

Global Issues SIG Colloquium: Global education and EFL: Mirror or window?

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The 2009 GILE SIG Colloquium was led by Kip Cates, moderator and GILE SIG coordinator. In the Colloquium, on the basis of theory and practice in global education and relevant research, six panelists attempted to answer the following crucial questions: What is the role of global education in language teaching, and should EFL provide a mirror to help students look at themselves in new ways, or should it be a window to the world aimed at promoting global awareness? A summary of the responses of five of the panelists is included in this paper.



2009年グローバル問題研究部会コロキアムが、当研究部会のコーディネーターであり、今回のコロキアム議長でもあるキップ・ケーツ氏の司会により行われた。6名のパネリストがグローバル教育の理論や実践、ならびに関連研究を基に「言語教育におけるグローバル教育の役割とは?」「EFLは、学生の自己を新しい視点で見る手助けとなる鏡の役割をすべきか、それともグローバルな気付きを助長するための世界への窓口となるべきか?」といった重要な課題に対して、独自の視点から回答を試みた。その中の5人のパネリストの回答をまとめたものが集録されている。

THE 2009 GILE SIG Colloquium featured Jane Nakagawa, Greg Goodmacher, Masataka Kasai, Albie Sharpe, Craig Smith, and John Spiri as panelists, with Kip Cates as moderator.

Each participant answered in a unique way the following questions: What is the role of global education in language teaching, and should EFL provide a mirror to help students look at themselves in new ways, or should it be a window to the world aimed at promoting global awareness? Following are some of the responses and ideas shared.

Jane Nakagawa

Nakagawa's response was that global education in EFL can be a mirror for students both to look at themselves in new ways and to look at the world in new ways. She emphasized the idea that no social change is possible without personal change.

Her short presentation focused on pedagogy and pedagogical materials for the global issues classroom to achieve the objectives of personal and social change. She briefly referred to several ideas or principles guiding her pedagogical and materials choices.

Critical thinking

Rather than teach "information," the teacher's role and the learners' roles vis à vis each other, as they learn how to engage

in the process, can be to encourage students (and the teacher) to think about what they know, how they know it, whether what they know is valid or matters, whether they should research or explore a thought or idea further, how to do that, and whether they should consequently revise their meaning perspectives or not. The teacher can model critical thinking for students and model these kinds of questions for class use, as Nakagawa does in her classes.

Nakagawa's practice in using critical thinking in the classroom is based primarily on the example of a few of her own teachers in high school and college, as well as research in what is called "transformative learning" (see Cranton, 1994, for a thorough description of this approach).

Student-centeredness

This notion means that the students themselves make some choices about the classroom content and activities, at least some of the time, if not frequently or in the main. Nakagawa utilizes a student-centered approach (similar to that outlined in Campbell & Kryszyewska, 1992) in her classes. This means her students are active participants in the learning process and have some freedom to tailor or adapt topics and tasks to fit their own interests, preferences, and goals in her task-based poetry, gender studies, global issues EFL, and pedagogy courses.

Learner differences

Students are assumed to vary in their interests and abilities. An attempt is made to accommodate these learner differences by either providing a variety of activities and tasks or, in the learner-centered approach described above, allowing students to make choices that lead to tasks which reflect their own interests, goals, and abilities.

Nakagawa referred to Gardner's multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and learning styles associated with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (described, e.g., in Fairhurst & Fairhurst, 1995; Lawrence, 1996) as examples of ways in which learners might differ. For example, a problem such as domestic violence can be explored "rationally" by gathering statistics and developing an argument, or "affectively" by imagining the feelings of the battered or the batterer. A project or task can utilize visual-spatial skills if it includes drawing, musical intelligence if songs are used or created, and so forth. Teachers can design tasks that are varied in terms of the intelligence or learning styles utilized, as Nakagawa does.

Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning techniques can be used to create opportunities for peer teaching, to foster student self-reliance and reliance on other students versus reliance on the teacher, and to support critical thinking or problem-solving activities. Cooperative learning can fit well with a student-centered approach because a goal of cooperative learning is student autonomy. Thinking about oneself and about the world are complex endeavors.

