Report of a case study : Adult English program featured with CALL

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抄　録

現在日本の大学少子高齢化に伴う受験生の減少、財政の縮小といった厳しい状況に直面している。また1991年に実施された大学設置基準の大綱化、簡略化、自己点検評価システムの導入にはじまる様々な法改正も、カリキュラムに大きな影響を与え続けているのが現状である。その中で大学は本来の役割である教育サービスと知的資源の提供をもって社会に役立て続けながら、その大学の特色を生かしたカリキュラムを、いかに多くの人々にアピールし厳しい市場を生き残っていくかが大きな課題となっている。昨今では多くの大学が地域の企業や地方自治体と協力し学生や地域住民を巻き込み地域の発展に貢献する努力を続けている。この研究はそのような大学と地域の協定により立ち上げられた連携事業のひとつで、コンピューターを使った英語学習プログラムを紹介するものである。ニーズアナリシスを継続的に使ったプログラムの立ち上げ、実施、評価を説明し、参加者の特色や彼らの考え方の分析を行ない生涯教育プログラムを実施する上での注意点などを検討する。この研究がこれから大学が生涯教育にどのように貢献できるかを考えていく上での指標になることを切望する。

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Introduction

According to the United Nations, a nation in which those over age 65 exceed 20% of the population is called a super-aged society : in 2006, Japan became the first super-aged nation. In 2010, Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau released demographic data showing those over 65 comprised 23.1% of the total population. These seniors, many of whom are still physically and mentally healthy, want to continue to participate in and contribute to society. They seek opportunities to learn, to gain knowledge and skill.

The expanding senior market in the field of education, accelerated by the declining birthrate, redefines the role of the university. By combating shrinking budgets and low enrollment, the expanding senior market in education works as a countermeasure for change. In fact, many universities are now collaborating with local governments or private agencies to provide their intellectual resources to the public. These services meet the comprehensive and diverse needs of the public and also contribute to community development and lifelong learning.

The present study is a report of a collaborative activity in which the lifelong learning department in a community and a university located at the foot of Mt. Fuji, provided an English course featured by CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). The report provides a brief introduction to the implementation process, course content, and characteristics of participants. Student perceptions and experience of lifelong learning as well as of English learning are also examined. The report concludes with a discussion of the issues and implications for implementing lifelong learning. The study will serve as a pilot study for further investigation of educational opportunities and university contribution in order to build a sound lifelong learning system in Japan.

Statement of the problem

Japan has the world's fastest growing elderly population with the baby boom generation born between 1947 and 1949 accelerating its growth. Although aging often involves physical and mental decline, many elderly or retired remain healthy and active. They seek opportunities to enrich and enhance their quality of life. Additionally, the stagnant economy and the loss of a lifetime guarantee of employment has resulted in a shifting work ethic, with the Japanese now placing more value on their personal lives. With the collapse of the lifelong employment system, people seek to gain more of their life satisfaction in their leisure time. However, Japan offers limited educational opportunities once people have completed their formal schooling. These social changes challenge universities in Japan to play a crucial role for those who seek opportunities for

enrichment and self-improvement in lifelong learning.

Significance of this study

Dynamic and complex social changes in Japan have led to the popularity of lifelong learning. However, the current system and practice of lifelong learning in Japan requires considerable improvement. To establish an attractive, effective, and systematic lifelong learning education system, a needs analysis is essential. The current study involves an on-going needs analysis in the process of planning, implementing, modifying and evaluating an English language program featured by CALL. The program was introduced by the collaboration of the Lifelong Learning Department in the local community and the university. The English program with CALL takes into consideration current globalization and the advancement of Information Technology (IT). At this moment, much of the research conducted on lifelong learning focuses on physical health or mental training for the delaying of memory loss or prevention of dementia. Few deal with lifelong language learning or computer literacy despite the necessity of computer or language skills in this advanced society. The present study serves as a steppingstone for further investigation of educational opportunities and university contribution in building a sound lifelong learning system designed to reach a wide segment of the population with diverse needs.

Literature review

This section is divided into the following 5 parts.

1. Definition of lifelong learning (LLL)
2. Effects of LLL
3. LLL in Japan
   - 3-1 Definition of LLL in Japan
   - 3-2 Types of activities for LLL
   - 3-3 Reasons (Aims) of participation
   - 3-4 Preferred or desired activities
   - 3-5 Participation difficulties
4. Adults' cognitive abilities
5. LLL : English programs
6. Role of the university in LLL

1. Definition of LLL

Definitions of lifelong learning vary in different contexts. For example, the European Commission defines lifelong learning as 'all learning activities undertaken throughout

life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspectives.' (European Commission, 2004, p. 1) UNESCO defines lifelong learning as 'adaptation to changes in technology and as 'the continuous process of forming whole human beings-their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and the ability to act.' (UNESCO Report 1996 Learning : Treasures Within, p. 99) OECD emphasizes "learning for all," stemming from the concept that learning is a part of life which occurs all the time and in all places, defined as 'education resulting from integration of formal, non-formal and informal education so as to increase ability for continuous lifelong development of quality of life.' (OECD Third Lifelong Learning Network Meeting, Opening Speech 2005) The differences in definition reflect the values, priorities and perceptions of defined contexts. Therefore, when lifelong learning is examined such contextual differences should be considered.

