

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

2005/IACE/AFEF004-05

Agenda Item:

***Designing learning communities among APEC economies:
Finding new values in collaboration***

Submitted by:

Kenichi Kubota,

Kansai University, Japan

Makoto Kageto,

Nihon Fukushi University, Japan

Insook Lee,

Sejong University, S. Korea

Chi-Syan Lin

National University of Taiwan, Taiwan

Hiroyuki Watanabe

Utsunomiya University, Japan



The 1st APEC Future Education Forum
Busan, Korea
8-11 September 2005

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

LECTURE REPORT FORMAT

Face sheet

Project Number: 2005/IACE/AFE004-05	Date received by Secretariat: 2005-08-29
Topic of Lecture: Designing learning communities among APEC economies: Finding new values in collaboration	
Participating Economy (-ies): <i>Japan, S. Korea, Taiwan</i>	
Speaker's Name, Title, and Organization (M) <i>Kenichi Kubota, Professor, Kansai University, Japan</i>	
Postal Address:	Tel: Fax: E-mail: kubota@res.kutc.kansai-u.ac.jp
Brief description of Lecture(including its purpose): <p>This lecture introduces the guidelines for blended learning of the international exchange program. It is an important issue for APEC economies to build up mutual understanding in order to promote friendship among the economies. Some schools and organizations set up international communication project to correspond by e-mail or set up video conferencing periodically. There must be, however, some barriers to hinder these activities. Firstly, most schools do not have any experience. Secondly, teachers have difficulty to speak and write in English. Thirdly, funding is not enough. The World Youth Meeting (WYM) is one of successful international collaboration projects lasting six years. In this research, we investigate the WYM as a model case in order to understand how the WYM is organized so that we can develop guidelines for the international collaboration projects</p>	
Date and Time of Lecture: <i>September 9, 2005</i>	
Signature of Research Team Leader: <i>Kenichi Kubota, Professor, Kansai University, Japan</i> Date: <i>Aug. 17, 2005</i>	

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

Table of Contents

1. Background	1
2. Research Objectives	2
3. Research Methodology	2
4. Detailed Findings	2
5. Conclusions and Recommendations	6
References	7

Abstract

Objectives

Develop guidelines for blended learning of the international exchange program.

Specific objectives

- 1) Develop the specific guidelines how to set up relation among schools and prepare for the face-to-face meeting through the use of ICT.
- 2) Develop the specific guidelines for organize the face-to-face meeting
- 3) Develop the specific guidelines to publish the report of the meeting after the face-to-face meeting.
- 4) Find out better instructional strategies blending face-to-face and media for international collaboration activities.

Linkages

Primary and secondary schools will get benefit from this project. The guideline will provide the way of initiating, exercising, and reporting collaborative work among schools. Students will develop cross-cultural understanding and create friendship among APEC economies. At the same time, teachers and students can acquire ICT knowledge and skills through this project.

Methodology

Literature review is for collaborative learning and blended learning in international contexts.

Questionnaire is conducted during the face-to-face meeting asking for ICT use and critical elements leading success of the meeting.

Result of the research

It is an important issue for APEC economies to build up mutual understanding in order to promote friendship among the economies. Some schools and organizations set up international communication project to correspond by e-mail or set up video conferencing periodically. There must be, however, some barriers to hinder these activities. Firstly, most schools do not have any experience. Secondly, teachers have difficulty to speak and write in English. Thirdly, funding is not enough. The World Youth Meeting (WYM) is one of successful international collaboration projects lasting six years. In this research, we investigate the WYM as a model case in order to understand how the WYM is organized so that we can develop guidelines for the international collaboration projects

**Designing learning communities among APEC economies
: Finding new values in collaboration**

*Kenichi Kubota,
Kansai University, Japan*

*Makoto Kageto,
Nihon Fukushi University, Japan*

*Insook Lee,
Sejong University, S. Korea*

*Chi-Syan Lin
National University of Taiwan, Taiwan*

*Hiroyuki Watanabe
Utsunomiya University, Japan*

Abstract:

