

Enhancing and expanding intercultural learning through collaborative online international learning

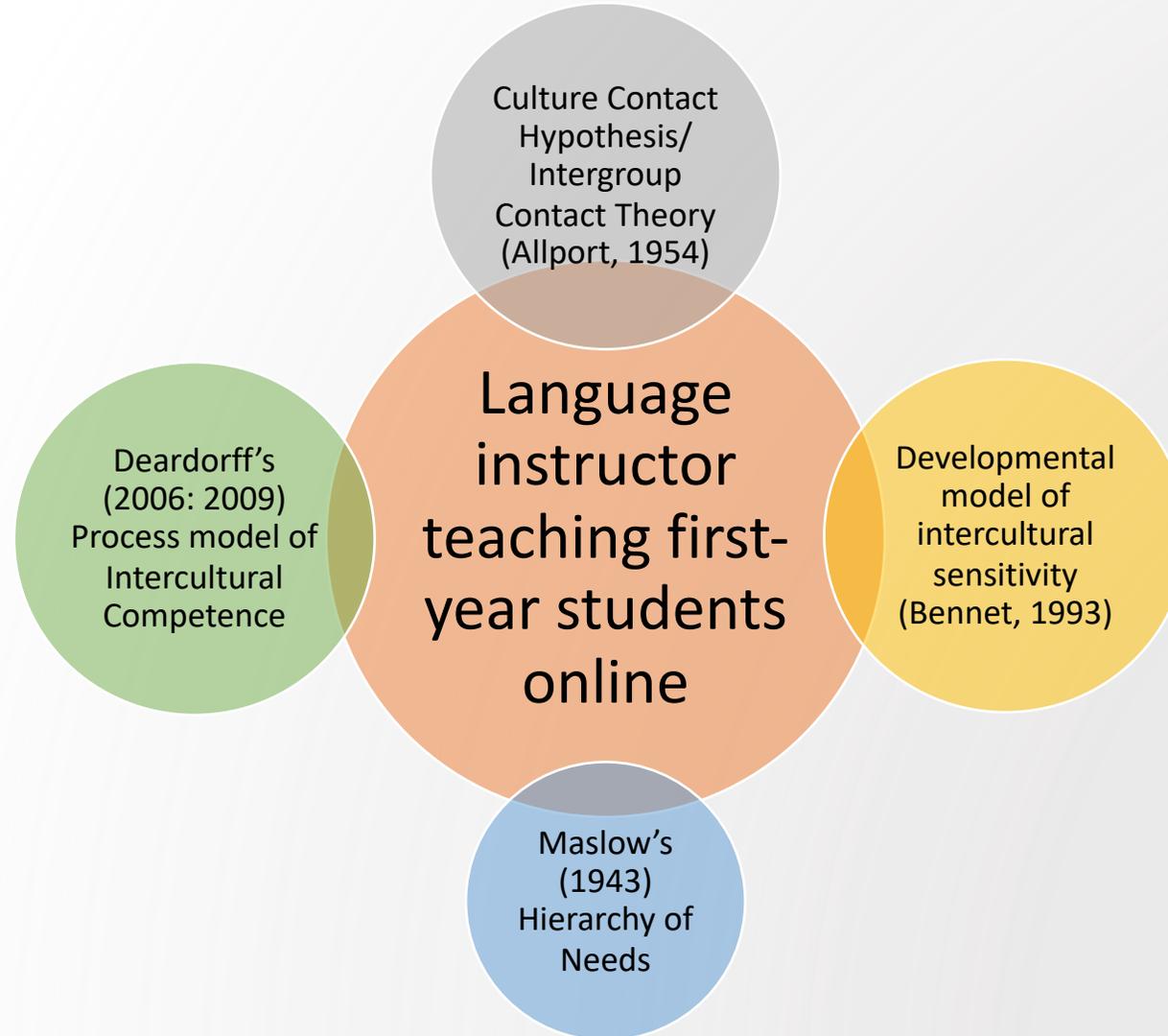
JALTCALL 2021

Sunday, June 6th 14:30—15:00

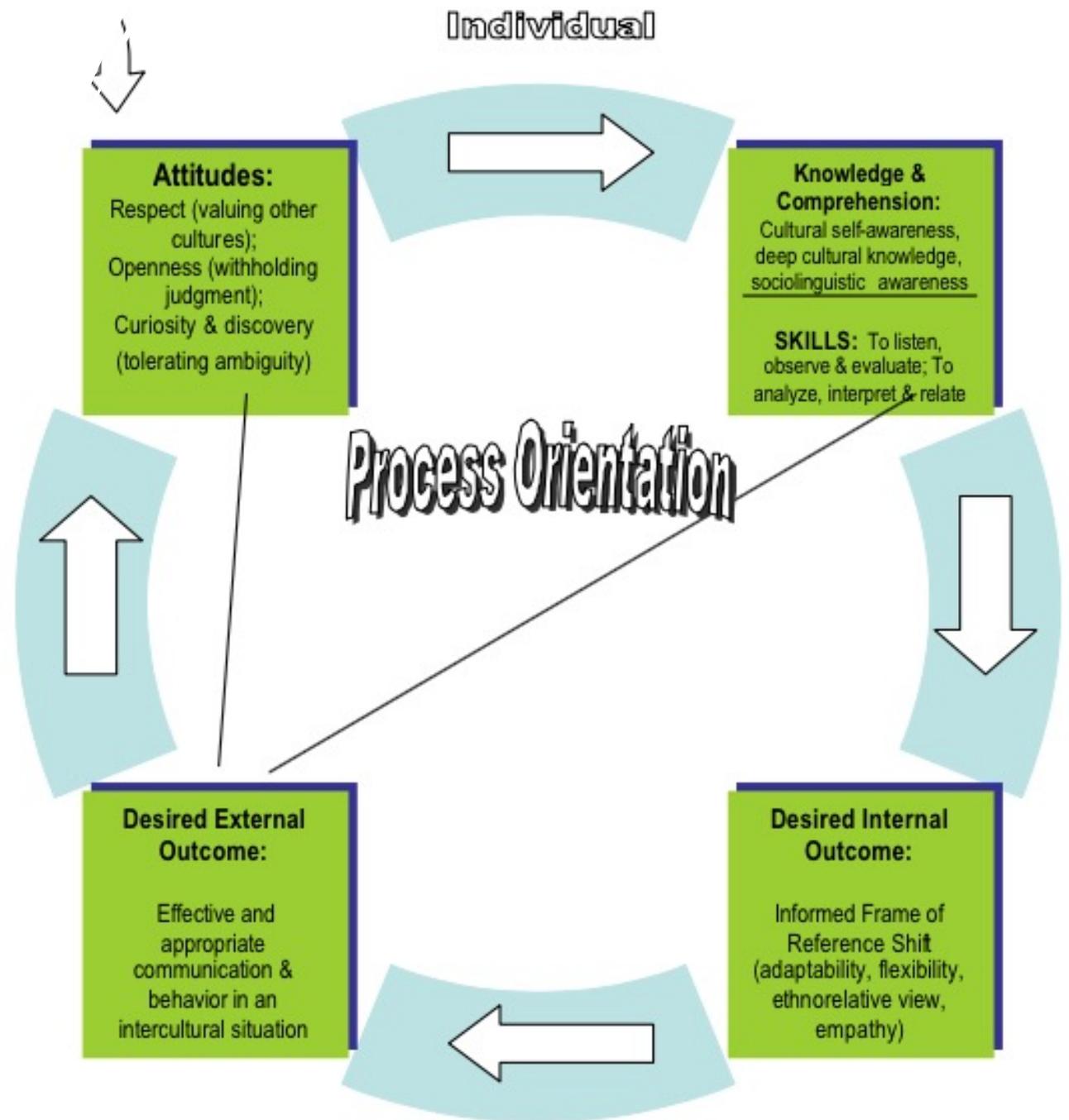
Kevin Ottoson

Nagoya Women's University

Theories informing my teaching



Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006; 2009)



*Ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural **knowledge, skills, and attitudes.***

(Source: Deardorff, D.K., 2009. Based on first study to document definition consensus among leading intercultural experts.)