2. Effects of lifelong learning (LLL)

Many research studies have evidenced the benefits of lifelong learning. Such benefits include maintaining physical and mental health, promoting socialization, and gaining knowledge and skills. It is also believed to help individuals adapt to social changes.

The following four studies show the benefits of LLL in terms of individual perceptions of happiness, well-being, life-satisfaction, self-confidence, self-esteem and independence.

Central Research Service in Japan (2008) performs a survey involving a randomly selected group of 3,000 people aged 20 and over. Those who participated in lifelong learning within the year were asked questions regarding its effects. 43.3% responded that their lives were enriched and 41.6% said such learning helps to maintain or improve their health. 37.5% make use of learning in their daily lives while 33.6% use learned knowledge or skills in their work or community. Only 7.4% respond that they were not actively using it.

Sabates and Hammond (2008) summarize and synthesize research concerning the impact of lifelong learning on happiness and well-being. They report that associations between education and happiness and well-being are not always positive. However, they argue that research shows adult learning enhances self-esteem and self-efficacy, especially when such learning meets the needs of the learners. At the same time, Sabates and Hammond question if learning over the life course increases happiness or life satisfaction.

In another study, Hammond (2004) also argues that self-esteem, self-understanding, self-identity, and independence enhanced by learning improve competency and communication skills. With these capabilities, Hammond concludes that individuals are better able to integrate socially.

Dench and Regan (2000) focus on both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the impact of learning on adults aged 50-71. The participants responded that learning increased their self-confidence, their enjoyment and satisfaction in their lives. Participants also reported that they gained ability to cope with everyday life through learning activities. Dench and Regan argue that learning provides participants with more confidence to take an active role in society, try new things and better cope with social or personal challenges.

The following three studies identified the neurological benefits of lifelong learning.

Takasaki (2003) stresses the importance of lifelong learning in helping people maintain their natural curiosity. He argues that curiosity for new information and knowledge may prevent the development of dementia. At the same time, he insists that lifelong curiosity enhances individual's feelings of self-esteem and well-being.

Yousef and Addae (2002) argue that increased mental activity produces a functional reserve in the brain via a phenomenon called long-term potentiation (LTP). Their research found that LTP reduces the sensitivity of hippocampal neurons to agonists of the neurotransmitter glutamate. They also found that LTP protects the neurons from the effects of acute hypoxia. Their observation suggests that LTP has protective effects on neuronal tissue. They conclude that the mental activity required for learning can protect individuals from some types of dementia.

Nussbaun (2006) argues the brain-health benefits of lifelong learning. Available research evidences three critical factors for new brain cell development : socialization, physical activity and mental stimulation. Learning new information stimulates the hippocampus, which appears to have a regenerative capacity. Therefore, he argues that it is essential for individuals to be exposed to new and ongoing learning opportunities to have a healthy brain.

The above-mentioned research focuses on the individual benefits of lifelong learning. Other studies see the benefits from a broader societal perspective. These studies claim that LLL contributes to society, for instance, to community development. Some studies focus on how social capital is promoted by lifelong learning. According to Schuller et. al (2001), social capital is defined as consisting of social networks, the reciprocities that arise from them, and the value of these for achieving mutual goals. Through lifelong learning, they claim that people meet others, forming supportive networks.

Kocken and Voorham (1998) studied people aged 55 and over in the Netherlands. The participants were involved in a mentoring program of a health education course, aimed to empower older adults to participate in society and to promote their well-being. The study found significant interaction effects between time measurement and group membership as well as improvement of perceived social support and subjective health.

As the above two studies show, lifelong learning can be a means for improving society through building supportive social networks. Therefore, benefits of lifelong learning could be both individual and societal. Individual improvement enhances societal manpower. However, as Hammond (2004) suggests, individual differences of backgrounds and current circumstances in the society have to be taken into account when studying the impact of lifelong learning.

3. LLL in Japan

3-1 Definition of LLL in Japan

In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) takes charge of lifelong learning and defines that it encompasses not only structured learning through schooling and social education, but also learning that takes place through sports, cultural activities, hobbies, recreation, and volunteer activities.

In 1949, the Act for Adult Education law emphasized that learning occurs throughout one's lifespan and it supported establishing community learning centers. Since then, Japan has been facing various social changes such as economic stagnation, low birthrate and an aging population, globalization, and information technology (IT) advancement. These changes had a significant impact on beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of people. Under Japan's well-known lifetime employee system, people devoted their lives to the company, working long hours with little time off. Many employees worked even after retirement. Now, with this system no longer in place, people are putting more value on their individual lives and families and seeking spare time to enjoy their leisure. In such a situation, lifelong learning is often considered as an ultimate solution of the above-mentioned social issues. In response, MEXT has implemented various measures to promote and build a society of lifelong learners, encouraging local governments and the private sector to participate.

3-2 Types of activities for LLL

There are various kinds of activities provided through lifelong learning programs in Japan. Many studies such as Ogden (2010) and Yamaguchi (2001) use the data of MEXT, which conducts a public opinion survey every three years. The participants of the MEXT surveys are 3,000 to 5,000 adults age 20 and older. Table 1 (Appendix A) describes the main activities and percentages of participation of the last two surveys (2008 and 2005).

