

# Developing a Global Mindset in Higher Education: Designs for Blended Learning

Peter W. ROUX\*<sup>1</sup>, Katsuaki SUZUKI\*<sup>2</sup>, Ryuichi MATSUBA\*<sup>3</sup>, Yoshiko GODA\*<sup>4</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>Saga University & Graduate School of Instructional Systems (GSIS), Kumamoto University

\*<sup>2,3,4</sup> Graduate School of Instructional Systems (GSIS), Kumamoto University

e-mail: [peteroux@cc.saga-u.ac.jp](mailto:peteroux@cc.saga-u.ac.jp)

**Abstract** This paper reports on the design of a blended learning course aimed at the development of a global mindset of students at a Japanese university. Principles of instructional design were utilized to combine theoretical and practical learning in a framework to develop the cultural intelligence (CQ) of students in preparation for study abroad. The course format was characterized by synchronous and asynchronous online activities and further supported by in-class, group-and/or person-centered activities with an emphasis on experiential learning. Cultural competencies, expressed in the form of knowledge, attitudes and self-perceived intercultural skills were measured. We present a limited set of qualitative results to reflect learner engagement and to consider the blended learning format.

**Keywords** blended learning; global mindset; cultural intelligence (CQ); instructional design; experiential learning

## 1. Introduction

To craft a successful career path, graduates today need a range of skills that may go well beyond their chosen field of study. Among these, the recent notion of a *global mindset* has emerged as a central idea in describing what might be required from 21<sup>st</sup> century workers. In Japan, recent programs to cultivate graduates with a global mindset have been introduced Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) <sup>(1)</sup> These aim to internationalize local universities by demanding a particular attention to developing *global citizens* through a variety of programs.

Considering the digital and educational requirements of our current age, Kedia & Mukherji<sup>(2)</sup> suggests a two-pillared model of knowledge and skill that connects three overlapping bases to describe a *global mindset*: (1) mastery over technology, information systems and telecommunications; (2) an understanding of the socio-political factors of the different countries in which the organization operates; and (3) an appreciation of the role of culture and cross-cultural issues that impact decision-making.

Lovvorn & Chen <sup>(3)</sup> suggest that a *global mindset* can be developed through a cultivation of *cultural intelligence (CQ)*. CQ is a four-factor concept that is defined by the *Cultural Intelligence Center* <sup>(4)</sup> as: "... a malleable capability that can be enhanced by multi-cultural experiences, training and self-awareness programs, travel and education". Livermore <sup>(5)</sup> defines it simply as a capability to function effectively across a variety of cultural contexts that includes ethnicities, generations and

organizations.

To investigate the development of CQ, we utilized blended learning to design and implement an undergraduate course at a Japanese university. Blended learning is expected to become predominant in future education, which Dzubian & Moskal <sup>(6)</sup> describes as "a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically advanced possibilities of the online environment..."

## 2. The study

To cultivate *global citizens* in higher education, this study explores how a blended learning format support the development of CQ in a group of Japanese undergraduates. Cultural competencies, expressed in the form of knowledge, attitudes and self-perceived intercultural skills were tracked and noted during the course.

### 2.1 Methods and Procedures

We applied a previously developed framework (Roux & Suzuki <sup>(7)</sup>) to a blended learning environment. This framework theoretically integrates three relevant fields: instructional design (ID), experiential learning and CQ theory. Drawing on the framework's embedded theories, we designed a 15-week course for a face-to-face (F2F) environment equipped with PC's and WiFi. The course included significant portions of online activity (synchronous & asynchronous) and the outline is presented in Table 1.

Three components were used as a foundation for the blended learning format: (1) learning content, (2)

assessment/evaluation and (3) research. We focus here on the qualitative feedback received during assessment & evaluation. These were obtained using Google forms in the F2F setting, as part of 4 online reviews that included 'free comment' sections. We reasoned that this free feedback as class reflection would be compatible with the notion of CQ development and could give an indication of course progress and efficacy.

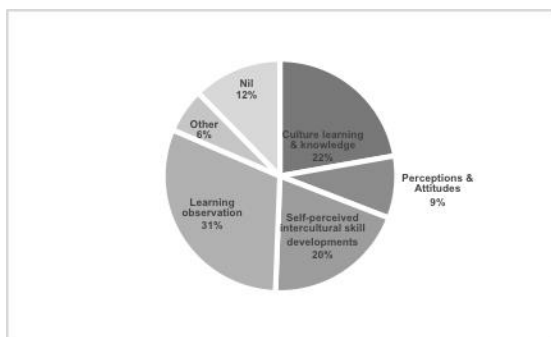
**Table 1.** Course outline: Developing a global mindset through blended learning

Blended Learning Environment	Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbook (8 chapters)</li> <li>• Classroom worksheets</li> <li>• Mini-lectures</li> <li>• Online media, surveys, feedback</li> <li>• International Virtual Exchange (IVE) Project</li> <li>• Flipped methods: textbook reading / audio and comprehension</li> </ul>
	Assessment/Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 online review quizzes</li> <li>• 13 online class feedback surveys</li> </ul>
	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CQ Scale</li> <li>• Online surveys/feedback</li> <li>• IVE Project</li> </ul>

Adapted from Roux & Suzuki<sup>(8)</sup>

## 2.2 Results

A selection of qualitative feedback results from the four online reviews (N=13) were taken from the 'free comment' section of the survey and analyzed to investigate in which ways cultural competencies emerged (if at all). The following themes emerged from student reflections, with distributions as shown in Figure 2: cultural learning & knowledge, perceptions & attitudes, self-perceived intercultural skill developments, learning observations, other, and Nil.



**Figure 1.** Feedback analysis: Themes & Occurrence rate

## 3. Findings

- (1) Emergent themes from the student feedback show relatively high incidences for learning observations, cultural learning and self-perceived intercultural skill developments. This finding of overlapping elements show potential for deeper analysis and discovery.
- (2) Content analysis of the student feedback indicate that students engaged thoughtfully and on a personally meaningful level with the contents and process of the course. This is taken as a positive preliminary indication of support for our framework and the blended learning design.

## 4. Conclusion

Preliminary findings from a blended learning course show qualitative support for an ID framework to develop CQ. Future research will aim to repeat this course for the purposes of refinement and further data collection to further investigate the development of CQ through ID.

## 5. References

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