

Internationalization of curriculum in English-medium instruction programs at Japanese universities: evolutions in pedagogy in the era of the ‘New Normal’

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Overview of the study

- A five-year project with funding from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) which will include repeated qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.
- **Initial aim:** uncover factors that enable and block internationalization of curriculum (IoC) in the context of the COVID pandemic in Japanese higher education, characterized by increases in online learning and other approaches to higher education provision.
- **Long-term goal:** See how educators and students respond and adapt to changes in IoC and educational provision over the next 5 years
- **Phase 1:** a preliminary pilot study of document analysis and qualitative interviews with educators in different EMI programs.
- **Phase 2:** interviews with educators involved in funded Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) programs (informed by phase 1 findings)

Key terms and concepts

- Curriculum
- Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC)
- English Medium Instruction (EMI)
- Virtual student mobility (VSM)
- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

What is 'Curriculum'?

...What *isn't* curriculum?

Formal	"the plans for instruction approved by the policy and governing bodies of educational systems" (Gay, 2002, p. 108)	Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching. <i>Journal of Teacher Education</i> , 53 (2), 106–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487104267587
Symbolic	representations and meanings experienced in the physical spaces in which students learn, both in classrooms and across university campuses. Also university-sanctioned practices such as entrance exams, cultural festivals and graduation ceremonies.	
Social	"knowledge, ideas, and impressions about ethnic groups that are portrayed in the mass media", representations which convey particular values, biases and stereotypes (Gay, 2002, p.109).	
Hidden	"unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of school and classroom life" (Giroux & Penna, 1979, p.22).	Giroux, H.A., & Penna, A.N. (1979). Social Education in The Classroom: The Dynamics of The Hidden Curriculum. <i>Theory and Research in Social Education</i> , 7 (1), 21–42.
Planned	the curriculum <i>intended</i> by policymakers, curriculum designers and educators	Kelly, A.V. (2009). <i>The Curriculum: Theory and Practice</i> . Sage.
Received	what is actually understood and experienced on the part of the students in reality	
...thus	the <i>totality</i> of student experiences resulting from educational provision (Kelly, 2009).	

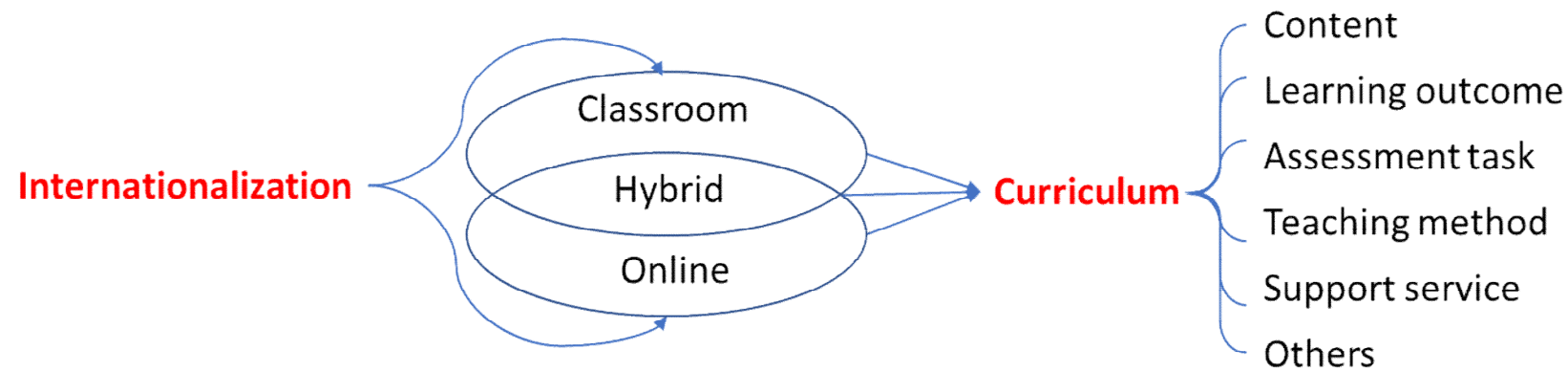
What is English-medium instruction (EMI)?

“the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro, 2018, p.19).

Macaro, E. (2018). *English Medium Instruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

What is Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC)?

“the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study” (Leask, 2009).



But its meaning and approach might differ across different regions, disciplines, and institutions.

