

Programme Administration and Management for Foreign Language Education Programmes

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This paper employs descriptions of specific situations in private tertiary education institutions (*daigaku*) in Japan to delineate factors and problems influencing second language education programme administration and management. The paper focuses on the role of the administrator, his or her relationships with the faculty and the administrative bodies, and environmental factors that limit programme development and student learning opportunities. This paper also provides a framework from which to develop solutions to administrative problems described herein.

Over the years we have observed frequent challenges to publicly asserted improvements in the teaching of English. We infer this from publications and forums of two of the prominent language education organisations in Japan NPO JALT

and JACET (Japan Association for College English Teachers). However, we have witnessed far too little constructive and informed influence over national foreign language education policies and planning and their implementation at the institutional and systemic levels, public and private, from primary to tertiary levels. One could rationalise the inadequate attention given policy and planning by qualified administrators and teachers, but we certainly cannot ignore these issues in contemplating the future of the Japanese people when they must continue to compete in a worldwide economy and aspire to be full members of the world community.

Context

It has been said that a chess-playing computer making one move a minute since the *Big Bang*, from that moment to this, would not have exhausted all possible legal permutations. The human context, on the other hand, is rather more vast and complex than a chess game. So, we trust you will understand if we do not even scratch the surface with regard to the interplay between contextual factors delineated below.

Programme Administration and Management for Tertiary English Education

This section presents implementation policy issues regarding programme management and development for college English language education. First, we will

point out seven major problems delineated by Ueyama (2001) which arise when colleges manage and develop an English language curriculum. Next we will focus attention on six factors to be considered in the process of developing a programme that will assist in clarifying environmental influences and show how they are used to describe a specific situation. Third, we will present a way to identify and articulate problems taking place, employing the six aforementioned categories and three types of programmes articulated below. Since the conditions surrounding each college are distinct, we will offer suggestions on how to analyze the “worth” of a programme in context. Finally, we will describe an means to formulate implementation policies by using a specific situation.

The problems that influence programme context

Our observations arise from the context wherein English is taught in private tertiary institutions in Japan. These institutions usually separate language education from other disciplines so that sociology or physics, for example, are taught in Japanese and not offered in English or any other foreign language. This is typical of undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programmes (Simmons, 1998).

We have observed that most problems in language programmes are usually so closely interwoven that solving them is difficult if they are inaccurately

identified. Ueyama (2000a, p. 2-7) has identified seven major areas to show how these problems can be more efficiently addressed. Identifying these areas will, in turn, make it easier for teachers to work cooperatively and employ resources effectively and thereby transform a group of classes into a programme.

Seven primary problem areas

1. Diverse and incompatible teacher qualifications, experience and competence.
2. Highly varied range of students' language comprehension and production.
3. Lack of cohesion among different course contents
4. Ambiguities in the administrative decision-making process
5. Inadequate opportunities for teachers and administration to share and ascertain student progress
6. Lack of common goals and objectives for students and course work
7. Inadequate communication between teachers

The conditions that dictate programme function and potential

We assume that to identify problems it is imperative to collect the data from various categories including teacher quality, student ability and motivation, student time-on-task, available class hours, teachers' teaching

and employment status, the content course teachers to English language teachers ratio, and subcategories of the curriculum structure, e.g., monitoring system and decision-making (including budgeting, personnel selection, assignments, promotion and retention). Conditions in these categories tend to control programme function. (Kaufman et al, 1996, p.151) In other words, we need to try to identify and predict limits and potential problems if we are to succeed in realising a programme's full potential. We address the following factors (and their interaction) in each category below in order to understand the conditions within and surrounding a programme. These six factors focus on the faculty and their environment. This is one small aspect of how the seven problem areas can be analysed.

