Initial Observations on a new Communicative Performance Course in Doshisha University’s Faculty of Global Communications

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Abstract
This paper presents a report on an introductory English course - Communicative Performance - included as part of Doshisha University’s new Faculty of Global Communications. The paper explains how the faculty was established as part of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology’s ‘Global 30’ program, along with its stated goals and the background of the course in question. It then describes the instructors’ pedagogical philosophy and the course content of the Communicative Performance program. This is followed by results and analysis of student / instructor feedback on the program of study. The paper concludes with a summary of its findings along with some caveats and suggestions for further research.

Background
In 2009 Kyoto’s Doshisha University was identified as a ‘Global 30’ institution by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monkashō). The stated aim of the Global 30 program was to broaden the international profile of Japanese higher-educational institutions with 30 universities.
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initially enrolled in order to fulfill this goal (JUMP, 2009). However, the number of institutions invited to participate in the scheme was later reduced to 13 due to budgetary constraints (Kakuchi, 2010).

Japanese educational planners and educators had for many years recognized that the nation needed to improve its commitment to globalization in higher education if it were to compete meaningfully on the international stage (McNeill, 2010). Monkashō’s own data confirmed that fewer Japanese students were studying abroad (Japan Times Weekly, 2011), while the Yomiuri Shimbun described students who were “inward-looking, preferring to stay in Japan” (Sugimori, 2009).

Following a 2004 peak of 82,945 students studying overseas, the numbers declined for four straight years, dropping "a staggering 11 percent" (Japan Times, January, 2011) between 2007 and 2008 to 66,833. This compared unfavorably with South Korea, which was dispatching twice as many students as Japan for study in the United States despite having half the population (McNeill, 2010). By late 2011, even U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had entered the debate, expressing concern about the downswing in the number of young Japanese studying in America. "As recently as 1997," she said, “Japan sent more students than any other country in the world to study in America. Today, Japan ranks sixth" (Japan Times, 2011).

Numerous theories were put forward to explain the decline. Academics like Naoki Ogi, professor of education at Hosei University in Tokyo, felt that Japanese students were becoming “introverted and risk-averse” (New York Times, 2011). Overseas students attending Japanese universities observed that Japanese learners had “lower energy and motivation,” (New York Times, 2011) perhaps as a result of passing grueling university entrance examinations. Some analysts blamed the decline on a poor economy and the soaring price of overseas education (New York Times, 2011), while others claimed it was a result of Japan’s formalized
Certainly there was a fear among students that studying abroad might cost them in terms of finding employment when returning to Japan. Since many Japanese employers stop accepting applications before students begin their fourth year of college study, students have to begin job-hunting quite early (Japan Times, 2011).

Various solutions to this problem have been suggested. Employers could help by changing their recruitment practices, while universities could contribute by setting up a semester specially timed for the return of those studying abroad. This would mirror the more flexible practices of U.S. universities, which “provide students with programs to fit their personalities and abilities” (Sugimori). In addition, the Japanese government could offer financial aid to students wishing to study overseas. According to The Japan Times, it was imperative that both the government and private sector should understand that the precipitous decline in the number of students studying abroad "could have a devastating effect on the future of Japan" (Japan Times, 2011).

If Monkashō recognized a need to offer incentives to Japanese students studying abroad, there was also a desire to increase the numbers of overseas students attending Japanese universities. After more than thirty years of the government’s Monbukagakusho scholarship program, only 133,000 - fewer than 4 per cent - of Japan's university students were being recruited from overseas (McNeill, 2010), including only 3% at the prestigious University of Tokyo (McNeill, 2011). This compared unfavorably with 223,000 in China - making China the world's sixth-largest study abroad destination (Zhi, 2010) - and 672,000 in the United States, while in South Korea universities had been pursuing globalization “at breakneck speed” (Fouser, 2011).

The potential harmful effects of this disparity were pinpointed in comments by
Japan-based academics such as Bruce Stronach, Dean of Temple University, who asserted that, "Foreign students are essential for Japanese universities these days: educationally, financially and particularly for graduate education and research" (McCrostie, 2011). Thus it was that Monkashō announced an ambitious goal: to increase the numbers of overseas students attending Japan’s universities to 300,000 by 2020 (McCrostie, 2011).