IoC and EMI in non-Anglosphere contexts

Three models of incorporating international actors in internationalizing universities

- **Colonization:** *The imposition of dominant (Western) approaches to HE at the expense of indigenous approaches*
- **Integration:** A two-way process of mutual accommodation by international and local actors with potential to reform the academic mainstream
- **Assimilation:** A one-way process of international actors' adaptation to resemble the local academic mainstream
- **Marginalization:** A process in which international actors are restricted to peripheral roles and excluded from full participation in the local academic mainstream

Brotherhood, T., Hammond, C.D., & Kim, Y. (2019). Towards an actor-centered typology of internationalization: a study of junior international faculty in Japanese universities. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00420-5>

Virtual Student Mobility (VSM) and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

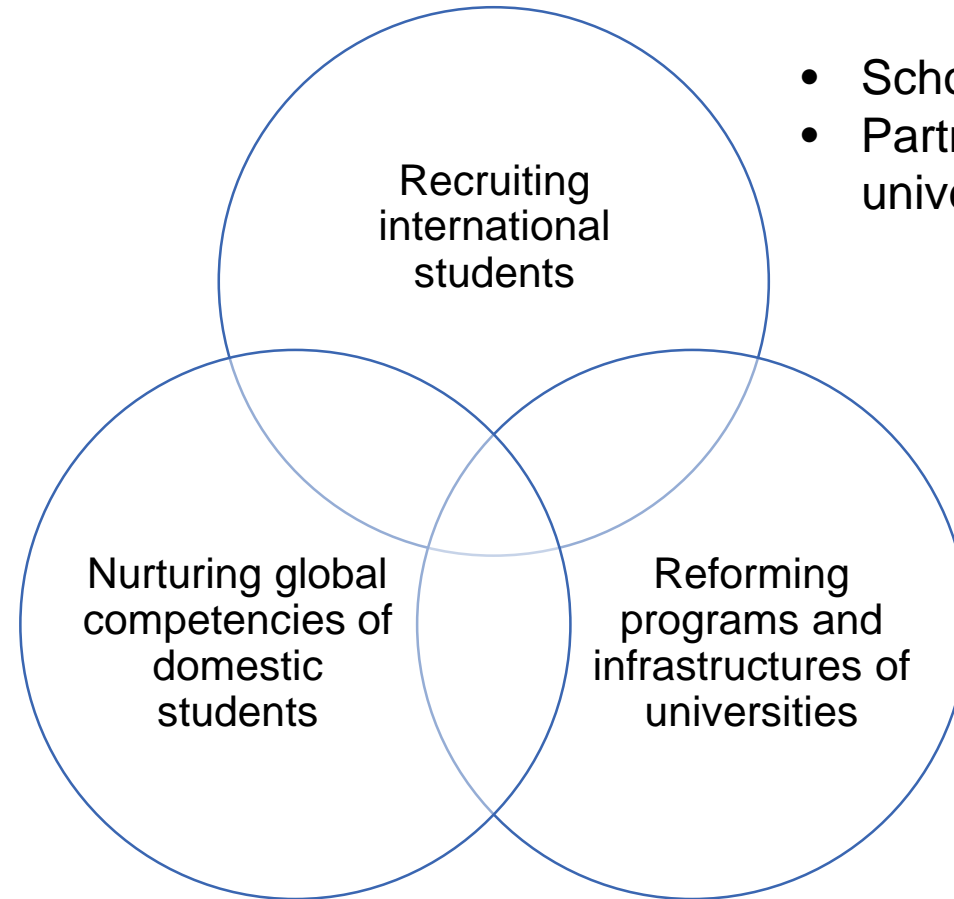
“**Virtual student mobility (VSM)** is a form of mobility that uses information and communication technologies to facilitate cross-border and/or inter-institutional academic, cultural, and experiential exchanges and collaboration. VSM can be embedded as part of the regular delivery of exchange and collaboration and/or be deployed as a response to emergencies that temporarily restrict physical mobility” (UNESCO IESALC, n.d.).

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) is a form of VSM developed at SUNY (US) which “is an approach that brings students and professors together across cultures to learn, discuss and collaborate as part of their class. Professors partner to design the experience, and students partner to complete the activities designed. **COIL becomes part of the class, enabling all students to have a significant intercultural experience within their course of study.**

- Can be created in any discipline; interdisciplinary collaborations work well
- Encourage active student learning and teamwork
- **Include an emphasis on cross-cultural interactions and understanding**
- Can be 5-15 weeks long
- Are a graded activity in each participating class
- Can use any technology tools that serves the learning goals” (<https://online.suny.edu/introtocoil/suny-coil-what-is/>)

The Japanese context: 3 main elements of internationalization of higher education in Japan