1. Faculty quality and limitations

These factors are related to faculty competence, their administrative support and opportunities to improve and perform well as teachers and researchers:

1. Faculty qualifications, experience, specific teaching skills, knowledge and ability to contribute to the overall programme
2. Faculty opportunities to continue their education and improvement
3. Administrative policies, practices and expectations that may exploit or hinder the faculty in any of these factors

4. Faculty self-imposed limitations that will exploit or hinder any of these factors

2. Faculty teaching status

These factors are salient in determining long-term continuity and programme development, faculty familiarity with administrative process and expectations and the extent to which teachers can contribute to the programme as a whole over time. Ideally, the faculty are employed full-time permanently with a class load that allows preparation, research, and professional development. To what extent is this true or are a significant amount of classes taught by marginalised teachers with large class loads? What is the Japanese teachers (non-native speakers) to native speakers (NSL) teachers ratio? (This is particularly important for disciplines such as international relations, business, commerce, economics and those of the sciences). How is the faculty as a whole affected by limited goals and design? (Ueyama, 2000b, pp. 11-12)

3. Student quality and learning opportunity

Who is the faculty actually teaching and do they have sufficient time to do so? Ideally, students have language proficiency equal to the task of dealing with their content courses in the target language. (Content courses refer to non-language disciplines such as economics, comparative culture, communication and so forth). Are

the students functioning at course level with sufficient classroom time-on-task or are the teachers basically teaching the same remedial language skills over and over once a week to unmotivated students with inadequate study skills and low expectations for success?

4. Ratio between content area teachers and language teachers

These factors are related to content course-language course continuity and cohesion: Ideally, classes are taught by permanent full-time teachers who can prepare language students by incorporating content courses into language courses. To what extent is this true or are your students taught by part-timers and limited-term teachers who are not given the opportunity to integrate these courses and attain proficiency goals?

5. Curriculum Structure

Is the faculty working with a programme *raison d'être* with clear goals, objectives, and a coherent systemic progression? (McCleary, 1988; Tom, 1997, pp. 101-159) This includes areas such as targeted language proficiency and purpose, scheduling, and curriculum rationale:

1. Cohesion and coherence: degree of programme integration into the main school curriculum and its significance in student promotion-relegation
2. Classroom materials: selection process and participants, sufficient time to select, evaluation

- and update
3. Student evaluation: Extent of monitoring system and incorporation of results into programme design

6. Decision-making structure

These questions pertain to the decision making process regarding operations, budget, personnel and factors listed above: How are the decisions made? Who makes these decisions and who is left out of the process? To what extent do language and content course teachers influence decisions?

How to choose and shape a programme

The next question is, “How do you choose and shape a programme.” The students’ needs and programme environment will determine its worth. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 42): “Judgments of worth depend upon the interaction of the entity with some context and thus vary as contexts vary.” Judgments of merit, on the other hand, are “tied to intrinsic characteristics of the entity being evaluated and are therefore relatively stable.”

In other words, ‘merit’ refers to the value of the programme itself, while ‘worth’ refers to the value of a programme in a specific context. The worth of a programme is determined by the extent to which it fits the conditions within and surrounding itself. Although

the characteristics of an actual programme may vary, depending upon the environment of the institution, by figuring out the worth, a programme is enabled to have ‘attainable goals,’ and language teachers have ways to identify problems so that they may improve the situation.

Focusing on key problems and formulating implementation policies?

Using the seven primary problem areas Ueyama (2001) has developed a matrix to assist administrators in identifying a programme’s problems, environmental factors and examples of practical solutions. The matrix must be keyed to the category a foreign language education programmes belongs to relative to the degree its goals emphasise proficiency. (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986)

TYPE A: All students are expected to become proficient in a foreign language. Programmes in this category include international relations, linguistics, foreign languages, international law, and international business.

TYPE B: The desired level of proficiency depends upon student needs. Missions and goals do not demand all students become proficient.

TYPE C: Language programmes that admit students with a minimal emphasis on foreign language ability do not expect students to become proficient. This category includes colleges specialising in the disciplines of music, fine arts, and physical education.