In the context of this challenge, and recognizing its “global scope” (Doshisha, 2010) the university was recruited for the Global 30 program. As Kyoto’s second-oldest private university, Doshisha has a tradition of international exchange which has been underpinned by long-standing relationships with prestigious foreign universities such as The University of Cambridge (U.K.), Stanford University (USA) and The University of Beijing (China) (Doshisha, 2010). In addition, Doshisha has endeavored to attract overseas students through departments such as its Institute of International Education, which each year presents up to 50 overseas students the opportunity to enroll in an American-style liberal arts program (Doshisha Institute of International Education web site, 2011).

The Faculty of Global Communications

For Doshisha, the key to broadening its global scope was the institution of a number of new undergraduate and postgraduate programs which were to be taught under the auspices of the new Faculty of Global Communications which opened in April 2011.

Global Communications programs consist of three tracks: English (approximately 80 students), Chinese (approximately 40 students), and Japanese (approximately 30 students). Both the English and Chinese tracks include a one year study abroad component, while the Japanese language track, comprised of non-native speakers, instead offers “a program of deep cultural immersion” (Doshisha 2010) so that students can gain a strong understanding of Japanese society and values. In their
fourth year, students from each of these language tracks will “work together to plan, facilitate, and direct projects such as international conferences or cultural exchange events” (Doshisha 2010). Thus, from its inception, the themes of intercultural understanding and cooperation were a major part of the foundation of the Faculty of Global Communications.

After its formation, the department’s character was further shaped in early meetings between faculty and heads of individual sections. Offering “practical skills in communication” (Doshisha, 2010), the new faculty offered courses which were intended to increase communicative competence, improve interpersonal skills, act as a bridge to other cultures and encourage Japanese students to participate more fully on the world stage as “facilitator, negotiator or administrator” (Doshisha, 2010). The English language track defined itself within nominally global standards of foreign language learning (Global Teaching Learning, 1999), which were identified as “The 5 C’s”. These were:

*Communication* - fostering communicative competence in foreign languages
*Cultures* - encouraging knowledge of a variety of cultures
*Connections* - promoting interaction with other disciplines and areas of expertise
*Comparisons* - developing an appreciation of the intricacies of language and culture
*Communities* - participating in multilingual communities in Japan and abroad (Doshisha, 2010.)

The adoption of these standards reflect the recognition that the desire to understand other cultures acts as a primary motivation for language learning. Many Japanese university students commonly desire to communicate with foreigners and obtain "access to the native's world" (Gumperz, 1996: 470), and it is in the interplay between sociocultural competence and linguistic skills that learners obtain deeper and more meaningful access to language skills.
In point of fact, it has long been “less possible to survive as a monolingual in most places in the world, (with) more than one level of identity…held by a majority of the world's population” (Reyburn, 1974). In other words, more and more people around the world require a second language and benefit from the experience of participating in the sociocultural “world” of that language, thereby taking on another identity. Thus, sociocultural sensitivity becomes even more crucial for global citizens and it is essential - as Doshisha recognized - to encourage learners to see themselves as part of an international community.

**Communicative Performance English Course**
From the very beginning, English-language professors in the Global Communications faculty were given a clear task: to quickly prepare first-year students for a required one-year academic study abroad course which takes place in their second year. Communicative Performance would be a core first-year course to meet twice a week with approximately 12 students per class. As many researchers, including Follman (1994), have noted, larger groups make it more difficult to establish a warm rapport. This smaller, virtually ideal class size would play an important part in shaping an environment which was friendly, focused and connected on an emotional level.

Communicative Performance classes were not streamed, combining a range of levels from a TOEIC score of 450 or above. Many students had international experience, having either lived or studied overseas. A good number described a desire to live or work abroad at some time in the future.

Students who have already made a decision to study abroad have certain expectations. They are aware that in their second year they will attend a foreign university, so they are quite motivated and focused, bearing out Dornyei’s assertion that, “Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate…and …sustain the long…learning process” (Dornyei, 1998, p.117). In general those students were
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quite confident, though some who had not been abroad also exhibited a certain level of confidence in English which was a great credit to their self-motivation and also to their high school instructors.

Professors in the Global Communications faculty were expected to foster an environment in which students could develop their confidence in speaking, give opinions and ask questions in front of others in English while also developing their practical knowledge about the world. This, it was hoped, would help them to develop an international view and the courage and confidence to navigate in an international world. In terms of content, the chief element of the course was to master the skills of preparing, developing and delivering a speech.

Returning to Japan for their third and fourth years of study, students would then build on their experiences overseas and develop a more sophisticated command of communicative skills. This “hands-on” practical approach would be exemplified by the students’ senior project.

