Active Learning Tourism Video Project

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アクティブラーニング観光ビデオプロジェクト

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要 旨

　本稿では、日本の大学において、外国語としての英語を学ぶクラスのためのアクティブラーニングの
ビデオプロジェクトについて考察する。このリサーチプロジェクトの目的は、次の問いを調査すること
である：1）学生の英語力にこのプロジェクトはどのような効果があるのか、2）英語力以外のどのよ
うなスキルを学生は身につけるのか。これらの問いに答えを出すために、このプロジェクト実施の前後
に、学生が認識している効果と困難さに関する意見を把握するためのアンケート調査を実施した。これ
らの結果と教員の観察、及び最終成果物に基づき、このプロジェクトは、学生の英語コミュニケーショ
ンスキル、協力するスキル、プロジェクトのプランニングスキル、そしてメディア制作のスキルの向上
に寄与したと言える。また、テクノロジーの役割は有益であることが見て取れたが、時に、プラスの面
とマイナスの面の両方が見られる場合もあった。さらに、統合カリキュラム内でプロジェクトを実施す
ることの含意についても論じている。

キーワード

　アクティブラーニング、デジタルスキル、コラボレーション、外国語として英語の教育

Abstract

　　This paper discusses the implementation of an active learning video project for an English as
a foreign language class at a university in Japan. The goal of this research project was to investigate
the following questions: 1) How did the project benefit students' English？ 2) What non-English
skills did the students acquire？ A questionnaire was administered before and after the project to
gage students' opinions about the perceived benefits and difficulties of the project. Based on these
results, teacher observation and an analysis of the end product, this project helped students improve
skills for English communication, collaboration, project planning and media production. The role
of technology was observed to be positive, though it both enables and hindered students at times.
Implications for implementing projects within an integrated curriculum are discussed.

Key words

　　active learning, digital skills, collaboration, English as a foreign language

1. Introduction

This paper discusses the implementation of an active learning video project for an English as a foreign language class at a university in Japan. The authors conducted a tourism video project with a group of 16 first-year Japanese university students studying in an intensive English program who are majoring in international tourism. Students were divided into groups of three or four. The goal was to collaborate to make a five-minute tourism video introducing a local theme park to viewers in English.

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2. Educational context

At the authors' university there is a policy to promote active learning. Active learning has been described as positively affecting student learning (Bonwell & Eisson, 1991; Prince, 2004). Active learning encompasses a wide range of activities, from active listening input-based activities to larger scale group projects in which students create something and present it. In language learning contexts, the fields of Task Based Language Learning (TBLL) has many characteristics in common with active learning.

Nunan (2004) defines TBLL as "a stand-alone communicative act in which students mobilize grammatical knowledge to create meaning rather than manipulate form"（p. 4）. Such meaning-focused tasks should result in a clearly defined outcome (Willis & Willis, 2007; Ellis, 2011).

Working with other students on a project presents both challenges and opportunities for learning. Students must collaborate to achieve their goal. Research on group work has shown that it allows students to develop language skills alongside other skills such as cooperation, leadership and planning (Shehaedeh, 2005). Collaboration has also been shown to increase student motivation to learn a language (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011).

Another policy of the authors' university is the use of information and communication technology（ICT）to promote learning and develop the skills necessary for a global society. Technology can assist stu-dents in communicating in different modes such as text, audio and video. Technology can further promote collaboration among students and affect motivation. In a meta-analysis of technology enhanced language learning, Zhao (2003) points to the bulk of research available suggesting efficacy in university settings, and the need for future studies to use technology as a primary form of instruction, not just supplemental. Technology can also become a barrier at times, thus should not be thought of as an edu-cational magic bullet. Teachers need to be well acquainted with the use of technology and cannot rely on technology to solve all one's problems. Indeed, Blake (2013) warns that technology can magnify problems if not implemented well.

3. Active Learning Video Project

The video project was conducted with a group of students enrolled in an intensive English program. The project was spread among three different courses that the students took in this program. In English Writing Skills class, students used Google Docs to collaboratively write a script. In Practical English IB, an academic skill class, students used Google Sheets to create a preliminary plan for completing the project.