It is an important issue for APEC economies to build up mutual understanding in order to promote friendship among the economies. Some schools and organizations set up international communication project to correspond by e-mail or set up video conferencing periodically. There must be, however, some barriers to hinder these activities. Firstly, most schools do not have any experience. Secondly, teachers have difficulty to speak and write in English. Thirdly, funding is not enough. The World Youth Meeting (WYM) is one of successful international collaboration projects lasting six years. In this research, we investigate the WYM as a model case in order to understand how the WYM is organized so that we can develop guidelines for the international collaboration projects

Keyword: International exchange, mediated communication, cross-cultural collaboration, face-to-face meeting,

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

It is an important issue for APEC economies to build up mutual understanding in order to promote friendship among the economies. As information and communication technology (ICT) has advanced such as e-mail, BBS, web pages, and

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

video conferencing, it makes us easier to communicate among the economies. Some schools and organizations set up international communication projects to correspond by e-mail and video conferencing periodically. These projects promote closeness and friendship between schools and organizations. There are, however, some difficulties to increase the number of schools to participate in these projects. Some barriers must be existed to hinder expanding and advancing the projects. We consider that possible barriers are followings.

Firstly, most schools do not have any experience how to initiate and promote the project although teachers think that international collaboration is important. In addition, there are few organizations to support this kind of projects. Therefore, teachers do not know where to ask and get support.

Secondly, different languages spoke in APEC economies are the barrier to communicate each other. In order to promote collaboration with people in other economies, most of us need to use English as a medium of communication. Teachers, however, have difficulty to speak and write in English without support by English literate people.

Thirdly, lack of funding causes difficulty of continuing the project for years. Especially, support for face-to-face meeting is a crucial factor to make the project vivid. However, students in less developed economies cannot afford to pay airplane fare and accommodation by themselves. Therefore, it is critical to provide the guideline how to rise funding for the international collaboration.

2. Research Objectives

The World Youth Meeting (WYM) is one of successful international collaboration projects lasting six years. In this research, we investigate the WYM as a model case in order to understand how WYM is operated, gets funding, and use ICT tools for communication. By observing the process of the WYM held in Aichi, Japan in 2005, we would like to develop guidelines for the international collaboration projects.

3. Research Methodology

Literature review is for collaborative learning and blended learning in international contexts. And questionnaire is conducted during the face-to-face meeting asking for ICT use and critical elements leading success of the meeting.

4. Detailed Findings

4.1. The Overview of the World Youth Meeting

Since the World Youth Meeting (WYM) started at the Nagoya International Center in 1999, teachers of secondary and higher education have composed a committee and continued to organize the WYM every year. The WYM is not just an event itself, but

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

composed of three phases; the pre-event phase, the event, and the post-event phase. Through the three phases, students acquire various knowledge and skills, such as informatics, international understanding, and English.

Students from Germany, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, Australia, United States, Nepal, Korea, Taiwan, China, Cambodia, and Thailand have participated in the WYM last six years. Since students from many economies have participated in the WYM, medium of communication must be English. The teachers and students communicate each other throughout the three phases by using e-mail, web pages, video conferencing as well as face-to-face meeting to achieve their objectives.

4. 2. Blended learning

Since the WYM employs different kinds of tools for communication, such as e-mail, BBS, presentation software, it is important to understand how these tools can be used in order to build up learning communities in international settings.

The term 'blended learning' has gain considerable popularity in recent year as strategies for delivering on promises about learning and performance. However, the term 'blended learning' covers a range of approaches and is used rather vaguely. Whitelock & Jelf (2003) presented three kinds of definitions:

1. the integrated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches;
2. the combination of media tools employed in an e-learning environment; and
3. the combination of a number of pedagogic approaches, irrespective of learning technologies.

