

Designing an English curriculum with Peace Boat

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This paper proposes global activity ideas for the Integrated Study Period in public elementary schools and English Lesson hours in junior high schools in Japan. The activity suggestions are created by a presenter from Teachers College, Columbia University and a staff of Peace Boat, a Japan-based international non-governmental and non-profit organization. Based on information about international organizations that have previously sent staff members to Japanese schools, we have developed activities around Peace Boat programs. We offer these ideas to educators in public schools and are excited to develop collaborative projects that will inspire and educate youth in Japan about the world that we live in.

この論文は小学校の総合学習の時間及び中学校英語用に考案されたグローバルなアクティビティを提案するものである。提案者は、コロンビア大学大学院ティーチャーズ・カレッジの大学院生とピースボートのスタッフである。本稿では、現在既に公立学校にスタッフを派遣し国際理解プロジェクトに取り組んでいる他の国際機関に習い、ピースボートのプログラムをベースにしたいくつかのアイデアを紹介する。我々は今後これらのアイデアを教育関係者に提供しつつ、学校側と協力しながら日本の若者が世界への知識を深められるようなプロジェクトを展開していきたいと考えている。

Joshua Porter is an International Coordinator for the Peace Boat organization. His main responsibilities include recruitment and training of teaching teams, development of home-stays and events in ports of call and visiting various educational institutions throughout Japan to introduce the Peace Boat organization. Prior to this position, Joshua had worked with various non-profit organizations including the education department of Manhattan-based foundation, The Asia Society, where he became acquainted with curriculum and educational material development for young learners throughout the United States. Throughout the last four years with Peace Boat, Joshua has worked to develop the onboard

communication and intercultural exchange programming. In this role he has developed contacts with administrators in schools, orphanages and youth groups around the world.

Miori Shimada is a M.A. TESOL student at Teachers College, Columbia Univ. in Tokyo, and an English teacher of young learners and adults for a language school in Tokyo. As a passenger on Peace Boat's very first global voyage, she served as a volunteer interpreter on board for two weeks.

While taking a course on global issues at Teachers College three years ago, Miori conducted research on the GET program of Peace Boat. At that time, the Japanese government had started promoting global education for *Sogo Gakushu* Time—the period for Integrated Study. Miori then began to seek a way to offer the Peace Boat concept as a tool for educators of young learners.

Joshua and Miori agreed that they would like to propose some teaching ideas based on Peace Boat material for elementary school English during *Sogo Gakushu* Time.

The purpose of this paper is to propose the construction of these English activities for young learners based on Peace Boat activities. An additional aim is to ask readers for their opinions and further suggestions about how we can achieve this goal. This paper has eight major sections: Introduction, *Sogo Gakushu*, Peace Boat, Proposal, Results, Discussion, Reference and Appendix.

Sogo Gakushu

Definition

Sogo Gakushu no jikan means integrated learning time which has officially started in Japanese elementary/junior

high schools since the year 2002. The purpose of this time, according to the translation of ministry documents by Ms. Alice Gordenker, a contributor for Japan Times is to

nurture in children the ability and disposition for better problem-solving by encouraging them to determine problems on their own, and study, think and make judgments independently. In this way, schools can foster the skills needed to learn and think independently, so children can think for themselves about how to live their lives.

Sogo Gakushu in Saitama

Miori Shimada lives in Saitama prefecture. According to Mr. K who worked for the Saitama board of education, *Sogo Gakushu* time has generally been provided a few hours every week, and it has been used for studies such as: welfare, the environment and international understanding. In some schools such as Kasukabe elementary school, the time has been divided into short periods, between 10 to 20 minutes everyday and has been used for English language learning. This schedule has been carried out for more than 10 years since the city's elementary school was chosen for the ministry's pilot program. In the city of Gyoda which was designated as a special educational zone, the schools have used qualified volunteers to teach English to their students proactively. Although the budgets schools get differ, some cities hire AET/ALTs (Assistant English/Language Teachers) independently and have English classes once every week.

