

Improving ESL Using a Global Videoconference

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Abstract

This paper examined using ODL (open and distance learning) technology in the classroom, specifically videoconference, to improve language learning skills for K-12 to first year university students. This is part one of a planned four part research that uses videoconferencing technology in the classroom in the belief of creating a more efficient ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom learning environment. Part one focuses on the preliminary lesson plan for teachers who are interested in using videoconferencing technology in their classrooms. The three essential language learning components of motivation, confidence and ability (Wu & Marek 2010) were integral in the design of the included module.

Definition:

"Videoconferencing is an active tool that incorporates audio, video, computing and communications technologies to allow people from different locations to collaborate face-to-face in real time, and share all types of information including data, documents, sounds, and pictures." (Ritzel, 2010).

Introduction

Videoconferencing (VC) as a tool for educational purposes, has been used for more than three decades (Aydin, 2012). Szeto (2014) stated that it has been used for multi-campus teaching and is often used to distribute lectures to students at remote sites. Although VC may be often used as a tool to enhance student learning, more should be done to incorporate it into the modern classroom. Kan stated that educational professionals are catching up however, videoconferencing is already rapidly grown in business and industry because of its cost and time saving benefits (Kan, 2011).

Connecting students at remote locations with others for enhancement of educational experiences seems less of a challenge than before (Szeto, 2014). However, intensified communication across country borders still require detailed planning and the use of a substantial number of pedagogical strategies (Kan, 2011).

The lesson module described in this paper focused on a plan for incorporating learning standards created for American schools as a means for improving English language education for lan-

guage learners primarily in rural areas in Japan. A major reason for the creation of the pilot is to provide students who will travel abroad a "pre-travel abroad" experience by videoconference with ESL students in other countries. Part one of this research focused on the preliminary lesson plan. Part two will revise part ones' lesson plan based on feedback from the student test group questionnaires and peer suggestions. Part three is expected to have a working model ready for application in the classroom. Part four will finalize the research and compile data collected into a final paper. A pilot lesson plan to organize cross-cultural communication for such an "intensified" program will now be discussed.

Subject Matter:

Improving ESL (English as a Second Language) Using a Global Videoconference

Method and Design

A Pedagogical Approach:

The mode of teaching will attempt to use synchronous videoconferencing. This mode facilitates a type of real-time "face-to-face" VC communication between the home country and another global classroom, which will possibly provide students timely opportunities to practice speaking English with peers.

The pedagogical approaches that will be attempted will require joint team-teaching efforts between the classrooms using the "World Language Learning Goals" and lesson plan, located the appendix section, in an attempt to create an interactive learning environment for the instructors to observe students. This approach, theoretically, could increase the probability that students will improve and retain the language skills learned in the lesson. Peer-to-peer learning and the distributed learning approaches will be used. Students will work with their peers in a global classroom to practice their English (Davis and Niederhauser, 2007).

The instructors will be largely passive which should allow the less advanced language learners to benefit from the experience of working with potentially more advanced language learners (Read, 2005). The cross-cultural collaborative work approach will also be used as students communicate with one another about their individual cultures. Student-generated content will be used as part of this approach (McCarty, 2006).

Standards and Key Concepts:

The following is a partial listing of language concepts borrowed from the Maryland Department of Education to be used only for the preliminary lesson plan as a reference. Newly created concepts and goals will be created during the revisal period based on feedback from the student test group questionnaires and peer suggestions.

World Language Learning Goal (In title only) – (Maryland Department of Education, 2003)

Rationale:

To meet language learning educational requirements, students need to meet the communication standards.

Goal: To build language skills and confidence in speaking English as a second language (ESL) by using Microsoft Office and Web 2.0 technologies such as facebook/Skype for students. In addition to students generated content written and verbal content in English.

STANDARD 1.0 Communication

1.1 Interpersonal: Students exchange information orally and in writing in the target language in a culturally appropriate manner to provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Beginning Indicator: Students engage in brief exchanges about personal interests in the target language.

Objective a. The student will ask and answer simple questions related to family and self.

Objective b. The student will exchange personal preferences, emotions and opinions.

Objective c. Express personal needs.

Objective d. Ask for repetition and repeat to ensure understanding.

Objective e. Exchange brief messages, emails, postcards, and letters.

Objective f. Give and follow simple directions.

1.2 Interpretive: Students understand and interpret the target language in its spoken and written form on a variety of topics.

Beginning Indicator: Students understand spoken and written language on very familiar topics in the target language that promote the learning of basic linguistic structures.

Objective a. Interpret the basic message from spoken and written texts that are on very familiar topics.

Objective b. Identify the main idea and some supporting details from authentic spoken and written texts that have visual support.

Objective c. Demonstrate understanding of developmentally appropriate information gained through active listening or reading by applying it to a different context.

1.3 Interpretive: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or

readers on a wide variety of topics in the target language.