How we can apply these definitions in the context of the WYM? The first definition is probably the most common interpretation for this term. However, traditional learning reminds us of knowledge-transfer model of teaching and learning, such as lecture style. The students are required active participation for the whole process of the WYM. The first definition may need further clarification of traditional and online learning.

The second definition refers to the tools used in teaching and learning process both online and face-to-face. We cannot figure out the effective blended learning strategies, simply mixing a variety of tools. We also need further clarification which tools can be fit to what kind of learning.

The third definition also gives us vague understanding because tools which the students use are closely connected learning activities. Therefore, we need to consider how we can make triangulation of pedagogy, tools, learning outcomes.

Actual blended learning would involve the students' learning through experiencing variation in aspect of learning objectives (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005). It is important for the students to choose which tool they would like to employ by themselves.

4. 3. Tasks, collaboration, and outcomes

In each phase of the WYM, both teachers and students have **specific tasks** to achieve so that they can grasp what to do in each stage. **At the pre-event phase**, first of all, teachers have to confirm the event theme, program, schedule and budget. They

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

also need to set up video conferencing for students to get interested in other sides of students.

For the students, firstly, they have to write their self-introductions and shoot video. Then they upload document and movie files on web. Secondly, students collaboratively develop a questionnaire based on the event theme. The students in each economy conduct the same questionnaire and collect data. After the questionnaire, the students analyze the data and prepare for joint presentation during the event by e-mail and video conferencing.

At the event of the WYM, the students by themselves carry out the program. According to the schedule, the students play a role of chair persons, cameramen, director, etc. The teachers are also busy to share experiences each other and meet invited government officials. It is reflective session of the event at the last day of the event. The direct communication is necessarily during the event. The students meet each other and collaboratively work together. Both teachers and students review the whole program and provide opinions in order to improving it for the next year.

At the post-event phase, students are asked to reflect on the event and edit video for making memorial movie, while teachers keep the record of joint presentation and upload it as a form of digital learning materials on the web pages. These materials can be used for English class.

Through these collaborative activities, outcomes of each phase is shown in the table 1 are expected to achieve.

Phase	Outcomes
Pre-event	English self-introduction , movie, result of questionnaire, Instruction how to make a effective presentation for students.
Event	Joint English presentation; Result of work shop(flags logos); Script for MC: Photos; Video movie
Post-event	The report; CD-English presentation material for classroom teaching.

Table 1: The outcomes in each phase

4.4. Collaborative tools

A various kinds of tools are used for this activity. Since participants are scattered all over the world, internet tools are convenient for communicating each other in distance.

(1) e-mail

E-mail is the most convenient tool for communicating each other. At the pre-event phase, the teachers set up mailing-lists for teachers and students so that they can collaboratively work together even at distance. After coming to Japan, they still use the mailing list for reporting their activities inside Japan. In this way, they can communicate smoothly during the event. After going back to their economies, they share full of their memories each other by e-mail. These feedbacks are uploaded on web pages for record.

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

(2) Video conferencing

Even before the event, students in different economies can meet each other via video conference. If they recognize each other before the event, activities in the event must be much more exciting. Therefore, video conference was set up every other week and students discuss the event theme more in detail. The teachers also use it to confirm the schedule on Sundays.

When some students could not come to Japan for the WYM, video conference during events set up a part of program so that those who do not participate can see what is happening at the event in real time. This happened in 2003. Because of SARS, Taiwanese participants were not able to come to Japan. Instead, they attended via video conferencing.

(3) Web page

Before the WYM, the students introduce themselves on the web page. They also share tentative programs and participant's list. As the students need to share information for joint presentation at the WYM, process of communication such as record of e-mail and video conferencing is put on the web pages. Digital photos of participants and schools are shown on the web pages. The more the students access the web, the more they feel closeness each other. The web page is a kind of critical access point where the students get excited in the WYM.

Photos during home stay are uploaded immediately so that parents synchronously feel comfortable to see how their children enjoy and spend at Japanese house. .

