

Device of communication to deepen learning

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In today's learning environment, there is a need for proactive and deep learning. It needs to be a place where certain skills and knowledge can be acquired, and thinking, judgement, and expression skills can be cultivated. This is necessary to cultivate the learners of today to not only be critical thinkers, but to also be individuals who are able to express their own thoughts. In university classes, it is necessary to devise ways for the students to foster these type of communication skills. This paper is a discussion of how the three authors encourage and promote the development of communication skills in their classroom.

Key Words : Initial response, Communication in learning places

1. Introduction

In university classes, communication between students must be carefully devised. When an instructor is lecturing in front of a class, students sometimes may become confused and be unable to follow the lesson. Furthermore, students may fall into the belief that there must be a problem with their ability to listen and comprehend the lecture or they may believe they have an issue with their own motivation. In addition, these issues are diverse, and it is the authors' belief that there is a need for ingenuity in the communication amongst students and in the information exchange of the instructors' ideas to the students. In order to create an active learning environment in the classroom, it is necessary to promote communication amongst students which is related to the lesson, make sure the students understand each other, and make an effort to create a good emotional situation. This can be a very difficult task to do with liberal arts subjects that may contain many students.

In order to enhance the teaching of new subjects, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been promoting language activities as an important means of learning⁽¹⁾. It is important for the students to start by expressing what they are trying to learn, either through oral or written forms of communication. Although the class is supposed to be centered around the subject being taught, it can also be an effective place to interweave language activities that are meant to enhance the communication amongst students or with the instructor. These types of activities are now being encouraged by MEXT to be introduced to precollege students.

Many people are working on improving the teaching methods at universities. For example, letting students participate in experiments, rather than just hearing the teacher's explanation of these experiments. This can be a very slow process in the classroom, and it may seem like there is not enough time to do something like this, but it can be very beneficial. Doing this increases students' interest and helps students to get involved in their own way. For students to accurately work with the subject material being taught, it is important that students first try to understand and convey the material accurately⁽²⁾.

2. An example of how to deal with the current status of students in general education and multidisciplinary subjects

When university students learn a new subject, they may find themselves confused with the material. This sense of confusion may hinder their willingness to learn the material. Human beings often seek a stable thinking position and tend to

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mentally place themselves where it is comfortable. Learning is far from a comfortable activity since it is about discovering one's self. Therefore, learning can be difficult for students, but it can also be very rewarding. For students to abandon their previous concepts and take part in this new world of learning, it is necessary to show the students this type of thinking from a broader perspective. One of the authors, Takashi Akazawa, oversees philosophy and mathematics courses, and has been striving to encounter many world views and to understand the ideas of others. This is just one example of an active attempt to not only communicate with others, but also to communicate with oneself.

In general education and multi-disciplinary subjects, it is often necessary to communicate with about 100 students. Instructors may prepare worksheets in advance and teach classes according to these predetermined worksheets, which may be an easy but effective method of learning. For example, there may be blank spaces within text, and students may have to fill them in. If students do not understand, they can raise their hand and ask a question, or they can write their question on the shuttle note. A shuttle note is a log of back and forth communication between the student and the instructor. After class students are asked to write in a 3 cm x 15 cm space any questions they may have, requests for the class, and their thoughts on the entire flow of the class on their shuttle note. The faculty member will then reply to each shuttle note's comments by answering questions and replying to the students' thoughts. Next, all the student questions, opinions, and rebuttals against the teacher's thoughts stated in the class are put together in a paper called the 'previous shuttle note' and placed at the entrance of the classroom at the next class for the students to view. Some students will arrive very early, and as soon as they enter the classroom, they will look at the previous shuttle note and see the opinions and ideas of other students regarding the previous class. By reading the thoughts of the instructor and the thoughts of other students, students can deepen their own thoughts on the issues of the class. It can be a very effective way to get students to deepen their thoughts about course content while also learning about themselves. In addition, students are able to discover what they want to say through the opinions of others and this often triggers the creation of new thoughts.

Studying liberal arts subjects at universities differs from specialized subjects because students must take some courses whether they are interested in the topic or not. However, it is important to motivate learning in the subject's that students are mandated to take. For each subject, learning guidelines are stated, but to convey them more deeply and clearly, the lessons are instructed from the viewpoint of communication.

Akazawa has overseen the life philosophy course for the electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, architecture, and nuclear engineering students for the last five years. He has tried to communicate with the students with a focus on the contact and the motivation for learning. The following are examples of specific issues raised.