Within the time frame for *kokusai rikai* (global education), English is one part of other global studies such as countries

and cultures. According to Mr. O, another person working for the Saitama board of education, one of the other popular activities to learn is cooking. He also mentions some schools have failed to apply global education for their Sogo Gakushu time because of the lack of qualified personnel, and because the demand did not meet that level. In the end, they switched the contents into areas such as welfare. Another problem is that there is no organization these schools can access when they need the staff to conduct global education for their students. Unfortunately that is the reality in Saitama prefecture, Mr. O concluded.

Next, Miori examined the situation in her city. Ms. T who arranges curriculum for Sogo Gakushu time in her son's elementary school points out that she feels the present English lessons during Sogo Gakushu time have not been working well. It is mainly because some of the ALTs do not have the skills to teach young learners. One example is that one of the ALTs came to her school and focused only on English pronunciation. As a result, the entire time was just spent for correcting the students' errors. Ms. T wants to arrange a more content-based curriculum, but she doesn't know how and where to ask for such a curriculum. She also suggests that there would be a possibility to conduct global issue lessons in social studies for the 6th graders since most elementary schools have provided the entire 3rd term for "Global Understanding" focusing on world and peace. It has been happening this way in the last two or three years. Until then the 5th graders of her school had used their 33 hours for the studies of global understanding in the home economics class. In this class the students had discovered that they ate a lot of Chinese food in their everyday lives and that they

also had Chinese residents around their area. Based of these facts, the students had decided to study about China. Ms. T also presents some main topics students would perhaps enjoy to study about the world: one is "food", next is "games" and the last one is "natural disaster". When she heard about our idea of developing curriculum with NGO, she sounded very excited. She even suggested the idea that an NGO design the entire Sogo Gakushu curriculum instead of their teachers doing it and hiring ALTs.

Challenges

Through our study, we learned that there are some difficulties when schools want to work with NGOs for such curriculum development. According to the former representative of an NGO called Shapla Neer whose aim is poverty relief in Bangladesh and Nepal, there are four major problems:

- NGOs have suffered to manage costs and as a result transportation expenses for visiting staff are sometimes lacking.
- The schools sometimes ask the NGO to explain about NGOs in general. And as a result, the class turns out to be only a general introduction of the organization.
- Schools sometimes seem to have the pressure of conducting voluntary activities right away, but the author thinks it's unnecessary.
- The author believes that teachers who actually participate in joint projects with NGOs can conduct better classes.

Sogo Gakushu in Nagoya

We found that cities such as Nagoya were active in the promotion of global education in schools around its districts. The city has published the handbook how to teach global issues in Sogo Gakushu time and offered a list of organizations that could teach global issues as well. Thanks to this system, the organizations such as UNCRD (United Nation Centre for Regional Development) has sent the staff to talk about UN and their role or to conduct the activities relevant to global education in elementary, middle and senior high schools in the area. They also have had the students come and study about their organization. (Please refer to Appendix A)

Since UNCRD started this program, they have received positive feedback. Some students wrote, “I want to know more about the world.” or “It was the very first time for me to know what was actually happening in the third world” (from the notes of telephone interview). Another student who attended their program became interested in working for in this area and actively participated in the NGO activities after graduating from university. The organization was pleased with these results and hopes to continue this program in the future.

Other NGOs

Pinat

There is another organization that has done an outstanding job. This NGO is called Musashino Network for Pinatubo Rehabilitation (in short, Pinat) located in Musashino city in Tokyo.

Local schools have invited this NGO in a manner similar to the example of the UNCRD. Pinat has also created some unique education materials referred to as the “Philippine Box” which contains educational materials about the Philippines and lent it to schools directly. The program began when they received concerns from Filipino mothers that their children were bullied in classrooms. At the same time, the Japanese government had just begun to introduce Sogo Gakushu time and promote global education in public schools. In the year 2002, they also published the book *Filipin to deaou* by a Japanese textbook publisher. The organization has since received contacts from various schools and groups.

Beside Philippine Box, Pinat also forms the music group called Tongaton-tai whose group members play Filipino traditional musical instruments. They have been sent not only to schools for Sogo Gakushu and Music periods but also to concerts or events of local festivals. The group also creates and sells those musical instruments.