The underlying premise of this matrix is that each higher institution exists in a different context: economically, politically, organizationally, and culturally, and therefore, so does its language education programme.

Chart: Analysis for Improvement toward making implementation policies

ISSUES		TYPE	Type A	Actions toward making implementation policies
1	Teacher Quality		Category 1 – 6	Teacher workshops: Do they help teachers improve teaching skills and understand students? Do they fit the conditions of the school?
2	Students' Language Ability		Category 1 – 6	Assess the criteria of admission, and analyze the students' progress.
3	Contextual Relations among Courses		Category 1 – 6	Assess whether or not proficiency-based instruction is employed in all classes.
4	Decision-Making Process		Category 1 – 6	Does the programme director have legitimate and adequate authority to manage and develop a programme?
5	Communicating Students Progress		Category 1 – 6	Is data collection working appropriately? Are results properly delivered to teachers?
6	Programme Goals & Objectives		Category 1 – 6	Re-examine articulation between the first 2-year courses and 3 rd /4 th year courses.
7	Communication among Teachers		Category 1 – 6	Assess internal decision-making process in the programme. Are administrators fulfilling their responsibilities? Does all information reach all part-time teachers in a timely manner?

The Role and Relationships of a Programme Director

This section will delineate the context of a relatively small private university located in Gunma Prefecture. The university, part of an institution including a junior college and a high school, is comprised of two faculties: economics and law. The economics faculty has two departments: economics and business management. The student body, mostly male, is about 2500. The English programme consists of three required 2-credit hour courses of about thirty students per class. The language faculty consists of four full-timers and ten part-timers. The primary responsibility of the programme director is to oversee the articulation of the curriculum, recommend new hires, and represent the programme to university governing bodies.

A basic perspective on an administrator's interaction with the faculty

We introduce here two simple ideas: First, you must BE there. Second you must be THERE. First, what do we mean when we say you must BE there? In other words you participate in the organization. You must attend the meetings, take part in the discussion and participate in implementing decisions made in those meetings. Further, it means that you develop relationships with the other university employees, the people in administration and the other staff (including the secretaries and the

folks who keep the floors swept and the furnace blowing warm air in the winter). AND you must make sure that they know you as a member of the organization, not just as a someone noisily complaining that nobody knows how to run the school (or worse).

Here is a practical example of what we mean and you may see how it applies to your situation. At this university, there is a professor's dormitory for faculty who live too far away to commute daily. Talking with other professors in the dorm common room, or at breakfast is just one way of getting to know each other. It gives you a chance to explain your personal views on a variety of institutional issues from the day-to-day administration to long-term strategy. When you want to make those views clear in a more formal context, much of the understanding is already there. This is not to suggest that you must live in a dormitory to be involved with the other faculty, but that you must make the effort to know and understand them. Look around your institution for opportunities for personal contact. The term "face time" is not just a management buzzword; it's a necessary element of being an effective administrator.

A primary function of an administrator (read 'manager') in any context is to engage in activities which help support and forward the aims of the institution. The second idea: "You must be THERE," focuses on acting in that function. Being there means you understand the context of your institution, its overall

objectives and academic goals. You need to comprehend its position in the local community and any extenuating circumstances affecting it. (e.g., enrollment fluctuations, trends suggesting curriculum changes, changes in the institution's status and direction). And not least of all, you should be aware of the impact that changes might have on faculty staffing. Knowing, for example, that institution-wide, full-time faculty are not being replaced when they retire by other full-timers might suggest that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to hire new full-time faculty members for your programme next year.

Actually, the main question here is, "Do you know your institution?" You may have clear ideas about how to run the programme, or its goals, but do they run counter to the overall goals of the institution, or support and further them? Your knowledge of the context of the institution can help you channel your ideas in the proper direction and format.