Working in cooperative learning groups, students may feel more emotionally supported as well as coming up with better and more diverse solutions to problems with the help of peers. Many major cooperative learning approaches are summarized by Sharan (1999).

Relativism

Teachers and students can adopt the viewpoint that differing ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and believing are valid for the individuals concerned. Adopting such an approach means that learner ideas (and those in reading materials) will be respected and considered valid for the person. This should create a more

peaceful and intellectually rich classroom where a variety of perspectives are offered and discussed.

In Nakagawa's courses, students work in cooperative learning groups exchanging information about themselves and sharing ideas about the course materials and themes. Students are not required to come to a consensus about issues. As a classroom activity in small groups, they also sometimes prepare debates that end in a "tie," in which each side is presented as valid.

Fairness

Fairness can be manifested in many ways, such as by treating persons in the classroom without prejudice or treating them uniformly (uniform treatment often equates as fairness in Japan—in short, not showing favoritism). Fairness in the meaning of inclusiveness can also be shown (e.g., making an attempt to incorporate diverse viewpoints in the classroom, providing as well-rounded a curriculum as possible, and so on). On the issue of inclusivity in materials, Nakagawa mentioned that in some of her courses, such as courses in poetry in English, most textbooks that she is familiar with exclude work by women and nonwhite writers. She feels it important to try to offset these imbalances by providing more work by women and persons of color, to supplement the textbook.

Greg Goodmacher

Goodmacher discussed the role of the teacher, emphasized the importance of focusing on language in GILE, suggested ways to develop each student's ability to see and value other perspectives, and showed examples of activities integrating language and global content.

Teacher roles

Goodmacher asked if we are global issues teachers, language teachers, or sort of a mix of the two. He argued that the role of a teacher in regard to teaching global issues varies according to the expectations of each educational institution. For example, when he started his current position as a member of the International Culture Department in a prefectural college, he was informed that his duties were to integrate language education with information about the world, specifically intercultural, social, and environmental issues. Opening minds to the world is a goal of his institution, but he believes himself to be fundamentally a language teacher. Goodmacher pointed out that GILE is an acronym for Global Issues “in” Language Education. Therefore, language teaching is a primary consideration.

The analogy of a strong rope helps to explain his role as a teacher of global issues in language education. Ropes are strong because they are made of numerous strands that are tightly spiraled around each other. Global issues are one strand. Grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, pronunciation, critical thinking, and speaking are some of the others. By itself, each strand is weak, but when woven together, the strands become a strong rope. In other words, the teaching can be more effective and the learning deeper. The teacher is responsible for ascertaining the needs of the educational institute in regard to determining the balance of the language and global educational strands and for then weaving these together to support students, who depend on the rope for support when climbing towards the curriculum goals. The teacher is a facilitator of learning activities and a provider of information about global issues and the target language.

Seeing and valuing other perspectives

Facilitating the development of the ability to see other perspectives and to recognize the validity of other perspectives are high

priorities in GILE, especially for classes that focus on cultural issues. The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University suggests that instructors “develop a syllabus that explores multiple perspectives” and “incorporate multicultural examples, materials, and visual aids as much as possible in lectures” (Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning).

Goodmacher showed two visual aids that he uses on the first day of an intercultural communications class. One image is the well-known optical illusion that is often used in psychology classes. In Figure 1, viewers will see either a young woman or an old woman (Weisstein, 2010).



Figure 1. Young woman-old woman illusion

Students are challenged to switch their way of thinking so that they can see either perspective. They are also informed that this switching is analogous to varying cultural perspectives in that both views are possible and equally valid.

The next image combined three different world maps: one made in Sendai, Japan, one made in the United States, and one made in Australia. The Sendai map showed Sendai in the middle of the world, the U.S. map showed the U.S. in the center of the world, and the Australian map showed the southern hemisphere on top, with Australia on top. Each map also exag-

gerated the size of each country. Students are asked which map is correct. Through these images, students start to realize that there are a variety of perspectives.