For students who have the willingness to learn or are already motivated, Plato and Aristotle's discussion about the need for daily habits and certain ways of thinking for realizing and achieving goals is important to note. To create your own motivation, it must be created from the outside. It is important for students to create a habit of studying, even if the period of studying is just a short amount of time. If students make it a habit to study, they will study. This is usually important for many people.

The students offer many various ideas about this. These ideas are presented to students through the previous shuttle note, without each other knowing who else wrote them. Creating a habit of exchanging one's own feelings has a considerable impact on the students themselves. Some even say that this idea should be heard in junior high school and high school. This is a topic that can deepen communication in the classroom.

As a way of life, individuals work to make themselves smile. In the life philosophy course, the case of Hankechi by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, is used. It shows that the control of facial expressions and emotions is very important for communication. Many students are not convinced of this exchange, but after the 15th lecture, one semester, they seem to understand the importance for themselves.

Today we are often influenced by Freud's view of human beings. We point out the importance of deep psychology, saying that what we hide unconsciously is crucial to formation of an individual. Learning, daily life, and human relationships are reflections of one's own mind, and it is important to have a strong sense of one's own feelings. However, it is only possible to discover the self that you do not know through interactions with others. We learn about ourselves through our friends and from other students. This can be very sympathetic for students.

Furthermore, we cannot deal directly with our feelings. It is more realistic to try to control behavior via habits first. It is very important to fully understand the need to study, and to drive intellectual curiosity by intrinsic motivation and learning. Therefore, it can be beneficial, even if for a short time, to have students study in a traditional manner. These study habits can be formed even without knowledge of the subject. This method of learning can help motivate students.

Descartes, Kant and Rousseau also explain their philosophical work. Descartes was involved in the development of natural sciences and mathematics in Europe, where natural sciences developed and modern science was created. He tried to explain why mechanics has been completed in England, in a language that both current students and modern people can understand. He tried to explain and understand in what kind of situation the mechanics were completed. This is much more interesting and more human-like than learning mechanics, and students seem to feel more familiar with science and technology. This led to the development of atomic physics and quantum mechanics. On the other hand, it also provides a rough understanding of the changes in the view of the universe that humanity has, and the changes in the view of the universe due to the development of science and technology as evidence. Despite great resistance here, the explanations from the human dramas who have made up the study have given me the confidence to be able to communicate with familiarity with the study.

By thinking about the universe in atomism, events on the ground can be expressed by simple formulas, and this method of thoroughly pursuing has been successful. This method of modern science can be discussed in the context of communication. These things are described in high school physics and geology textbooks and coupled with some experience in magazines and various scenes, is likely to have the effect of linking students to their specialized learning. The first thing instructors may throw at the students is somewhat sensational and this causes students to be in awe, creating a space for effective communication and an exchange of ideas.

Today, some students may be aware of the importance of morality. And although they may sympathize with Kant's moral philosophy, students seem to think a bit further away from the idea that human good will is universally justified. Shinran, a Japanese Buddhist monk from the 13th century, taught of the human contradiction between goodwill and sin-malignancy and the issue of alienation, which seems to be the challenge of humanity formation.

The Bushido of Inazo Nitobe is also taken up as a traditional Japanese way of thinking. In Japan, the spirit of Bushido has been passed down to the hearts of people. Nitobe claims that the spirit of Bushido lies in Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism. Nitobe's righteousness, thanks, and *Makoto* (one of the eight virtues of Bushido, meaning honesty) resonate with many students. These words have been heard from parents, club advisors, and the like, and are generally present in everyday life and in good agreement with the concepts they have heard.

At the end of the 15-week course, the spirit of construction is mentioned. Looking back on the history of Japan, we have digested everything that came from other countries, such as religion, philosophy, art, science, and built up ourselves as a unique people. For example, particle physics started with Hideki Yukawa and his discoveries led to the development of Quantum mechanics, which was born in Western Europe and ended up creating a new domain of physics⁽³⁾. Now Japan is blossoming in the field of physics with eight Japanese Nobel Laureates in Physics since 2002⁽⁴⁾.

Today, Japan has become an economic power. However, some may have concern about material universalism and the trend of optimism in the world. It is important to first start communication with your immediate family, friends, and local people, and then expand the circle of communication to not only Japanese people outside your immediate circle, but also communicate with people from overseas. We need to be modest as Japanese. The history of the university and the spirit of construction can be exchanged as important items for students.