Knowing the context also helps win other members of the faculty to your point of view, even when your ideas might not be popular OR easy to implement. A recent example may illustrate. During a working session in a university-wide end-of-term review, members of one group were brainstorming needed changes. Professor A suggested that the university's goals for the students needed clarification. Professor B responded somewhat heatedly to the suggestion, but since it was a brainstorming session, they moved on. Later

in the day, walking to yet another meeting, professor B apologized to professor A for his earlier outburst. Professor A's suggestions had caused him to spend some time thinking about the situation at the university and he concluded Professor A was correct. Their mutual knowledge of the context and their personal relationship helped them understand each other and now they are working together to clarify those goals.

Supplementary programme construction and administration

In this part of the paper, we will see how the "Global Village" at a third private university was developed as a positive and creative response to such challenges. In addition to the problems listed above, there are other impediments and obstacles to effective language teaching that have to be challenged and hopefully surmounted if language teaching has to make sense at all.

The five programme limitations to language learning

Taking as a concrete example the situation of the "French Conversation" programme at this third university, here are the major impediments and limitations imposed by the general curriculum organization.

1. Classes are conducted once a week, one and a half hours (one *kouma*) each time (a situation that is

- typical throughout Japan in public and private tertiary institutions). We know that this is not the ideal situation. Language learning must take place every day if we are to see real progress, and one *kouma* a week is basically useless unless individual students take the learning process upon themselves the rest of the time.
2. There is no practice of the target language during the week. Opportunities for Japanese students to practice their French in Japan are extremely rare and as a result, they come back one week later having spoken a lot of Japanese and without a bridge to the next class, another small atoll of the target language in a sea of native language.
 3. Students going abroad do not receive appropriate preparation. The most attractive side of the French conversation courses is that students who study very hard for two years will be able to take the exam giving them access to the exchange programmes with Quebec and France, and based on the statistics of the last ten years, will be accepted in that programme. However, once they do land in the country of their dreams, they realize they have not been prepared properly. Culture shock, communication breakdown, unwillingness to truly understand the other culture, and in the worst cases (about 5% of the students) a cancellation of the stay with an unhappy return to Japan.
 4. Japanese students do not interact with international students on campus. Even though this programme has about 200 international students on campus, they do not really mingle with the Japanese students. Most of them learn Japanese language and culture in the courses offered by the Japanese programme, but then they socialize amongst themselves, often using English as the lingua franca. It is possible for international students to go home with a good knowledge of the Japanese language, cultures and customs, but without any real interaction with Japanese people. One of the limitations could be the conditions for socialisation found in Japanese culture. Japanese students tend to make friends only if there is a reason to meet a person, (e.g. in the context of a club or a classroom). It is unusual for Japanese students to develop friendships spontaneously with the international community. To go back to the example of the French conversation course, Japanese students almost never take the opportunity to meet the French-speaking students on campus. Moreover, the international students have problems of their own: there are also financial challenges forcing them to find small jobs on campus, but often off campus.
 5. All students have to advance at the same speed; no individual variations are allowed. This is a real

problem for fast learners who would like to study more than once a week. Some students do attend private schools, but this is rare, adversely affecting the future of language classes on campus.

History of the Global Village Programme

After a brief explanation of the history of the creation of the “Global Village”, we will describe how this system allows learners to respond to the five challenges described above. This system of course also provides more on campus job opportunities for international students.

Around 1996, the university established the *Chit Chat Club* (CCC), a system providing students with an immersion room. Once anybody enters this room, where you can find satellite TV, popcorn and coffee machines, books and videos from the English-speaking world, western-style furniture etc., and you are only allowed to speak English. English-speaking international students are hired to facilitate conversations and activities in English at fixed times during the week.