They then used Google Forms to log how long it actually took to accomplish the project. In Practical English IA, a presentation class, students used Google Slides to create a storyboard of their program, video cameras to record their scenes and iMovie to edit their videos. Each of these classes is held twice a week for 90 minutes. The project was conducted over a six-week period. Table 1 shows the complete process of the project.

Students had access to a class set of

Table 1. Procedure of the Project

No.	Action	Objective	Outcome
1	Watch model video	* Describe the narrative structure of each scene * Glean key expressions and gestures	* Complete a worksheet * Perform gestures and key expressions in class.
2	Research online	* Collect key information about the location * Describe types of gestures and actions to be done	* Collect information from website in a notebook
3	Scout location	* Visit location and photograph key scenes * Collect further information	* Create a photo storyboard in Google Slides
4	Plan project	* Create a preliminary plan of the remaining steps required to complete the project * Estimate the time required to complete each step	* Create a plan in Google Sheets
5	Log project step	* Keep a log of each action to complete the project * Include date, time, action, contributors and notes	* Log each step until project completion in Google Forms
6	Write script	* Write a preliminary script, including information about gestures and camera operation * Revise script based on teacher feedback	* Write script in Google Docs
7	Record practice video	* Each students records a practice video of their scene * Students receive feedback from peers	* Record video using iPad * Give feedback via LMS * Record feedback in notebook
8	Record video on location	* Sign out video camera equipment * Record video on location	* Save raw video footage in Google Drive
9	Edit video	* Edit scenes, add music and text in iMovie on iPad * Add English captions in YouTube	* Upload completed video to YouTube
10	Assess peers	* Students peer-assess based on a standard rubric and provide feedback comments	* Watch video on YouTube and assess on LMS

iPads, computer lab, video cameras with microphones and their own smartphones throughout the project. Google Docs were used because of their built-in collaboration features and free availability on any digital device. Students uploaded videos to YouTube, using YouTube's privacy feature that restricts access to only people who have the correct link. In other words, videos are not publicly searchable. The learning management system (LMS) Moodle was used for submission and evaluation of assignments. A questionnaire was administered before and after the project to gage students' opinions about the perceived benefits and difficulties of the project.

4. Results

This section presents the results of the student survey.

Before the project began, only two of 16 students had ever done a video project at school; one was in elementary school and the other was during an exchange at an overseas high school. When asked about their feelings prior to beginning the project, a majority of the students expressed negative opinions based on worry and perceived difficulty. After concluding the project, most students believed it was a positive experience. When asked if they would like to do another video project, however, the class was divided for reasons that will be discussed below.

When asked to predict what would be the most difficult part of the project, most answers related to speaking English. After the project, the most common difficulty was technical issues followed by speaking and project planning. When asked if they believed this project helped improve their English, all but one student agreed. Although students'

Table 2. Student Survey Results

Question	Response	
1. Have you ever done a video project in school ?	Yes: 2	No: 14
2. How do you feel about making a video ? （Before)	Positive: 7	Negative: 9
3. How do you feel about making a video ? （After)	Positive: 12 *No response (1)	Negative: 3
4. Would you like to make another video ?	Yes: 8	No: 8
5. What do you think will be the hardest part of this project	speaking (10), technical (5) no response (1)	
6. What was the hardest part of the project ?	technical (9), speaking (4), planning (3)	
7. How do you feel about using technology to collaborate ? (Before)	Positive: 9	Negative: 7
8. How do you feel about using technology to collaborate ? (After)	Positive: 10	Negative: 6
9. What non-English skills did you gain ?	technical (6), communication (4), teamwork (2), planning (2), no response (1)	
10. Do you think this project helped improve your English ?	Yes: 15	No: 1

attitudes to using technology remained almost unchanged, students listed technology and planning as the most common non-English skills gained from this project.

5. Discussion

This section discusses key areas of importance that emerged during the project: physical awareness in communication, narrative skills, digital skills and teamwork.

