Web-based CBI (Content-based Instruction) Materials for Japanese Language Courses

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Project Overview

• 3-year project, 2005-2008.
• Funded by UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching.
• Collaborated by Japanese lecturers from UCLA, UCI, and UCSD.
• Developed CBI materials for Intermediate, Advanced, and Heritage courses.
• The final products were uploaded on the CCLE and shared by all UC campuses. Each instructor can modify the material for his/her own course.
• The project was evaluated by internal/external evaluators.
• We presented/published papers, organized the CBI workshops for Japanese language teachers, and keep working on material development.
Background Issues for the Project

• General Issues
  • Language curricula at a majority of colleges are not considered as one of the academic core curricula in academia.
  • Lectures/lessons of foreign language classes do not treat students as intelligent individuals.
    • The contents discussed in these types of classes are normally far lower than the average student’s intelligence level.

• Issues Regarding CBI
  • CBI materials are lacking, not only for fundamental and beginning courses, but also for advanced and heritage levels.
  • Developing CBI materials is time consuming.
Background Issues for the Project

Language curricula at a majority of colleges are not considered as one of the academic core curricula in academia.

Especially for elementary/intermediate levels, we practiced simple fact with limited vocabulary and grammar items.

We ask students what food they like, what they did over the weekend but discussion go beyond stating simple facts.
How can CBI improve our FL courses?

• Resituating the language course at the beginning of a Japanese Studies (Differentiate it from a private language school “in town.”)

• **Rethinking curriculum goals** = The goal of FL education should be to cultivate “cultural literacy” in our students, while promoting critical awareness of the target language/culture, as well as of that of individual students’ own language/culture.
  
  • Intercultural competence = the ability to create for oneself a comfortable third place (Kramsch, 1993:13) between one’s linguaculture and the target linguaculture
  
  • Literacy = socially, historically, and culturally-situated practices (Kern, 2000).
  
  • Texts = dialogue, graphic signs, paralinguistic behavior, and other semiotic systems (Kern, 2000).
  
  • Reading = an active action; is an interaction between the reader and the text (Kern, 2000).
A Teaching Approach for Developing Intercultural Competency & Literacy

- Is Communicative Language Teaching sufficient?
  
  Why? Or Why Not?
  
  • Content not enough in depth
  • Not cultivating enough of critical thinking skills
  • Native-speaker yardstick
    • Ignored the significance of the multiple identities exhibited by speakers in different social contexts
  
  • Treatment of culture as additive
    • Has treated culture merely as a fifth skill on the ACTFL proficiency scale
CBI (Content-based Instruction)

Why CBI?

• Integration of language and content.

• CBI aims at eliminating the artificial separation between language instruction and subject matter classes which exists in most education settings. (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989)

• “A CBI curriculum, when focused strongly on sociopolitical and cultural information and cross-cultural literacy skills, can provide students with a significant short-cut to cultural literacy that might normally take months or even years of living in-country to achieve.” (Stryker & Leaver, 1997)

• Embraces the broad and fluid concepts of “culture” and “literacy.”
Theoretical Support to the Principles and Pedagogy of CBI

• Lee & VanPatten: Atlas Complex
  - Whose responsibility is it to learn...Most instructors “assume that their principal task is one of improving the ways in which they express their expertise.. In moving away from teaching-fronted to teacher-assessed interactions, instructors will necessarily behave in a less Atlas-like way (Lee & VanPatten, 2002)

• Vygotsky: higher-order cognitive functions are culturally-mediated by the signs and artifacts emergent of practical activity.
  - Social Semiotic Theory   - Signs   - Activity Theory
  - Zone of Proximal Development   - Distributed Cognition
  - Dialogic Learning   - Metacognition   - Scaffolding
Curriculum Development

• Curriculum goal(s)
  The curriculum aims to foster students in becoming competent and culturally-literate users of Japanese. The students become able to acquire and construct knowledge of culture on their own and express their thoughts and opinions regarding these issues.

• Teaching materials
  • Should provide opportunities for students to participate in constructing knowledge.

• Assessments
  • Must evaluate more than the mastery of the linguistic knowledge (characters, vocabulary, grammar)
What Content(s) to Choose?

• Appropriate for college students
  • Intellectually-stimulating content

• Responding to the needs and interests of the students
  • Interesting content and something they can relate to

• Achieving our curriculum goal(s)
  • Language course is the entrance to Japanese studies
What Type of Activities?

• 5 Cs from Standards for Foreign Language Learning (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities)

• Six-T’s approach (Stoller & William, 1997) to content-based instruction (Theme, Texts, Topic, Treads, Tasks, Transitions)

• Bloom’s Taxonomy - 6 different cognitive levels
Material Development for 2nd year Japanese Students

• Who they are?- 2nd year Japanese Students at UC system.
• What needs they have?- Why they take the course and what they want to learn.
• How to integrate CBI materials into the course curricula.
• What and how materials are developed/used.
• Feedback from students and instructors.
2\textsuperscript{nd} Year Japanese Students at UC system

Use Several Different Text Books:
Elementary – Genki, Yookoso, Nakama
Intermediate – Intermediate Japanese (IJ) Tobira

For the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year Japanese, most campuses use both Elementary and Intermediate levels of textbooks (Transition)
Needs of JFL students
Why they take Japanese language course and what they want to learn.

• FL requirement or Specific needs??
• Requirement as their major/minor
• Interests of Japanese culture.
• Goals after lower division and college (education, career)

• Areas 2nd year students need to improve
How to integrate CBI materials into the course curricula (UCLA)

• 75 minutes 2 days/week  50 minutes 2 days/week
  10 weeks = 40 classes

• 4 classes X 75 minutes for CBI
• Required sufficient time outside the class

  Use of CCLE (Moodle)
  Use of Authentic Materials
Content/Topics for 2\textsuperscript{nd} year Japanese

Sports (Baseball, Sumo, Karate)

Travel (Beyond sightseeing/group tour)

Life Events; Cerebration, Wedding, Funeral (Buddhism)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Bloom</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Read the assigned materials</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Communication Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reading comprehension tasks</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summarize what you learn and react it</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Select a topic and search for references, read them</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Cultures Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summarize the references and share (upload to Forum)</td>
<td>Synthesis, Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Read classmates’ summary</td>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Exchange opinions on the topics selected by others</td>
<td>Analysis, Evaluation</td>
<td>Communication Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Compare and contrast topics of their own and of others</td>
<td>Synthesis, Evaluation</td>
<td>Comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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Good Points:

Students could be more aware of Japanese Culture in Japan.

Students read sufficient volume of reading materials in Japanese in order to obtain the updated/current information on each topic.

Students had more opportunities to discuss about Japan with their friends / family members.

Students spontaneously share the information and learned from each other.

Discussion was very active and the instructor participated as a member.
Weak Points:

Some students relate these issues to their own experience, however, most students just learned the facts. They should have made comparisons between in Japan and their own culture.

Due to the time constraints, some topics were not fully discussed.
Some students have struggled to learn new vocabulary and grammar so that they spent too much time for decoding text and less time to learn the content.
References


References


References


• National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. 1999.
References

• *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century.* Lawrence, KS: Allen Press.


Thank you...

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