Personalization of global issues

Personalization can help students realize that global issues affect their lives, and that their actions contribute to problems and to solutions of global issues. Suggested activities for personalization included field trips to rivers, beaches, zoos, and garbage incinerators; interviews with elders from the students' hometowns about environmental changes; and pair work activities based on information that directly affects students' futures. For example, an information gap activity involving the average salaries of females and males in Japan leads students to think about gender inequalities across Japan, especially those students who will soon graduate and enter the job market.

Critical thinking

Since activities that activate critical thinking are of utmost importance in both global issues and in general language communication, teachers should often integrate critical thinking strands into the curriculum. One way to do that is with the use of value lines. Crawford (2005) defines value lines as a "learning activity that is recommended for evoking students' opinions on issues to which there can be varied responses (that is, degrees of agreement and disagreement with a statement)" (p. 26). These can be incorporated into many language-teaching activities. For example, value lines can be done in combination with dictation exercises or after reading sentences or paragraphs. Role-playing is another useful exercise. When students are asked to participate in role-plays and support or defend a position that they are against, they must think more about the other perspective; this is a part of the development of critical thinking.

Finally, Goodmacher emphasized the importance of meaningful review to increase the retention of both global issues information and language skills.

Masataka Kasai

Kasai's response was that global education attempts not only to develop students' knowledge of the world, but also to promote their individual growth. Global educators may employ various types of activities including in class and outside of class activities. Global education can enhance students' motivation while developing what students think is necessary to live in a global society. Kasai's presentation was based on theory as well as a pilot study of his students' perceptions of global perspectives.

The primary purpose of global education may be to educate students to live responsibly and effectively in a global society by developing global perspectives (Anderson, 1979; Pike & Selby, 1988). Six useful concepts are: (a) perspective consciousness, (b) global issues, (c) global interdependence, (d) global history, (e) cross-cultural learning and skills, and (f) participation in a global society.

- Perspective consciousness: The recognition that every individual has a perspective that is not universally shared and which can be continuously formed and reformed over time (Hanvey, 1976).
- Global issues: Persistent worldwide problems that cannot be solved by one nation alone (Alger & Harf, 1986) including human rights, pollution, poverty, ethnic conflicts, and population problems.
- Global interdependence: Interconnectedness of people, events, and issues, and the ways in which they affect and are affected by other people, events, and issues (Pike & Selby, 1988).

- Global history: A history that is interconnected across the world including interrelated regional histories (Anderson, 1979).
- Cross-cultural learning and skills: Knowledge about one's own culture and other cultures, and skills in effectively interacting with people from diverse cultures and countries (Merryfield & Subedi, 2001).
- Participation in a global society: People's actions on a local scale to solve or ease global issues they learn about (Alger, 1985).

It can be concluded that global education attempts to not only develop students' knowledge of the world (e.g., global issues, global interdependence, global history, cross-cultural learning), but also develop their individual growth (e.g., perspective consciousness, cross-cultural learning skills, participation in a global society). When it comes to students' individual growth, it is important to develop their "open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, inclination to empathize, and nonchauvinism" (Case, 1993, p. 320) rather than self-centeredness, ethnocentrism, and nationalism.

By utilizing the six concepts above, EFL teachers can practice global education by introducing (a) global issues from various viewpoints, including viewpoints different from those of the students (perspective consciousness); (b) information about how Japan affects or is affected by global issues (global interdependence); (c) information about how global issues have developed from the past to the future, through the present (global history); (d) information about how the rest of the world affects or is affected by global issues (cross-cultural learning and skills); and (e) information about who or what organization takes action on global issues, or by encouraging students to take actions on the issues on a local scale (participation in a global society).

Global educators usually introduce information through various in-class activities such as reading, listening, writing,

and discussion. Outside of class activities may also play an important role in global education. For example, in order to understand the effects of global issues on foreign countries and individuals more deeply, students can interview people from target countries or cultures, or visit local or regional organizations connected to global issues activism.