Background/ Problem Statement

- Recent initiatives (e.g., Global 30 Project, Top Global University University Project) have sought to internationalize higher education and foster global *jinzai* (*global human resources*)
- **Study abroad considered one of the most effective means for increasing intercultural competence (ICC)** (Deardorff, 2004)
- Virtual cross-cultural exchanges offer equitable and affordable opportunities to internationalize the curriculum (Ceo-DiFrancesco & Bender-Slack, 2016).
- The purpose of this research is to better understand students' perceived intercultural development as well as their attitudes toward foreign language learning through collaborative online international learning.

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

- **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)** allows students and instructors around the world to interact through collaborative projects and discussions as a part of their coursework.
- “...globally networked learning and virtual exchange,...a new teaching and learning paradigm that promotes the development of intercultural competence across shared multicultural learning environments” (SUNY COIL Center, 2015)



Context-Nanzan University-Basic COIL

- Focuses on cultural and basic exchange of opinion and language acquisition. It aims to break the ice by communicating prior to short-term study abroad programs.
- <https://office.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nu-coil/en/nu-coil/index.html>

Basic COIL Project-Context

First-year,
English
majors in
Japan ($n=21$)

First-year,
humanities
majors in
Japan ($n=20$)

Students give a
joint presentation
on their research
and discussions of
one of our weekly
topics

First-year,
education
majors in
China ($n=44$)

Basic COIL Project Shared Objectives

- University students in China and Japan talk about various everyday topics (summer, food, holidays, careers, interpersonal relationships) in English
- Give students an opportunity to learn from each other
- Improve English language skills
- Improve intercultural skills
- Improve virtual learning skills

Required Software

- WeChat app to communicate with partners (video and chat)
- Zoom for joint presentations (Chinese participants cannot start a zoom meeting. They can only join a meeting.)
- Google Forms-for questionnaires and reflections (Japanese students)
- PowerPoint-for making presentations

Methodology

- 1) Participants (n=41, Japanese first-year university students)
- 2) Open-ended weekly reflections through Google Forms (a. What was interesting? b) What did you learn? c) What would you like to know more?)
- 3) COIL post-project survey adapted from Ceo-DiFrancesco & Bender-Slack (2016)
- 4) Final open-ended questionnaire, a) What did you learn? b) Why is that important? C) How will that help you in the future? (i.e., What? So what?, Now what?)

Basic COIL Project Schedule

Phase	Week	Activities	Dates
Prep	0	Preparation-Install and check required software/ assign students into groups on WeChat (WeChat)	9/14-9/20
1	1	Icebreaker-students get to know each other, learn about each other's local environment, students learn about Japan/ China (WeChat) Reflection (Google Forms)	9/21-25
2	2	Discuss-Summer vacation (WeChat) Reflection (Google Forms)	9/28-10/4
	3	Discuss-Food (WeChat) Reflection (Google Forms)	10/5-10/11
	4	Discuss-Holidays and Traditions (WeChat) Reflection (Google Forms)	10/12-10/18
2	5	Discuss-Interpersonal relationships/Careers (WeChat) Reflection (Google Forms)	10/19-25
3	6-7	Project report- Conduct a survey on one of the four topics/ Create Power Point presentation Students give joint presentations on their research during a Zoom meeting during class for the university students in China. (PowerPoint, WeChat & Zoom)	10/26-11/9
4	7	Reflection (Google Forms)	11/9

Results from this Basic COIL Project

Survey and Reflections

Survey results-English language-Motivation

English motivation	EM	SD	HM	SD
1. I have been more motivated to learn English through participating in this COIL experience.	4.19	0.87	3.75	0.91
2. Due to this COIL experience, I am more motivated to further my English competency for use in my future work or career.	4.24	0.77	3.9	0.79