Rather than a research thesis paper, English language track students would be required to work with their classmates in the Chinese and Japanese language tracks to develop, plan, and carry out an ambitious final project. Examples ranged from organizing a conference to working with a local town on tourism. The emphasis would be on action rather than the usual forms of academic research. Criteria for the successful completion of the four-year curriculum aims would also depend upon the following minimum scores on English proficiency tests: TOEFL iBT 79 (ITP 550), or TOEIC 750.

**Course Content and Course book**

In terms of pedagogy we concurred with Larsen-Freeman's call (2000), for a “principled eclecticism” of methodologies in language teaching. Specifically this involves a combination of a) communicative and b) content-based/authentic
materials. Instructors, in addition to suggesting areas of interest for learners, should pay close attention to students’ culture, customs and personal interests when considering curricula. Students themselves should research and contribute materials, making the target language a meaningful part of their lives and stimulating real communication.

As instructors we felt that the “texture of our practice” (Hargreaves, 1997, p.410) was crucial. In short, the instructor should present himself as a facilitator, mentor and guide. We were fully in support of Krashen’s view (1982) that language acquisition can only occur when authentic comprehensible input is understood in a relaxed and non-threatening classroom environment. When affective factors such as motivation and anxiety are addressed, students’ involvement and self-confidence increase.

Having said that, although high stress can potentially impede learning, it does not necessarily follow that low-anxiety classes guarantee success. Although language instructors should generally endeavor to reduce anxiety in the classroom, it could be argued that a certain level of anxiety actually aids learning, and that highly-motivated students expect a certain level of urgency in the learning process. Generally speaking, though, our goal was to remove the focus from the instructor wherever possible, thereby encouraging output unencumbered by overzealous language policing and requiring students to take responsibility for their own English production. This would also help prepare learners for the greater autonomy they could expect in a western university environment.

A variety of techniques acted as stress-reducing activities during early class sessions. Some featured rapport-building exercises in which students gave basic introductions using drawings or name cards about their hometowns, hobbies and high school clubs. This encouraged students to make emotional connections with their new classmates.
Students were encouraged to discover their classmates’ birthdays and to arrange a small celebration during the last ten minutes of class. Instructors occasionally arranged lunch with small groups of students, giving everyone a chance to get to know one another and to chat in a different environment.

Approximately half of our classes began with an activity in which each student gave a one-minute speech first to a partner and then in front of the class. This involved being assigned a topic at random, having 15 seconds to mentally prepare then one minute to speak ‘off the cuff.’ Students would be given a simple question: “What is your favorite book?” “Would you rather live in small town or large city?” then told to find three reasons to support their opinion. They were forced not only to think quickly, but also to produce appropriate responses.

Though somewhat artificial, the activity showed students that they could mentally assemble an answer and quickly express it in appropriate language. This would be most helpful in class conversations during their overseas study, where supporting an opinion with facts, examples and personal anecdotes would be an integral part of academic performance. In the beginning instructors noted that this proved to be a challenge for most learners, though improvement was soon forthcoming. In the course-end survey, several students singled out this exercise as being not only enjoyable, but one that would help them in their year abroad.

A second round of speaking exercises also focused on simple content, such as their most interesting travel experience. This time students had to practice simple gestures and also raise their voice 15% higher than normal speaking volume. For this exercise a simple poster project was utilized. Students pasted a few photos on a B4 card. This allowed them the chance to stand in front of their poster and gesture toward it while speaking in front of only one listener. They practiced this speech four times and then listened to their classmates’. Their gesturing errors were pointed out. Slowly, with increased practice they began to gain a level of
comfort and correct their nervous habits. The culmination of this activity was to present in front of the class.

The course book, which the faculty had selected for the Communicative Performance class, was ‘Speaking of Speech’ (2009), a text which takes a step-by-step approach toward building students’ communicative performance primarily in the area of presentation skills. Students are introduced to the building blocks of presentation skills (Physical Message/Visual Message/Story Message) as they begin with short, informal presentations lasting a minute or so and gradually make more difficult and complex presentations building toward the final project - a challenging ten-minute “Powerpoint” presentation.

As instructors we felt that the textbook had been well-chosen for its suitability in gradually building presentation skills. The key idea here was that goals should be achievable in small steps. In the beginning students were given a relatively easy topic to present, along with one speaking skill they needed to focus on, such as a description of their hometown, while maintaining eye contact with their partner as they spoke. After practicing in pairs, students presented in groups of four and eventually in front of the entire class. Later units were devoted to the use of computer and “big-screen” visuals, though we endeavored to avoid putting students into situations they were not ready for. Those who were unsure about using PowerPoint software were allowed to present their pie charts and graphs on paper, while students who were comfortable with PowerPoint gave their presentations on overhead screens. This comparison enabled the whole class to see how much more effective PowerPoint presentations were.

