Creating new curriculum for practical English usage
Introducing students to Digital Media

実践的な英語を扱うカリキュラムへの取り組み

― 大学生のためのデジタル・メディア入門 ―

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

次世代教育学部国際教育学科
グジョン・ルック
GOUGEON, Luc
Department of International Education
Faculty of Education for Future Generations

Abstract：英語の実践が活かせる場，特に総合的に英語の４技能を行かせる授業とその種類が学校のカリキュラムによって大きく異なる。特に学部が多くない規模の小さな大学の場合，実践的な英語の科目が少ないと考えられる。

本稿で取り上げる科目は「Introduction to Digital Media」である。学生は使い慣れているソーシャル・ネットワーキング・サービス（SNS）やブログ，ポッドキャストと呼ばれるメディアを使って，理解を深めると共に実際に自分たちでデジタルなメディアを作成する。デジタルメディアを英語というツールで学び，英語でメディアを発信することまでできるこの科目では学生は英語を総合的，実践的に使うことができた。

Keywords：ICT, autonomy, digital literacy, digital pedagogy, digital citizenship

Ⅰ Introduction

Our students are undoubtedly digital natives and with the creation of this new digital media class, we responded to their interest in technology while working at improving their level of English organically.

With the combination of social media, blogging and podcasting, we guided them in the creation of their own media production from the first draft to the online posting.

This class favored intercultural exchanges while promoting good digital citizenship.

Research questions and goals

1- Can a project based approach support practical usage of English basic skills?

2- Is it possible to raise the students learning autonomy by providing them accessible free software?

Ⅱ Methodology

We conducted a survey with our students about the skills they acquired in 3 specific fields.

We analyzed the result of the survey. The data sample is limited only to our 12 students who are currently taking the class. We realize that the data sample is not sufficient to extrapolate and come to a conclusion, yet it provided us with precious information regarding our student's expectations toward ICT.

We used Google Form to create an online survey and we asked the students to do this survey in class using their own device. Before we gave them the survey, we taught them how to make their own Google Form. After we posted the link of the survey on the class Facebook page, most students used their Smartphone to respond to the survey.

1- Pedagogical framework: Teaching skills for the 21st century

This class tackles various essential skills which are essential for our students to improve their English. Beyond the improvement of English, the class will provide them with real life skills which they can reuse in their future.

According to a study published by the Economist (2015) Driving the skills agenda: "*Education systems are not providing enough of the skills that students and the workplace need.*" This class answer this need.

The role of the teacher in this class is to introduce as clearly as possible how to use each of these applications and to support the students in the production of their blogs and podcasts.

This approach coincides clearly with the intention of our university to offer our students a more active learning experience. The students are in charge of creating their own blog and podcast and are able to appreciate the immediate result of their effort.

This type of class is highly adaptive to the needs of our students and we offered numerous options with different levels of difficulty for the students.

Our ultimate goal is to offer our students a certain level of autonomy where they can use everything which they learned in class and keep pursuing it outside of class.

2- Debating class and autonomy

The creation of the new Digital Media class followed of the Debating Skills 1 class that we offered the previous semester.

Debating Skills 1 was taken by the highest level students in order to improve their speaking and thinking abilities. Indirectly, it promoted intercultural communication.

While the class was well received by students, we were happily surprised when the students decided to create their own debating club independently showing an interest in self-learning and proving the importance of introducing the idea of autonomy throughout our curriculum.

The creation of this club independently is a proof that

once students are ready to take charge of their own learning experience.

This class was also a chance for the students from different countries to communicate.

3- Expended classroom

This class was a first step into the concept of the expanded classroom where we create a proper learning environment outside of the classroom by encouraging an online discussion. The blog and the social media offer everybody to comment on each other's work.

The Facebook group was also a tool to maintain this expended classroom.

4- Who is this class for?

This class was offered to highly motivated students with a higher level of English. The class was only taught in English but could be adapted to students with lower level of English who are highly motivated in creating their own digital media's. This class was also aimed at Japanese and foreign students who are interested in communicating with each other.

We are hoping that the students in this class will be able to eventually assist us in promoting the use of ICT in our university. The idea behind this class goes beyond the simple of attribution of credits, we want to create leaders.