5.1 Physical awareness: Gestures and environment

One of the skills targeted by the project was students' physical awareness while speaking. Which is to say, students' ability to gesture and interact with the environment in a meaningful way while presenting information. Prior to the project, students were exposed to the concept of gesturing and interacting with the environment during previous in-class activities. This project was an opportunity for students to practice on a larger scale.

Specifically, students were asked, as a part of the project requirements, to use gestures while speaking to emphasize important points and demonstrate their emotions. Moreover, they were also asked to use gestures to indicate key features in the surrounding environment（such as buildings or objects）as well as preceding a change of location or motioning the camera to capture something off screen. In order to prepare for this requirement, students were given specific instruction and practice opportunities in using these gestures. In one such practice, students were shown a video tour, in English, of sightseeing locales in Tokyo. Students were asked to take notes of gestures the presenter

used as well as the exclamations that accompanied them. After doing so, students were tasked with duplicating the gestures and exclamations. While students were practicing, the instructors assisted the students and encouraged them to use louder voices and larger gestures. For example, students practiced gesturing over their shoulder towards a point of interest and saying "Let's check it out！" and spreading their arms wide to indicate a large object and exclaiming "Wow, it's huge！" This and other similar practice techniques helped the students to develop confidence and a general understanding of how gestures are used in English.

As gestures and physical interaction are a key part of using English in a meaningful and impactful way, it was essential for the success of the video project as well as students' personal English growth that they become familiar with how they are used. Before the project, students used only small tight gestures that did not read well on camera or avoided gestures all together. On the other hand, most students used many large dramatic gestures in their final video submissions. The dramatic increase in gesture use would indicate that students were able to grasp the importance of gestures and interacting with the environment for improving their English fluency. Moreover, it also indicates that students came to better understand the importance of gestures in making their speaking more impactful.

While students were initially hesitant to participate in the gesture practices and to use them extensively, their comfort with the skill did seem to improve over time. After multiple practice sessions, most students were observed smiling and joking with each other

about the gestures. This apparent pleasure in using the gestures seemed to grow as students moved from general practice to working with their final video scripts. During this time many students became quite animated in their groups while trying to determine which gestures would be best for a particular scene. While it cannot be known definitively, it is unlikely that students would have been so open or energetic about planning these gestures prior to the practice sessions. In a sense, students learned a comfort and familiarity with gestures that could not be taught but only gained through extensive practice. One student commented, "I think I became able to some [sic] actions and expressions." In their responses to the questionnaire, other students referred to improving their natural speaking, expression, emotion and communication abilities as a result of this project.

5.2 Narrative skills

As part of the project, it was hoped that students would learn a general understanding of the essential elements of narration and conveying information in an organized fashion. In addition to improving their English use, this understanding would help them attain their overall educational goals.

In order to equip students with the necessary skills to complete this element of the video project, they were assigned a series of tasks designed to focus on these skills. In one such task, students were asked to watch a sightseeing tour video of Tokyo in English and take notes about the information in the video. Students were then asked to organize the information in the video into an outline format. The outline format helped to reveal to the students the basic underlying structure of the narration used in the video. In doing so, students were also able to gain some insight into the fundamental structure inherent to clear and informative narration.

With some guidance from the instructors, students were able to determine that a functional explanation of a topic should start with a basic general statement or opinion about that topic. From there, the explanation should provide specific reasons and examples that support the claims made at the beginning of the explanation. Additionally the reasons and examples should provide the audience with more details and useful information about the topic. Finally, the explanation should smoothly transition to the next topic of discussion by using connecting sentences or sentences that make reference to the next topic. Understanding these fundamental elements of a narration is an important step for improving English communication skills.

Without these essential underpinnings, students' discussions of topics often tended to wander and touch on key points in a haphazard manner. As a result, their explanations of a topic were often difficult to understand and it was nearly impossible to comprehend important information in their outline and preliminary script. With this necessary knowledge, students' exposition and narration in their final videos were clear and organized in a logical manner. In the time after the completion of the project, students have continued to show an increased awareness of these key points for successful discussion on other assignments. If students are using this knowledge unbidden on English assignments, it is reasonable to assume that they may be doing so in other areas of their

educational and personal lives.