Although the materials and assessment of both classes in our study were quite similar, the individual instructors naturally introduced their own classroom techniques and activities from time to time. In one group, lessons began with a series of warm-up activities and games used in drama classes to reduce stress and
self-consciousness while also increasing physical awareness, group-solidarity and enunciation. Though they were ‘fun’ in nature, they enhanced the emotional texture of the class.

In another group, the instructor was keen for his students to take advantage of particular Internet sources. One was the BBC’s comprehensive English learning site (BBC, 2011), its news section offering a brief summary of one story per day. The text and audio were an excellent way to practice listening, remain informed on world events, access topics of particular interest and practice intonation and pronunciation. Students were instructed to visit the site, pick a news story of particular interest, listen, take notes, summarize and look up any new vocabulary (definitions of difficult words being provided right below the text). The final step was to read along with the announcer (“shadow” the text) in order to improve word stress, sentence stress and basic intonation. In about 15 to 20 minutes students could practice several skills and have something to discuss as a quick warm-up activity in the next class.

Another, more challenging site for students was TED Talks (TED, 2011), the website of the progressive Californian “think tank” and lecture program. Decidedly more difficult than BBC news programs for English learners, TED Talks offers subtitles and in some cases full language translations. It also offers good examples of effective use of visuals.

To encourage and reward autonomous learning, students were given extra credit for any summary which was made of a news program on the BBC or a TED Talk. In one class in one term over 15 extra credit homework assignments were handed in.

Over the 15-week course, students had 8 class projects. Each project culminated with a whole-class-presentation. The last two projects asked students to find a) an interesting product and b) a job they considered interesting. For the penultimate
project, students were encouraged to use the Internet to find an interesting new invention, and directed to web sites that could help them find interesting new products. By this point in the class, all students were presenting on a large screen while using a variety of graphs, charts and illustrations to explain their product. In the course survey, students expressed surprise at the quality of the presentations and the energy which other students had invested in their presentations. A positive cycle had been established. Students’ desire to impress their classmates pushed them to attain higher levels of performance.

An important key to student success was the modeling of presentations by their instructor. As the presentations became more complicated, it was especially important for the instructor to demonstrate a variety of effective visual techniques. Students would view two presentations by the instructor, the first an example of “how not to present,” the second more polished and effective. An active critiquing session was held post-presentation. Students were required to point out strong and weak points and more importantly how the presentations could be improved. Throughout the term, students were able to develop their critical skills in order to distinguish between an effective speech and a poor one.

The final project was decided upon in a pre-term faculty meeting. The main idea was to have students explore a career or job which interested them. The final project matched the overall philosophy of the new department: communication and navigation. A primary aim was to create an atmosphere in which good communication skills and the confidence to use them could be developed. Secondly, we wanted our students to navigate the world around them. By researching and gathering information about a particular job and then sharing it with the class, students would learn by engagement, or “learn by doing.”

If the job was unique to one company then students could also briefly describe the firm. In addition, they had to interview someone who performed that job or worked
at the company in question. This interview could explain the demands of the position or answer any extra questions students might have. Interviews could be by email, telephone, in person or even online.

The rationale behind the interview task was multi-purpose and further underscored the principles of the department. Firstly it would encourage students to navigate the world and become pro-active, needing to formulate the right questions in order to retrieve useful information. Secondly, interviews in some cases provided students with unexpected information. One student who interviewed his high school English teacher was surprised to hear about the difficulties she faced every day. Thus, interviews added unexpected depth to some presentations.

**Questionnaire Results and Analysis**

At the conclusion of the course students were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix) intended to elicit their opinions about the course contents. In all, 20 students filled out the questionnaire, which was completed anonymously.

When queried on their reasons for enrolling in the program, the majority of students described a limited but focused set of goals. The majority - 75% - wished to use English or improve their English skills in order to study abroad. 40% also expressed through written comments a desire to “communicate around the world,” “learn about cultures,” or “broaden horizons.”

95% of our students felt that it was either “very important” or “quite important” for Japanese to communicate in English internationally. The same number also described a “very high” or “above average” interest in intercultural communication. This supported two of Monkashō and Doshisha’s stated goals, namely to increase the numbers of Japanese students engaged in overseas study and to act as a bridge to other cultures.
Since one of the main aims of the course was to increase communicative competence in English, we were curious to see how our classes had measured up. Our questionnaire revealed that before the course, only 15% of our students had ever made a speech in English, with 80% describing themselves as either “a little” or “not at all” confident in English communication. In fact, only 15% of students felt they were “quite confident” in communicating in English. Not only that, 60% of students were “a little” or “not at all” confident in communicating with foreigners.

