

Journals and Dialogic Writing in Content and Language Integrated Learning Courses

内容言語統合型学習におけるラーニング・ポートフォリオと対話的な学習

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Abstract: Drawing on the John Zubizarreta's learning portfolio for university-level classes, this article argues for the place of reflective learning notebooks in content and language integrated learning courses. Specifically, it looks at the importance of bilingual and flexible notebooks as course tool on a service learning project. It argues that multi-functional notebooks not only encourage motivation and reflection, but that they can be an indispensable tool in encouraging dialogue to extend beyond the classroom and into the community.

Keywords: Learning portfolio, service learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning Courses (CLIL)

要約

ジョン・ズビザレッタが紹介した大学授業学習用の「ラーニング・ポートフォリオ」を利用し、本論は、反省的、融通が利くラーニング・ノートブックを Content and Language Integrated Learning と言われる「内容言語統合型学習」(CLIL 型学習)の授業でどのように有効的に使用できるのかを検討していく。さらに、大手前大学で行ったサービス・ラーニング (Service Learning) 授業で利用したバイリンガルのラーニング・ノートブックを紹介する。このような多機能の学習ノートは学習意欲や再考を促すだけでなく、教室を超えて学外やコミュニティにおいても対話を続けるための欠かせない道具になることを示す。

キーワード: ラーニング・ポートフォリオ、サービス・ラーニング、内容言語統合型学習 (CLIL)

Introduction

In September of 2015, I led a group of nine students and two additional faculty members on an English-language service learning project to the Japanese National Hansen's Disease hospital Nagashima Aisei-en (see Tanaka and Jackson in this volume for a description of the project). Our goal was to translate Japanese documents into English, making the hospital's archives and history more accessible to English-speaking visitors. As Aisei-en has launched a campaign to receive World Heritage Site recognition, our student service project was at once social activism and a learning experience.

This was a translation-based service learning project, with the primary goals being to gain practical skills and deepen the student's understanding of Japanese history and social activism in a global context. Part of the plan, therefore, was focused on creating meaning through learning and personal growth, drawing on John Dewey's concept of reflection on experience (Dewey). This article describes the role of journals and dialogic writing as a reflective tool in service learning. By dialogic writing, here I refer to a practice of creating an ongoing and reflective conversation between the students and the teacher which is based the educational materials. Dialogic

writing becomes the primary way of making meaning from all aspects of everyday project interactions—speaking to peers, listening to lectures, taking notes, or translating documents.

The project was from the first designed to be dialogic—the teachers would be engaging with and responding to the same material as the students. Peer feedback was an essential component, but faculty also provided comments and guidance (Tanaka and Jackson, 2015). To encourage students to engage with the material on a variety of levels, each participant and faculty member was required to keep a notebook for the duration of this project. The notebook was not simply a journal: it was designed to be a dialogic engagement with the project. It served as a notebook for recording information and note-taking or even sketching. It was also a workbook for the first rough drafts of the translations. Notebooks sometimes became a shared space, where students and teachers offered comments and ideas to each other about the translation process. Finally, it was a journal, with space for daily reflection.

The idea for the journals was drawn from John Zubizarreta’s idea of learning portfolios. Learning portfolios, as John Zubizarreta has argued, have become an important part of many university courses, in particular as digital technology allows “rich and diverse models of how portfolios are used worldwide for multiple purposes” (Zubizarreta, 2008, 1). While learning portfolios have long been a staple in American universities in particular, recent work such as that by Carlson (2015) and Apple and Shimo (2004) demonstrates the ways in which learning



Image 1. Student notebooks on the worktable

portfolios or notebooks can be an asset in the English as a Foreign Language classroom in Japan. In Zubizarreta's model, learning portfolios integrate three strands of education: reflection, documentation, and collaboration (ibid). The notebooks for the Nagashima project students differed from Zubizarreta's model in one very important way. In his model, Zubizarreta argues that a successful portfolio "involves a concise, reflective narrative, plus selected evidence in series of appropriate appendices." In contrast to that, students on the Nagashima project were given relative freedom with these notebooks.

The notebooks differed from EFL learners' portfolios or blogging as well, in that bilingualism was encouraged. The translation project, courses and daily tasks were conducted in English, but it was made clear from the beginning that the journals could be bilingual. This was a calculated move to help students articulate their thoughts in the ways they thought best. Paul Nation (2013; 1997) has argued for the judicious use of L1 in the L2 classroom as a powerful tool to reinforce vocabulary, and more recent scholarship has argued that cultural contexts can help students retain both vocabulary and content (Chihara, T., Sakurai, T., & Oller, J., 1997). In addition, because the content of the translation and the project was challenging and because the participants were mixed in their English abilities, allowing free use of both L1 and L2 in their notebooks allowed students to re-engage with the material at their own levels (Carlson 2015).

