FACILITATING INFORMAL LANGUAGE LEARNING: GOOGLE MAPS

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Preview of today’s talk...

- The Rationale (or, Why We Did This Project)
- The Projects (or, What and How We Did Them)
- The Results (or, What Everyone Said Later)

Why a map project? (1)

Downsizing in foreign language (FL) classrooms
- # of undergraduates studying FL rising, but proportion of the total students declining: 16.5% in 1965 to 8.6% in 2006
- Financial concerns → increased class sizes and/or decreased in-class contact hours

Necessity of capitalizing on all / more aspects of SLA
One such aspect is informal learning—voluntary, self-directed learning outside the classroom (e.g., Connor, 1997-2009)

Major locus of learning — 75% (Falk & Dierking, 2002)

Why a map project? (2)

Lafford (2009) suggestions for further CALL research:

1. “Explore the attitudes and abilities [of] learners who participate in virtual environments …”
2. “Explore the relative affordances1 of different authoring tools to create task-based activities …” (p. 692)

In more discrete terms, to try these cloud apps in our respective and shared contexts
To further investigate informal learning

1affordance = opportunities and constraints provided by a technology in a specific context for L2 learning (Levy, 2009)
Why a map project? (3)

- Hope to blur boundary between in-class and out-of-class activities
- Longitudinal examination of extent to which participants continue using these tools (future study)

Thus, today we’ll talk about:

1. The *in-class* map activities, which lead to...
2. Informal, out-of-class activities (we hope 😊)

The Project (or, What and How?)

Purposes of Map-Making

- To practice typing Japanese (Arizona students)
- To use learned structures to describe a place students want to introduce.
- To create the opportunity for exchange with FL students by contributing to a collaborative map and sharing it
- To introduce Japanese students to U of Arizona and American students to Japanese universities
- To familiarize students with another cloud application (Google Maps)

Participants

University JFL students in Arizona, USA (n = 182)

- 1st-year students
- 3rd-year students

University EFL students in Ibaraki, Japan (n = 129)

- 1st-years (3 groups: low-, mid-, high-level)
- Three different universities

Over 2-year period (2009-2010)

The Tool (the app)

Used Google Maps (free, of course)

Students created a class map written in their L2

- Arizona students wrote in Japanese, Japan students wrote in English
- Collaborated on map of campus and surrounding area
- Extension of class material (forms) and lesson on word processing in Japanese
- Used photos to enhance

Languages of Communication
An example from a Japan map

An example from an Arizona map...

Procedure

Step 1. Setting Up a “My Maps” Google Account
Step 2. Accepting the Invitation to Collaborate
Step 3. Opening the Collaborative Map
Step 4. Open “My Maps”
Step 5. Navigating
Step 6. Editing: Creating Map Content Manually
   - Describing the building
   - Type in the name of your building under “Title” in katakana
   - In the text box, type your section number and your last name first
   - Then type the building description. See the review sheet.
Step 7. Enhancing your map
   - Adding and Formatting Attributes
   - Adding a Web Link and a Photo

Procedure, Part 1 (Teacher)

Step 1. Open a google account
Step 2. Go to Maps and then My Maps
Step 3. Click Create new map

Teacher Procedure, Part 2

You’ll see this screen...
Step 4. Add a title
Step 5. Add a map description
Step 6. Choose the privacy setting

Teacher Procedure, Part 3

You’ll see this screen...
Step 7. Invite students to collaborate
Step 8. Save when finished
Student Procedure, Part 1

Step 1. Have an e-mail account (e.g., Yahoo, Hotmail, gmail)
Step 2. Accept the invitation to collaborate

Jim: I set up 20 gmail accounts for groups of 3-4 students to speed up this process...
login: tsgaku.student.01@gmail.com
pass: map4everybody

Kiyomi: I used school accounts

Student Procedure, Part 2

Step 3. Open “My Maps”
Step 4. Open the class map

Step 5. Navigating around the class map (to “Edit”)

Then your happy mapmakers can edit using these tools...

Student Procedure, Part 2

Step 5. Navigating around the class map...

Then when your mapmaker clicks the blue balloon this pop-up appears...
...and your happy mapmaker adds a title
...and a description for this special location or thing.

Student Procedure, Part 2

Step 6. Editing (creating map content manually)
- Describing the building
- Type in the name of your building under “Title” in katakana
- In the text box, type your section number and your last name first
- Then type the building description. See the review sheet.
Step 6. Describing the building

- Type in the name of your building under ‘Title’ in the text box.
- Type your section number and your last name first.
- Then type the building description. See the review sheet.
- Save your work by clicking ‘Save’.

Please DO NOT click ‘OK’ until you finish all steps.
When you are done editing, click the ‘DONE’ button.