5- Evaluation model

The students were evaluated on the published material they created during the class. No examination was administered. We only set up minimal requirements which all students needed to fulfill.

6- Our approach to software and devices

While being held in the computer lab of Philosophic, we encouraged the students to bring their own devices according to the current BYOD education trend. This trend is spreading to the workplace

where companies are now encouraging their worker to use the computer they feel comfortable with.

The computers in Philosophic won't let the students download new software, hence our recommendation for bringing their own devices.

Our students used Apple, PC, iPads, Android tablets and Smartphones to work on their projects. The inter operability between platform seem to be an essential tool for the modern workplace.

We decided early on to keep all software, web services and other applications completely free. While blogging and podcasting on a professional level is not free, we opted for a free approach where the students were encouraged to experiments and test the limits of free tools.

The free options are a gateway toward a more professional approach and something we hope to explore in the future. The simple idea behind this choice is that if the students are truly interested in pursuing this project, they will eventually move toward a paid version.

While using free options, we demonstrated the advantages of the paid version so they understand clearly the limitations.

7- Methodology for software introduction

By using free software in a pure experimental way, we also avoided using the SAMR technology implementation model described by Rab Paterson in the Learning Technologist Toolkit, where we need to reevaluate our current software usage.

One of the most expensive decision in an ICT environment is to acquire expensive dedicated software and licenses such as ProTool or Adobe Photoshop.

In this specific case, we used an experimental approach which offered us more freedom of movement. We tried multiple options and were open to suggestions from the students.

We have yet to settle for an established list of software, but this experience will be precious in creating a solid methodology for future projects.

8- Using Chrome OS

For the purpose of experimentation, we used a Chromebook and a Chromebox to prepare and teach this class. Both of these affordable computers are running the Chrome OS created by Google.

While the Chrome OS is still not popular in Japan, we discovered the numerous educational possibilities of the Chrome OS computers during our visit to Hong Kong. The Chrome OS is one of the fastest growing platform in the world of education.

Chrome based computers are inexpensive, easy to use, easy to share between numerous users and constantly updated. The Chrome OS functions best when connected to the internet since almost all of its application are cloud based.

The Chrome environment is compatible with the IPU web domain (____@ipu-japan.ac.jp) which makes it easy for both teachers and students to log in.

Chrome OS proved to be a powerful tool in the classroom and could be a solution for future ICT needs.

Chrome OS for education is currently available for all learning institutions and provided that the devices uses a special Google for Education licence, it is possible for the IT department to control all the computers in one unversity quite easily.

Beyond using the licence, Chrome based computers can easily be used by the teaching staff.

There are well known limitations to using Chrome OS, notably the absence of native Window softwares like Word, Excel and Powerpoint which case easily be replaced by the tools offers by Google such as Docs, Sheets and Slide.

A second limitation is the access to quality wifi signal. Since the Chrome OS computers work best only when connected to the internet, the unequal wifi coverage inside Philosophia sometime to be a challenge.

9- Facebook group

Facebook groups have been in constant use for the last four years in the department of international education. These private groups are created and

administered by the teachers and are used on a daily basis in order to disseminate important information for all the students. Facebook is an important communication tool for the students and the teachers. We created one Introduction to Digital Media group where we posted detailed instructions for our students. We even created video instructions that was shot by one of the student on his iPhone and posted directly to the main group (Picture 1).

The students were then encouraged to create their own Facebook group where they posted all their updates, blog post and audio recording. These groups were all private and only the students in the class could access the content.
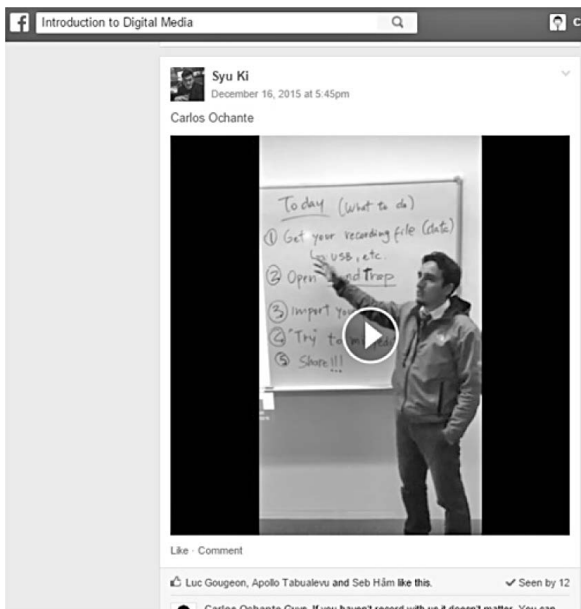
Picture 1