By contrast, there seemed to have been a encouraging shift in learners’ assessment of their communicative confidence by the end of the course. 15% now felt “very confident”, while 30% were “quite confident” or “somewhat confident” in their ability to communicate in English. In addition, 100% of our learners now described themselves as either “very confident,” “quite confident,” or “somewhat confident” in communicating with foreigners.

Students' assessment of their presentation skills also gave cause for optimism. Where at the start of the course only 20% of class members were “somewhat confident” in presenting a speech to an audience, an even larger number - 78% - described themselves as only “a little confident.” None felt able to describe themselves as “very confident” in this area.

There had been a dramatic shift by course’s end. An encouraging 20% now said they were “very confident” in giving presentations to an audience, and 80% were “quite confident” or “somewhat confident.”

This improvement was accompanied by an equally encouraging enhancement in the ‘nuts and bolts’ area of presentation skills. Where 95% of learners had described their presentation skills as “below average” or “poor” in the beginning, by term’s end 50% said they were “much better” or “better.” 80% of class members said
their presentation skills had improved “a lot” or “quite a lot.” This boost seemed to effect a reduction in one of the most common problems associated with presenting skills - the fear of presenting. 75% of learners felt this fear had been reduced “a lot” or “quite a lot.”

Further questions targeted aspects of the course other than the English language component. In terms of complementing the other courses which students had taken in the Faculty of Global Communications, 45% of students felt that their English classes had succeeded “very much” or “quite a lot,” with 45% feeling English classes had been “somewhat” effective.

Within certain limits we noted some ‘collateral’ benefits of the Communicative Performance course which satisfied Doshisha’s desire for this degree course to act as a bridge to other cultures. All learners described English classes as having helped improve their knowledge of other cultures “quite a lot,” “somewhat,” or “a little”, despite the fact that this had not been an overt goal of the Communicative Performance program.

Since 95% of learners were of the opinion that it was either “very important” or “quite important” for Japanese to communicate in English internationally, it was also gratifying to see that most (80%) felt the course would help them to communicate in multilingual communities in Japan and abroad “very much” or “quite a lot.” This view was supported by additional written comments: “This course will help me when I go abroad,” “This course will be helpful in the future,” and “This course gave me the courage to speak to students from overseas.”

So far, it seemed that students generally agreed that their communicative competence, presentation skills and cultural awareness had advanced. But apart from students’ personal motivation, we were also interested to see how the course structure, materials and pedagogy had met learners’ needs and expectations.
The results of our questionnaire seemed to show that, in general terms, the activities and contents of the course had exceeded or met the hopes of our students. 80% of learners described the course as “better than I expected,” with 10% declaring the course as “exactly what I expected.”

Students also had the opportunity to address aspects of the course more explicitly. With regard to the one-minute warm up activity mentioned above, students described it as one of the things they enjoyed the most. 65% said the activity was “very helpful,” and 30% described it as “helpful.” Written feedback on the activity observed that it “helped improve communication,” or “helped me to think and organize quickly.”

Learners’ opinion of the course book (“Speaking of Speech”) was that it was either “very good,” or “good” (75%), “average” (10%) or “below average” (15%). The DVD materials included with the textbook - used to demonstrate presentation skills - were said to be “very helpful” (35%) or “quite helpful” (65%).

With regard to the quality of teaching received, 95% of students described it as “very good,” or “good.” In addition, it was “very helpful” (65%), “helpful” (10%) or “quite helpful” (25%) when the instructor gave an example PowerPoint presentation in class. This underlined our conviction that instructors should, whenever possible, be willing to model tasks which students are to perform. Having been provided by their instructor with concrete examples, even the most nervous students begin to develop a level of confidence in public speaking.

This kind of “instructional scaffolding” (Yelland, Masters, 2007) not only provided a useful reference for students, but also offered instructors a valuable insight into the demands, benefits and possible drawbacks of a task as seen from the students’ perspective. If student motivation is the key to their own success, the instructor’s own motivation is, in Dornyei’s words, “infectious” (Dornyei, 2001, p. 50),
underlined by Harmer’s insistence that, "the motivation of the student is perhaps the single most important thing that (the teacher) brings to the classroom" (Harmer, 1983, p. 3).

