

Proposal for the Tablet PC project

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I. Project

The development of a series of teaching and learning language activities and projects with the use of Tablet PC and DyKnow to assess how such technology can facilitate collaboration between faculty and language learners and between learners.

II. The course to be developed

Japanese IV, Japanese V, and Japanese VI (second year language courses).

III. Project description

In Japanese language courses, students work on various types of collaboration activities with their classmates to facilitate their language learning. Tablet PC and DyKnow technology would be very useful to help them develop their language skills. Using the technology, teachers can easily access each student's pair/group work and review the target material in class. In addition, students can present their group work in class, compare with others' work and have a class discussion if necessary. Teachers can also provide additional learning material and activities to be used outside the classroom.

The following are some examples of the activities that can be done between faculty and students and between students and students both inside and outside the classroom.

IV. Examples of the activities

1) In the classroom

Between faculty and students—Listening exercise (Asking for and giving a direction)

In foreign language courses, students often work on listening exercises which require drawing objects and maps. However, it is not always easy to observe how each student/group does in the classroom. Using the Tablet PC and DyKnow technology, language teachers can quickly check their work, and the whole class can share and review the material together efficiently. Their work can also be stored for the next class activity. Teachers can check their work after class to find out any error tendency that the whole class and/or each student has, and the class can review the material and further develop the activity if necessary.

Between students—Collaborative oral practice (e.g., information gap activities) with many classmates.

In any language course, oral practice is a must to develop students' speaking skills. Research in Second Language Acquisition shows that collaborative activities between students can enhance the development of their language competence, especially communication strategies. It is often pointed out that students had better practice with many learners to develop the competence. However, students tend to work with the same partner or group members due to the crowded classroom. Also, shy students are afraid of

finding new partners, as well as talking to them when facing each other. As a result, students tend not to change their partner or group members in each class.

Tablet PC and DyKnow audio tool would solve this problem. Teachers can arrange their group members in advance and assign each student into each pair or group. Students can work on collaborative activities even with those who are sitting far from them. This type of activity might work well especially when they work on information gap activities. Without using any body language, they need to accomplish their given tasks, and I believe such activities would enhance the development of their communication competence.

Such a 'distance learning' experience might help them develop ideas when they need to work on collaborative activities in their subject areas with students from Japan, such as KIT or the University of Aizu in the future.

2) Outside the classroom—Providing grammar explanation files (lecture files) online.

Students often mention that it takes lots of time to understand each grammar when reading the textbook, since there are few visual aids available there. To help students prepare for each class and review each grammatical structure effectively, we can prepare grammar explanation files (e.g., lecture files), using Tablet PC, DyKnow, and Camtasia and upload the files on the server. In this way, students can easily access the files at anytime from anywhere. I can also give assignments orally in each file, and students would be well prepared for each class. If such lecture files work well, I can avoid repeating the same grammar explanations that I already explained before in class, and we can thus focus more on interactive class activities.

I provided some ideas of possible activities and projects with the use of the Tablet PC and DyKnow technology in the language courses. There should be more various activities and projects which facilitate collaboration between faculty and students and between students and students. I would like to develop my ideas through reviewing literature and other researchers' work this summer.