Development of an EMI Course with the Integration of Innovative Methods: Effects on Students' Confidence, Knowledge, and Skills

Curtis Chu and Mariko Takahashi
Setsunan University, Japan

ABSTRACT

While various innovative pedagogical methods have been proven effective in facilitating the development of students' English language skills in different contexts, this study explores the implementation of several innovative methods in one EMI course, which includes collaborative online international learning (COIL), content language integrated learning (CLIL), problem-posing education (PPE), and project-based learning (PBL). Deliberate considerations were made in choosing the methods: COIL to stimulate motivation; CLIL and PPE to promote content learning (input); and PBL to facilitate content-integrated learning outcomes (output). The course outcome was assessed with pre- and postcourse questionnaires on the use of English for communicative purposes. The findings suggest that the course was highly effective in promoting the development of participants' confidence, knowledge, and skills, with large effect sizes. Both participants' expectations for the course and the course objectives were met. The use of innovative methods strongly contributed to the positive outcomes of the course in this case.

Keywords: active learning, COIL, curriculum design, EMI, PBL

INTRODUCTION

While innovative methods in teaching, such as collaborative online international learning (COIL), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), problem-posing education (PPE), and project-based learning (PBL), have been established in different contexts, it is worth investigating the effects of integrating these approaches into a single course while deliberately arranging them with specific considerations. COIL can generate student interest and motivation (Gokcora, 2021; Nishio et al., 2020; Tuke et al., 2021); CLIL and PPE enable students to acquire both content and language (CLIL: Coyle, 2007; Mehisto et al., 2008; PPE: Crookes, 2013; Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004); and PBL allows students to engage in the process of learning through investigation and produce a product as their learning outcome (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2005).
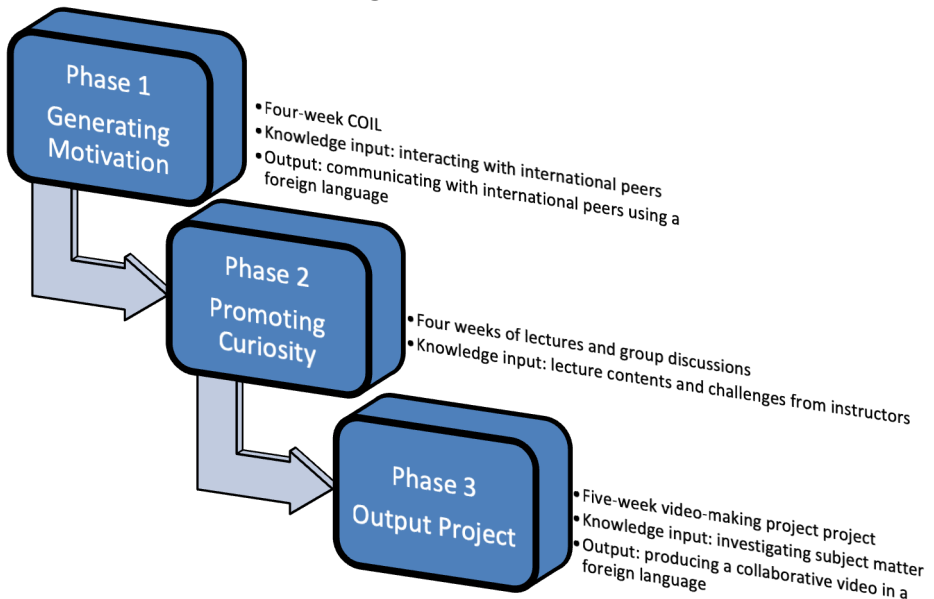
In addition to innovative methods, through English as a medium of instruction (EMI), students might be able to increase their confidence in using English as a tool of communication. Studies have shown that EMI in higher education can be significant for content learning and English as an international language (Hino, 2017) and may increase students' confidence in spoken English (Zhang & Pladevall-Ballester, 2023). However, studies have also shown that teaching with an EMI approach does not seem to be effective in terms of improving academic performance and English proficiency (Arroyo-Barrigüete et al., 2022; Lei & Hu, 2014; Lin & Lei, 2021). Several possible factors that contribute to ineffective EMI classrooms have been identified, such as excessive use of teacher-centered pedagogy, limited classroom interactions, lack of English proficiency, and lack of academic writing instruction (Ismailov & Yamamoto, 2021; Kojima, 2019). To address such factors, innovative methods (COIL, PPE, CLIL, and PBL) could be employed to provide opportunities for the extensive use of group work, promoting dialog though questions, checking for vocabulary comprehension, and providing instructions on academic writing, which could contribute to the effective implementation of EMI.

Thus, the objectives of this study are to develop an EMI course that integrates innovative methods such as collaborative online international learning (COIL), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), problem-posing education (PPE), and project-based learning (PBL) and to investigate how the course affects participants' confidence, knowledge, and skills corresponding to the content of the course in aspects related to using English as a tool of communication.

Development and Implementation of the Curriculum with Innovative Methods

This study took place in a new course for second-year students at the Department of International Studies at a private university in Japan. The assigned theme of the course was Japanese society and culture. The two classes (Classes A and B) where the current study was conducted were for students who had applied and been accepted to the new English Language Honors Track at the department, with each class consisting of 13 students, and the classes met once a week for 90 minutes for 15 weeks in the spring semester of the 2023 academic year. It should be noted that there were seven other classes with the same theme, but the "course" in the following refers to the two classes for students in the English Language Honors Track.