One more major program Pinat has organized is the teacher training and also sending the personnel to elementary and junior high schools. In the teacher training, the staff instructs the public school teachers how to use the materials of Philippine Box to teach about the Philippines. During training, they often hear that teachers’ image of the Philippines had changed drastically: Some of the participants were amazed at the bright side of Philippines. Pinat usually encourages schools to work with the Filipino mothers instead of their staff. In this way, students would respect the country more, and it would reduce the bullying of Filipino children. Their suggestion has worked effectively, and

Filipino mothers who helped to conduct the lessons gained confidence and thanked the organization.

SOSIA

SOSIA is an NGO that encourages exchanges with children in Burma. One teacher became interested in this organization and designing the curriculum for the Sogo Gakushu time in the 3rd term of her 4th graders. In January, her students studied about Burma through quizzes, video clips and photos. Afterwards they brainstormed questions to ask the children in Burma and imagined and discussed about their everyday routine in groups. At the end of the class, the students wrote letters with pictures. Later the staff of SOSIA visited Burma with those students' questions and letters. In March, the staff returned with the answers to students' questions, video clips of Burma and some materials of that country. The students studied these, discussed about the country and spoke their opinions. The teacher felt this kind of exchange should be carried out in the long term.

Peace Boat

In the following section we will introduce the Peace Boat organization with specific emphasis on the development of the language learning programming. We will also show projects that may be of special interest to young learners in Japan and how Peace Boat may be utilized to bring global issues to elementary and middle school students.

Introduction

Peace Boat is a Japan-based international non-governmental and non-profit organization that works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment.

Peace Boat seeks to create awareness and action based on effecting positive social and political change in the world. We pursue this through the organization of global educational programs, responsible travel, cooperative projects and advocacy activities. These activities are carried out on a partnership basis with other civil society organizations and communities in Japan, Northeast Asia, and around the world.

Peace Boat carries out its main activities through a chartered passenger ship that travels the world on peace voyages. The ship creates a neutral, mobile space and enables people to engage across borders in dialogue and mutual cooperation at sea, and in the ports that we visit. Activities based on Japan and Northeast Asia are carried out from our eight Peace Centers in Japan.

Peace Boat believes that travel in itself can be a tool for positive social and political change, and seeks to create and implement best practices in responsible travel and what we call travel for peace and sustainability. Socio-political considerations rather than commercial interests largely determine our choice of destinations. Our partnerships with local organizations and travel agencies reflect our effort to utilize tourism in a progressive and educational form so as to contribute to global sustainability and peace.

Peace Boat's first voyage was organized in 1983 by a group of Japanese university students as a creative response to government

ensorship regarding Japan's past military aggression in the Asia-Pacific. They chartered a ship to visit neighboring countries with the aim of learning first-hand about the war from those who experienced it and initiating people-to-people exchange.

Three Global Voyages and one short Asian regional voyage are usually organized each year. The three-month Global Voyages are each joined by around 800 participants and visit between 15-20 countries. The ship, as a neutral space beyond borders, becomes a floating peace village, encouraging a sense of community and enabling direct dialogue between those onboard and in the ports that we visit. Our programs, both onboard and in port, explore the main aspects of Peace Boat activity – peace, human rights, sustainability and respect for the environment – and aim to develop travel as a tool for peace and sustainability.

Onboard each voyage, with the participation of around 50 guest educators from across the globe, Peace Boat organizes a range of educational activities, including peace education workshops and lectures, language classes and cultural programs. The themes of these activities link Peace Boat's fields of work with contemporary issues in the countries we visit. Additionally, all participants onboard are encouraged to contribute to programs, resulting in a daily schedule of more than 100 events and activities, from expert lectures on global issues to salsa dance classes, from Arabic conversation lessons to music festivals, from documentary movie screenings to soccer games on deck. Through utilizing the spaces onboard the ship, and harnessing the talents of all guests, participants and staff onboard, Peace Boat creates a special environment in which people can live, learn and undertake positive action together.

Peace Boat visits an average of 15 ports on each global voyage. During our visits, typically one to three days in length, we develop various ways through which our overall objective of promoting peace and sustainability can find a concrete expression, locally and globally. The port is the place for us to build alliances and promote solidarity with different actors and at different levels of each society. Activities are jointly organized and aim to answer to the needs of our partners in each port at the same time as they become powerful mobilizing tools for the whole range of Peace Boat participants.