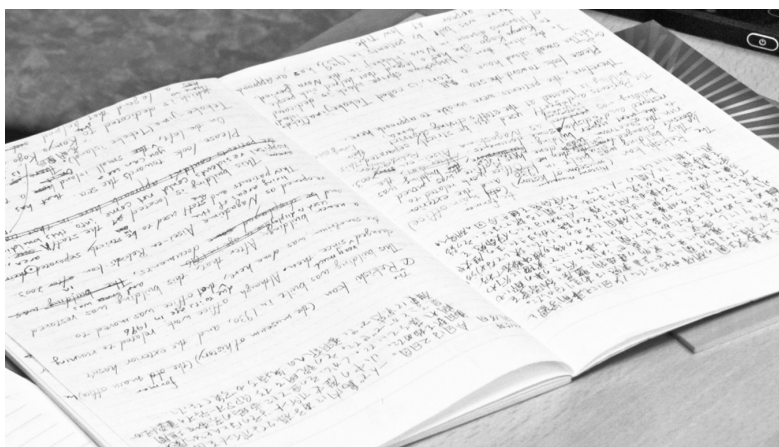


Image 2. The bilingual and multipurpose function of the notebook Teacher and peer comments and suggestions

Many of the notebooks were truly bilingual, with ideas, feelings, and work done in both Japanese and English. The flexibility of the notebooks allowed students to reflect on their notes and materials in a way that created meaning for them. In addition, the project itself was bilingual and foregrounded the importance of translation in English language learning in Japan, an emerging new trend which has been demonstrated to be an effective pedagogical tactic in Japan by Chihara, T., Sakurai, T., & Oller, J. (2007).

Despite the differences in practice, the Nagashima project notebooks sought to integrate the three core principles of a portfolio as articulated by Zubizarreta. Documentation came in the form of student notes or memos,

or work on their translation activities. Reflection was done every day during scheduled diary writing activities in the evening. Finally, collaboration and mentoring took place when students commented on each other's notebooks and translations as well as when the teachers provided commentary. Indeed, as a final stage, I provided detailed notes and reflections of the individual's work in each notebook. Daily, I also used their books. I checked their translations and reflections, making notes of what they had done well and accomplished that day. When necessary, I was also able to write suggestions for tasks for the next day. I wrote freely in participant journals, asking questions about things they had written there or offering further details that might help their work. In short, I used the notebook as freely as the students, with my responses, comments, and questions tailored to the content and my observation of the student.

The notebooks allowed me to see where students were struggling and where they felt confident. For quieter participants, the daily check offered encouragement and boosted communication between us. Furthermore, positive feedback provided motivation for participants to continue to do their best. Thus, the collaboration and mentoring step of the notebook process was what made them inherently dialogic projects. In the end, the notebooks also became a cornerstone of the student posters discussed in this volume (Tanaka and Jackson, 2015).

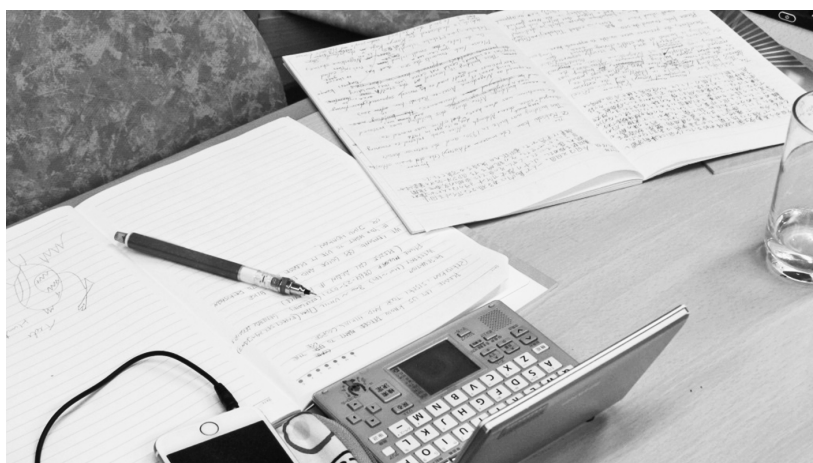


Image 3. Working with each other's notebooks

Below, I draw on diary entries to map the reflective journey of the participants. The quotations are exact. These were free writing sessions, with no prompts given after the first day. On our day of preparation, students began their notebooks with a brief description of their motivation to go on the project. They then used the diaries to track their learning, their reflections, and their motivation.