Figure 1: Outline of the course design

Phase 1 Generating Motivation
- Four-week COIL
- Knowledge input: interacting with international peers
- Output: communicating with international peers using a foreign language

Phase 2 Promoting Curiosity
- Four weeks of lectures and group discussions
- Knowledge input: lecture contents and challenges from instructors

Phase 3 Output Project
- Five-week video-making project project
- Knowledge input: investigating subject matter
- Output: producing a collaborative video in a foreign language

The course had four objectives: 1. To develop a further understanding of Japanese society and culture by using English; 2. To develop a sense of understanding regarding how Japanese society and culture are perceived abroad by looking at materials on Japan written in other countries; 3. To communicate ideas and opinions on Japanese society and culture with people in Japan and in other countries by using English; 4. To further develop confidence in using English as a communication tool.

To promote active learning, innovative methods such as COIL, CLIL, PPE, and PBL were incorporated into the three-phase design of the new English course, namely, generating motivation, promoting curiosity, and generating an output project. The outline of the three phases and their pedagogical elements are shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Overview of the COIL Project

Week	Topic	Description of Tasks
1	Self-introductions	1. Watch self-introductions from U.S. partners and respond with comments/questions using text 2. Create and upload self-introduction videos 3. Choose the theme for culture presentation and develop it as an assignment
2	Culture presentation (1/2)	1. Watch responses from self-introduction videos and respond with text 2. Work on culture presentation, record it, and upload to share with partners.
3	Culture presentation 2 (2/2)	1. Watch presentation videos from U.S. partners 2. Comment on presentation videos with text
4	Feedback, farewell, and reflection	1. Read feedback from U.S. partners 2. Record and upload farewell video 3. Reflective writing

In Week 1, the students met in their assigned classrooms and engaged in self-introduction activities. The first phase of the course began on Week 2, where a four-week COIL project was assigned where students conducted asynchronous virtual exchanges for four weeks using videos on the Flip platform with peers from a community college in the United States. In the second phase of the course, lectures on various topics related to Japanese society and culture were given to the students, and they were challenged by the instructors to think deeply about the topics. In the final phase of the course, a five-week collaborative video-making project was assigned, and the students were asked to investigate a topic of their choice to create content for the video. In Week 15, the students took an online test that assessed their English skills in their classrooms separately. The details of the three phases are explained below.

Generating Motivation with COIL

The first project of the course, a four-week COIL project on culture exchange, was implemented from Week 2 to Week 5 of the course. Students from both class A and class B joined the same classroom throughout the duration of this project. The purpose of the COIL was to stimulate motivation and interest in the course by offering students an exciting opportunity to communicate with native English speakers in the United States. Studies have shown that virtual exchange can motivate students to study harder and increase their interest in learning about culture (Luo & Yang, 2022; Schenker, 2013; Yamamoto, 2022). Therefore, a COIL project was designed in the early stage of the course as an attempt to stimulate motivation and interest. An overview of the COIL project can be found in Table 1.

In the first week of the COIL (Week 2), students made videos in groups to introduce themselves to their international partners. The first stage of the COIL is for students to get to know each other by engaging in ice-breaking activities, where in this case, exchanging self-introductions. Students in the United States first shared their self-introduction videos, and they talked about their interests, hometowns, hobbies, studies, and travels and asked questions about Japan. Local students first watched their partner's video before making their own group self-introduction video so that they could include their responses to their partner's questions in their video. Before the end of the class, local students were requested to choose a topic for their group presentation. Among the eight groups of students (each group with three to four members), two groups chose "Traditional Festivals in Japan", two groups "Japanese Culture", two groups "Anime", and two groups "Food in Japan". Local students had preliminary discussions with their group members regarding the presentation before class ended.

In the second week (Week 3), students watched the responses to their self-introduction videos and responded on Flip using text. Then, they worked in their groups to continue preparing for their group presentation the following week. Students needed to record their presentation in a video and share it with their American partners before class the following week.

In the third week (Week 4), students watched the presentations from their partners together in class. Their partners reported on American culture that they thought would be surprising to their Japanese partners, which included manners, communication, holidays, school, and what they had learned about Japanese culture. While students watched presentation videos from their partners, they used text to provide comments on the videos to engage in asynchronous conversation. Prompts were provided for local students to leave comments to their partners, such as "What did you find most interesting in the video?", "Is there anything that you disagree with or think is not accurate in the video, especially when American

students talk about Japanese culture?", and "What are some questions that you might have and want to know more about from your US partners?".

In the final week of the COIL (Week 5), students read comments from their partners on their presentation videos and exchanged opinions through text. Then, they exchanged farewell videos and were encouraged to exchange contact information to continue building their relationships. Before the end of the class, students were assigned to write a reflective essay on their COIL experience, which both concluded the COIL and set the tone to focus on English language learning for the second phase of the course. Students were provided with scaffolding on how to write academically.

Promoting Curiosity through English-Mediated Lectures

In the second phase of the course (Week 6 to Week 9), classes A and B met separately in their respective classrooms to further develop their knowledge of Japanese society and culture in English. Each instructor adopted an approach that they were familiar with to teach the four sessions between the two projects.