Ⅲ Structure of this project based class.

Phase 1: Creation of a personal Facebook group/page.

The idea of creating a personal Facebook group follows our ever going effort to promote collaboration and open communication within the walls of IPU. While this effort seem to be limited to one department. We keep noticing positive results and an incredible ease to contact all of our students.

Mastering the creation of a personal page or group is an important step toward self promotion, branding and a communicative work ethic.

The group page was also used by the teachers of this class to relay instructions to the students which included a short video describing a task, a list of steps to take to create a page, several links to free software and applications.

The student page became a way to share their latest update with the rest of the group. By doing so, their personal work suddenly gained a small limited audience.

Things the students learned:

- The importance of SNS in self promotion
- Basic concept of digital citizenship.
- The importance of thinking before publishing.

Phase 2 : Creation of a personal blog on the Wordpress platform

Blogging is a great tool for a student to practice their written English. We decided to use the Wordpress platform since it is one of the most popular blogging platform in the world. When it comes to blogging, numerous platforms are available: Blogger, Tumblr, etc. but Wordpress is a good stepping stone toward a professional looking blog.

Wordpress is offered in two versions, the wordpress.com version is free and this is the one we chose while the wordpress.org necessitate paid hosting.

Wordpress multilingual platform is also essential to be able to reach students with different levels of English. For example, a Japanese student who is facing a problem can always change the operating language back to Japanese to fix a problem.

We taught the students how to create their page (Picture 2). We explained the importance and the signification of owning a web domain.

Things the students learned:

- Basic text editing skills and how to work on a draft.
- How to add a picture from a link or a cloudbase service.
- The importance of intellectual property and good digital citizenship.
- How to use basic HTML skills to insert a Google

Map or a Youtube clip inside a blog post.

- How to publish and share their blog post.

Picture 2

Phase 3: Creation of a personal podcast

2015 was the year where podcasting gained a lot of traction in the media. The ramping popularity of new podcast like Serial proved that podcasting has something unique to offer to the listening public.

Podcasting has become an essential medium for influencers for whom it is a simple way to get their voice heard. Even President Obama used podcasting to get his voice heard on the Marc Marron WTF Podcast.

Podcast are a precious tool for our students to increase their daily exposure to English with the ultimate goal of greatly improving their listening skills.

With the production of their own podcast, they combine many essential skills such as writing, speaking and of course listening.

After explaining to our students the theory behind podcast, we showed them how they can listen to podcast on their own. This step is crucial in creating a familiarity with the format of podcast.

We asked the students to listen to podcast outside of class and to create a top 3 list of podcast which they were asked to share on their Facebook page.

Once the students understood the format well, they prepared their own podcast.

We offered them the possibility of recording their podcast on their own phone or to record it with a professional microphone and recorder (Picture 3).

Many of the students opted to use the professional equipment.

Picture 3

The unedited audio file was then uploaded on Google Drive using the Chromebook (Google cloud storage) and could easily be shared with the students.

Once the students had their own file we gave them the option of editing the file with two different editing software: the online Soundtrap and the downloadable Audacity.

Soundtrap is the easiest editing software to use and can be use on numerous devices.

Once the students edited their audio file, they uploaded their podcast to the free audio sharing service Soundcloud. Soundcloud offered them the possibility to share the file with the other students in the class.

Things the students learned:

- How to prepare for recording a podcast.
- Basic sound recording knowledge
- Basic editing skills.
- The mechanic of publishing a podcast.