- Scholarships, fellowships
- Partnerships with foreign universities - 1980s

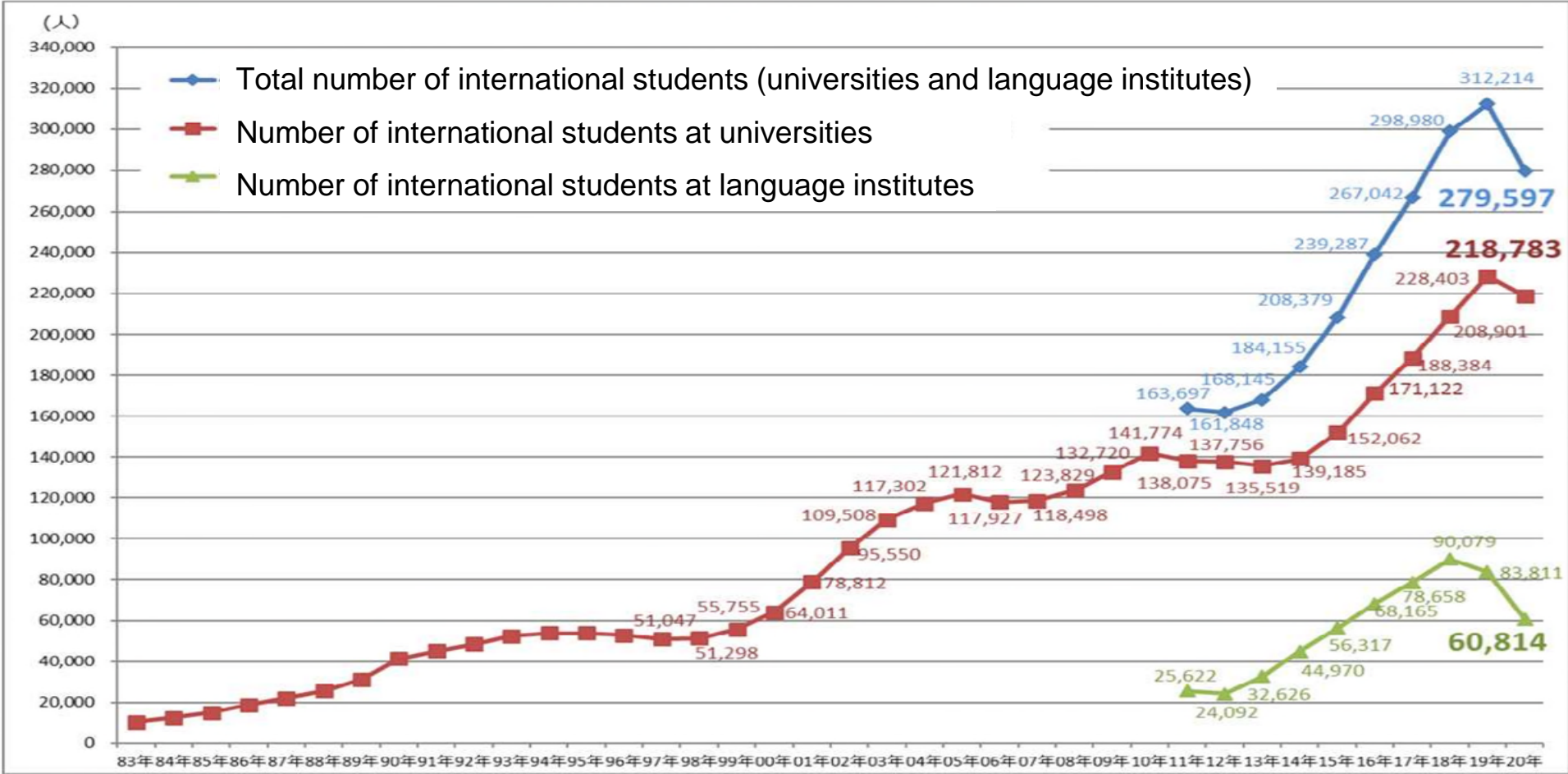


- Establishment of courses, programs and degrees in international and global studies
- Scholarships and fellowships for Japanese students to study abroad - 2000s

- Establishment of courses, programs and degrees in English (EMI)
- Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) - 2018
- Support office for International students
- English writing centers