In one of the classes, the instructor adopted a soft CLIL approach to facilitate language learning as well as content learning. CLIL is the acronym for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It is defined by Mehisto et al. (2008) as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (p. 9). The type of CLIL that places more on language learning is referred to as soft CLIL (Ikeda, 2013). In this class, the themes of each session were as follows: the popular culture of Japan (Week 6), the traditional culture of Japan (Week 7), the customs and features of Japanese society (Week 8), and the business and economy of Japan (Week 9).

At the beginning of each session, a short discussion question related to the theme of the session was given, and the students engaged in group discussion in English for several minutes. The instructor then implemented two activities in each session: the first activity was a language learning-oriented activity, and the second was a content-learning-oriented group activity. In Week 6, the students read an article written by an American reporter on the popularity of a long-running Japanese anime series, learned relevant vocabulary, and answered comprehension questions. They then engaged in the dubbing activity of a Japanese anime clip, focusing more on how to convey the content of the clip to an international audience than on the accuracy of the translation of each line. In Week 7, the students watched a video clip produced by an American broadcasting company on Japanese traditional craft and answered listening comprehension questions. The second activity involved planning a day tour of a prefecture in Kansai with Japanese traditional food and craft experiences for tourists from abroad. In Week 8, a video clip on Japanese customs from the perspective of a foreign tourist was utilized as

listening material as well as material for discussion. The students then engaged in a poster-making activity on the campus etiquette of the university. In Week 9, the students first read excerpts of a report on the Japanese economy published by an international organization. As the second activity, they gathered information on a company based in Kansai and performed a short group presentation.

In the other class, the instructor adopted a problem-posing education (PPE) approach to stimulate dialog and engage students in thinking about problems related to Japanese culture and society. From the lens of Freirean pedagogy (Freire, 2000), PPE rejects the notion of banking education, which assumes that teachers are knowledgeable and that students know nothing; therefore, teachers give lectures to deposit knowledge, and students can only store deposits of knowledge. Instead, by posing problems that relate to students themselves and their existence with the world, students are inclined to respond to these challenges.

Four themes were selected for four sessions before moving into the next phase of the course. The themes were chosen based on the responses from students when asked what topics they are interested in, which are gender equality (Week 6), food loss and waste (Week 7), culture and customs (Week 8), and tourism and over-tourism (Week 9). Each session was structured in the following way: first, the instructor presented background information and definitions of key concepts related to the weekly topic. Then, the instructor poses several questions for students to discuss with their group members. When students share with the class results from their group discussions, the instructor challenges their responses by posing more questions or asking for justifications. After the discussions and dialogs, the instructor presented cases of social problems related to the weekly theme in the context of Japan. The cases were presented along with questions related to the existence of students. Resources on the internet were adopted to help students comprehend weekly themes, such as the Sustainable Development Report, news articles on gender differences in the national parliament, government statistics on annual food loss, videos on traditional food culture, and infographics on public manners for tourists. In addition to learning from resources provided by the instructor, students also learned from each other through sharing mini-presentations on initiatives to reduce food loss by major food companies.

Collaborative Video-Making Project

As the second main task of the course, a collaborative video-making project on Japanese society and culture was implemented from Week 10 to Week 14. Both classes were gathered in the same classroom to engage in this project. The purpose of the project was to have students analyze and communicate features of Japanese society or culture in a video format in a collaborative and creative manner. More specifically, the project aimed to have students gather materials and data relevant to the topic of their choice, analyze and summarize them, and connect

the findings to their real-life contexts by exploring the neighborhood or conducting interviews to produce videos that can share their ideas and findings with their classmates and a wider university community.

This project was developed within the framework of project-based learning (PBL). Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2005) explained PBL as the type of learning where "students engage in real, meaningful problems that are important to them" (p. 318). Studies have shown that video-making projects and tasks can promote the active engagement of students (e.g., Aksel & Gürman-Kahraman, 2014; Hafner, 2014; Yeh et al., 2020). For example, H. Huang (2015) illustrated how a video-producing project facilitated language learning and motivation in an EFL course in Taiwan. In H. Huang (2015), the participants produced videos on the genres of entertainment, technology, travel, or sports individually; however, the positive impact of collaborative video-producing projects has also been attested to in the literature. Collaborative learning, or "instructional arrangements that involve two or more students working together on a shared learning goal", helps students learn effectively (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019, p. 71). H. W. Huang (2021) implemented a collaborative vlog (video blog) making task on preassigned topics of Chinese food culture and work-life balance and noted that the task helped the participants improve their speaking performance in English, technology skills, and communication and collaboration skills. Furthermore, Takahashi (2023) conducted a collaborative travel vlog-producing task in an EFL classroom with a CLIL (content and language integrated learning) approach and showed that the task functioned as a motivational CLIL task that facilitated language and content learning. Accordingly, integrating a collaborative video-making project into the current EMI course was justified based on the literature.

In the first class (Week 10), the instructors distributed a handout outlining the overview, schedule, and evaluation criteria of the project. The length of the video had to be between five and six minutes, and there were four requirements. First, all the group members needed to speak English for approximately one minute in the video. Second, videos had to include some form of data, such as interview data and concrete examples. Third, the students were asked to film at least part of their video outside of the classroom either on campus or off campus. Fourth, they had to edit the video by using a video editing app of their choice. There were seven criteria for evaluation: language, content, delivery, structure, editing, collaboration, and length. For each category, a detailed explanation was given on the handout.