A request made to the administration to receive support for the opening of a similar room for French received the answer that there were not enough students taking French to justify such a budget. English was the sole language studied by about half the language learners on campus. However, since all the other languages together added up to the other half of the language

learners, and a second proposal to create an immersion room for all the other languages combined was accepted. A “Non-English Conversation Room,” was then created. This system was baptized the “Global Village” and after an initial group of four languages in 1997, the GV offered 9 languages in 2000: Chinese, Korean, German and Russian, four Latin languages (French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) and finally Japanese for international students.

Currently, Japanese students are invited to attend sessions facilitated by international students from 4:45 to 6:45 every day after class, and each language receives one or two slots depending on statistical attendance, which means that a maximum of three different language sessions are being used concurrently in the large “World Language Center” lounge on campus.

Here is the schedule for Fall 2001 as an example: Monday: Chinese, Korean and Italian. Tuesday: Spanish and French. Wednesday: Korean and Portuguese. Thursday: Spanish, Chinese and German. Friday: French and Russian

Due to budget restrictions, Japanese was canceled this year and some languages which used to receive two slots only have one now.

The Global Village solutions to the five limitations

1. Classes are conducted once a week, one and a half

hours (one *kouma*) each time. GV time can be incorporated into the regular class requirements. For example, 10% of the total French grade depends on one hour of GV attendance monthly. Most students actually attend more than the required amount.

2. There is no practice of the target language during the week. The GV can double or triple the amount of time students use the target language.
3. Students going abroad do not receive appropriate preparation. Besides basic language exercises, Japanese students are allowed to discuss *au fond* in Japanese, life in foreign countries, preparing for a trip abroad.
4. Japanese students do not interact with international students on campus. When there is a time, place and reason, even very shy Japanese students find an excuse to make friends with international students. There are numerous cases of friendships that have started during GV sessions and which are still going on today.
5. All students have to advance at the same speed, no personal variations. Here is an anecdote showing how the GV allows “fast students” to move at a different pace. Since a semester actually lasts three months, students in the French classes are required to show proof of attendance at the GV for 3 hours each semester. However one student who had just started

French in April attend the GV for 30 hours that semester! As a result he was ready to take the second semester of the second year of French, and he is now completing the equivalent of two years of French after only two semesters, saving a whole year.

What else can be done with the status quo?

Among the programmes that have been created and are now successfully run besides the GV: the already mentioned *Chit Chat Club* (CCC), the *Freshman and Sophomore English Programmes*, the after school English for Academic Purposes program offered four times a week, the English Forum (for students more advanced than those attending the CCC), the English Self-Access programmes (writing center, self-study facilities, etc).

Conclusion

We have described the means to identify problems, conceptualise context, formulate policies, and develop new options. We have hopefully given you better questions, existing models and concrete solutions. We have also stressed the significance of ‘worth:’ the value of a programme must be ascertained in a specific context. Since the situations presented here are practical, they may be helpful to a director who has been coping with a less structured curriculum (or what may be nothing more than a cluster of classes). The factors we have described above will help set up a sequential approach to

formulating and implementing programme and policies. And while the experiences provided here may not be enough to generalize all the characteristics at other institutions, the concept of 'worth' and how it is related to context may give a director flexible perspectives to examine a programme.

Despite the limitations imposed by overall curriculum design, creativity, imagination and initiative are being used to provide better programmes in existing administrative structures when expressed in culturally acceptable forms. Moreover, situations like the Global Village allows for teamwork and collaboration at many different levels.

A cautious note, the new challenges ahead will be even greater. With the student population falling sharply, some institutions already have closed down, others had to scrap departments and programmes, and increasingly, institutions of higher education are financially overextended. Are we at the dawn of an era of educational Darwinism—the "survival of the fittest" schools? This could be the last straw in a country that seems to need so much intellectual, emotional and spiritual revival.

Ask yourself these questions: Do you know your institution? How do you interact with the faculty? Do they know you? Is there any way you can use the existing context to improve the existing programme?

The qualities of faculties and administrators will determine the survival of tertiary language programmes in the 21st century in a country which desperately needs to communicate with the outside world.

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