3-3 Reasons (Aims) of participation

Table 2 (Appendix A) summarizes the results of the MEXT survey on how people

think of or make use of lifelong learning. As indicated in Table 2, more people participate in LLL for enriching their lives rather than directly using acquired knowledge or skills for their careers.

3-4 Preferred or desired activities

In the past, various surveys have been conducted concerning people's wishes on activities of lifelong learning. In 2011, the Asahi Newspaper (ASPARA) surveyed 1,487 individuals under age 50 and 2,486 individuals over age 50. Participants were asked what they would like to learn through lifelong learning education. The top five activities in each group are described in Table 3 (Appendix A). For both groups, the most frequent answer was that there was nothing that they want to do. When asked for explanation, the under 50 group responded that they have no time. The over 50 group said they would prefer to study for some useful license or certificate rather than engaging in these activities.

A recent survey by Asahi News (2011) asked 1,408 females about the activities they would like to do after their retirement while the same question was asked of the male population in 2010. The top five are described in Table 4 (Appendix A). In Table 5 (Appendix A), the results of the MEXT survey for the same question are shown.

As shown in Table 3, 4 and 5, preferred activities vary, revealing differences among different age groups, gender and different studies. It should also be recognized that some people shows no interest in lifelong learning in some surveys.

3-5 Participation difficulties

Some studies found that several factors prevent participants from engaging in lifelong learning.

Ogden (2010) pointed out several factors that hinder the dissemination of lifelong learning. First, Japanese universities offer limited opportunities to adults to participate in higher education. The majority of university attendees are aged 18-22 and transferring credits between universities is not a prevalent practice in Japan. Moreover, Japanese society places value and prestige in formal education, compared to learning after the formal education. Formal structured university instruction is still favored in Japan. In such a situation, the needs of participants who have different learning styles and preferences are still not fully satisfied.

The following two case studies reveal the difficulties that should be overcome so that lifelong learning can be more accessible to the public.

Kimura and Nagakura (1994) surveyed Japanese adults over age 20 who lived in rural areas. Their study reveals gender differences of participation in lifelong learning.

Compared to male participants, more females attend the activities and those females who do attend tend to be middle-aged rather than elderly. The study also found that there are differences in perception of lifelong learning and in preferred activities among different age groups. The study noted that participants claim that they are more inclined to attend activities if they are held at a location within a 30-minute commute. Kimura and Nagakura conclude that in order to support lifelong learning activities, locations and instructors should strive to be within a 30-minute driving distance. At the same time, they urge that the dissemination of lifelong activities among the elderly or males will be necessary.

Kou et al. (1994) reported the survey results regarding lifelong learning of one city whose population is over 80,000 in Aichi. According to their survey, more than half of the citizens do not engage in any lifelong learning activities. The study tried to identify the reasons behind not attending such activities. Some claim that it is not easy to find activities that match their time schedule and others claim that they do not have information about lifelong learning. The study concludes that in order to facilitate a learning environment, it is important to have a variety of activities that meet the needs of a wide range of generations. At the same time, PR effort to promote spreading information on lifelong opportunities is necessary.

The survey by MEXT also reveals reasons that people do not engage in lifelong learning activities. The top five reasons are described in Table 6 (Appendix A).

In her study of private English programs, Iwata (1996) mentioned that although many adults learn English for their hobby or interests, they face several issues such as high cost, limited time, and being frustrated with their lack of progress or lack of opportunities to use their skills outside the classroom.

Osako (2002) reviews major issues, provisions, and support systems in Japan. It was found that the main reason for nonparticipation in learning activities in the 60-79 age group is no time or health reasons. He suggests implementing support systems in which cooperative participation, easy access to information, and counseling is urged.

As the above studies indicate, these difficulties vary from political infra-structure, funding, information dissemination, personnel, and curriculum matters. Moreover, the older generation faces more challenges compared to those younger. Accessibility not only to the programs themselves, but also to the information on availability or the contents of such programs to the older generation should be considered.

4. Adults' cognitive abilities

In the previous section, it was revealed that learning foreign language is one of the popular activities in LLL. However, learning a foreign language may require higher

level cognitive skills and many studies concern such cognitive abilities in adult learning. Some studies show that cognitive abilities are greatest in the 30s and 40s, remaining the same until the late 50s to early 60s, with cognitive abilities declining after this period, but only to a small degree. At aged 70 and beyond, decline may be noticed.

Richer (2003) argues that the negative connotations related to aging and memory may have impact on the elderly's cognitive performance, increasing with people's anxiety. She suggest that it should be emphasized that cognitive decline does not happen to everyone, pointing out several keys for teaching older students. For example, using color codes to focus attention, using dictionaries and memo techniques to write down all information, avoiding exercises relying on memory only, providing clear instruction (in writing, when possible), plenty of time for completing tasks, shorter class assignments, well-defined tasks, help with vocabulary, use visual aids, review often. Richer also discusses the negative factors, such as lack of prior experience in foreign language, lack of opportunities to speak.

Jurich (2000) argues for the importance of education of older adults, maintaining active lives. Although it is generally believed that cognitive function declines with age, research find more complicated results. Ability to recall may be reduced by aging while other memory functions such as implicit memory and measures of verbal ability may have little influence. He argues teaching strategies based on problem solving and critical thinking would work for the adult learners. In addition, Jurich suggests the use of modern technology in education programs for older adults has advantages, including helping to fill the internet revolution generation gap.