The students were then randomly divided into groups. Each class formed four groups, and as there were 13 students in each class, as mentioned above, six groups had three students, and two groups had four students. Each group then chose a theme from the five themes on Japanese society and culture decided by the instructors beforehand. The themes were the Japanese economy (2 groups), social issues of Japan (2 groups), tourism (2 groups), Japanese popular culture (1 group),

and Japanese traditional culture (1 group). Each group then chose a topic relevant to the theme and started to gather information and materials to determine the structure and specific content of the video.

In the second class (Week 11), the students continued to plan for their group's video. All the groups finalized their plans by the middle of the class, and the groups who could film on campus went to shoot videos outside of the classroom. The groups who decided to film off-campus discussed their schedule and made additional preparations. In the third class (Week 12), the groups who still needed to film on campus continued to film outside, and the groups who had finished filming started to edit the video. Most of the groups decided to use CapCut, a mobile video editing app by ByteDance, for editing. In the fourth class (Week 13), all the groups worked on editing the video. The deadline for submission of the video was two days before the fifth class. Throughout these four classes, the instructors monitored the students' progress and offered advice to each group in turn. They also checked the script of the narration before the students recorded a voice-over. The students also posted a brief report of the progress of the day on one of the university's learning management systems at the end of each class.

In the fifth class (Week 14), the videos were viewed in the format of a contest. The event was organized by the instructors of the course and an English teachers' group at the department that specializes in innovation in English education. The order of the videos was decided by one of the instructors, and a preview of the videos was posted on the learning management system on the previous day. On the day of the contest, another faculty member was invited as the head judge and evaluated the videos with one of the instructors, choosing three winning videos. The other instructor played the role of the host. The students also voted for their favorite video to choose the peer review award. Table 2 summarizes the content of the videos. The students answered a reflection questionnaire of the course (discussed below), while the judges consulted each other. At the end of the class, an award ceremony was held, followed by feedback from the judges and the instructors.

Table 2: Summary of the Content of the Videos

Genre	Content
Economy #1	University students' daily routine and Japanese economy
Economy #2	University students and part-time jobs
Social issues #1	LGBTQ issues
Social issues #2	The university's measures against natural disasters
Tourism #1	Sightseeing spots in Nara and Osaka
Tourism #2	Hidden sightseeing spots in Kobe, Nara, and Osaka
Traditional culture	Historical places in the neighborhood
Popular culture	Unique cafes of Japan

DATA COLLECTION AND FINDING

The data for this study were gathered using pre- and postcourse questionnaires administered via Microsoft Forms. For quantitative data, 15 questions divided into three dimensions on a Likert scale from 0 to 6 were administered. Dimension One surveyed students' confidence in using English to talk about various aspects of Japanese society and culture. Dimension Two surveyed students' knowledge of various aspects of Japanese society and culture. The final dimension surveyed students' skills that were involved in the course. Three additional questions were added to the postquestionnaire to survey whether students felt that the COIL, lecture, and video-making project affected their confidence in using English for communicative purposes. For qualitative data, three open-ended questions were asked in the precourse questionnaire, which included questions about expectations for the course, the merits of talking about Japan, and studies in the English Language Honors Track program. Three open-ended questions, which included questions about memorable experiences, the merits of talking about Japan, reflections on the English Language Honors Track program; and suggestions, were asked in the postcourse questionnaire. Details of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

Twenty-four second-year participants majoring in international studies who were enrolled in the course volunteered to complete both the pre- and postcourse questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered in Japanese, and students were allowed to respond in either English or Japanese. The reliability analysis of both the pre- and postcourse questionnaires revealed Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .831 to .914, indicating that the quantitative data were reliable, as shown in Table 3. Regarding qualitative data, the responses were translated into English for analysis, and the translation was confirmed by the researchers.

Table 3: Reliability of Pre- and Postcourse Questionnaires

Dimension	N	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
			Pretest	Posttest
Confidence	24	5	.908	.914
Knowledge	24	5	.847	.848
Skills	24	5	.831	.836

Regarding whether students felt that the three phases of the course affected their confidence in using English for communicative purposes, the average score for the COIL phase was 4.3 (out of 6), that for the lecture phase was 4.1, and that for the video-making phase was 4.5.

Quantitative Findings

To determine whether the data were normally distributed, the Shapiro–Wilk test of normality was used. The results indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected for both the precourse questionnaire (p = .594) and the postcourse questionnaire (p = .092); therefore, the data were normally distributed. Thus, parametric paired sample t tests were adopted to compare pre- and postcourse data.

As shown in Table 4 below, all three dimensions and total pre- and posttest scores were compared. Students' scores on confidence in using English to talk about Japan, knowledge about Japanese culture and society, and skills involved in the course (sharing information about Japan, making videos, presenting, communicating, and comprehending videos in English) significantly increased in the postcourse questionnaire.