Kasai introduced the results of his 2008 pilot study on his students' perceptions of global perspectives. The data included reflective journals collected from 50 students in his English course. In journals students answered questions about globalization, including: (a) What are three essential characteristics you think you need to have in order to live in the globalized world; and (b) Why do you think these characteristics are essential? Answers were perspective consciousness (5%), global issues (5%), global interdependence (2%), global history (2%), cross-cultural learning and skills (66%), participation in a global society (9%), technology literacy (5%), information literacy (3%), and others (3%). Kasai concluded that global education motivated students and meets their needs to a great extent.

Albie Sharpe

Sharpe discussed resistance to teachers' value-laden messages within the frame of health education and public health research. Sharpe began by restating a question first posed by Reardon, professor of peace education at Columbia University (2007): To what extent do we teach in a way that recognizes that we might be wrong? What are the effects of this on our students, on ourselves, and on the causes that teachers may believe in? To this, some closely-related questions were added: What are the dangers of imposing values on students? Should we teach values, should our values be reflected in the teaching process itself, or should we create spaces in which students can explore and define their own values?

There is a substantial body of research into the outcomes of health education—what students learn and what they don't learn, and what leads to health-seeking behavior change and what doesn't—which may have much broader applicability in terms of global education (see Baum, 2008). Looking at how health education, and in particular sex education, is taught in many (but not by any means all) Japanese schools, Castro-Vázquez and Kishi (2002) noted that the teaching of sex education in Japan resulted in the development of a hierarchical discourse, in which young adults were disempowered and prevented from active engagement. In a survey of students in a health class at Ritsumeikan University (Sharpe, 2009), all students but one reported that, in junior and senior high school sex education classes, there were no in-class opportunities to ask questions, discuss feelings, or develop practical skills, such as asking their partner to use a condom; the primary mode of instruction was teacher lecture and textbook-centered learning. Castro-Vázquez and Kishi argued that, with students finding school sex education programs primarily meaningless, it becomes necessary for them to instead “contrast, contest, resist and even disrupt the disciplinary regime of ‘moralistic science’” (2002, p. 474).

In trying to instill values in students, teachers may use *power-over* forms resulting from their elevated social status, higher levels of education, wealth, proximity to power, and various resources. Health educators, and indeed all educators, according to Labonte, may use *hegemonic* power to “control how others come to see themselves—as powerful or powerless” (Labonte, 1997, p. 32). We therefore, “set political agendas around health, and it is in how we define these agendas that we either hegemonise the relatively powerless, or transform the power-over by sharing what powers we possess” (p. 33). Spencer, Maxwell, and Aggleton (2008), researching health education programs in England, noted that while the sex education curriculum explicitly recognizes the importance of empowerment, in reality, the

parameters of *normal* and *appropriate* sexual behavior are shaped for young people by outside forces. Empowerment of young people could therefore result in “resisting” and “redefining” dominant discourses (p. 351). This pre-defined top-down model is “far removed from theoretical underpinnings of the concept of ‘empowerment’ and arguably serves to regulate, rather than empower young people’s sexual attitudes and behaviors” (p. 353).

In global education, how is it possible to teach in a way that reflects values, without necessarily imposing them, in a way that opens up a space for students to develop and explore their own values, to socialize each other (rather than be socialized by the teacher), and to avoid the imposition of hierarchical knowledge? Peer education of much health content (HIV education, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex, etc.) can provide an alternative approach. The role of the teacher becomes primarily one of facilitator, rather than content provider. One teaching option would be to present frameworks for analyzing health issues—primary health care, health promotion, the determinants of health—and then allow students opportunities to research how these influence specific health areas. The learning could then, as a result, be reflexive in that the students are learning about public health, then teaching it to others and themselves. In Sharpe’s classes, they do this through a series of student-organized presentations and supportive discussions. Respect for diversity of opinions and the dignity of other students is emphasized.