5. LLL : English programs

In Japan, learning foreign languages, especially English, is one of the most popular activities. Both the private and public sector offers various programs. The following studies focus on adults' English learning in Japan.

Williams (2004) focused on 34 adult learners aged 40-70 who enrolled in a non-credit university English course. 18% of them study English on a daily basis and 25% study more than twice a week. The majority (73%) indicated that they have been studying English for over two years. These participants learn English for personal interest and hobbies. In terms of learning environment, the majority (93%) indicated that group lesson was the best or second best way to study language although many indicated that private lessons (56%) and self-study (44%) were also preferable. Regarding lifelong learning, 96% see lifelong learning as a positive experience and 100% of participants would like to continue it. 85% claim that the lifelong learning experience provides the opportunity to make friends. In conclusion, William argues for the importance of

profiling and understanding adult learners so that tertiary institutes can provide a wide range of and quality of learning opportunities.

Itoi (2007) examined two lifelong learning courses, one university based program with 10 participants aged 51 to 70, living in an urban area and another one community based program with 14 participants aged 46 to 80, living in a rural area. Her study found that speaking is the skill that the participants most wish to improve and they have little interest in reading in both groups. However, some believe their speaking skills are not improved anymore due to their age. On the other hand, some believe they have good reading skills and there is no need to study reading. Reasons for participating programs vary in both groups : some are for traveling overseas while others are for reading mails written in English. A few are to improve their English skills to take English tests such as TOEIC or STEP (Society for Testing English Proficiency-Eiken) and some seek opportunities to interact with other people. Ito concludes that the lifelong learning courses for language in Japan are mostly to cultivate people or improve people's intellectual level. Considering such a situation, Ito suggests that Needs Seeking instead of Needs Analysis should be performed. With Needs Seeking, the instructors and participants discuss and find goals and implement courses based on such goals reached by mutual understanding. In such a way, Ito believes the satisfaction levels or feeling of accomplishment of learners will be improved.

Although the above studies focused on adult English programs, there are a limited number of studies that focus on relatively older adult English learners, their learning and pedagogy. Therefore, as Itoi (2007) suggests, a systematic analysis of the current condition and needs of participants in English programs are urged so that optimal support for adult language learning can be prepared.

6. Role of the university in LLL

The role of the university is to educate students and to develop the research which contributes to social development. However, new roles have been imposed on universities due to changes in Japan. The declining number of 18 years old, which are caused by the low birthrate, resulted in low enrollment and shrinking budget. The growing elderly population leads the expanding senior or adults' market in the field of education. In such social change, Japanese universities are struggling to survive and suggested expanding the target population. Many universities are now collaborating with local governments or private agencies to provide their intellectual resources to the public. Such services are believed not only to meet the comprehensive and diverse needs of the public but also to contribute to community development. In developing the community, such collaborations are designed to boost the local economy, to share

resources, and to expand educational opportunities. At the same time, university contributes to the development of the society, raises public awareness of the importance of education, provides intellectual resources and stimulus, and brings participants together.

The following study shows an example of such collaboration and its challenges. Maruyama (2009) observed inter-generation collaboration and learning among local residents, NPO members, and university faculty and students. He describes a lifelong learning project organized by the local university, the National Institute for Educational Policy Research and the Asia/Pacific Centre for UNESCO. The study was conducted at a suburban city, located 105 km from Tokyo. In this project, collaboration among the university and its students, local farmers, and local government strove to develop better employment for youth, stronger agriculture and more students' involvement in the local community. This project succeeded in providing opportunities to all participants although some challenges remain. Maruyama concludes collaboration among the public sector, industry, and universities brings advantages to individuals, communities and society as a whole, helping to attain a sustainable society.

The review of the literature on lifelong learning found that benefits vary according to individual background, needs, and purpose for engaging in learning. At the same time, social changes in demography, politics, and economy influence people's belief or attitudes toward lifelong learning. Therefore, there is no single provision that determines the desirable LLL. However, currently, there are several issues to overcome in order to implement more effective and useful programs available to a larger population. In order to overcome such issues, needs analysis is indispensable. Needs analysis provides useful information, including 1) what the public needs, 2) what are the resources and location availabilities 3) who are the participants, 4) what are the participants' abilities, their plans, goals, motivation, expectations, interests, beliefs, past learning experience. Needs analysis needs to be comprehensive, comprising initial planning through the evaluation. This helps clarify program goals, choice of material and instructional strategies, modification and adjustment in running phases, and evaluation and refinement of the program. With such analysis, universities can determine their new role in contributing to LLL.

Minimal research has been done focusing on university-based lifelong English learning programs despite the popularity of foreign language learning. And yet, in our global society, more people are faced with the need to read information written in English and the need to interact with others using English. In a similar way, computer skills are requisite in our information-technology centered society. Yet, to date, there is no research on lifelong English programs featuring CALL. The present study of a

university and community collaborative English program featured with CALL will fill this gap, providing information on the background and content of the program as well as its planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Moreover, by revealing the characteristics and perception of the participants, the study will help to establish effective programs that match the needs of larger populations. At the same time, this study will help in determining the new roles of universities for the better education of an aging society.