Table 4: Paired Sample T-test and Cohen's D

	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Cohen's D
Pair 1 (Confidence) Pretest-Posttest	-1.40	-6.29	23	.000	1.05
Pair 2 (Knowledge) Pretest-Posttest	-1.09	-6.14	23	.000	1.20
Pair 3 (Skills) Pretest-Posttest	-1.37	-9.78	23	.000	1.53
Pair 4 (Total) Pretest-Posttest	-1.29	-8.22	23	.000	1.49

For the first dimension of students' confidence, the posttest scores $(M = 3.52, SD = 1.06)$ were significantly greater than the pretest scores $(M = 2.12, SD = 1.01)$ $(t = -6.29, p = <.001)$. The effect size for the difference between the pre- and posttests was calculated using Cohen's d. A value of 1.05 suggested a large effect, where 85.3% of the participants had a higher mean score in the posttest compared to those in the pretest (Cohen's U_3), and there was a 77.1% chance that a participant picked at random in the posttest would have a higher score than a person picked at random in the pretest (probability of superiority).

For the second dimension of students' knowledge, the posttest scores $(M = 4.23, SD = .79)$ were significantly greater than the pretest scores $(M = 3.14, SD = 1.01)$ $(t = -6.14, p = <.001)$. The effect size of 1.20 suggested a large effect, where 88.5% of the participants had a higher mean score in the posttest than in the pretest (Cohen's U_3), and there was an 80.2% chance that a participant picked at random in the posttest would have a higher score than a person picked at random in the pretest (probability of superiority).

For the third dimension of students' skills, the posttest scores *(M = 4.13, SD = .82)* were significantly greater than the pretest scores ($M = 2.76$, $SD = .97$) *(t = –9.78, p = <.001)*. The effect size of 1.53 suggested a large effect, where 93.7% of the participants had a higher mean score in the posttest than in the pretest (Cohen's U_3), and there was an 86% chance that a participant picked at random in the posttest would have a higher score than a person picked at random in the pretest (probability of superiority).

Finally, for the total score, the posttest scores *(M = 3.96, SD = .82)* were significantly greater than the pretest scores ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .91$) *(t = –9.78, p = <.001)*. The effect size of 1.49 suggested a large effect, where 93.2% of the participants had a higher mean score in the posttest than in the pretest (Cohen's U_3), and there was an 85.4% chance that a participant picked at random in the posttest would have a higher score than a person picked at random in the pretest (probability of superiority).

Qualitative Findings

To capture the students' reactions to the course, open-ended questions were included in both the pre- and postcourse questionnaires. The data were first coded according to the question number and the student code name; for example, Q1-S1 represents Student number 1's response to Question number 1. Then, the coded data were analyzed using content analysis (Patton, 2002) to discover recurring themes.

The students answered three open-ended questions before the course: Q1. What are your expectations for the course? Q2. What do you think are the merits of being able to talk about Japan in English? Q3. What are your resolutions to start studying in the English Language Honors Track? After the course, they answered three open-ended questions: Q4. What were your memorable experiences in the course? Q5. What do you think are the merits of being able to talk about Japan in English? Q6. What are your thoughts after spending one semester in class for students in the English Language Honors Track? The responses by the students were coded by the researchers to identify recurring themes. Most of the students wrote their answers in Japanese, and the examples below were translated into English by the researchers. "S" in the sections below refers to student identification numbers assigned randomly for the purpose of this analysis.

For Q1 (expectations), two themes were identified: improving English communication skills and learning about Japanese culture and society. The majority of the students mentioned that they wanted to improve their English communication skills to express themselves well in English (S10, S23), and several students mentioned that they wanted to gain more knowledge of Japanese culture and society (S11, S12).

Q1-S10: To be able to communicate my opinions in English
Q1-S23: To be able to speak English fluently
Q1-S11: To learn more about Japanese culture and society
Q1-S12: To gain knowledge of the Japanese economy and culture

For Q3 (resolutions), almost all the students wrote about improving their English skills (S6, S16, S24), and a few students focused on collaboration with peers (S3).

Q3-S6: I want to develop my English skills by using English confidently and actively while having fun studying English.
Q3-S16: I will make efforts to improve my English speaking and listening skills as much as possible.
Q3-S24: I want to be able to express my thoughts fluently in English.
Q3-S3: I will do my best by working together with my friends.

To determine to what extent the students' expectations and personal goals expressed in Q1 and Q3 were achieved through the course, their answers to Q6 (thought after the course) were analyzed next. Four themes emerged from the students' responses: opportunities to use English, confidence in using English, development of knowledge of Japan, and enjoyment of the course. The students observed that there were many opportunities to express themselves in English during class, including interactions with students from abroad (S10, S15), which helped them become more confident in using English (S4, S5). They also pointed out that they were able to gain knowledge of Japan in the course (S9). In addition, the students agreed that the course was highly enjoyable (S20).

Q6-S10: It was good to have many opportunities to use English, such as interacting with American students and making presentations and videos in English.
Q6-S15: There were more opportunities to use English than before, and I became more interested in English as a result.
Q6-S4: I had opportunities to use English actively, and now I feel less afraid of expressing my opinions in English.
Q6-S5: I started to think that speaking English rather than just studying grammar is the best way to improve my speaking skills and started to speak English more.
Q6-S9: I was surprised that I did not know much about Japan, but this class gave me many opportunities to think about Japan. Now that I know more about Japan than before, I want to talk about it when I go abroad.
Q6-S20: All the content was truly fun, and I enjoyed learning English.