In terms of classroom atmosphere, we were interested in how far we as instructors had managed to create a relaxed yet focused classroom atmosphere in which students were unafraid of making mistakes. We were committed to Krashen’s advocacy (1982) of language acquisition occurring by means of authentic comprehensible input presented in a relaxed and non-threatening learning environment.

Virtually all students (95%) described the classroom atmosphere as “relaxed.” However, on reflection we felt that our question had been worded inexacty. We had given students a choice between describing the atmosphere as “relaxed but serious,” “relaxed but not serious,” “too relaxed,” or “too strict.”

Our results showed that students felt that the classroom atmosphere was “relaxed but serious” (65%), or “relaxed but not serious” (25%). But did these categories reveal satisfaction or dissatisfaction? Did our students’ interpretation of “serious” or “not serious” reveal approval or criticism? Of all our questions, we felt this one had failed to properly elicit the information we were seeking, though from our own observations of student performance and classroom interaction, we were also fairly sure we had succeeded in creating a comfortable, focused atmosphere in class. The question should be improved or perhaps even translated into students’ native language in subsequent questionnaires.

Nevertheless the fact remained that the principal message we were getting from learners was that they had found the course helpful and beneficial. When asked, “What was the best or most useful part of this course?” the most popular answer was “Making presentations,” followed by “Physical Message” (the physical nuts
and bolts of giving a presentation, including posture, gestures, inflection and appropriate language transitions.) Students also emphasized “using Powerpoint,” “speaking English only,” “meeting friends with the same goals,” and “watching others” as useful aspects of the course.

Where students were surprised by certain aspects of their course, it was mainly in positive terms. They included the observation that “we can be understood in English only,” and that, “Many students can speak English,” both crucial confidence-building breakthroughs.

When asked how the course could be improved in future, students were firm that teachers should be even less tolerant of Japanese being used in class. Some also felt there should be more time to speak in English, whether as “chatting”, free speaking or other modes.

**Instructors’ Assessment**

If the students’ assessment of the course contents and effectiveness was in the main positive, what were the views of their instructors, who share a combined total of twenty years teaching experience in the Japanese university system?

To begin with, we recognized that, in terms of the number of students embarking upon overseas study, and in terms of its commitment to internationalization, Japan was lagging behind its international competitors. For these reasons we were fully in agreement that Japanese students would benefit considerably from universities meaningfully embracing globalization.

We were also in accord with the general philosophy of the program: namely to broaden Doshisha’s international profile in response to an ever-increasing globalizing trend in education. This could be accomplished in part by offering incentives to Japanese students studying abroad, and by increasing the numbers of
overseas students attending Japanese universities.

Experience has shown us that the majority of Japanese university students study English with the vague feeling that it may one day prove to be of some benefit, or perhaps none at all. As a result, motivation and focus are sorely lacking in many classes, with the primary goal of many - perhaps most - students being a passing grade. Non-English majors are haphazardly slotted into a bewildering variety of English programs with little conception of what those courses contain or entail. In terms of course content, students are often subject to the whims of the individual instructor, who may himself be confused as to the specific focus of the course in question.

By contrast, implementing an international studies program with a study abroad requirement raises the stakes for all concerned. This is because it presents both instructors and students with a clear task to be achieved within a limited time span. It forces a program to aim for clear goals, and means instructors must create an effective curriculum and maximize class time in the knowledge that a year abroad will present a great challenge to their students.

The most important difference between this program and others we had taught was in the motivation of students - the most crucial deciding factor when learning a language. Class members thus exhibited a certain sense of urgency, showing that when the program, the instructors and the students share the same focus, real learning can take place. If more programs could include a study abroad component, even for half a semester or for a short summer program, the teaching and learning environment would be greatly improved.

Initiating a new program inevitably presents questions and challenges. They include implementing a curriculum with clear, achievable, sensible goals which matches students’ abilities and motivation. Thus the decision to emphasize
presentation skills was an important one. With only a year for instructors to prepare students, developing confidence in their ability to speak in front of others was critical, and the course book, supplementary materials and class activities proved effective in helping achieve these aims. In addition, a strong grounding in presentation skills would prove useful to some students in their chosen careers.

In overall terms we shared our students’ optimistic evaluation of the course, not least because we saw their language and presentation skills improve week by week. Certainly there seemed to be an overall increase in confidence which was accompanied by a reduced fear of public speaking. In addition most learners maintained a high level of motivation during the course, with attendance better or at least equal to that of other courses. As a result we found teaching this course to be a pleasurable and rewarding experience.