Note: EM=English majors; HM-Humanities majors

English language skills-improvement

English motivation	EM	SD	HM	SD
3. I feel that my language skills have improved.	3.71	0.78	3.6	0.75
4. I feel that I can speak with more fluency now than prior to my participation in this COIL program.	3.43	0.93	3.15	0.88
5. My comprehension of spoken English has improved due to this program.	3.95	0.80	3.65	0.59

Note: EM=English majors; HM-Humanities majors

English language-confidence and comfotability

	M1 EM	SD	M2 HM	SD
6. I feel confident speaking English after participating in this program.	3.55	0.94	3.2	0.83
7. I feel more comfortable speaking in English now that I did before I participated in this program.	3.62	0.97	3.45	0.89
8. I feel more comfortable speaking with a non-Japanese speaker now that I did before I participated in this program.	3.95	0.87	3.7	0.92
9. I feel confident that I can conduct virtual exchanges in English in a work environment.	3.76	0.89	3.15	0.88

Note: EM=English majors; HM-Humanities majors

Intercultural attitudes

	EM	SD	HM	SD
10. This program has made me more aware of the needs, interests, and abilities of others.	4.38	0.67	4.05	0.51
11. This program has changed the way that I interact with others of cultural background different from my own.	4.29	0.72	4.00	0.86
12. Due to this experience, I would like to study abroad.	4.29	1.01	3.45	1.39

Note: EM=English majors; HM-Humanities majors

Student Reflections

- Intercultural learning and attitude
- The importance of English for communication
- Collaborating online
- Maintaining connections

Reflections-Intercultural learning and attitude

- By collaborating with people from different countries to prepare and make presentations, **we were able to get to know each other's cultures, and by talking through English in different languages, we became closer to each other.** Also, although we only interacted with each other in wechat, we were able to actively discuss and give a collaborative presentation, which gave us a sense of accomplishment. **I wanted to meet and talk with them.** The experience I gained here **enriches my everyday thinking. Eliminates many prejudices and enables multifaceted thinking...** It may be **difficult to completely eliminate prejudice, but I think this kind of thinking will be required in the future.** So I think **this experience really helps me in the future and has made me grow.** (KK HM)

Reflections-Intercultural learning and attitude

- **What I think is important to learn from COIL is to put yourself in the other person's shoes.** Conversation is nothing without the other person, **so it is important to think about what words you use and whether your words will hurt the other person when you say them.** **I am glad to have learned this** through conversations with people from different cultures. (MI HM)
- ...what I learned through this COIL experience with ***Chinese and Japanese members will lead to deepen the intercultural and mutual understanding between different countries.*** (NK HM)

Reflection-The importance of English for communication

- *I learned so many things from COIL experience. At first, **English is really important and convenient language to communicate with other countries' people. If I don't understand English, I can't speak and be friend with them. Secondly, it's really hard to do a presentation with people whose language is different. If I do a presentation task with Japanese students, I can use Japanese and share our works very easily. However, we don't have any choice but to use English this time so I tried to use English that can make it easy to make people understand. Finally, through our presentation, I learned that if country is different, the way of thinking or their dream job is different. Also, there are some similarities. That was really interesting for me. (MI, EM)***

Reflection-The importance of English for communication

- (It was important) because I was able to know how foreign people use English and speak in English every day. I haven't a chance to speak in English in this way with foreign people so I only knew English which Japanese use and speak in. In fact, I thought I have to study English harder through this experience. It was a very good stimulus. (MK HM)

Reflection-Collaborating online

- *I could learn a lot of things from my COIL group and presentation we had. First, I could learn the difficulty of communicating with the two Chinese members because all of us had to use English though we speak another language as our mother tongue. Therefore, it took me a minute to send what I wanted to say. However, from this experience, I became sooner to reply a message in English. Another thing I learned is the importance of cooperating with each other. We needed to cooperate to make a better presentation slide and a power point, so we frequently contacted on Wechat. Thanks to our effort, we managed to introduce research we had conducted to Japanese and Chinese students. Besides, I was glad that I could know the difference of the English pronunciation between Japanese and Chinese. (YI, EM)*