Student Procedure, Part 3

Step 7. Enhancing your map using Rich Text

- Adding and Formatting Attributes
- Adding a Web Link and a Photo

Student Procedure, Part 3

- Step 7. Enhancing your map using Rich Text toolbar
  - Adding and Formatting Attributes (text effects)

Jim: I have students send photos to me (e-mail practice); I then resize and upload the photos to my webpage and students link to a photo folder there.
Icons
Map-Making (1st-year JPN)

Arizona Students’ Maps
Map-Making

Japanese Students’ Maps
Map-Making

The Tsukuba map...
Students selected locations and added them to the map...

The pink rectangle shows the university, meaning about half the locations were outside campus.
For example...

Japanese Students’ Map
Map-Making

University things...
Or things outside

Japanese Students’ Maps
Map-Making

This is Ino-ji. He is a potato.
He lives in front of Tokai Station. He is holding a stick.
Japanese Students’ Maps

Map-Making

The Results (or, What Everyone Said)

Data: Method

Questionnaire
Quantitative
✓ 4 Likert-scale items
✓ 5-point semantic-differentiation scale
✓ anchored by “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (5)
✓ neutral midpoint = 3
Qualitative
✓ 4 open-ended questions
✓ Good pts. / bad pts. / other pts. / suggestions

Data: Timing

Survey data collected ...
✓ Dec-Jan, 2009-2010
✓ At end of first term in Arizona
✓ At end of school year in Tsukuba
✓ Basically after mapmaking finished

Data Analysis

· Descriptive statistics
· T-tests for group differences with FDR correction (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995)
· Qualitative data

Quantitative Results (US-Japan)

All positive numbers
Fairly strong support for enjoyable (stat-sig difference)
Modest endorsement of helped L2, motivation, use again

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Arizona</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped learning L2</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased motivation</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to use again</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < 0.05 after FDR correction.
Quantitative Results (US-US)

| Stat-sig improvement for three items | Fairly strong support for enjoyable, helped learning | Modest endorsement of motivation, use again |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Perceived Usefulness of Mapmaking, Arizona Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
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<td>Want to use again</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: **p < .01 after FDR correction, *p < .05 after FDR correction

Qualitative Results for mapmaking

Good points
- Enjoyable
  - “Fun, new way to use what we learned”
  - “Really cool teamwork”
- Language skill improvement
  - “It’s very simple, but it gets me thinking in Japanese.”
  - “It made me more comfortable with my Japanese.”

Qualitative Results for mapmaking

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Good points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s fun that students in Japan can see our school.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cool seeing the Japanese students making English maps”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I really like the idea of sharing with a school in Japan.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is good for both people in two countries to know each other.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Results for mapmaking

Bad points
- Technical difficulties
  - “A little confusing figuring out the technology.”
  - “Google was rather inconvenient.”
- Negative reactions
- Not useful, not effective
- Time, timing
  - “More than one class would be more helpful”
  - “Took too much time”

Qualitative Results: Suggestions

- Add more appropriate vocabulary
- Timing: earlier / later
- Check student work before posting
- More iterations of map-making
- Publish results (hard copy):
  - せっかく授業でやったのでグーグルマップを使って、バンプレットのような物を作ってみる？（印刷するなど）
  - Make a “tour plan”
  - ツアープラント作ってみる。学校、駅、百貨店等の目的地まで行くのに、何がどこにあるのか書く
Qualitative Results for mapmaking

Suggestions

☑ Expand beyond assigned places
   “How about a map of our hometown?”
   “How about favorite places outside of campus?”

Challenge

Different academic calendars (U.S.A. and Japan)
Those pesky Google accounts
   > set up accounts beforehand
Typing difficult (1st-year JFL students)
Technology difficult, Google Maps “confusing”
   > polish explanation, allow more time
Overlap (students choosing the same thing)
   > teacher makes list
Time-consuming
Make section maps
   > 23 students per map rather 100+ students

Conclusion

Students:
1. activity enjoyable and motivating
2. effective vis-à-vis language learning
3. want to expand activities

Teachers:
1. encourage cross-cultural exchange
2. captivating activity

(Post-) Conclusion

If you’d like to have a look at some of our student maps, the handouts for students we’ve mentioned today, or today’s PowerPoint, we invite you to visit:

http://www.jimelwood.net/maps/maps_index.html

We also welcome correspondence via e-mail (on the conference webpage)

References Cited


MacLean, G., & Elwood, J. A. (2009). Digital natives, learner perceptions and the use of ICT. In M. Thomas (Ed.), Handbook of research on Web 2.0 and second language learning (pp. 156-175). Hershey, PA: IGI.