Prior to departure, I worried that the fact I would read the diaries would cause students to self-censor their writing. Contrary to my expectations, I feel that in general that was not the case. Students wrote with relative freedom, and in every case were reflective about their learning process and their work on Nagashima without being prompted.

For example, Student Z, with a lower level of English expressed fears in the first journal entry, which was

written in English:

“I was very very nervous in this morning. Actually, I felt nauseated. Because I thought I can’t join this program so I didn’t preparation. I can’t good tradition today. So I hope I’ll do good tradition tomorrow and these days.

[At this point, the writer switches to Japanese; translations of Japanese entries are hereafter given in italics]:

*Points for Reflection*¹

Being too slow

I couldn’t speak up

I got into too bad of a mood. Be positive

I didn’t talk to the senior students

I was dark”²

The nervous energy and self-criticism in this entry is quite clear. Yet, despite the initial fears, the student continued on the program, taking detailed notes in both Japanese and English during the tour of the museum and sanatorium grounds. In their notes, there is active engagement with the new ideas as well as continued reflection on the translation process: “*We start translating tomorrow, but I feel like I don’t understand anything. I don’t want it to be like yesterday when I just stayed quiet. It’s not that I don’t understand, yesterday I was just quiet because I hadn’t “thought about it”. My goal for tomorrow is to really think about it and be able to say my opinion! The overall goal for this project is to know and think about Hansen’s disease, and decide what we can do from now.*”³

This participant continued self-reflective note-taking, discussing what was learned and what they found important. By the third day, Student Z was clearly articulating thoughts and opinions about what was being learned and how this related to personal goals: “*I learned the hospital wants to burn materials. The country might want to hide it, but in order to make sure this kind of discrimination never happens again, I think they must be made public.*”⁴

In the end, Z reflected on the experience as a whole: “*I learned a lot on this project. Not only about Hansen’s Disease, but about discrimination and human relationships... During these 4 days, I was tired and my head didn’t work. But, after all, it was so good that I participated in this project. A month ago, two months ago, I didn’t even know the word Hansen’s Disease, but I learned so much information and studied so much. At first I was interested*

1 All translations of the Japanese diary entries are done by the article author.

2 反省点

ポケーッとしすぎ

発言できてなかった

気分悪くなりすぎ→ポジティブに

先輩と会話しない

暗い

3 明日から翻訳するけど、ほんまわからんことだらけやと思う。昨日みたいにだまっておことだけはやめたい。わからんわけじゃなくて、昨日だまったのは“考えてなかった”だけやもんな。よく考えて自分の意見を言えるようになるのが明日の目標！このプロジェクト、全部の目標はハンセン病のことを知って考えてこれから自分がなにができるか決めること。

4 園側が資料を燃やそうとしているって知って国としてはかくしたいんかもしれんけど、これからこんな差別をまた起こさへんようには公開すべきだと思う。

in “translation” and to tell the truth I wasn’t interested in Hansen’s disease at all. But, this gave me an interest in Hansen’s Disease. If we go to Nagashima again next year, I definitely want to participate.”⁵

While more motivated students, like the above example, tended to write more and utilize the notebook extensively, the path this student traced in the journal was quite typical. Many students expressed fear, hesitation or regrets about participating before the program started. The majority worried their English would not be good enough or they did not understand enough about the history of Hansen’s disease in Japan. Yet, once they arrived on the island, students universally reported a good experience.

Student T expressed a commonly shared feeling in the diary: “The study trip at Nagashima Aisei-en started today. During the orientation study on the 14th, I heard a lot of things, but to tell the truth I didn’t really understand it. But today, we came to the actual place, and saw the real buildings, the jail, the charnel, with our own eyes, I was surprised at how real it became. It deeply impressed me that the things I heard about had actually happened here. Then, hearing from a survivor who experienced it, Nakao-san, really confirmed the impression.⁶ His words were never fluent, and he spoke as if laying out one thought after another, and told a story different from the textbooks. From this, I got a raw sense of history. From here on out, it won’t always be possible to directly speak to people, and as someone who heard the story, I felt a renewed sense of mission in this research project.”

The diaries were, for the most part positive, but they were also a place to record frustrations and doubts, as was the case with the first diary excerpted. By opening lines of communication through the diary, the teacher was aware of which students were struggling and could provide extra support and assistance as necessary.