Q2 and Q5 (merits of being able to talk about Japan in English) were the same questions and were used for comparing the students' responses before and after the course. The themes of the responses were consistent before and after the course: conveying the attraction of Japan (Q2-S1, Q5-S17) and being able to respond to questions about Japan (Q2-S24, Q5-S6). However, the answers by the students became more specific and detailed after the course.

> Q2-S1: We will be able to convey the attraction of Japan to people overseas.
> Q5-S17: By being able to introduce Japan in detail, we can help foreign people become interested in different aspects of Japan. In other words, introducing Japan may help foreign people cultivate new interests.
> Q2-S24: We will be able to help tourists from abroad.
> Q5-S6: We will be able to answer questions about Japan when we interact with people from other countries. Additionally, I think that being able to explain about Japan in English will make them more interested in Japan, and we will be able to get to know each other better.

Regarding Q4 (memorable experiences), three themes emerged: COIL, group activities, and video-making projects. The students said that they enjoyed exchanging videos and comments with American students and that COIL helped them learn about different cultures (S5, S15). They also mentioned that the video-making project was engaging because it enabled them to go outside of the classroom to gather materials on Japanese society (S2, S16). In addition, some of the students referred to group activities in the lecture weeks as memorable experiences (S9, S14).

> Q4-S5: Sharing and commenting on each other's culture with American students was a good opportunity for learning about different cultures and for improving my English.
> Q4-S15: I enjoyed using English to introduce Japanese culture and learn about American culture when we interacted with American students online.
> Q4-S2: It was not easy to conduct interviews, translate them into English, and create a video that was easy to understand. However, the sense of achievement was great when we watched our video together.
> Q4-S16: The video-making project was the most memorable because we actively moved around to shoot videos.
> Q4-S9: I remember the anime dubbing activity the most.
> Q4-S14: I was able to learn about detailed differences such as between food loss and food waste and discuss relevant issues with my classmates.

These three themes matched with the three components of the course. Indeed, the students agreed that each section helped them learn to talk about Japan in English.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings from both quantitative and qualitative data revealed students' increased confidence in using English to talk about Japan, their knowledge about Japan, and their skills related to sharing information about Japan. The innovative methods adopted in the course also indicated a potential benefit to the positive development of students.

Confidence

In terms of confidence, a large effect size (Cohen's d = 1.05) was found, which suggests that students felt more confident in their English skills to a statistically significant degree. This could be due to the benefit of well-organized EMI instructions (Zhang & Pladevall Ballester, 2023), and the students' reflection comments indicated that the course helped them improve their confidence in speaking and using English (e.g., Q6-S4, Q6-S5). Students used text to continue the conversation on the exchange of self-introduction videos with their international partners, and they received comments from them, which could be interpreted as their videos being viewed and the contents being understood. The same could be applied to their culture presentation videos. For example, one of the groups presented on Japanese tea culture. The group received comments such as "Thank you for sharing a lot of good information about Japanese tea", "I would love to participate in the tea ceremony", and "It looks and sounds so elegant and pleasant", and they received questions such as "What kind of tea is typically served for tea ceremony?", "Are there any special occasions for tea ceremonies?", and "Do you guys attend tea ceremonies?". The comments showed that their videos had been viewed and comprehended, and the questions asked for additional information that was not provided in the video showed that the viewers were engaged by the contents of their videos.

In addition to COIL, the lecture phase of the course likely contributed to an increase in students' confidence in using English. New vocabulary in the lectures was often explained during class. Finally, the last phase of the course likely contributed to students' confidence, where they investigated a topic of their choice and created a video in English to introduce their investigation. Students worked in groups, and they learned from each other when deciding how English would be used in their videos. Some groups also asked their instructor to help them proofread their script, and the instructor explained to students why the suggested edits to the script were recommended.

Knowledge

In terms of knowledge about Japanese society and culture, a larger effect size was discovered (Cohen's d = 1.20), showing that students believe that they have acquired more knowledge through the content of the course. They also expressed in their comments that the course provided them with opportunities to think about Japan and that they gained enough knowledge to convey the attraction of Japan and to answer questions about Japan (e.g., Q5-S6, Q5-S17, Q6-S9). Starting from the COIL phase, students had to research a chosen Japanese cultural topic, were asked questions by their international peers, had to seek out how to respond to the questions, and watched videos on how their international partners perceived Japanese culture.

While the lectures might be self-explanatory since content on Japanese society and culture was provided, in the class with the PPE approach, students had opportunities to voice their opinions in English and obtain content knowledge, which aligns with the suggestions of Wallerstein (2004) and Crookes (2013). For instance, students were asked to discuss possible explanations for certain social issues, and when students presented their ideas, they were often challenged to think of "why". Students would then further discuss with their group members, and this process required them to investigate more deeply into the subject matter and extend their ideas to English. One student verbally mentioned that the teacher always asked her why when she presented her ideas, which made her consider different aspects of her ideas.

Video-making projects require more in-depth research on the chosen topic than COIL. Students performed fieldwork outside of the classroom, for example, local city ruins, nonprofit organizations, tourist destinations, and different corners of the campus. They took photos and videos and conducted interviews as part of their research. Therefore, as attested by the CLIL approach (Coyle, 2007; Mehisto et al., 2008), the process of inquiring about knowledge and fieldwork likely enabled students to gain knowledge on the subject matter.