Some Caveats
Within certain limits we can feel confident about the broad findings of this paper. However, we also recognize that our assessment of the efficacy of the Communicative Performance class should include certain caveats.

Firstly, it is important to recognize that teachers’ different approaches might foster alternative perceptions and reactions among different groups of learners, and that “individuals may hold different conceptions of what good teaching actually is” (Keane and Mac Labharainn, 2005). Nevertheless we feel we have minimized this effect through co-ordinating lesson activities, methods of assessment and by - broadly speaking - following the course syllabus agreed on by all instructors in pre-semester meetings.

A second caveat would be that the twenty students who complete our questionnaire represent only about 15% of the total course intake. Nevertheless, we observed a certain consistency in the motivation and goals of students in all groups. Many had
either lived or studied overseas, and expressed a desire to live or work abroad at some time in the future. After six years of high school English these students all possessed quite a well-grounded knowledge of basic functional language and exhibited “a certain uniformity in their needs” (Kurzweil et al, p. 33). Most university teachers working in Japan will recognize this egalitarianism as a well-documented characteristic of the nation’s university students and it has meant that most Japanese students generally cluster “around the mean in English ability” (Nevara, 2003).

Perhaps more importantly, as described above, Communicative Performance course members exhibited a self-described interest and motivation in English study which is above the norm. 95% of our students felt that it was either “very important” or “quite important” for Japanese to communicate in English internationally. Teaching colleagues who had been in charge of other groups in the same program observed similar characteristics among their students. Therefore we feel justified in claiming that our groups - to a considerable extent - are quite representative of the wider student sampling who took this course.

Finally, notwithstanding the fact that student feedback questionnaires are a commonly-used tool in course assessment (Rowley, 2003), we also had some mild reservations about the competency of students to evaluate course design and teaching methodology. We were wary of students telling us what we wanted to hear, or even rating professors on factors such as popularity rather than teaching effectiveness. Despite these reservations, it remains true that only students themselves are in a position to judge the quality of the instruction they receive (Coughlan, 2004; Cohen and McKeachie, 1980 in Hoyt and Pallett, 1999), and that research has found student evaluation of teaching to be generally “reliable and valid” (Keane and Mac Labharainn, 2005).

Having said that, we emphasize that this is a limited survey and it is hoped that
follow-up research – perhaps after students have completed their one-year study abroad - will provide further data on the efficacy of this course with regard to assessing how well it prepared them for academic life in a foreign environment.

Summary
To sum up, responding to an invitation to take part in Monkashō’s ‘Global 30’ program, Doshisha formed a new Faculty of Global Communications. The faculty’s curriculum emphasized communicative competence in English, Chinese and Japanese, appreciation of different cultures, interaction with other disciplines and the opportunity to participate in multilingual communities. In sociocultural terms, students were being encouraged to regard themselves as members of an international community.

The students on Doshisha’s new Communicative Performance course exhibited an above-average desire to use English or improve their English skills in order to study abroad, and also an above-average interest in intercultural communication. The vast majority had never made a speech in English before, and possessed low confidence in English communication, presentation skills and public speaking. By contrast, all learners were much more confident in these areas at the conclusion of the course.

The activities and contents of the course met or exceeded student expectations and student evaluation of the course book was generally positive. The quality of teaching was praised, including the “instructional scaffolding” provided by instructors, and additional activities such as short speeches were received positively. The classroom atmosphere was described as “relaxed but serious,” though further data would have helped to expand students’ opinions on this point.

To a certain degree, most students felt that their English classes had complemented
other courses in the Faculty of Global Communications. There was also limited agreement that the Communicative Performance class had helped improve their knowledge of other cultures and would help them to communicate in multilingual communities in Japan and abroad.

The overall message from learners was that the course had been of considerable benefit, especially with regard to presentation and computer skills, the “Physical Message” and confidence in English. If confidence-building was one of the instructors’ main aims, there seemed to be reason here for cautious optimism. Not only that, the goals of Doshisha’s new faculty - to improve communicative competence and interpersonal skills, and act as a bridge to other cultures - seemed to have received an encouraging start.

References
Doshisha University Faculty of Global Communication web site. Retrieved, July 18th, 2011, from: http://globalcommunications.doshisha.ac.jp/english/


McCrostie, J. Foreign students back but numbers look likely to fall. Japan Times, July 12, 2011.


Appendix: Results of Student Questionnaire
Communicative Performance - Term One

This questionnaire is for instructors’ research purposes.
Students should also complete Doshisha’s online questionnaire.