5.3 Digital Skills, Collaboration and Planning

A primary focus of the project was improving students' digital literacy. Throughout the world, the use of digital tools in education has blossomed. Moreover, an understanding of digital tools, specifically internet based tools, has become an essential part of everyday life. With that in mind, the project aimed to help students become better acquainted with a wide range of tools as well as internet-based applications.

A survey of students involved in the project conducted before the project began painted a fairly clear picture of students' interaction with digital tools prior to the start of the project. Specifically, most students indicated that they had never used any internet-based applications of digital technologies in their educational lives. Of course, many students had experience with applications or digital technologies from their personal lives. While that was beneficial for them, they were still unfamiliar with how to use those technologies to work in a group in an educational environment.

For this project, students were asked to use a variety of internet-based applications as well as a selection of digital equipment. These included video and audio recording equipment, video editing applications, YouTube and Google Docs. Within Google Docs, students used the word processing system, "Docs", the spreadsheet system, "Sheets", the presentation system, "Slides", and the data collection system, "Forms." Of those, most students had some limited experience with Google Docs as well as YouTube. Despite this prior experience, all students required training in using Google Docs and YouTube for group collaboration. Moreover, all students needed training and practice in order to use the video recording and audio recording equipment as well as the video editing application effectively.

To help students understand the use of Google Docs (Docs, Sheets, Slides and Forms) in a collaborative educational environment, the instructors gave the students a series of tasks that would familiarize them with the basic systems in addition to helping them prepare for their video. For example, students were shown a video tour, in English, of sightseeing locales in Tokyo in class. After that, the instructors demonstrated the creation of a digital storyboard about the video using Google Slides. With the instructors' digital storyboard as an example, the students were asked to create a storyboard for their projects. These digital storyboards were created with pictures collected by the students during a scouting trip on location conducted by the instructors.

Another important component of this project was project planning. At the beginning, students were tasked with researching specific locations on the Internet. They then needed to process the information in a meaningful way by determining specific objectives to further investigate during their on-location scouting trip based on this research. The results of the scouting trip then formed the basis for the project storyboard. After this, students made a preliminary plan which outlined what students perceived to be the remaining steps to completing the project. This was done collaboratively using Google Sheets.

After submitting the preliminary project plan, students were required to log each step they took to actually complete the project. One reason for this was to compare the perception and reality of project work. Even the most detailed plans encountered unforeseen problems and extra steps. In the questionnaire, students mentioned planning, time management and academic skills as having improved. As one student commented about skills gained, "...make a plan, manage time, use technology and speak in front of a camera." Another reason that logging was included was to see how collaborative the groups actually were. Groups that had an even distribution of the workload among its members received higher scores for the quality of collaboration.

After students had completed their digital storyboards, scripts and project plans the instructors focused on introducing the video recording equipment and the video editing software. Since the video recording equipment was limited, each group was given only a short tutorial on operating the equipment. Fortunately, most students were able to understand the basic operation of the equipment with only a small amount of training. On the other hand, students were given extensive training and practice with the video editing application. To prepare students for editing their final videos, they were asked to record practice videos using their phones or tablets within the school. In these practice videos, groups were asked to use their prepared scripts and gestures but to stay within the school rather than going to the location. After completing their recordings, students were shown how to edit these videos in the video editing application and were given time to experiment and practice using the application. During this practice, students became familiar with the key concepts of video editing that they would use in their final project.

Students were of mixed opinions about the digital elements of this project. In a survey conducted after the completion of the project several students expressed a distaste for the digital portions of the project and were disinclined to do further projects requiring technology. In response to the question "After the video project, how do you feel about using technology to work together with others?" one student wrote, "To be honest I did not feel good about technology because I had too many problem [sic]." About fifty percent of students gave similar answers. Furthermore, about fifty percent of students gave negative responses to the question, "Would you like to make another video for a school project in the future?" On the other hand, positive responses to the role of technology were also common. One student who recognized the balance of hard work, fun and skills development wrote, "Make a video, show my emotion, memorize draft were really difficult but I could enjoy this project." Meanwhile, another student wrote, "This project make me glow [sic] up various things. The English video project is for first time to me I was exciting [sic] and this video became to [sic] one of my memories." While students may have found using the digital tools difficult and some may not have entirely enjoyed those elements of the project, most were able to acquire abilities that will benefit them in their personal and academic lives. Extending beyond learning English, these skills have become a fundamental part of the modern world and students will have a better

chance of success with a general grasp of digital skills.