Skills

In terms of skills involved in the course, the largest effect was found in this dimension (Cohen's d = 1.53). The five items in this dimension (Appendix 1) surveyed the abilities to share information on Japan in English, make videos about Japan in English, do presentations on Japanese culture in English, communicate with people in other countries in English, and comprehend videos about foreign cultures in English. Students shared information on Japan and did presentations in English during the COIL phase and in the video-making project, experienced

communicating with international partners during the COIL, and watched videos created by their international partners.

While the activities in the course correspond to the questions surveyed in this dimension, the positive outcome with the large effect size was a delightful surprise. The students had been determined to improve their English skills as members registered to the special English language track (e.g., Q3-S6, Q3-S16), and they had expected the course to help them develop English communication skills (e.g., Q1-S10, Q1-S23). The course was able to meet the students' expectations, as they observed that there were many opportunities to use English throughout the course (e.g., Q6-S10, Q6-S15). Collaborative activities promote and reinforce learning (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019), and it is likely that the incorporation of various collaborative tasks also contributes to improving participants' skills. Thus, we interpret this outcome as the successful implementation of course activities that were effective at cultivating student skills.

Achieving the Objectives of the Course through Innovative Methods

The students responded to three questions on whether they felt that COIL, lectures, and video-making projects increased their confidence in using English for communicative purposes. The average scores for COIL (4.3 out of 6), CLIL/PPE approach lectures (4.1 out of 6) and video-making projects (4.5 out of 6) support the positive effects of the innovative methods. The students' comments also showed that the integration of innovative methods, including COIL, CLIL, PPE, and PBL, was effective in achieving the objectives of the course. The course aimed to improve students' confidence in using English to talk about Japan and to develop their understanding of Japanese society and culture through the use of English. Through the 15-week course, the students became more aware of their own culture and society (e.g., Q6-S9) and gained more confidence in talking about Japan in English (e.g., Q5-S6), as shown in their responses to the postcourse questionnaire. The three components of the course were mentioned as memorable experiences, which indicated that the students benefited from engaging in tasks and projects developed in the frameworks of COIL, CLIL, PPE, and PBL. In other words, the students agreed that this EMI course on Japanese society and culture helped them develop and strengthen their confidence, knowledge, and skills in an enjoyable environment by engaging in various activities based on innovative methods.

Conclusion

This study aimed to develop an EMI course incorporating innovative methods, including COIL, CLIL, PPE, and PBL, and to assess the effects of the course on the development of Japanese university students' confidence, knowledge, and skills relevant to the content of the course and the use of English

as a communication tool. In the 15-week EMI course on Japanese culture and society, the students who had joined the English Language Honors Track in the department's new curriculum engaged in multiple collaborative tasks designed to provide them with opportunities for improving their confidence in using English, their knowledge of Japan by learning about their country in English, and their general learning and English communication skills. The analysis of the pre- and postcourse questionnaires revealed that the course was highly effective in promoting the development of the participants' confidence, knowledge, and skills. The course satisfied the students' expectations and achieved its objectives, and the utilization of various innovative approaches to learning strongly contributed to the positive outcomes of the course.

Regarding the limitations of this study, the data gathered in this study were obtained from self-report questionnaires; therefore, the use of other sources of data, such as peer evaluations, instructor observations, or comparisons with standardized English tests, might better support the findings.

For suggestions for future directions, it might be worth investigating the outcome of the course if the three phases were to be reorganized, for example, starting with lectures, video-making projects and ending with the COIL. In this way, students could share their videos with international partners as part of the COIL activity, which would allow them to gain feedback from an international audience on their videos. Additionally, it may be interesting to implement the course for EFL learners from different cultural backgrounds and compare the results with those of Japanese students.

REFERENCES

Aksel, A., & Gürman-Kahraman, F. (2014). Video project assignments and their effectiveness on foreign language learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 141,* 319-324. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.055

Arroyo-Barrigüete, J. L., López-Sánchez, J. I., & Morales-Contreras, M. F., & Soffritti, M. (2022). The impact of English-medium instruction on university studentperformance. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-16. 10.1080/01434632.2022.2047193.

Coyle, D. (2007). Content and language integrated learning: Toward a connected research agenda for CLIL pedagogies. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 10*(5), 543-562. https://doi.org/10.2167/beb459.0

Crookes, G. V. (2013*). Critical ELT in action: Foundations, promises, praxis*. Routledge.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.

Gokcora, D. (2021). Benefits of collaborative online international learning projects. *Academia Letters, 202*, 1-4.

Hafner, C. A. (2014). Embedding digital literacies in English language teaching: Students' digital video projects as multimodal ensembles. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(4), 655-685. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.138

Hino, N. (2017). The significance of EMI for the learning of EIL in higher education: Four cases from Japan. In B. Fenton-Smith, P. Humphreys, & I. Walkinshaw (Eds.), *English medium instruction in higher education in Asia-Pacific* (pp. 115-131). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51976-0_7

Huang, H. (2015). The effects of video projects on EFL learners' language learning and motivation: An evaluative study. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching, 5*(1), 53-70. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.2015010104

Huang, H. W. (2021). Effects of smartphone-based collaborative vlog projects on EFL learners' speaking performance and learning engagement. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 37*(6), 18-40. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.6623

Ikeda, M. (2013). Does CLIL work for Japanese secondary school students? Potential for the 'weak' version of CLIL. *International CLIL Research Journal, 2*(1), 31-43.