Research questions

The study poses the following ten questions :

① Who are the students? (demographic data, English fluency, educational background, occupation, foreign travel)
② What is their experience of English learning?
③ What is their experience of computer use?
④ What are their preferred learning styles?
⑤ What is their level of fluency in English?
⑥ What are their reasons for participating in an English program?
⑦ What are their perceptions of English class as well as of LLL?
⑧ How did they think of the class featured with CALL?
⑨ How do they evaluate their improvement in English skills?
⑩ What are their desire and expectation about taking future English courses?

Research methods and procedures

Throughout the program, an on-going needs analysis was performed. Chart 1 (Appendix B) describes an on-going needs analysis.

As shown in the chart, during the planning and preparation phases, needs analysis was conducted by discussion and review of available research. The head of the Lifelong Learning Department and the coordinator in the committee for lifelong learning at Health Science University discussed a short-term English program, targeting people who live or work in the community. Introduced by the coordinator at the university, the researcher and the head of the department of the town met several times to plan the program. They discussed the contents of past English programs, the current conditions of the English learning environment and some public opinions on English programs. They also reviewed available research, including case studies of LLL, adult English learning, and university-based programs.

During the execution, modification and evaluation phases, four measures were taken for needs analysis. One English diagnostic test was administered at the first meeting,

measuring students' listening, grammar, and reading and conversation skills. Two surveys were then conducted : the first was given at the initial class meeting and the second was completed at the end of the course. The first survey consisted of 22 multiple -choice questions and 10 Likert scale questions. The aim of this survey was to obtain information about the participants, their experiences and perceptions of English and lifelong learning. The second survey consisted of 15 questions including multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions, and open-ended questions. Surveys were administered to gain information on students' evaluation and thoughts on the course as well as future expectations.*[1] Finally, the instructor continuously had classroom observation.

Program Description and Findings

First, the program description will be presented, including background, participants, class schedule and tuition. Then the aims, textbook, CALL materials, content of the class, class organization, and instructional strategies, which are all decided based on the first needs analysis (discussion and review), will be described. Finally, the findings of the needs analysis (two surveys and a diagnostic test) will be revealed via 10 research questions.

Program background

The program presented in this study was developed through the collaboration between a university and the local community. The Lifelong Learning Department of the town and the committee for lifelong learning at the university worked together to improve the community at large. Participants are government workers, citizens of the town, instructors, students, office workers at the university, university volunteers, doctors, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and psychologists from the university rehabilitation center. Various activities, such as lectures, research, rehabilitation services and volunteer activities were planned and implemented. Chart 2 (Appendix C) illustrates the system.

An English class featuring computer assisted language learning (CALL), targeting the community people was held in 2010.

Participants of the study

The study included 14 participants aged 24--66. Students were recruited via an advertisement in the town paper. The class was limited to 14 students because of computer availability. Eight computers with internet access were available and a pair of students shared one computer while the last set was used by the instructor.

Class schedule

The 13-session class began in April and was held once a week for 90 minutes, from 7 : 00 p.m. to 8 : 30 p.m.

Tuition

Tuition was 5,000 yen and the textbook was 1,500 yen, approximately 80 dollars, about 6 dollars for one session.

Aims of the class

Aims were 1) to improve the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English and to increase vocabulary for practical use and 2) To review basic grammar.

Textbook

Enjoy Speaking, published by Tokyo Asahi Press was used for the class. The textbook introduces standard conversation patterns used in daily situations in the form of 24 lessons. Each lesson starts with conversation practice, and then moves to exercises in which the student is required to fill in the blanks. In addition, grammar explanation and exercise are included at the end of each lesson. Topics include greetings, appreciation, apology, suggestion, request and suggestions. This textbook uses both English and Japanese.

CALL materials

CALL materials are selected, considering the following points :

1) targeted to beginners or low intermediate levels

2) cover all English skills, including grammar and vocabulary exercises

3) use interactive materials (which means students can actually use their skills and receive immediate feedback.)

(All sites used for the class were written on the board and a handout which has the same information was delivered in each session.) *2

Class organization

A 90-minute session was divided into 3 phases. First, the textbook was used, reviewing grammar and introducing vocabulary and expressions used in the conversation topic. Then pair or group interactions in which students engage in the conversations are implemented. Card or board games are also involved. Then, in the last 30 minutes, students engage in CALL activities, which are related to the topic on the day.

Instructional Strategies

For instructional strategy, particular attention was made to the following points. 1) Participants' previous experience and past learning experience are taken into consideration and instruction is designed not to be out of touch with these experiences.

2) Clear and direct instruction and written forms should be prepared.

3) Tasks are uncomplicated and well-defined.

4) Plenty of time was given to each activity and instructions were designed to be related to participant's lives.

Results of surveys and diagnostic test

Responses to the ten questions are as follows :

① Who are the students? (demographic data, English fluency, educational background, occupation, foreign travel)

The 14 participants' ages ranged from 24-66 with four students younger than 30,three aged 30-40, three aged 40--50, two aged 51-60 and two aged over 61.

In terms of their educational background, one finished junior high, five finished high school, two went to two-year colleges, three have undergraduate degrees and three went to technical school after graduating high school. Regarding their occupation, all participants except one have a job. Six participants work full time and seven are part-time workers.

Almost all participants had experienced foreign travel and most of them went to several countries, such as the U.S., Australia, Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, Italy, China and so on. The most common travel destinations were Hawaii, followed by Korea.

② What is their experience of English learning?