5.4 Teamwork

A major element of the video project was a focus on collaboration. Throughout the project, students worked in groups to complete every step. In fact, the project had very little individual work for students to do. As such, the development of teamwork and collaboration skills was a primary focus of this project.

One key feature of the project design was an interdependence of group members. At the beginning of the project, the instructors explained that the group would not be permitted to move on to the next step of the project until all members had satisfactorily completed the previous step. While this requirement did cause some stress within the groups, it also forced students to consistently combine their efforts in order to keep the project moving. In general, students assisted each other in completing the assignments and demonstrated competent teamwork. One student commented, "I think my academic skills have improved, such as group work. We did all the activities together and I learned how to work in groups."

An example of this teamwork requirement and its results was the script for the final video. In order to begin filming their final video project, students were required to submit an acceptable script to the instructors. While each student was required to submit the script individually, the scripts needed to be the same and well written. Although it may seem trivial, this requirement meant that groups need to ensure that all of their members completed the assignment. In this scenario, groups focused on individual member

performance while the instructor was able to focus on overall group performance.

For some students, this arrangement was a unique English language learning experience. Rather than receiving English help directly from the instructors, many students received help from their fellow team members. In this case, the instructors were not usually asked for help unless the entire group was having difficulty. This type of grassroots collaborative English learning may have been very beneficial to some of the students who often hesitated to ask the instructors for help during the regular class. Beyond the English language benefits, the teamwork skills developed by this project have wide-ranging applications in students' lives, both currently and in the future. Although students have had ample opportunities to work in groups during their previous education, the specifics of this project make it a unique collaborative experience for the students. In addition to being a very long term project, it also included a wide range of distinct tasks as well as an integration with technology that was unfamiliar to most students. As such, students had an opportunity develop their teamwork skills in new ways that will help them going forward.

6. Implications

One implication this project has for educators is the development of an integrated curriculum. This project was supported by the Practical English IA presentation skills class, Practical English IB academic skills class and, to a lesser extent, the Writing Skills I class. Student responses and teacher observations indicate that both presentation and academic skills were developed through this project. Spreading the weight of the project

across different classes allowed enough time and resources to help develop the knowledge and skills necessary for this project to be student-centered. Knowledge of the tourism video genre, digital collaboration and video production skills were new to most students. The results suggest possibilities for targeting sets of skills around a central project within an integrated curriculum. Another aspect of curriculum design relates to learning that occurs outside the classroom that results in the production of real-world communicative events. These conditions contributed to the need for collaboration in an active learning environment.

Two important factors in doing a project across different classes are planning and communication. Projects move in stages. Hence, activities need to be scheduled appropriately to ensure that the project proceeds smoothly. When courses are taught by several different teachers, communication during both the planning and implementation stages is essential to ensure a project's success. Clear communication with students about what is expected and when allows them to take responsibility for the project and plan accordingly.

Technology enhanced this project by facilitating collaboration, communication and production of a creative product. Although students developed digital skills, they encountered difficulties during the process. Perhaps the main technical challenge was the sheer amount of technological skills training that was required in a short period. Efforts should be made to integrate technology in ways that will not block or frustrate students. One suggestion would be to introduce various skills via smaller assign-

ments during a period leading up to the project to alleviate this burden. Although the results of this study are not generalizable, it also suggests a larger need for more technology skills training at a younger age to avoid any possible skills shortfall among university students.

7. Conclusion

This paper has described an active learning video project with a class of tourism majors who are studying English as a foreign language at a Japanese university. It has described how the project was implemented in stages via an integrated curriculum. Students responded positively to the project and recognized both English and non-English skills that were acquired. Although technology caused some issues, this project provides an example of how technology can be used to support active learning.

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