Ismailov, M., & Yamamoto, Y. (2021). What makes an effective learner-centered EMI classroom in higher education? A Qualitative systematic examination of students' perceptions using thematic synthesis approach. *ICERI2021 Proceedings* (pp. 3438-3446). IATED.

Kojima, N. (2019). Pedagogical practices and learning environment needed in EMI: From the motivational perspectives of Japanese students. *APU Journal of Language Research*, 4.

Krajcik, J. S., & Blumenfeld, P. C. (2005). Project-based learning. In K. R. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 317-334). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816833.020

Lei, J., & Hu, G. (2014). Is English-medium instruction effective in improving Chinese undergraduate students' English competence*? International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 52*(2), 99-126. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2014-0005

Lin, T., & Lei, J. (2021). English-medium instruction and content learning in higher education: Effects of medium of instruction, English proficiency, and academic ability. *SAGE Open, 11*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211061533

Luo, H., & Yang, C. (2022). Pedagogical benefits of Chinese-American virtual exchange: A study of student perceptions. *ReCALL, 34*(1), 37-50. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344021000203

Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., & Frigols, M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL: Content and language integrated learning in bilingual and multilingual education*. Macmillan Education.

Nishio, T., Fujikake, C., & Osawa, M. (2020). Language learning motivation in collaborative online international learning: An activity theory analysis. *Journal of Virtual Exchange, 3*, 27-47. https://doi.org/10.21827/jve.3.35780

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd ed.).* Sage.

Schenker, T. (2013). The effects of a virtual exchange on students' interest in learning about culture. *Foreign Language Annals, 46*(3), 491-507.

Takahashi, M. (2023). Producing travel vlogs as a collaborative task in English classes with a soft CLIL approach. *The Asian Conference on Education 2022: Official Conference Proceedings*, 615-629. https://papers.iafor.org/proceedings/conference-proceedings-ace2022/

Tuke, G., Kapur, S., & Ashour, K. (2021). Global citizenship cultivation through COIL-PBL model: case study of the Great Debates course. *Journal of Virtual Exchange, 4*, 80-91. https://doi.org/10.21827/jve.4.35815

Van Leeuwen, A., & Janssen, J. (2019). A systematic review of teacher guidance during collaborative learning in primary and secondary education. *Educational Research Review, 27,* 71-89. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.02.001

Wallerstein, N., & Auerbach, E. (2004). *Problem-posing at work: Popular educator's guide.* Edmonton: Grass Roots Press.

Yamamoto, J. (2022). A case study of EFL students' motivation toward online exchange programs. *Journal of Osaka Jogakuin University, 18*, 51-72.

Yeh, H. C., Heng, L., & Tseng, S. S. (2020). Exploring the impact of video making on students' writing skills. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education, 53*(4), 446-456. https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2020.1795955

Zhang, M., & Pladevall-Ballester, E. (2023). Students' English-medium instruction motivation in three English-medium instruction courses in China. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 1077852. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1077852

APPENDIX

Items on the pre- and postcourse questionnaires
<Confidence in talking about Japan in English>
1. I have confidence in talking about Japanese popular culture in English.
2. I have confidence in talking about Japanese traditional culture in English.
3. I have confidence in talking about Japanese customs in English.
4. I have confidence in talking about the Japanese economy in English.
5. I have confidence in talking about Japanese society in English.

＜Knowledge of Japan＞
1. I think I know about popular Japanese culture.
2. I think I know about traditional Japanese culture.
3. I think I know about Japanese customs.
4. I think I know about the Japanese economy.
5. I think I know about Japanese society.

<Skills involved in the course>
1. I can share information on Japan in English.
2. I can make videos about Japan in English.
3. I can do presentations on Japanese culture in English.
4. I can communicate with people in other countries in English.
5. I can understand videos about foreign cultures produced by people in other countries in English.

<Precourse>
1) What are your expectations for the course?
2) What do you think are the merits of being able to talk about Japan in English?
3) What are your resolutions to start studying in the English Language Honors Track?

＜Postcourse＞
1) What were your memorable experiences in the course?
2) What do you think are the merits of being able to talk about Japan in English?
3) What do you think after spending one semester in class for students in the English Language Honors Track?

CURTIS CHU, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Faculty of International Studies at Setsunan University, Osaka, Japan. He is the COIL coordinator of the institution, and he teaches intercultural communication, global citizenship, English, and Chinese. Prior to his current position, he was a lecturer at a public university in Taiwan, and he has over 10 years of experience teaching English to students from elementary to senior high school. His research interests include intercultural competence, virtual exchange, reading comprehension assessment, and TESOL. He can be reached at
<curtis2020@gmail.com>

MARIKO TAKAHASHI, PhD, is a lecturer at the Faculty of International Studies at Setsunan University, Osaka, Japan. Her current research interests include the development of tasks for EFL classrooms based on the approach of content and language integrated learning, corpus-based analysis of features of Asian Englishes, and analysis of English used in Japanese popular culture. She can be contacted at <mariko.takahashi@ilc.setsunan.ac.jp>.