神戸市外国語大学 学術情報リポジトリ

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メタデータ	
	言語: eng
	出版者:
	公開日: 2019-03-18
	キーワード (Ja):
	キーワード (En):
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URL	https://kobe-cufs.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/2438

MUN Perspectives on Teaching and Learning:

A Focus on Negotiation

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1. Introduction

MUN (Model United Nations) or MUN-like simulations have been held in various parts of the world for nearly a century; the earliest events are recorded in the 1920s at the time of the League of Nations, the precursor to the modern United Nations (National Model United Nations, 2018). Despite the efforts expended over the many the years at these events, surprisingly little has been researched or written regarding the teaching and learning that was undoubtedly occurring during the various phases of preparation, practice and participation. Among the few papers available, some offer support to teachers (Endless & Wolfe, 2003; Chasek, 2005), while some have focused on the connection with business (Philips & Muldoon, 1996), or political science (Crossley-Frolick, 2010; Obendorf & Randerson, 2012). However, most papers report on MUN simulations in an L1 English environment with a paper by Adamson (2013) being among the few exceptions. The present volume (in addition to three previous volumes published by Kobe City University of Foreign Studies[1]) has taken positive strides in aid of rectifying this area of benign neglect.

2. Background to the Theme

There is no doubt that both teaching and learning are taking place throughout and beyond the MUN experience. However, observations, analysis and testimonials from faculty mentors—the people facilitating the events—may provide not only insights

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[1] Zenuk-Nishide, L. (Ed.). (2009). *Experiential learning through Model United Nations simulations project phase 1;* Zenuk-Nishide, L. (Ed.). (2012). *Experiential learning through Model United Nations simulations project phase 2;* Zenuk-Nishide, L. & Tatsuki, D. (Eds.). (2017). *NMUN 2016: stakeholder perspectives on learning processes and outcomes.*

into learning but also guidance for future mentors. The relative lack of academic records may in part reflect the sheer lack of writing time available to most faculty mentors who juggle their MUN work on top of their regular workload—they work so hard coaching delegates mostly for the sheer joy of it. Another academic barrier is the lack of a specific academic niche—Educational psychology? Communication science? Linguistics or pragmatics? Political science or economics? Environmental or life sciences? The answer may be "All of the above" because, depending on the agenda and themes selected for MUN events, the faculty mentor may need to have or develop expertise in any or all of these.

The chapters in this volume have been sorted into two parts: The part one chapters deal directly with negotiation, persuasion and communication in MUN preparation; The chapters in part two present insights and examples of 'best practice' related in more general ways with negotiation expressed as a language teaching/learning construct.

2.1 Perspectives on Teaching and Learning (Part I)

It is especially significant that the first of the five chapters in part one was written by a former professional UN negotiator, Michiko Kuroda, who is currently dedicating her skills to the training of future leaders in diplomacy. In her chapter, *Interest-Based Negotiation and MUN: Equipping Youth with Appropriate Tools for a Better World*, she explains how the UN has applied the principles of negotiation and discusses the implications of training university students according to the principles of interest-based negotiation.

As well as learning and practicing the various methods of negotiating, student delegates also need to deepen their knowledge regarding the case under negotiation as well as enhance their communication skills. In chapter three, *Research is Key to Model United Nations Writing, Negotiating and Public Speaking*, Lori Zenuk-Nishide illustrates the crucial role of good research in preparation for MUN negotiations and resolution drafting. In her case study, she describes how two Japanese university students prepared and later participated as delegates or ambassadors representing Egypt in the National Model United Nations Canada Security Council.

Reflecting the reality in the world, non-native speakers of English are more often than not the majority speakers at MUN events. Their way of communicating using English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) can be understood as a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) displaying mutual engagement, a negotiated joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. So too, MUN simulations embody these three criteria and thus can also be considered a community of practice. Chapter three, *ELF in MUN Negotiations: Problematizing the Native Speaker*, by Donna Tatsuki problematizes the L1 English speakers who do not accommodate their speaking style according to the majority ELF community of practice. The chapter catalogues the shortcomings that native speakers display when communicating with ELF speakers in the context of MUN simulations and offers suggestions/teaching materials for native speaker sensitivity-training as well as strategies for ELF users to cope with native speaker initiated communication problems and break-downs.

The author of chapter four, J. Barrie Roberts, uses her training as a lawyer to bring fresh insights into the principles of negotiation in *Using 'Getting to Yes' to Teach English, Negotiation, and Other 21st Century Skills*. She recommends *Getting to Yes*, the classic text on principled negotiation for ELT instructors who would like to use conflict resolution to engage students with authentic communication. Her chapter describes four very different courses that used *Getting to Yes* to teach integrated lessons in principled negotiation and ELT and concludes with suggestions for additional ways to integrate negotiation within ELT.

In chapter five, *Speech, Drama, Debate, Negotiation, and the Model United Nations*, David Kluge summarizes the basic principles of rhetorical speech and logic/fallacies of logic. The chapter closes with introductory explanations of how the fields of speech, drama, debate, and negotiation can inform MUN practitioners.

2.2 Perspectives on Teaching and Learning (Part II)

The four chapters in part two each have a unique contribution to this volume. The first in this section, *Debating at School in Italy* by Letizia Cinganotto contextualizes debate within CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) methodology. The chapter describes the "Educational Avant-garde" movement promoted by INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation, Educational Research) in cooperation with 22 schools in which debate is used to help innovate and reshape the

traditional lessons.

Chapter seven, *Improving Student Involvement in Discussions* by Takara Kenza Allal-Sumoto begins on the premise that discussion activities have not always worked well in English classes despite the fact that they are emphasized in MEXT objectives (MEXT, 2012). She reports on materials development research to evaluate the effectiveness of each activity and recommend changes.

Chapter eight also begins on a similar premise that Japanese students are reluctant to participate in discussions and share their opinions. In *The Evolving Argument: Negotiating Improved Academic Writing Skills and Class Cohesion*, Robert Joel Deacon describes a semester-long activity designed specifically to improve and promote negotiation with the expected outcomes of better class cohesion, critical thinking, and persuasive writing skills. Although research results improved class cohesion and positive transfer of writing structure strategies, gains in grammatical peer-feedback did not improve as much as hoped.

The section closes with *Negotiating the Challenges of Studying Abroad* by Anthony Torbert and Noriko Nakanishi. In their research they investigate the challenges faced by students in study abroad programs through a simple online survey followed up with semi-structured interviews of a select group. The results provide insight and guidance regarding the preparation and negotiation strategies students need to develop to make the most of their study abroad program experiences.

3. Conclusions

The chapters in this volume are based on just some of the presentations given at the Global Negotiation Symposium, which was envisioned as a faculty development opportunity held synchronously with the annual JUEMUN (Japan University English Model United Nations) event. It is our hope that this will be just the first of a series of volumes dedicated to understanding and promoting negotiation by recognizing its importance as a 21st century life skill.

Acknowledgments

dedicated to Kyoji Ueda and Nahoko Matsunaga for their much appreciated stewardship and support.

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