After the event, all data recorded at the conference, such as video, presentation files, are uploaded on the web page as database so that new participants can take a look at them as a reference. The students can get necessary information from this database by using sentence retrieving functions. They understand level of presentation they are required in the event at the preparation stage for next year although they will attend the WYM for the first time. The web pages provide concrete images of required level. (The examples are shown on the following web pages; <http://www.japannet.gr.jp/w2005/PPT/p-index.html>; <http://www.nfu.jp/lc/>)

(4) Video exchange (DVD exchange)

DVD gains more popularity in these days rather than video tapes. It is more convenient and versatile. While the students are in Japan, all activities are recorded as forms of digital photo and video. After editing all recorded tapes, some students produce a documentary. This is an opportunity for those students who are not good at English.

(5) Face-to-face meeting

Face-to-face meeting is a highlight of the whole process. After coming to Japan, the students are involved in home-stay program for four to five days. During the event, buddy system is employed to make foreign and Japanese students together. After the WYM in July, the students may meet again at Asian Students Exchange Program held in Taiwan in December. .

4. 5. Discussion

We have not deeply analyzed the process of the WYM yet, but gain some insights

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

about importance of combination among tools and face-to-face. By analyzing the online communication, Miyata *et.al.*(2005) observe the growth of student's views from individualistic to relational. Those who participate in the WYM say that they would like to come again and evaluate positively.

We need to analyze why the WYM is successful so that we can get some guideline to implement this kind of international collaborative project in different places. As we mentioned at the beginning, there are some barriers to hinder the activities.

(1) Why has the WYM continued for six year successfully?

Although students are new every year, the teachers accumulated experiences to share via web pages and built a learning community among the teachers. New teachers can easily join the WYM by looking at the webpage, using video conferencing, etc.

(2) How do the students overcome English barrier?

Since English is the only way to communicate each other among economies, it is important for the students to set up their mind into English mode. The teachers who participate in the WYM are not only major in English, but also teaching other subject, such as social study, science, etc. Those who are not English major also try to learn English enthusiastically. These teachers attitudes influence students' English learning in turn.

In order to support English learning, the teachers prepare a various tools for communication, such as e-mail, video conferencing, web page, video, etc. The students gradually recognize importance of English and try to use English as much as possible. The more they use English, the less they feel English is a barrier. At the meeting, face-to-face situation make the students speak English more. The blended learning creates an environment for nurturing English ability.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) also strongly has supported promoting English learning and presented strategies for "developing English-speaking Japanese" in 2002. MEXT put more emphasis on international exchange and communication for educating Japanese for global societies.

(3) How can we raise funding?

Fortunately, the WYM continually get funding in order to invite the students from other economies. Funding is basically from philanthropy organizations, enterprises, and MEXT. The WYM organizes the event with about three million yen (\$30,000). Good news is that MEXT plans to support international collaboration activities financially although MEXT has not announced officially yet. We, however, think that we need not only to seek funding, but also to establish a way to develop the funding system, so that we can be more independent and do not always rely on outside funding agencies.

5. Conclusions

This collaborative research has just started this year (2005). We will continue to work on together for enhancing the international collaboration among economies. Although ICT has been developing rapidly, there are some gaps among economies. It

The 1st APEC Future Education Forum 2005

is important to consider ICT infrastructure in respective economies. To build up an international learning community, we have to conduct further research.

References

- Miyata, Y., Ueda, N.& Weintraub, H.(2005) *Learning Support in Multi-Cultural Collaboration: Design and Analysis of Online Communication*. ED-MEDIA 2005.
- Mizukoshi, T & Ikuta, (2005). *Korekarano Jouho to Media no Kyoiku (information and media education for future)* Nihon-bunkyo shuppan.
- Oliver, M & Trigwell, K. (2005). Can 'Blended Learning' be Redeemed? *E-learning*, vol. 2 No.2, 17-26.
- Whitelock, D. & Jelfs, A. (2003). Editorial: Journal of Educational Media Special Issue on Blended Learning. *Journal of Educational Media*, 28(2-3), 99-100.