Paving the way for transition: E-Learning initiative in FD

Is the idea of self study e-Learning material for class management exciting enough to get the professors to use it?

Osaka University

GFD PROJECT

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Abstract

We would like to introduce the e-Learning material created for the Global Faculty Development project at Osaka University, with the aim of enhancing teaching and learning. However developing the contents is only half the job done. The purpose of this poster session is to present our contents, discuss the challenges we are facing in terms of implementation and receive new ideas from the audience with regards to overcoming those challenges. This process may help us to strategize the implementation process and successfully launch the e-Learning material.

This on-going 5-year project (2008-2012) to support FD for fostering the globalisation of university education (GFD project) is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan.

GFD project

Vision: Making Osaka University more attractive to prospective international students from around the world and offer research and development (R & D) opportunities with cutting-edge technology.

Aim: Globalization of education. Using English as a medium of instruction, teaching in the second language. Training of faculty members with the skills necessary for interactive courses that cater to the needs of students from varying cultural backgrounds.

The primary goal of the project is to develop e-Learning content based on latest pedagogy related to giving lectures in English effectively, and providing a wide range of exemplary materials in specialised disciplines.
The three branches of this project include
(1) Developing self-study e-Learning material with the aim of improving teaching skills in English
(2) Organising FD workshops, symposia and corresponding materials with the aim of improving teaching and course design skills based on learner-centred methods of instruction
(3) Maintaining and updating the e-Learning environment to enhance the use of ICT. The content developed through this project is made accessible to the faculty through the WebCT learning management system (LMS) managed by the Cybermedia Center (CMC), Osaka University.

http://gfd.ime.cmc.osaka-u.ac.jp

Challenges

■ FD promotion at research oriented university.
Teaching is not valued and assessed but research results are. What can be done to encourage faculty to reconsider their current teaching style in terms of whether or not it is effective in facilitating learning? The teaching evaluations/feedback by students are not utilised in improving the quality of instruction and there are no universal standards to tell "what is good teaching". An e-Learning system helps professors access FD materials at their convenience, however, requires faculty to be active enough to utilize them. Since there is not a mandatory access time, there is no immediate pressure for the faculty to do so. Therefore, the strength of e-Learning may actually in some ways act as a limitation?

■ Motivation towards globalization of education.
There is a definite necessity to offer discipline specific classes, courses, degrees in English. Despite Japanese universities' ability to offer advanced technological education, the flow of international students from Asian countries is directed towards North America and Europe, or more precisely, towards English speaking countries.

■ Adoption of interactive teaching in the specific cultural context. There are cultural issues/biases such as Japanese are not used to interactive teaching. How can the faculty members of Osaka University be a good facilitator by involving students from various cultural background in the class. In Japan, expressing one's ideas in class or making critical comments in regard to the lecture content is unwelcome and is perceived as though the student is challenging the teacher. As a result, Japanese students are conditioned to traditional lecture style teaching and are not used to interacting in classes. The importance of maintaining group harmony prevents students from developing a habit of "thinking" in class.

Plan

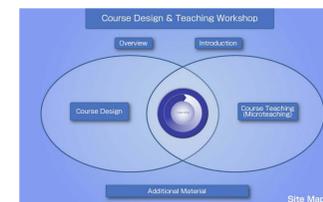| | Let's teach in English | | Implementing learner-centered teaching approaches | |
Year		Giving lectures in the disciplines	Workshop	Material development
2008	Effective course design and class management (In the Natural Sciences)	Biology, Information Science, Nanotechnology, Medicine, Physics	■ Course design & teaching (4days) ■ Co-instructor	Creating e-learning material based on the content of course design and teaching workshop
2009	Effective course design and class management (In the Humanities and Social Sciences)	Economics, Law, International Public Policy, Literature, History	■ Course design & teaching (4days) ■ Follow-up／Co-instructor ■ Symposium Talk	Creating e-learning material based on the content of course design and teaching workshop, Follow-up, Co-instructor workshop, and symposium talk
2010	Facilitating discussion and active learning (In the Natural Sciences)	Chemistry, Mathematical Science, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Information Engineering, Environment and Architecture, Health Science	■ Course design & teaching (4days) ■ Workshop for faculty developers ■ Symposium Talk	Creating e-learning material based on the content of course design and teaching workshop and workshop for faculty developers and symposium talk. Making it accessible through LMS.
2011	Facilitating discussion and active learning (In the Humanities and Social Sciences)	Dentistry, Psychology, Political Science, Philosophy	■ Course design & teaching (4days) ■ Other workshops	Review and revise FD workshop e-learning content
2012	Evaluation and revision of the materials		On-line workshops using ICT	

Ongoing process

Let's teach in English;

•Effective course design and class management
focuses on teaching principles and seeks effective ways to help faculty improve the quality of their teaching by providing them with new methods and tips of conducting lectures and class management.
•Facilitating discussion and active learning
centered the significance of student-teacher interaction. The issues to be addressed here are how to strive to be a good facilitator in the classroom and to do so in English.
•Giving lectures in the disciplines
designed to assist faculty in mastering the English associated with their own area of expertise, model courses for faculty to study discipline-specific pedagogical knowledge.

(1) and (2) are video recorded in classes conducted in English by Japanese and non-Japanese faculty from both inside and outside of Osaka University, in addition to student and faculty interviews. In order to raise the faculty's motivation to improve responding globalization of education, a range of the university's efforts for internationalization of education are also introduced.

Implementing learner centered teaching approaches ;

based on the learner centered FD workshops and symposia held annually to enhance teaching and course design skills additional material based on follow-up and co-instructor workshops.

Both of the developed e-Learning materials Let's teach in English and Implementing learner centered teaching approaches are made accessible to the faculty members of Osaka University through the WebCT learning management system (LMS).

FD Workshop ;

organized annually to encourage the faculty members of Osaka University to acquire the course design skills with focus on Learner-Centered Approach, by an expert on university education.
Course design and teaching workshop is a 4-day intensive course consisting of lectures which require active participation and practical training of mock lectures (micro teaching) by participants.

The objective for them is to reflect on their teaching style and to implement the Learner-Centered Approach.