The diaries also provided a place for students to vent. Working to complete a translation, with each student in charge of different sections, meant that teamwork in the end was essential. Yet, a challenge with service learning will always be that the participants have different motivational levels and unique approaches to the material. This project proved no exception, with some students inclined to be less serious about their work. Thus, some students were frustrated with the working styles of other students and recorded their thoughts in their diaries. One student wrote, “It doesn’t feel like I’m on an island with a history of Hansen’s disease, it’s no different from any normal day with students in the dining room now playing their music and looking at their smart phones and laughing. It’s really a shame.”⁷

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- 5 今回プロジェクトで色々を学んだ。ハンセン病だけじゃなくて差別についてとか人間関係について学べたと思う。…この4日間のつかれもあってか中々頭がまわらない。けど、やっぱりこのプロジェクトに参加して本間によかったと思う。1ヶ月、2ヶ月前までハンセン病って単語も知らへんかったわけやけど、すごく為になる情報、勉強をさせてもらったと思う。初めは“翻訳”に興味があってハンセン病については正直に言う興味がなかった。けど、今回でハンセン病について興味がわいてきた。来年も長島に行けるんやったらぜひ参加したい。
 - 6 今日から長島愛生園の研修が始まった。14日にも事前学習ということで様々な話を聞いたが正直実感はあまりなかった。しかし今日いざ現地に来て、実物の建造物、監房、納骨堂を目の当たりにし、唐突に生々しく感じる。…話で聞いた事がここで実際に行われていたのだと深く印象付けられた。その後の被体験者である中尾さんの話でその印象はより確固なるものとなった。決してなめらかではない彼の一つ一つ思い出すようなその語りから生きた、生の歴史や古典ではない記憶から何より強い伝えねばという使命感を受け取った。これから先いつまでも、ずっと聞ける訳ではない、その話を直接聞いた人間の一人として、その使命感を継ぎ、今回の研修への思いを新たにしたい。

Student M was more discrete but still acknowledged difficulties: “Today, we all translate from Japanese to English. Before the work, we made a schedule. However, it was not clear enough for some of students. I realized difficulties to work together as a team. I wanna something to make better with this experience.”

Learning to work as a team was as much a part of this experience as was the study of Hansen’s disease or learning the practical skills of translation, and the diaries reflect all of these elements. Students were diligent in recording the difficulties and challenges as well as the benefits, frankly acknowledging the parts of the program they felt failed. This in turn gave space for the teacher to acknowledge the shortcomings and begin a dialogue about teamwork and accepting different working styles. At the same time, it was important to let the students know their complaints had been heard and acknowledged as valid. The diaries were thus invaluable in assessing the overall success of the program.

The students’ diaries illustrate many shared points. First, all of the students were apprehensive about the project going into it, and they all worried about what to expect despite the day spent studying in preparation. Second, the diaries also reveal the ways in which students were motivated by visiting Nagashima for themselves and, in particular, hearing the stories from the president of the Residents’ Association, Nakao-san. The diaries clearly state in every case that the student felt that the experience was ultimately a good one. Every participant recorded they had learned a great deal and experienced personal growth over the short trip to Nagashima.

As Student M reflected in English, “I learned many things on this project. Not only about Hansen’s Disease, but also I also learned about discrimination and human relationships.

“For 5 days, I had gained many things. I had thought about things which I have never think about. Through talking with people who lived unusual life gave me new ideas. Next, I wanna share it with somebody because it enrich our lives and our society.”

This view was echoed in other students’ diaries as well. Student I summarized the experience as follows: “*The three nights and four days went by too quickly. At times the translation and the study of Hansen’s Disease was difficult, but it was very important that I came and learned here. I was conflicted about participating and joined at the last minute, but hearing the stories of Nakao-san, Tamura-san, and Kamiya-san, and seeing the museums and the things from that time while translating... Because we saw the actual things, at times the translation was easier and at times actually more difficult. We were able to state our opinions and work together. It was three nights and four days of thinking and learning, and above all communicating that.*”⁸

In conclusion, the expanded portfolio system not only helped motivate participants, but it also became an

7 今、歌が流れ、学生がスマホを見て笑っている食堂にいるところは、日常と変わりがなく、ハンセン病の歴史のある島にいる気がしない。とても残念。

8 この3泊4日とても早すぎました。翻訳もハンセン病の勉強もときにつらくなるときもありましたが、ここにきて学んだことはとても大切なものになりました。最初飛び入りで参加するときはずごく迷いましたが、中尾さん田村さん神谷さんたちのお話をきいたり、歴史館で実際の当時の物をみたりして、翻訳をして。実際の物をみたりしたからこそ翻訳しやすかったり、逆に難しかったりしました。みんなでお互いに意見を言い合いを行うことができました。考え、学び、それを以下に伝えるかを学べる3泊4日でした。

important means of communication with the teacher and the peer group. Whether working together and providing feedback or recording diaries, the journals were a dialogic tool that encompassed, recorded and defined the experience of staying and working on Nagashima. The notebooks were an essential part of the program, student reflection on the experience when they returned to the classroom, and a central part of a dialogue that is still ongoing.

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