Beginning Indicator: Students make short presentations and write simple verbal communication on very familiar topics in the target language.

Objective a. Write and deliver short descriptions about very familiar topics of personal interest.

Objective b. Tell or write a brief story, journal entry, or blog.

Objective c. Present songs, short poems, impromptu skits, or dialogs.

Major Assignments:

Each one is finished at the end of one of the module units. There are five:

- 1.) Prepare presentation introducing the class to the guest classroom class. Include information on daily life in the local community.
- 2.) Participate in video conference discussion on daily life.
- 3.) Participate in video conference presentation on one cultural practice (chosen by students).
- 4.) Participate in role play exercises illustrating cultural practice chosen in assignment 3 above.
- 5.) Complete a joint letter/email inviting new global classroom students to participate in the cultural practice. The letter will outline the guest students' role in the practice.

Summary of Classroom Module:

The purpose of the module is to increase both the technical language skills and the speaking confidence levels of beginning-level, ESL students.

Speaking only English, students work with a class of students who tested at a slightly higher level of English language proficiency. The two classrooms become familiar with each others daily living habits and at least one cultural practice. Moderated video discussion forums allow students to share ideas and experiences. To reinforce language skills and to build speaking confidence, students give a presentation via video conference. The module culminates with development and presentation of a letter of appreciation.

Students who complete this module should be able to discuss the key aspects of the daily lives of global classroom students. In addition, their confidence level when speaking English should increase. Each class gives the presentation to the partner classroom. Each classroom audience rates the presentation.

Background:

The module utilizes language learning standards from the Maryland State Curriculum,

World Languages standard to measure student progress. It is designed to help beginning-level conversational English students achieve the "beginning indicators" of Standards 1 and 2 of the curriculum (Maryland Department of Education, 2003). Students studying English for at least 2 years should be a requirement.

Time Frame:

There are five units with five 60 minute lessons each with a total class time of 90 minutes. There are expected to be some slow-learners in the class. The length of the unit may be altered if some students are having a hard time using and retaining the information they learn during this unit.

Subject/Grade Level:

The subject is ESL (or other comprable English class). The module is based on standards from the Maryland Deparment of Education. The guest classroom speaks English at a slightly higher level of proficiency.

Key Challenge:

Motivating students to actually talk only in English might create some challenges for the instructor. Consequently, it may take longer to complete this unit.

Prior Knowledge:

- Students have studied English for at least 2 years.
- Students will know how to use the Internet and laptop computers.
- Students will know how to function with tools such as Microsoft Office
- Students will have had some experience creating PowerPoint presentations.
- Students will have general knowledge of the concept of video- conferencing.
- Students should have prior experience conducting research on the Internet.

Technological Activities

Students will:

- Use Microsoft PowerPoint to create presentations.
- Use email to communicate with students.
- Use the Internet to research the daily lives and cultural practice of each group of students.
- Use videoconference tools to collaborate with other students.
- Use Microsoft Word to create a letter of appreciation.

Essential Questions:

Students will be able to answer the following questions about their country and the guest classroom's country.

- What are the daily practices of the global classroom students?
- How can I communicate the daily practices of my community to the global classroom students.
- How can I describe one cultural practice of the the global classroom students in English?
- How can role plays be used to teach important lessons?
- What makes a role play strong? Weak?
- What are the most important oral and written presentation skills?
- How can I deal with feelings of shyness when speaking English?
- What is the value of learning about other cultures?

Conclusion

This paper sought to explore using ODL (open and distance learning) technology, specifically videoconference, in the ESL classroom. The aim was to improve students language learning skills. As this is the first part of a four part plan, more research, data collection, and revisions are needed. The three essential language learning components of motivation, confidence and ability were an integral part in the design of the included module. Videoconference as a tool for education purposes has been used for more than three decades (Aydin, 2012). The lesson focused on a plan of incorporating learning standards created for American schools as a means for improving English language education for language learners primarily in remote areas in Japan and other global classrooms around Asia. This pilot program module to organize cross-cultural communication plan will require further research. The next step in research is collecting data based on feedback from student test group questionnaires and peer suggestions to be processed into information for the second stage.

Appendix

Improving ESL Using a Global Videoconference (Preliminary Lesson Plan)