Reflections-Collaborating online

- In the future, I would like to get a job using English at an international organization like the United Nations. Therefore, it was very helpful because I learned important things for my future job. **Working together with the Chinese members on the assignment has improved my communication and presentation skills. Our group were able to produce high-quality output based on the process of information collection, information analysis, concept, and expression.** I felt that the process of advancing the assignment would lead to future work. I think that creating the theme, conducting questionnaires, and summarizing the results led to an improvement in problem solving capabilities. **Moreover, through the statistical analysis of the survey, I think I have gained a lot of power to organize using Excel and PowerPoint.** (JN, EM)*

Reflections–Collaborating online

- *I found I do not have to lead every group work.* Since April, I have *tried to manage people* to finish work because no one say “yes” when I asked him or her to be that role. But, *thank to my Chinese group members, I could notice that not everyone is so lazy.* They leaded this COIL project. *Although I was little inactive.* *Also, I found I need to comeback to myself to what I wanted to be.* *Motivative behavior of Chinese members gave me courage.* (YK, HM)

Putting it all together

- *I learned the difficulty and fun of communicating with Chinese in our common language, English. It was hard for me because we had a conversation at the second language. It was my first time doing a presentation with foreigners, so I was very worried. In preparing for the presentation, there were times when I couldn't communicate well with Chinese members. However, the whole group worked together to create a very good presentation. Also, I learned the importance of cooperation. It was a great opportunity to learn about the importance of teamwork. The five of us were not just a group, but as a team, we were able to work together to produce results. Furthermore, I found that the pronunciation of the English spoken by the Chinese is slightly different from that of the English spoken by Japanese. Therefore, it was hard for me to catch the videos of Chinese members. However, it was a very good opportunity to improve my listening ability. When there were words that I couldn't understand no matter how many times I asked, I could find out more about China by researching about its history and the region in which they lived. Moreover, I was able to increase my vocabulary words and grammar because the Chinese members sent it to WeChat with vocabulary words and grammar I don't usually use.*
(JN, EM)

Going forward-Maintaining connections

- *COIL experience is important for me because I would never experience such a thing. In this COIL group WeChat, we talked about many things in English. I was surprised that I could chat with foreigners. It was fun and exciting to have a chat with Chinese students and I liked their cultures and their personalities. Due to this experience, I would like to study abroad. I would like to visit another country especially, China or other Asian countries. I want to know more about their cultures. It was a great experience to have a presentation with Chinese students. HK, EM*

Going forward-Maintaining connections

- ***Through this COIL project, I want to study English further. I am glad that I was able to talk with people who have different native language through English. Due to the COVID-19, we could not go to school, and I did not have a chance to talk with people from different countries, but it was great opportunity to interact by COIL project. I was very happy to communicate with the students in the same group. It was a wonderful memory to give a presentation by cooperating with each other. My members gave a lot of opinions. I want to keep in touch with them*** (RH, EM).

Discussion

- Participants rated statements regarding intercultural competence and motivation toward learning English higher than statements regarding English ability.
- Despite their difficulties with using English to communicate with Chinese partners, the Japanese participants described the importance of English as a method for communication
- Participants described the intercultural attitudes and knowledge they recognized they developed through this COIL project
- Participants described their increased ability to use technology for communication and collaboration as well as conducting and presenting research

Implications

- COIL offers opportunities for higher education institutions to foster internationalization at home.
- COIL participants may experience some intercultural development in terms of attitudes (curiosity, openness, and respect) and knowledge (deeper knowledge of one's own culture and the other).
- COIL participants may experience an increase in motivation to learn a foreign language.
- COIL participants may experience development of virtual learning skills (e.g., basic technical skills, motivation and independence, effective and appropriate communication skills, persistence).

Suggestions for those starting a COIL project

- Carefully consider your objectives before you start
- Communicate your objectives with your partner and your students
- Consult early and often with your partner about various issues (e.g., objectives, the plan, software, assessment)
- Obtain pre-project data in terms of intercultural competence and foreign language motivation
- Be realistic
- Be flexible
- Get feedback from all students involved
- Debrief and reflect

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Thank you

- kevinottoson@gmail.com
- kevin@nagoya-wu.ac.jp