Even within this framework, however, there are contradictions. By opening up a space for exploration of values and giving students chances to not only construct but share their knowledge, empowerment can be the result, but may not necessarily occur. There was some evidence, based on interviews, that students in the above course were empowered to become more critical and more capable of managing health information (Sharpe, 2009). However, it also needs to be recognized that stu-

dents have a right *not* to be empowered, and that empowerment can only really occur when a person makes a conscious or unconscious choice to utilize power. Furthermore, by the explicit transfer of values within the learning environment, the teacher is not eliminating values altogether—they are still present in the choices made in the construction of the learning environment. Shouldn't they therefore be explicitly recognized? For example, by emphasizing diversity and respect as goals, shouldn't we recognize that this is also value laden?

The concept of resistance within health education means that imposition of values on students could have the opposite effect of what teachers intend: It may provoke resistance and opposition—something that teachers may be unaware of within the classroom environment. The way that values connected to health, global issues, or indeed any other educational goal, are taught can be far more important than the message itself. Teaching values (regardless of what they are) in the wrong way may counteract the value of the causes that teachers believe in as well as be dangerous to students and even to planetary well-being. This can be even more true when teachers are passionate about the causes.

Craig Smith

Smith talked about global education as it may be realized in extracurricular projects and events led by students and supported by educational institutions.

Collaboration among students, teachers, and staff may engage an educational institution as a community in conceiving and implementing short-term action plans that raise awareness and deepen understandings of successes and failures in peace-building efforts through experiential learning. If the institution as a community makes commitments to global education projects, the collaborative efforts of all participants may contribute to the

vitality of the school as a problem-solving, success-enhancing, educationally creative organization. Extracurricular educational activities blur the lines between coursework and real-world experiences. Student, staff, and faculty joint ventures blur the lines between the participants' conventional roles. The source of the vitality that brings extracurricular global education projects alive is the willingness of people to get involved because they care about the project. The enthusiasm of a few people acting as initiators can end up inspiring the school as a whole.

There is a long, successful tradition of school communities creating annual cultural festivals and sports days. These models have been used for a wide variety of global education projects held both locally and abroad and include: (a) model United Nations meetings, (b) global issues youth conferences, (c) human rights initiatives, (d) fieldwork study of community-building organizations, (e) cultural exchange festivals, (f) poverty reduction projects, and whatever communities can agree on to put their ideas into action.

Viable extracurricular collaborative global education projects typically share five characteristics:

1. Experienced participants share what they learned from past projects but joy is found in "reinventing the wheel." Less than perfect results are acceptable.
2. People join in because they are interested in the project.
3. "Taking part" means everyone participates: No one stands on the sidelines and no one takes the whole responsibility but rather everyone plays a role.
4. Distinctions fade between *givers* and *receivers*, *learners* and *teachers*.
5. At the end of the project, everyone may want to repeat it, although potentially it can be sustained even by just one or two clear-eyed, determined folks.

Diplomatic initiatives at the highest levels of government, large-scale projects implemented by large inter-governmental bodies, action plans led by big nongovernmental organizations, and events created by renowned international community groups are necessary actions to globalize peace, but are insufficient. School-wide, collaborative, peace-building projects raise awareness of the idea that a few ordinary people in a small school community can take effective steps towards solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

When we are curious enough to want to know why peace may appear elusive and fragile, and compassionate enough to want to understand the feelings of other people, we may look for ways to go beyond a single understanding to reach more understandings of our world.

Projects that bring together a few willing, kindred spirits provide windows to other worlds outside of classrooms. When the light is just right, we will see a myriad of reflections in the window glass. As members of a globally-aware community, we can help members of educational institutions see themselves, each other, and others in new ways.

Conclusion

The above is a summary of some of the many ideas shared at the 2009 GILE SIG Colloquium. While each panelist answered our moderator's questions in a somewhat different way, frequently resurfacing ideas included: reported learner interest in global education, a need for learner independence or autonomy in the classroom, the value of differing perspectives and collaboration, and a need for teacher flexibility in working with diverse learners and diverse course contents.

Bio data

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