Lesson Outline — Unit 4				
Summary		During this lesson students will create role plays in English based on their Internet research and discussions with the guest classroom. Each role play is a demonstration of one cultural practice observed by students. Students will work in groups of 4. Role plays will be presented simultaneously to home and guest classrooms. This module helps students build their speaking confidence and their ability to connect concepts in English.		
Starting Activity		Classroom lecture introducing the "role plays." Detailed descriptions of how one can learn from role plays will be included. Students have not previously been exposed to this method of learning. Students will watch DVDs of students engaged in role plays in both Japanese and English. Guest classroom instructor will use same video recording.		
Formative Assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz on "role plays" as a learning tool and the English vocabulary associated with role plays. • Writing a 10-line role play in Japanese and English. 		
Summative Assessment		Playing a spoken part in a role play and submit a short evaluation of classmates' role plays. Completing a quiz on the cultural practices presented during the unit.		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4 (sample lesson plan page 11)	Day 5
What is a role play?	What makes a role play effective? Getting the message across	As part of an assigned small group, decide on a role play topic and beginning outlining a script.	As part of an assigned small group, finalize and rehearse role play.	Name some things that stood out about amongst the cultural presentations you saw.
How do role plays help us learn?	Review role plays on DVD and identify their strengths and weaknesses of role plays.	Group leader summarizes role play plan. Each group gets feedback from peers and instructor.	Perform role play to local and global classroom as part of assigned small group. Observe role plays of classmates and submit a short evaluation (factors to rate and scale provided by instructor)	Describe one or more cultural practices presented.

Lesson Plan for Unit 4, Day 4	
Lesson Title and Length	Composition and Presentation: Creating and performing a role play
Grade Level/Subject Area	Grade 10 (Japanese system), students' English proficiency is developing Subject Area – Conversational English, English reading, writing, and comprehension
Concept/Topic	Communicating lessons in English via role-play.
Overview & Purpose	Students have spent the last three days understanding role plays, learning to identify the strength and weaknesses in a role play and understanding how role plays can be used to teach important concepts.
Education Standards Addressed	Maryland World Language Learning Goals Goal 1 - Students exchange information orally and in writing in the target language in a culturally appropriate manner to provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
Objectives (Specify skills/information that will be learned.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role play writing. • Participating in a small group. • Performing a role play. • Evaluating role plays.
Technology Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will access global network, ePals. • Students will set up video projector for video conference. • Students will complete online evaluations. • Students will Microsoft Word to write role play scripts.
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be know how to acces various global networks. • Students will understand the definition of a role play and the elements needed to create one. • Students will understand how to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a role play.
Verification	Objectives have been successfully achieved when the student participates fully in writing a role play. Instructor and supporting members will sit with each small group for 5-10 minutes to observe students' contributions. Students will perform a speaking role in their group's role play. English pronunciation and context should be at least average based on the rubric for this module. Students will complete an evaluation of classmates' role plays. Students will participation in review discussion of material presented by other students. Students will achieve 70% on final quiz reviewing cultural practices presented by other students.

<p>Activity</p>	<p>30 Minutes: The students will work within their assigned small group, selected from their classmates, to finalize and rehearse their role plays.</p> <p>During the previous three days, the instructor and supporting members observed the students and recorded their technical and social competency levels: fast-learner/leader, average-learner/follower, and slow-learner/lagger. This information is written in the notebook marked "Videoconference Module." Instructor assigned students to five groups of four so that there is one fast-learner, two average-learners, and one slow-learner per group.</p> <hr/> <p>30 Minutes: Students will upload their role plays to the class website. Students at local and global classroom will give their presentations.</p> <p>After each presentation, class will take 5 minutes to submit their evaluations of the presenting group via the classroom website.</p> <p>Presentations will be video recorded.</p> <hr/> <p>15 Minutes: Instructors lead discussion of the cultural practices presented by the groups. This is a joint discussion between the local and global classroom. Instructor dismisses class.</p> <hr/> <p>15 Minutes:</p> <p>Students will take a twenty-question quiz on role plays. The majority of the questions will focus on writing and performing role plays.</p> <p>Local and global classrooms will go over the quizzes together, grade them and then upload them to the class website.</p>
<p>Materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom notebooks. • Laptops • Pens • Computer stations/multi-media room • Video conference equipment
<p>Differentiated Instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow-learners will be placed in groups with faster learners and average learners so that they can more easily access the information. • Instructor will have supporting members who will give additional one-on-one support to slower learners during the classroom sessions. • One element in the rubric will be "degree of improvement" so that slow-learners are rewarded for the progress that they make even if that progress falls short of the lesson goal. • TTDY will be available for the hearing impaired.
<p>Re-teaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts and skills will be reinforced during the classroom discussion period. Peer-to-peer learning will be encouraged during these discussion.
<p>Extension Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top three groups (based on peer evaluations) will work with the instructors during the next week to create a vodcast of their presentation. Presentations will be uploaded to the class website and made available to English learners in other grades

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国際テレビ会議システムを利用した第二言語としての英語(ESL)能力の向上

ボイド・D

本論文は、幼児から大学一年次にわたる学生の語学学習スキルの向上を目的として、授業での open and distance learning（開放遠隔教育）技術、特にテレビ会議システムの活用について考察したものである。当研究は、より効果のある ESL（第二外国語としての英語）学習環境を作り出すと考えられるテレビ会議システムの活用についての、全四部からなる研究の第一部にあたる。第一部では、教師が授業にテレビ会議システムを取り入れる際の準備段階としての授業計画について記述する。