The majority (eight) had high-school level formal English instruction while five had English instruction at the college level. In terms of their experience of English lessons outside of formal education, half have taken or were currently taking English lessons. Of these, three had participated in English lessons that used media such as TV, radio, or the internet, whereas the rest had not. In terms of daily English use, six indicated that they occasionally use English whereas the majority said they rarely use English.

③ What is their experience of computer use?

The participants' computer experience showed some diversity. In terms of frequency of computer use, one said all the time, three are frequent users, eight are occasional users, and two rarely use the computer. In their self-evaluation of computer skills, none said excellent, one said good, five said okay, six said not good and two said not good at all.

④ What are their preferred learning styles?

In terms of learning style, seven preferred group study and seven preferred individual study, such as tutoring. None preferred self-learning, such as studying by themselves, or taking broadcast media English lessons.

⑤ What is their level of fluency in English?

In this section, the findings were drawn from the results of the diagnostic test. The test

measures students' listening, grammar, and reading and conversation skills. Mean=43.6 with SD=13.29 with the Highest=73, Lowest 23. Overall, they showed higher scores in grammar and weakness in reading.

⑥ What are their reasons for participating in an English program?

The most frequent reasons given for learning English were for foreign travel (7), for their job (5), and for brushing up/refreshing their prior learning of English (3). Some (3) said they like English or are interested in foreign countries. When asked which skills they would like to improve, the top was conversation skills (13) followed by listening (11). Only two sought to improve reading, writing, and grammar. None sought to improve pronunciation.

⑦ What are their perceptions of English class as well as of LLL?

To the question of the necessity of English, the majority responded that English is necessary in this global world. Regarding lifelong learning, several statements were given and the participants were asked if they agree. To the first statement, "Even after graduating from school, it is beneficial to continue learning," all participants responded that they strongly agree. To "Life-long learning is necessary for enriching interpersonal relationships," the majority responded that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. To "Life-long learning is useful for broad vision," the majority responded that they either strongly agree or agree. To "I would like to continue learning for self-improvement," the majority strongly agreed. However, to the statement, "Japan has plenty of opportunities for Life-long learning," the responses were polarized : eight strongly agreed or agreed, and five strongly disagreed or disagreed. Next, the participants were asked how much they spend for LLL per month. The most frequent answer was less than 40 dollars, followed by 40 to 79 dollars. Only one person spent over 80 dollars. In terms of family support for their taking the class, all participants said they had good family support.

⑧ How did they think of the class featured with CALL?

The findings are based on the survey conducted after completion of the course. In terms of the difficulty of the content of the course, half (7) thought it was appropriate while six found it easy. When asked about the difficulty of the textbook, the majority (9) thought it was appropriate while three found it easy. In both cases, two participants found the course content and textbook difficult. In terms of their satisfaction in the course, the majority (12) said they were very much satisfied and two responded that they were satisfied in the course. When asked about whether they were satisfied with

the choice of textbook, more than half (8) said very much satisfied and six said satisfied.

Regarding CALL, none had CALL experience before the class. However, the majority said it was all right in terms of difficulty. They said that it was not so easy but it was not so difficult despite being their first experience with computer-assisted learning. They also responded that they were satisfied with CALL activities and they felt these activities were useful. In open-ended questions, six responded that they really enjoyed CALL activities while the majority responded that they really enjoyed English learning in the course. They said they had less fear or discomfort when speaking English in the class and they are motivated to study at home using CALL. They also mentioned that the course provided a good opportunity to meet and interact with other people. They found that sharing computers was good for helping and learning from each other.

⑨ How do they evaluate their improvement in English skills?

When questioned about their improvement of skills, four said their skills are much improved and nine said that their skills improved a little bit.

⑩ What are the participants' desire and expectation about taking future English courses ?

Seven mentioned that the course should be a continuing course, stating that 13 sessions are too short a time for English mastery. They wish to learn more expressions in daily conversation. Three wanted more homework, one wanted the challenge of making a speech in front of the class. One suggested speaking English only. Three said they want to expand vocabulary, improve writing and reading skills, or knowledge of grammar.

Discussion

The above results revealed the varied characteristics and English fluency levels of the participants. Results also indicated different perceptions and expectations of LLL as well as English programs. However, it seems all participants had positive experiences of the course. Students' high motivation and strong commitment were evident throughout as observed by the teacher. They also showed favorable attitudes toward CALL and computer sharing activities. They took turns when practicing and helped each other in paired CALL activities. At the end of the course, participants' desire for the challenge of English learning and their desire to continue the course were revealed.

There are some findings that need to be explored. First, despite their low frequency of daily English use -- six indicated that they occasionally use English while the majority said they rarely use it -- the participants believe that English is necessary. These findings could be the result of this particular community's context. The community is

located in a resort area with many foreign travelers visiting each year. Some of the participants in the course work at hotels, local restaurants, or popular tourists sites such as the museum or the nature field. In short, they frequently interact with English-speaking foreigners.

Second, the participants enjoyed CALL. The CALL activities chosen for the course are interactive and self-paced. Therefore, the participants can receive immediate feedback about whether their responses are right or wrong and they can choose various levels and skills such as listening, reading, writing, speaking skills and knowledge of grammar or vocabulary. They also shared a computer with their partner and helped each other to accomplish tasks. During these CALL activities, the role of the instructor was as facilitator and supporter, rather than teacher. As a result, the atmosphere was anxiety-free, enjoyable and supportive. Such a learning environment may have enhanced their sense of self-efficacy as well as their control of the learning process.