According to the president of Fukui University of Technology, President Kakeshita, there is a global need for human resources who have an international sense and the ability to communicate with diverse people, who can respond to various situations, and be creative. To foster such individuals, President Kakeshita strongly believes individuals must have a strong will to fully understand one's specialty from the basics, and there must be an attitude to persistently study. Everything, if you have the mind and will to pursue it, will lead to things like creativity. The university wants to develop individuals who have this persistent heart⁽⁵⁾.

3. Communication problems Japanese students face from the perspective of an instructor from the United States

There can often be trouble when communicating in one's native language, but when students are required to communicate in a second language, such as English, a unique set of challenges arise. First and foremost is the obvious point that learners of a second language may have not yet acquired ability to use the language. The challenge for many then becomes how to communicate without words. For individuals who have had experiences such as traveling abroad, hosting exchange students, or living in a society where multiple languages are present, nonverbal communication becomes the main method of communication. Such expressions of nonverbal communication may include gestures, facial expressions, posture, eye contact, etc. In mixed culture societies, such as America or England, nonverbal communication is sometimes required to communicate when a common language isn't present. However, in very homogeneous populations such as Japan, many individuals have never had to rely on nonverbal communication because there is always a common language. Therefore, it may be necessary to openly discuss with students what to do when they do not know how or what to communicate. When students are unsure of how to communicate their thoughts, answer a question, or keep a conversation going, silence is often the only form of nonverbal communication many students know how to do. Silence in and of itself is a form of nonverbal communication, often expressing or showing discontent, confusion, or fear. Dedicating time to teaching forms of nonverbal communication and practicing them in the classroom can not only be pragmatic, it can be a great ice breaker for any group of students. It teaches the students that communication can happen even when one is not fully confident in their thoughts. It teaches students to learn from each other, to guess at what the other person is trying to communicate and helps students to learn more about the way their peers think but the way they choose to communicate nonverbally.

In the foreign language classroom, there are many possible triggers for anxiety. These include fear of being corrected, fear of being compared to their peers, fear of displeasing the teacher, and fear of falling behind in class⁽⁶⁾. Students often try to mitigate these fears when possible, and it often comes at a sacrifice to improving their communication ability. For example, students often find it more comfortable to interact with only their close friends. Many students may lack the confidence to interact with unfamiliar individuals due to the fear that they may be judged or compared to others. In the foreign language classroom it is important for instructors to be aware that many students struggle with this and instead of forcing interaction from the first class, it may be better to find ways to slowly and comfortably build up interaction amongst all students. Interacting with many students is an opportunity for students to expand the number of ideas and ways of thinking they are exposed to, but this should be done slowly and with great caution as many students may be nervous and afraid to share their real opinions at first.

The university English classroom may be the first time for many students that the method of learning English is not grammar-translation. The grammar-translation methodology is a methodology of language learning that focuses on translating sentences and understanding each word and grammar point of a specific text⁽⁷⁾. There traditionally is not be a lot of verbal communication with this methodology, often only one correct answer, and it is a very instructor centered methodology. Grammar-translation method is the preferred method of language learning in Japanese secondary schools with one of the reasons being the pressure of high school and university entrance exams⁽⁸⁾. The English classroom in junior and senior high schools is focused on preparing the student to translate sentences on tests, read abstract texts, and memorize obscure words. The university English classroom may be the first time that students experience a different type of teaching methodology, and this may be shocking for many students.

Up until the university English classroom students knew their answers would receive either a correct mark or incorrect mark. When given the opportunity to learn via a more communicative language learning methodology, Japanese students will often focus on every word they produce. There is an ideology that has been engrained in their heads that they must focus on grammatical accuracy and correct word choice. However, the communicative language classroom often asks students learn language in a natural way and maintain a constant flow of communication. The communicative classroom may put more emphasis on getting one's point across and maintain a constant exchange of communication rather than grammatical accuracy. This may cause a steep learning curve for students who have only experienced the grammar-translation methodology. Students must learn to be acceptable with making mistakes, they must be willingly to make mistakes for the communicative classroom to be successful.

Therefore, the foreign language classroom becomes a place for students to not only to improve their English ability, but also their critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration skills. The classroom should not just be place for students to listen to their instructor and restate what the instructor said. It is important for instructors to ask for students' individual opinions, arguments, and thoughts rather than just asking them to answer a question with a correct answer. Having students discuss, debate, and present their ideas in the foreign language can be a way to improve communication amongst each other and themselves.

