
Equipping Japanese university EFL students with the language skills, business skills, and cultural awareness needed for global business

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Abstract

In the age of international business it is important for individuals to have the language skills, business skills, and cultural awareness necessary to be able to work in a global context. However, achieving this is not an easy task, especially in a culturally homogenous country such as Japan, where language learners are often characterized as being shy, lacking in confidence, and having little opportunity to interact with people from other cultures. In addition, the education system, which still does not widely encourage critical thinking, or value “the individual voice”, leaves many students unequipped for cross-cultural communication in the global business world.

Therefore, with an aim of giving Japanese university students the opportunity to develop high-level English skills, critical thinking and business skills, and cultural awareness, an innovative undergraduate program was created within the economics department of a private Japanese university in Tokyo. The program, which has been funded and recognized for good practice by the ministry of education, offers undergraduate students opportunities to develop a variety of skills and knowledge bases not often focused on in other programs or institutions in Japan.

By building students’ language ability, giving practice in a host of skills such as presentations, video conferencing, and negotiation, and through innovative content courses, and overseas study and internship opportunities, the program successfully equips students with the skills needed to successfully participate in cross-cultural global business. This presentation will discuss the overall curriculum before highlight some of the programs key measures of success.