Ⅳ General Reflections

Possibilities for the future

This introduction to digital media's class shows great promises and possibilities to be adapted for the needs of different IPU departments. This class can answer the need for all students to learn how to self promote. This basic knowledge can be useful for all students.

With the creation of the new business faculty, it's wishful to think that the experience when

gain teaching these new type of classes will be transferable to the new faculty curriculum.

This approach aligns itself perfectly with the new business profile offered by the current Department of International Education while fulfilling the need of our high level English speaking students for a more challenging class.

We learned that introducing these technologies takes time and the process of creating a blog and a podcast proved to take more time than expected.

The creation of a Wordpress blog is simply time consuming.

Interpretation of the survey

Like we mentioned earlier, the sample of 12 students is quite small, but all students responded positively to the survey showing satisfaction to the class. As an example the question: Did this class help you practice your English? showed a 100% "Yes". Did you learn any new technology skills in this class? Students both practiced and improved their ICT skills.

In question related to apps, they confirmed that they were daily users of Facebook.

In general, the students are interested in improving their ICT skills in using free software while practicing their English.

Student feedback

The students are expecting us to teach them more about Google Doc, vlogging, media streaming and editing. Many of our students have shown an interest in becoming producers of digital media in the future. The students have asked us to give them the tools and skills required to become proficient bloggers and vloggers. The popularity of Youtube is undeniable and we hope we will be able to offer a class dedicated to vlogging in the future. The creation of digital media is democratized and the use of free software is most definitely the best option for them.

Student feedback toward the school facilities and expectations toward ICT

Our students overwhelmingly criticized the poor quality of WIFI access inside the building. WIFI is now an essential part of our student's life and it is used by our foreign students to communicate with their family back in their home country.

The internet coverage has proved to be problematic in situation where we tried a Bring your own device (BYOD) approach.

Our university computer rooms weren't adapted to our need. The computers were too slow and would not let our students use the Google browser which was essential for editing in the Soundtrap application. Access to updated computers was high on the list of demands from our students.

V Conclusion

This new type of class for higher level students answers a demand from the students for more challenging classes. There is no doubt that this type of class is scalable and will be profitable for the rest of IPU students. Offering such an ICT rich class gave us an opportunity to do research both on hardware and software.

While the class helped our students with their English, we were surprised by the enthusiasm of students toward using free software to create their own digital media.

The positive response and reaction from our students let us believe that this type of class has a bright future at IPU.

VI Bibliography and reference

Driving the Skills Agenda: Preparing the students for the future, An Economist Intelligence Unit report, sponsored by Google, 2015
http://www.economistinsights.com/analysis/driving-skills-agenda

ABEL, Jessica, *Out on the Wire: Uncovering the Secrets of Radio's New Masters of Story*, Broadway Books, 2015

BLAKE, Robert J., *Brave New Digital Classroom*, Georgetown University Press, 2013

BARRAKET, Jo & SCOTT, Geoff, *Virtual Equality? Equity and the Use of Information Technology in Higher Education*, Australian Academic & Research Libraries, 32: 3, 204–211

MILTON, Marion, *Digital Literacy and Digital Pedagogies for Teaching Literacy: Pre-service Teacher' Experience on Teaching Rounds*, Journal of Literacy and Technology, Volume 14, Number 1: March 2013

OBE, Mitsuru, J*apan Rethinks Higher Education in a Skills Push*, The Wall Street Journal, August 2nd, 2015 http://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-rethinks-higher-education-in-skills-push-1438571119

PATERSON, Rab, *The Learning Technologists Toolkit: An overview of digital pedagogies for the 21st century teaching*, Language Research Bulletin, 29, ICU, Tokyo

PUENTEDURA, Ruben R., *Technology In Education: An Integrated Approach*
http://www.hippasus.com/rrpweblog/archives/2014/12/12/TechnologyInEducation_AnIntegratedApproach.pdf

SHAMBURG, Christopher, *Student-Powered Podcasting*, ISTE, 2009

SNIDER, Alfred Charles, Sparking the Debate: How to Create a Debate Program, Idea, 2014

SOLOMON, Gwen, *Web 2.0 How to for Educators*, ISTE, 2014

STANLEY, Graham, *Language Learning with Technology,* Cambridge University Press, 2013