

## BRINGING WORLD CITIZENSHIP TO THE CLASSROOM

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The term "world citizenship" has several meanings. Perhaps the clearest definition of this phrase was stated by Strain (1999). He used this operational definition:

A world citizen is an individual who accepts global responsibilities or expands his or her social consciousness to include the people of other countries.

In the classroom this means to look at global issues such as war and peace, human rights and the environment. According Cates (1999) this also includes world themes of world religions, world flags, and world languages. He also includes a geographical literacy of world regions, world countries and world cultures. He states that English teachers are in a unique position to promote the ideal of world citizenship through their work. The rationale for doing so rests on a number of points:

\*the emerging role of "English as a global language" for communicating with people from cultures around the globe (Crystal, 1997).

\*the growing interest in content-based instruction focussed on meaningful communication about real-world issues (Brinton, 1989, Mohan, 1986).

\*appeals by UNESCO's Linguapax Project and by Ministries of Education for foreign language teaching to more effectively promote international understanding (UNESCO, 1987).

At Gifu Women's University the English Literature curriculum is divided into three sections: linguistics, English literature, and international communication. At the end of the students' first year, they select one of the three fields of concentration. Usually, over half of the freshmen class choose international communication for more intensive study for the following three years.

As international communication students enter their second year, they are enrolled in a class entitled "**BEGINNING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**". The purposes of the class are as follows:

1. to broaden the students' understanding of the world.
2. to learn to find articles that are of interest to them.
3. to learn to discuss a topic in a group and share opinions.
4. to learn to summarize the group discussion and present it to the class.
5. to learn to accept other opinions.

On the first day of class, students are put into groups of four. They are asked to find an article in a magazine or newspaper that interests them. The publications are in the student library which is permanently in the classroom. The publications include *The Japan Times*, *The Japan Times Student Times*, *Avenues magazine* published in Nagoya, *Mini World*, and the *English Journal*. Students make enough copies of the article so each member of the group can take one home. They read the article during the week, and look up any vocabulary words that they are not familiar with. One of the students in the group will give a brief presentation at the next class meeting. This student is asked to write a brief summary of the article, using her own words as much as possible. The summary should be limited to 10 to 12 sentences. The student is encouraged to memorize these sentences so the presentation will be more natural and eye contact will be made.

At the next class meeting, the group sits together and develops a group opinion. Then the presentations begin. The designated student from each group tells the class of the summary she has written. Then the teacher calls on one of the seated members of the group to stand and express the group's opinion of the article. This process takes two class meetings.

On the following week, new groups of four students are selected, one volunteers to be the presenter, and the process begins again and the two week cycle is repeated. The intention is that over the course of one year, each student will be with every other student in the class to maximize exposure to students with differing opinions.

For more advanced students, usually in their third or fourth year, the course is titled "**ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**". This course has the following objectives:

1. to learn how to collect information about social and environmental issues.
2. to learn how to put the information together.
3. to learn how to work together and interact with others.
4. to learn how to give a successful presentation in English.

On the first day of class, students are asked to select and write down two environmental or social issues that are important to Japan and two that are world wide issues. They choose issues that interest them because they will spend a lot of time, the entire semester searching for information about the subject. They hand in their selections the next week. Students with similar interests are placed into teams of three or four, and a team captain is selected.

Students are given instruction on where to find material for their presentations which are given at the end of the semester. Each team is given a copy of the "Directory of Japanese NGOs Concerned with International Cooperation" and shown how to write to a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is associated with their subject. They include a self addressed stamped envelope with their letter. Other sources of information are the internet, local and university libraries, The Nagoya International Center, the Gifu International Center, magazines and newspapers. The advanced students build on the experiences they had in Beginning International Communications where they searched for articles of interest to them during their sophomore year. Students are encouraged to obtain information in English since most do not have the skill to adequately translate articles from Japanese to English.

Here are examples of the topics chosen by students in the advanced class:

1. Sexual discrimination in the Japanese language.
2. The refugee situation in Kosovo.
3. The dioxin problem in Japan.
4. Global warming.
5. The economic recession in Japan.

6. The declining birth rate in Japan.

7. Nuclear testing.

Class evaluations collected at the end of the semester show that students find this method of collecting, synthesizing, writing, and presenting information to the class some of the most interesting activities they have undertaken at the university. Students are encouraged to participate in solutions to the problem. It is gratifying to note that several have become members of the NGO with which they have communicated. These are the students whom could reasonably be called world citizens.

#### References

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