GET (Global English/Espanol Training)

Peace Boat, through its GET Program, organizes onboard English and Spanish language programs that allow participants to communicate more effectively with the people they meet in port. These programs focus on oral communication and combine onboard classroom study and a range of language-based activities, with special exchange programs and home-stays in selected ports of call. Peace Boat views the English and Spanish languages as global property that can be used as tools for international and intercultural exchange. We believe in introducing students to the many varieties of both languages found throughout the world, from the English spoken in Singapore or New Zealand to the Spanish spoken in El Salvador or Argentina.

GET Communication Programming Mission

The GET Program is part of the Peace Boat movement. It was established in the belief that the evolution of people's

communication beyond borders will help to create peace. The GET Program will therefore train people to utilize global communication tools for peace.

At this moment in world history, through globalization, internet and satellite broadcasts, English is developing a new role as the “global language.” This dominance of English must not be allowed to benefit only native speakers of the language, or to continue the imperialism and oppression that the language has so often symbolized.

Rather, the GET Program believes that the new “global English” is a tool that belongs to all the world’s people equally. It should be used as a communication tool to empower people across the world to work together to develop an equal and sustainable society, based on peace, justice and respect.

To these ends, we have the following main fields of work:

- To establish and share global English as a “global people’s language.” In particular, we will develop a basic, standard version of this language.
- To establish and develop a training program to help students learn global English as a tool for confidence-building and mutual understanding beyond borders.
- To establish and develop a training program for teachers, focusing on methods to teach global English as a tool for confidence-building and mutual understanding beyond borders.

Onboard GET Structure

- There are two coordinators for the GET program on each voyage. There are between 10-16 teachers

depending on the number of student applications. Approximately 150-200 of the 800 or so participants who join each Peace Boat voyage take part in the GET program.

- There are between roughly 20 intensive classes which is the main aspect of our language program onboard. Each class has between 4 and 8 students. Teachers develop their own curriculum with the support of a GET teaching framework and teach about 70 lessons to their students throughout the voyage.
- Besides the main program, GET also organizes English and *Espanol* Open Classes which can be taken by anyone onboard. Each class is 35 minutes long, and is team-taught by a teacher and a CC (Communication Coordinator or Interpreter). The number of people who attend can reach as many as 200 or more, especially at the beginning of the voyage.
- There are four or five English GET Challenge Programs on each voyage. These are special programs in port that allow the GET students to practice their English in real situations with members of the local community.
- There is a rich series of events, activities and creative projects onboard every program including: Speech competition, Global culture festival, ‘English only’ day, English Karaoke, Survival English workshop, Slang workshop, Aussie English workshop, Poetry workshop, Mnemonics workshop, Public Speaking, Video documentary/ drama, Performance, GET Yearbook, GET Language CD, Journal Project etc.

Community service and language learning together

In addition to the onboard programming GET has recently begun offering pre and post voyage courses, each roughly 10 weeks in duration. By 2007, we anticipate adding a fourth study-abroad component, whereby students will live with a local family and participate in volunteer activities that support the community. Students are thus able to participate in a course of study which spans nearly a year in total.

Although it was not initially a primary characteristic offered within our communication training programming, we have found that GET students and teachers often become very engaged in fundraising events and projects throughout this time frame as a matter of course. The opportunity to learn about a culture directly from members of the local community, while engaging in support activities, has proven significantly valuable to the pursuit of language and communication skill development.

We believe that these original projects offer the opportunity to join the worlds of communication training and community service in a way that benefits all of the project participants and are so beginning to recognize the full importance of this element of our programming. We look forward to expanding this area in the future.

We have listed below some of the exciting projects that have been generated by GET students and teachers in the past as a result of living and learning together on Peace Boat, in Tokyo and in ports of call world-wide. Please see Appendix B to view a more detailed list.

Intercultural Exchange, Education and Fundraising Projects Developed by GET and Peace Boat

- Children's Book Exchange/Fundraising Project (Vancouver, Sri Lanka, Kenya)
- Japanese Folktales (Samoa)
- Story boards (Cochin, India)
- Mural Project (Rabul, Papa New Guinea)
- Post card Project and school building fundraising project (Da Nang, Vietnam)
- School Exchange and Garbage clean up (Easter Island, Chile)
- Exchange and internet fundraising project (Jamaica)
- Planting Mango Trees (Philippines)

Proposal

In this section, we would like to present some collaborative project ideas for educators in Japan and the Peace Boat organization. We have designed these ideas, considering research from other international organizations that have visited schools in Japan, and the past activities of Peace Boat and GET Universal.