Self-evaluation of student improvement should be examined carefully. The survey shows that four said their skills are pretty much improved and nine said that their skills improved a little bit. However, as many cultural studies report, the Japanese tend to underestimate their abilities or value, and doing so is considered a virtue.Therefore, it is likely that some students are understating their improvement.

Implications and considerations

The followed are implications and considerations for implementing LLL based on the present study.

1) It is essential to have an on-going needs analysis to meet student needs in a particular context.

2) Clear goals should be set but they should be modified if necessary.

3) Careful examination and selection of materials should be done based on the information gathered by the needs analysis.

4) Student attitudes towards LLL should be considered.

5) Observation, monitoring and discussion with students can provide valuable information for program development.

6) Evaluation of the course by participants and teacher are critical for improving the quality of LLL.

Limitations of the study and suggestions

The present study is a case study with a limited number of participants in a particular community. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized. However, the

determination of a good program depends upon the context. However, the following checklist is suggested to aid in the planning, re-examination and evaluation of available programs. The program should :

A) provide educational opportunities to the public.
B) maintain accessibility, flexibility, and clear purposes or goals.
C) match participants' needs and goals.
D) involve assessment and evaluation of its efficacy and effectiveness.
E) give participants choices and challenges.
F) have appropriate funding, facilities, and equipment.
G) encourage on-going participation.
H) have good justification for program continuation.
I) enrich participants' motivation and desire to continue learning.
J) promote quality of life and individual well-being of individuals
K) enhance participants' sense of self-efficacy or/and self-fulfillment.
L) help participants' active contribution to the society.
M) encourage participants' interpersonal relationship with others.
N) respond to social changes.
O) instill awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.
P) encourage social networks and collaborations of various agencies such as government, the private sector, universities, policy makers, and the general public.
Q) improve participants' skills and knowledge.
R) promote intellectual stimulation.

For further development

Like many other communities, we had a limited budget for lifelong learning. Further study might consider how LLL programs may use available resources to lead successful and effective programs that benefit the community as well as the university. Moreover, since the participants were aged 24-66 with just a few over 50 and none college age or younger, expanding programs to include the older generation as well as the younger generation, such as high school or junior high school students, should be considered. The possibility of involving university students as teacher's assistants (TAs) may encourage a wider range of participation in lifelong learning programs.

*1 These surveys are available upon request.

*2 The list of CALL activities and internet addresses are available upon request.

Appendix A

List of table

Table 1　Types of Activities and Percentage of Participants
Table 2　Reasons for Participating LLL
Table 3　Preferred Activities by Two Age Groups
Table 4　Preferred Activities by Gender
Table 5　Preferred Activities (MEXT)
Table 6　Reasons for Not Attending Activities

Table 1　Types of Activities and Percentage of Participants

Activities	2008	2005
Health / Sports	22.5	21.8
Hobbies	19.8	18.8
Computer/ Internet	14.0	11.8
Culture/ general education	10.2	＊
Skills and knowledge related to the work	9.3	8.9
Skills and knowledge related to daily lives	8.4	7.5
Volunteer	6.9	6.0.

＊In the 2005 survey, this category is divided into three. Culture such as literacy, science, and history (6.2%) Social issues (4.8%) and language (2.9%)

Table 2　Reasons for Participating LLL

Reasons	2008	2005
Enriching their lives	43.8	46.0
Maintain or improve their health	41.8	38.7
Make use of their daily lives	37.5	＊
Make use of their career	33.6	27.5
Make use of social or community activities	17.2	＊
Used acquired skills and knowledge for further development	16.1	17.5
Make use of volunteer	13.8	13.9
Get license or certificate	13.0	13.9

＊In the 2005 survey, 26.3% responded that they make use of their daily lives, social and community activities.

Table 3 Preferred Activities by Two Age Groups

Ranking	Under 50 group %	Over 50 group %
1	Nothing 14.3	Nothing 14.1
2	Language 14.2	Language 11.3
3	Music instrument 11.1	Musical instrument 8.9
4	Sports 8.7	Calligraphy 6.3
5	Cooking 6.8	Poem 5.7

Table 4 Preferred Activities by Gender

	Females		Males	
	Activity	Responses	Activity	Responses
1	Foreign languages	339	Gardening	339
2	Yoga/ Pilates	277	Cooking	277
3	Calligraphy	229	Playingmusical instrument	229
4	Gardening	211	Foreign language	211
5	Flower arrangement	204	Climbing/ trekking	204

Table 5 Preferred Activities (MEXT)