4. Device to activate communication

What makes English learning difficult is that students are used to having only one correct answer. It is necessary to dispel the idea that there is only one correct way to communicate what you want to say. It is also necessary to eliminate the feeling of embarrassment that comes when making a mistake. Therefore, it is necessary for the instructor to create an environment where it is difficult for students to feel embarrassed. To do this, group work is used to make students comfortable around a smaller number of peers. Students can work on a presentation of a topic of interest and eventually present as a group. The preparation for the presentation can be done in Japanese; however, the contents and presentations are done in English. The preparation period encourages communication and an exchange of ideas, where students need to be creative and work together to produce a product worth presenting.

One activity that Professor Pirotto does in his English classroom, is a month-long project where the students chose a topic such as creating a university course or solving a problem in their city. Students are then guided through a process that allows them to be creative with the potential outcome of their topic. Students are required to discuss their topic with fellow students, collect data to support their argument, and present their solution in small groups or in front of the class. This form of learning takes students outside the classroom, allows for deepened learning, and improved communication. Professor Pirotto strives to move away from the standard grammar-translation method of language learning that does very little, if anything, to improve students' communication skills.

5. How to deepen learning in communication theory

It is only recently that communication has appeared as a university lecture. One method used by Professor Kumagai to improve communication is to have the students think about a problem and provide their opinion on that problem. For example, showing a video, then having students think about the video, and finally providing their opinions about the video.

Why did the university course titled *Communication Theory* begin to appear in the first place? It began to appear because modern society is becoming more complex in the context of mechanization, globalization, and nuclear families, which has only made it more difficult for people to communicate.

Keidanren conducts a survey every year to determine what companies look for when recruiting new employees. The Keidanren survey is presented to students in the first lesson. The number one need every time is communication skills. Moreover, as of 2018, it has been number one for 16 consecutive years ⁽⁹⁾. This is probably because hiring companies are having difficulty communicating with newly hired young people. However, at the same time, there may be a reality that young people find it difficult to communicate with adults as they enter society.

When then do students find it difficult to communicate? Every year in class a questionnaire is carried out to ask this exact question. Every time the survey is given, the first and second place response is when students talk to a superior or a senior and when meeting someone for the first time. Moreover, these two answers were much more prevalent than the third-place response. In the context of Keidanren's findings, becoming a new employee is exactly the same as these first two responses.

Japanese society and communication between Japanese people have been built on close relationships, as Takeo Doi (1971) states ⁽¹⁰⁾. However, as the regional and indigenous climate collapses and as globalization progresses, young people entering the global society may feel confused. In this class, students are asked to confirm and understand the meaning of certain honorifics and greetings, that would be used in situations where communication is difficult. The Japanese-speaking

population is the ninth largest in the world, and in this class, students are asked to think about living in modern times while maintaining their Japanese identity. These types of activities are also meaningful for the growing number of international students who not only have the opportunity to learn about communication in a globalized society, but they are also able to learn about content specific to the domestic Japanese identity, a topic they might not be introduced to otherwise.

Another problem with communication in modern society is the increasing number of people with developmental disabilities, including autism. We are also investigating whether or not we are aware of this disorder every year, but the number of people who we are aware of is gradually increasing. In addition, autistic people often have difficulty with eye contact, but when students are asked to write their thoughts on how to use eye contact, many of them described more than expected.

When students were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 whether they viewed themselves as normal or different from others, the average was leaning towards being different. However, many Japanese students were worried about differing from the norm, whereas international students viewed being different than the norm as something good. In this class, these results were returned to the students, and the students were advised on how to interpret them. Also, after the class, some students came to ask questions or consult about problems related to the lecture.

As described above, in this class, students are informed of modern communication issues, describe and state their own opinions related to them, and rethink the issues raised as their own. This is the method in which this class is taught. All of this is done for the students to become global human resources who are capable of learning through interaction with others, are able to express their own opinions, and communicate in an ever-globalizing society.

6. Conclusion

In university, it is natural for students to learn how to communicate properly while learning, but it is a good chance that there are a few students and teachers who feel frustrated in learning. The authors feel that it is necessary to work not only on devising the content of academic subjects, but also on teaching from the viewpoint of fostering the communication that is required. This may seem obvious, but from the teacher's perspective, this is something that is often a struggle. From the viewpoint of communication, the three authors shared knowledge with the hope of improving education at the university.

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