- Staff members could visit classrooms to introduce Peace Boat and GET. They could also explain the process of each of the fundraising activities in the previous section and use the content to form quizzes or games.

- Teachers and students could visit the office of Peace Boat and see what they actually do for their work.
- Students and teachers could design some fundraising activities with the help of Peace Boat. Or they could actually participate in some of the activities Peace Boat organizes throughout Japan.
- Peace Boat staff could visit classrooms pre-voyage to provide information on a website to exchange pictures and ideas as their voyage progresses for the students to follow along. Students are encouraged to use English to exchange ideas with the children in other countries with the support from their teachers and ALTs.
- Students from Peace Boat programs could visit schools post voyage to explain about their experiences and offer advice to children about how English can be used for fun and enjoyable activities.
- Peace Boat staff and teachers could work collaboratively to establish direct exchange opportunities between students in other countries and students in Japan by email, letters, video, artwork, etc.

For educators that are interested in working together on cultural exchange or global education activities as listed above, the first step is to review the upcoming voyage listed below to determine which time-frame and voyage themes may be appropriate for your students.

- Peace Boat's 54th Global Peace Voyage will sail from Yokohama on July 21, 2006 and return on October 29, 2006.

- Peace Boat's 55th Global Peace Voyage will sail from Yokohama on November 2, 2006 and return on February 11, 2007.

Please see Appendix 3 to view the upcoming voyage schedule, countries visited and themes dealt with in greater detail.

Results and Discussion

We have spoken with some individuals representing various school systems and their response was that we should:

- Contact the individual boards of education of each city in order to get permission to visit schools.
- Provide example lesson plans of the type of activity that could be used in an elementary school language environment.
- Provide a complete curriculum for students studying at a specific age, time frame and content area to educators.
- Look more towards middle and high school students with higher language level ability that can receive and understand a presentation on the NGO itself.

Conclusion

Peace Boats GET Program has evolved much in recent years. We have found that providing an environment of creative autonomy for our teachers and an atmosphere that offers students the chance to participate in program decision making, has resulted in a rich array of projects related to

language development and intercultural understanding. We look forward to bringing these ideas and activities to the language learning environment within Japan, especially to students at younger ages who are in the early stages of developing their impression of language education and intercultural communication activities.

We would like to offer educators an open invitation to review our past projects and suggest ways to work collaboratively on intercultural exchange, global awareness and communication training projects in the future.

We hope to have contact with more educators and continue to share ideas. Our programs for the 52nd voyage are already underway and we look forward to the opportunity to share these experiences with students in Japan. In order to accomplish this we will:

- Publish the content of this presentation with an open invitation to project participation so interested educators can contact us.
- Begin research and development on how young students can get involved with our projects through language related activities.

Miori Shimada has been teaching English to young learners and adults at various schools for ten years. She has also taught English in a few pre-schools and a public elementary school in Saitama area. Her research interests are picture books and global education for young learners. She is currently working for Keisen University.

Joshua Porter is an International Coordinator for the Peace Boat organization. His main responsibilities include

recruitment and training of teaching teams, development of home-stays and events in ports of call and visiting various educational institutions throughout Japan to introduce the Peace Boat organization. He is based in Takadanobaba, Tokyo.

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Appendix 1

UNCRD (United Nations Centre for Regional Development)

In-house programs for elementary/middle schools during 1999-2005

Elementary schools

- The role of UN and the activities of UNCRD
- The work of UN related to our daily lives
- The water system in Laos
- What is international cooperation?
- The role of UN and UNCRD

Junior high schools

- The role of UN and the activities of UNCRD
- Job experience at UNCRD office
- Poverty in 3rd world and the activities of UNCRD
- Our environment and UN
- Implementation and research of a regional plan and the people being involved
- UN and refugees

- How to become UN personnel: by supporting a graduate report
- The children in Burma, environmental problems and the role of UN

