The role of self-access learning in preparing Japanese students for global citizenship

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Overview

- Evolution of self-access language learning (SALL)
- Affordances offered by SALL & SALL facilities
- SALL and global citizenship
- Challenges and future directions
Your experiences of self-access?

- As teachers/administrators and/or
- As learners

Self-Access facilities?

Independent learning programmes?

Learner autonomy as a programme goal?
Evolution of self-access language learning (SALL)
What’s your image of a self-access centre/language learning space?

- Materials
- Staff Roles
- Equipment
- Services
Precursor to self-access

Language labs (audiolingual methods)
## Types of Language Learning Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example name</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centre</td>
<td>Materials, worksheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Lounge</td>
<td>Target Language(s) Speaking Practice (CLT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Village / International Room</td>
<td>Intercultural Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Learning Centre</td>
<td>Learner autonomy/metacognitive development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Cafe</td>
<td>Social Learning (sociocultural theory)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource Centre

- Supplement classroom learning
- Students study individually

Worksheets

- Books
- Audio-visual materials
  - Movies
  - Satellite TV
Language Lounge

- Aim: Target Language Practice
- CLT
- EFL context
Global Village

- Aim: Intercultural Exchange
- Cultural events
- Language exchange
Independent Learning Centres

- Aim: Foster autonomy
- Resources ≠ Autonomy
- Language Advising/Counselling as field
  - Gremmo (1995)
  - Mozzon-McPherson & Vismans (2001)
Social Learning Spaces

- Learning as socially mediated action
- Interdependence
- Importance of student peers
- Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998)
- Nexus of Practice (mediated discourse analysis) (Scollon, 2001)
Self-access in Japan

1999
Soka University
World Language Center (WLC)
2013 - SPACe

2001
Kanda University of International Studies
Self-Access Learning Centre (SALC)

2004
Akita International University
Self-Access Centre (SAC)
2008 - Language Development and Intercultural Studies Center (LDIC)
JASAL

- Japan Association for Self-Access Learning
- Founded 2005
- 2015 – 180 members
- Currently 27 registered centres in Japan ...but many more emerging!

http://jasalorg.wordpress.com
Affordances offered by SALL & SALL facilities
Discussion

- How can students benefit from SALL facilities on campus?
- How can institutions benefit?
Language Practice

- Safe environment for target language practice
- Mono & multilingual centres
- English-only policies – policing language use?
Self-directed skills development

- Language Advising/Counselling Services
- Dialogue & reflection
- Metacognitive skill development (Wenden, 1998)
  - PIME
    - Planning
    - Implementing
    - Monitoring
    - Evaluating (Thornton, 2010)
Motivation for learning

- Hub for like-minded people
- (Near peer) Role-models (Murphey, 1996)
- Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998)
International friendships

- Informal environment for making friends
- Spark interest in overseas & language learning
- Develop international posture (Yashima, 2002)
Intercultural Communication

"C”ulture or “c”ulture?
SALL and global citizenship
What is “global jinzai”?  

- MEXT/METI (2011):  
  I. Linguistic and communicative competence  
  II. Independence and assertiveness, determination to challenge oneself, cooperativeness and flexibility, sense of responsibility and duty  
  III. Understanding of foreign cultures and identity as a Japanese
Criticisms of MEXT definition

- Too narrow
- Overseas experience over domestic change
- Too focused on linguistic competence (and especially English education)
  - Measurable
- Japanese-ness as a fixed construct – contradiction?

(Chapple, 2013)
Challenges to creating global jinzai?

- How can we encourage Japanese young people to gain international experience / study abroad?
- How can we develop effective language and study abroad programmes?
- How can we attract more students from overseas to study at Japanese universities?
- Is there a place for these “globalised” citizens once back in Japan?
Challenges to creating global jinzai

- Decline in Study Abroad since 2004
- Why?
  - oversupply of domestic higher education
  - decrease in affordability
  - Lack of compatibility with Japanese HE (credit transfer etc.)
  - Timing for Job-hunting
  - Japanese can’t compete

(Ota, cited in Yonezawa, 2014)
What can SALL facilities offer?

- Inspiration/Preparation for Study Abroad
- Alternative to Study Abroad
- Globalised environment in Japan
Attributes of Global Jinzai

- Linguistic and communicative competence

SALL offers:

- Authentic communication opportunities
Attributes of Global Jinzai

- Independence and assertiveness, determination to challenge oneself, cooperativeness and flexibility, sense of responsibility and duty

**SALL offers:**

- Opportunities to develop self-directed language learning skills (Advising)
- Work experience in quasi-international environment
Attributes of Global Jinzai

- Understanding of foreign cultures and identity as a Japanese

**SALL offers:**

- Opportunities to learn about foreign cultures through
  - Friendships with international students
  - Workshops and sessions offered by international faculty and staff
- Increased awareness of Japanese identity
Challenges and future directions for SALL
Technological advances

“We have the internet now!”
“Self-access centres are redundant.”
No need for physical materials & centres with expensive staff.

But...

- Relationships formed in SACs can be powerful motivators for learning
- Metacognitive development requires trained staff
- EFL environment – language practice
Shrinking university budgets

“Equipping and staffing centres is expensive.”

But...

- Cheaper than sending 100s of students abroad?
- Positive impact on other areas of study
- Good PR (Open Campus etc.)
- Keep up with the Joneses.
Lack of understanding

“What do you do all day exactly?!”
“Your job is so easy – you just chat with students!”
“What will SALL improve TOEIC scores?”

Leads to...

Understaffing (academic & administrative)

Pressure for numerical data
Closed community?

“That place is only for fluent speakers.”
“I’m not welcome there.”

Solutions

- PR & incentives
- Staff training
- Integration with curriculum
- Good relationships with Faculty
Learning Commons vs SAC

Cross pollination of ideas

Dedicated space for shared interests
Future directions?

- More centres across Japan
- More use of mobile devices
- Emphasis on social learning
- SACs as hubs for cultural exchange
- More multilingual centres
- Greater appreciation of importance of self-directed learning skills/learner autonomy?
SALL & Global Citizenship?

- Global jinzai cannot be nurtured in classrooms alone
- Intercultural communicative competence requires authentic communication in informal & formal environments with a variety of people
SALL & Global Citizenship?

- Language Learning Spaces can provide:
  - Opportunities for authentic interactions in foreign languages
  - Access to other cultures through meaningful human relationships
  - Opportunities to develop autonomous learning skills
  - A bridge or alternative to study abroad
Thank you!
Any comments/questions?

http://kandaeli.academia.edu/KatherineThornton
JASAL 10th Anniversary Conference

- 12 Dec., 2015 10:00 – 16:00
- Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages (神田外語学院) Tokyo, Kanda
- 12 presentations on self-access learning
- Free
- Pre-registration required

http://jasalorg.wordpress.com
References


References