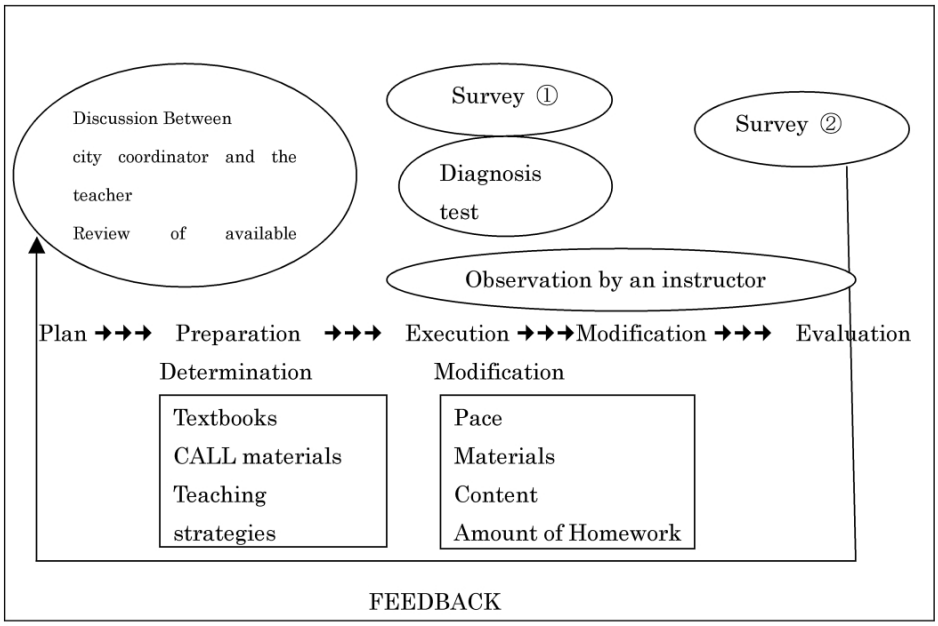
Ranking		%
1	Health related activities or sports	55.1
2	Hobbies (music, art, flower arrangement, cerography)	53.2
3	Cultural activities (history, literature, science, language, social issues)	29.2
4	Computer/ internet activities	25.8
5	Household skills (cooking, sewing, knitting)	23.6

Table 6 Reasons for Not Attending Activities

Reason	%
Too busy working and no time for that	45.4
Too busy with household chores and no time for that	18.9
No motivation was given/ no chance	16.4
Costly	9.0
No particular reasons	11.6
Do not feel necessity	5.9

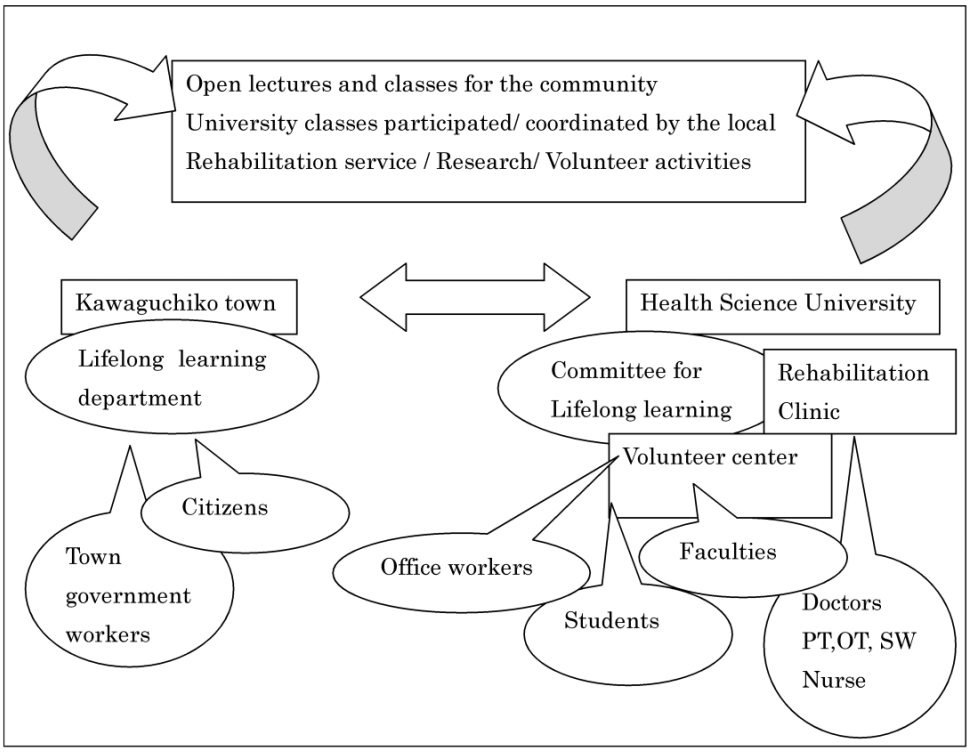
Appendix B

Chart 1　Data gathering strategies



Appendix C

Chart 2　Collaboration System



Abstract

Japanese universities are currently facing serious challenges to their survival while they strive to continue providing intellectual resources and educational services to the public. To combat shrinking budgets and low enrollment, various measures have been taken. One such measure is to be involved in lifelong learning, defined as learning that occurs throughout one's lifespan. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) promotes lifelong learning, and encourages the collaboration of local government and the private sector to meet this challenge. At present, many universities are now collaborating with the private or/and public sectors in contributing to community development and lifelong learning. The present study is a report of one such collaboration in which the Lifelong Learning Department in a community and a university provide an English program with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The report introduces the program, including its plan, implementation, and evaluation processes. Needs analysis of participants is emphasized as requisite to program success. The study concludes with an analysis of implications and a review of the challenges in implementing a lifelong learning program. This study will hopefully serve as a pilot study for further investigation of educational opportunities and university contribution in order to build a solid lifelong learning system in Japan.

Key words : Lifelong
Learning
Collaboration
CALL

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