Field programs in elementary/middle schools during 1999-2005

Elementary schools

- The role of UN and the activities of UNCRD through the experience of carrying water
- Talks of Sierra Leone and UN while playing the traditional musical instruments
- Talks of UN and UNCRD, cooking Sri Lankan curry
- Let's make Sri Lankan curry with Sri Lankan staff
- Let's make a traditional costume with a researcher from Bangladesh: Understanding of global cultures and UN
- Chinese culture and UN with the introduction of Japanese traditions by students
- Let's make vegetarian food with Indian staff
- Talks of environmental issues and UN by Burmese staff
- Environmental issues and the work of UNCRD in Laos: For the better world

Junior high schools

- The role of UN and the activities of UNCRD
- How to become UN personnel
- Human security and environment
- Sierra Leon, the activities of UNCRD and the situation of UN
- Experiencing Sierra Leonean musical instruments
- The role of UN/UNCRD and volunteer activities
- Talks of Sierra Leone and UN while playing the traditional musical instruments
- What kind of country is Burma?
- Global understanding and the role of UN

Appendix 2

Intercultural exchange, education and fundraising projects developed by GET and Peace Boat

Children's book exchange/fundraising project (Vancouver, Sri Lanka, Kenya)

A high-school class in Vancouver donated children's books to Peace Boat, the books were sold on board to passengers, who wrote English messages in them. The collected money and books were delivered to children in Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Japanese folktales (Samoa)

GET students onboard the translated traditional folktales

from Japan to English in GET English classes. They painted large picture boards to go with the English translation. Students presented these stories in Samoa to community youth and offered the translated books to the children as a memory of the program.

Story boards (Cochin, India)

GET students made story boards about true tales of what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during WWII in English. These stories were presented at a conference in India preparing for the World Social Forum and also to local schools and other organizations to teach others about the atrocities of Nuclear weapons.

Mural Project (Rabul, Papa New Guinea)

Murals depicting the reality of AIDS and HIV were painted on a wall in Papa New Guinea together with local youth to bring color to the community buildings and help bring awareness to the threat of HIV in the area.

Post card Project and school building fundraising project (Da Nang, Vietnam)

Onboard members of the GET program held a peace themed post-card making contest. The winning cards were printed and sold onboard to raise money to build a school in Da Nang, Vietnam.

School exchange and garbage clean up (Easter Island, Chile)

A cultural exchange and beach clean-up was conducted with children at an elementary school in Easter Island.

Exchange and internet fundraising project (Jamaica)

GET students and teachers conducted onboard fundraising

projects and participated in a cultural exchange program with children from a youth organization in Jamaica. These activities resulted in the purchase of a digital camera and an internet connection for which is to be used to help produce a webpage for the organization.

Planting mango trees (Philippines)

Issues of sustainability and fair trade were introduced in onboard English classes. Fundraising projects were conducted to buy and plant Mango trees in the Philippines with local youth.

Appendix 3

Peace Boat's 54th Global Voyage for Peace

Departing from Yokohama, Japan on July 21st, 2006 and returning on October 30th, 2006, This voyage will take a northern hemisphere course around the earth, passing through the Suez and Panama Canals, and calling on a diversity of ports including Viet Nam, India, Morocco, Colombia and the US. Peace Boat's 54th Voyage program will focus on and work closely with people building peace in a variety of ways, including the process of healing and rebuilding in post-conflict societies, identifying and preventing future conflict, and addressing structural violence affecting communities such as poverty and degradation of the environment.

See: <http://www.peaceboat.org/english/voyg/54/itinerary.html>

Peace Boat's 55th Global Voyage for Peace

Departing from Yokohama, Japan on November 2nd, 2006

and returning on February 11th, 2007, will take a northern hemisphere course around the earth, passing through the Suez and Panama Canals, and calling on a diversity of ports including the Seychelles, Libya, Brazil, Venezuela and Hawaii. Peace Boat's 55th Voyage program features an itinerary with a balance of ports of call of the Global South and the Global North. Including visits to places such as Jordan, Malta and Libya, the voyage will bring participants to seldom visited areas of the world. A strong focus is placed on Latin American ports of call, including countries such as Brazil and Venezuela where recent political shifts and changes are receiving much international attention.

See: <http://www.peaceboat.org/english/voyg/55/itinerary.html>