.

Ⅳ Conclusion

As a conclusion we can say that a significant increase of stimulation was generated by using ICT tools in the targeted classes. Students involved found realistic goals were they could put in practice different kinds of abilities. We created class models were English was a useful tool for e-learning. Students participated in using ICT tools that were not related directly to English learning but instead, it gave them an opportunity of put their language skills and thinking in practice. We, the teacher, by testing these tools in classes obtained a better understanding of the possibilities that a web 2.0 environment can provide to the school and classes. By using various ICT technologies in the classroom, we are only mirroring the current media consumption and usage of our students while focusing their attentions on best practices and curating the experience. The implementation of good ICT practice is an ongoing challenge where the students are learning how to use new tools and they get to practice their English at the same time. From the start, we perceived a certain resistance toward ICT from some students. Since these technologies were mostly new for our students, we realized that most of them were not ready or could not understand the reason why they should invest a lot of time and energy in mastering them. We perceived a divide between their skills as users and their skills as producers of original digital content. We think that in the future we will need to find a balance between our students usage of smartphones and the technical knowledge they need to produce great content on other digital platforms.

Did we teach something useful? We think it's a resounding yes. But we insist that this report is not really a conclusion but just a summary of our experiments with ICT technologies at IPU. We are looking forward exploring other new technologies and report our findings.

Ⅴ Bibliography

Translation: Research on the development of ICT in education, 2011

文部科学省先導的大学改革推進委託事業,「ICT活用教育の推進に関する調査研究」, 放送大学学園, 平成23年３月, http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/itaku/1307264.htm

Armstrong, J., & Franklin, T. (2008). *A review of current and developing international practice in the use of social networking (Web 2.0) in higher education.* Retrieved from http://www.franklinconsulting.co.uk/LinkedDocuments/the%20use%20of%20social%20networking%20in%20HE.pdf

Boudreaux, M. (2010). *Collaboration via Wikis: Social aspects and adapting teacher feedback in an online environment.* (Master's thesis, University of Louisiana). Retrieved from http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd11182010131545/unrestricted/BoudreauxThesis.pdf

Franklin, T., & Van Harmelen, M. (2007). Web 2.0 for content for learning and teaching in higher education. Retrieved from http://ie-repository.jisc.ac.uk/148/1/web2-content-learning-and-teaching.pdf

M. Morrone (2014) MAKING INROADS FOR ICT IN JAPAN: FINDING PLATFORMS FOR CHANGE IN A TRADITION-BOUND CULTURE, *INTED2014 Proceedings*, pp. 2951–2955.

Ullrich, C., Borau, K., Luo, H., Tan, X., Shen, L., & Shen, R. (2008). *Why Web 2.0 is good for learning and for research: Principles and prototypes.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 17th International World Wide Web, New York. Retrieved from http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/58/87/57/PDF/ULLRICH-CARSTEN-2008.pdf

Web sites:

http://quizlet.com/

http://www.net-texts.com/

http://edtechreview.in/

www.podcastinenglish.com

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/

http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/technology-in-education/

http://www.iste.org/

https://www.wikispaces.com/

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Educational_technology

http://www.macfound.org/programs/learning/

http://movingforward.wikispaces.com/Education+Blogs+by+Discipline

http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/ICT_Guide_EN_v19_reprintwc.pdf

http://edublogawards.com/2013awards/best-podcasts-or-google-hangouts-for-educators-in-2013/

http://www.adlnet.org/scorm/