For most of the questions, tick (✓) the box which best indicates your answer.
EXAMPLE:

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<td>✓</td>
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The Questionnaire begins HERE.

1. Why did you enroll in the Faculty of Global Communications?
Please write your answer on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: To use English / To improve my English skills / To communicate around the world / To learn about cultures / To broaden my horizons / To study abroad / To get a job

2. Before this class, had you ever made a speech in English before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

3. How confident were you in English Communication at the beginning of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</table>
4. How confident are you in English Communication now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</table>

5. How confident were you in communicating to foreigners in English at the beginning of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</table>

6. How confident are you in communicating to foreigners in English now??

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</table>

7. How confident were you in presenting to an audience at the beginning of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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</table>

8. How confident were you in presenting to an audience at the end of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
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</table>
9. How good were your presentation skills at the beginning of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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10. How good were your presentation skills at the end of this course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Much better</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>A little better</th>
<th>The same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
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11. During this course, how much did your presentation skills improve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
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12. How much did class presentations help you to reduce your fear of presenting?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very confident</th>
<th>Quite confident</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
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13. How much did this course complement the other courses you took in The Faculty of Global Communications?

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<th>Quite a lot</th>
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14. How much did this course help you to improve your knowledge of other cultures?

Very much  Quaite a lot  Somewhat  A little  Not at all
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1 1 4 6 2 3 1 2

15. In your opinion, how important is it for Japanese to communicate in English internationally?

Very important  Quite important  Somewhat important  A little  Not important
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9 5 3 2 1

16. How would you describe your interest in intercultural communication?

Very high  Above average  Average  Below average  Low
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4 3 7 1 4 1

17. How much will this course help you to communicate in multilingual communities in Japan and abroad?

Very much  Quite a lot  Somewhat  A little  Not at all
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5 3 4 4 2 2

Optional: Please add any extra comments on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: This course will be useful in the future / Gave me the courage to speak to students from overseas / Gave me more confidence / Helped me with writing and visuals.
18. Were the activities and content of this course what you expected? 
Choose the best answer:

1. Better than I expected   2. Exactly what I expected   3. Not as good as I expected

15 3 2

Please write any other comments on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: This course is interesting / Will help me when I go abroad / Powerpoint was difficult but I learned a lot / I want more communication with students / I am only satisfied with CP and French class / I met friends with the same goals / I got ideas from watching classmates.

19. How helpful were the 1-minute speeches? 
(15 seconds preparation/1 minute speaking)?

Very helpful    Quite helpful    A little    Not helpful

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Please write any other comments on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: 1-minute presentation helped improve communication / Helped me to think and organize quickly / taught me not to be afraid to make mistakes.

20. What was your opinion of the course book? (Speaking of Speech)

Very good    Good    Average    Below Average    Poor

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
21. How helpful were the DVD materials included with the textbook?

<table>
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<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Quite helpful</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
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22. How helpful was it when the teacher gave an example presentation in class?

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<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Quite helpful</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
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23. How was the quality of teaching you received?

<table>
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<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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24. How was the atmosphere in the class?

(Choose one)

14 5 1 0

25. What was the best or most useful part of this course?

Please write your answer on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: Making presentations / Physical Message / Speaking English only / Watching other students / 1-minute speech / Using Powerpoint.
26. Were you surprised by anything in this course?
Please write your answer on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: Using gestures naturally / Many students can speak English / We can be understood in English easily.

27. How could this class be improved?
Please write your answer on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: Not much / Students should not be shy / Teacher should speak at natural speed / There should be more topics on Japanese culture / Having more time for students to speak in English / Ban Japanese / More chances to chat / The class could not be improved.

Paul Carty’s students only:

28. How helpful was the homework of listening to news and speeches on BBC and TED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Quite helpful</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Please write any other comments on the following lines:

SAMPLE ANSWERS: I loved this class / I improved a lot / The listening homework was a good chance to listen at home / Listening helped me / Very practical help.
要約

この論文は、同志社大学において新設されたグローバル・コミュニケーション学部でも行われている英語入門コース「コミュニケーション能力」についての報告である。この論文では、文部科学省が推進する「グローバル30」の一環としてどのように学部が設立されたのか、その目標と背景について説明する。また、講師の教育学的哲学と「コミュニケーション能力」プログラムの授業内容についても述べる。次いで、授業を受けた生徒からのフィードバックとして講師によってなされた「アクションリサーチ」によって得られたデータから分析し結論付ける。最後に、この研究で明らかになった内容ならびに更なる研究のためのいくつかの補足説明と提案とともに締めくるる。