International students in Japan

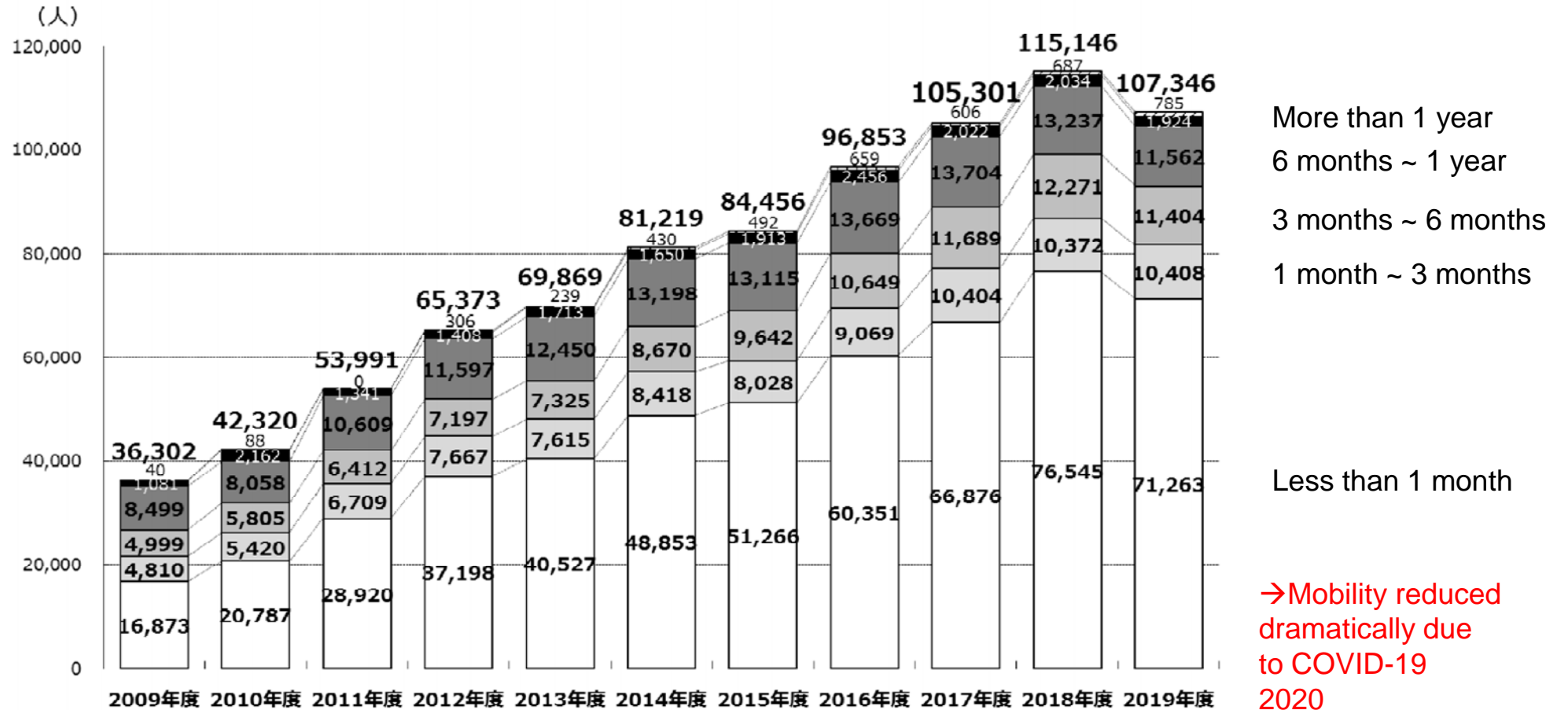
Number of international students in Japan



(MEXT, 2021)

Japanese student studying abroad

Number of Japanese students studying abroad



(MEXT,2021)

Why EMI?

- Main rationale of internationalization of HE for the government: **to nurture global competences of Japanese students (creating ‘*global human resources*’) and bring talented international students**
- But not everyone gets to go abroad for international experiences — only around 3~4% of JP students study abroad - COVID-19 has further limited mobility of students
- For many, EMI are the only international classes they can take
- In 2018, EMI was offered at the undergraduate level in 305 universities (42%) and 227 at the graduate level (36%) (MEXT, 2020)



EMI in Japan: 3 models

Global Human Resources (GHR) model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• targets domestic students• curriculum focuses on ‘international’ studies and foreign language skills.• emphasis on language and communication skills for students’ career development• Some offer English teacher’s licenses
Crossroads model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targets both domestic and international students.• courses on international or regional issues with an interdisciplinary approach• Japanese and Asian studies courses to attract international students.
<i>Dejima</i> model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• targets international students• named after <i>Dejima</i> island which was used as the only place designated for foreign trade during the Edo period, serving to segregate foreigners from mainland Japan.• often isolated within the university and with little interaction between domestic students and international students• often focus on STEM fields to attract international students since Japan is relatively advanced in these fields

Adapted from Shimauchi, S. (2017). English-medium Degree Programs in Internationalization of Japanese Universities : Conceptual Models and Critical Issues. *Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, 29, 105–117.

Problem statement

- Students attending EMI classes - > students gain international competences/ intercultural awareness?
 - **“intercultural competence does not happen automatically when people from different nations meet under the same institutional context. Even when there aren’t obvious conflicts, that does not mean that there is successful interaction”** (Hiller, 2010, p. 150; cited in Moeller & Osborn, 2014; Yonezawa, 2014)
 - Internationalization of curriculum becomes important in designing EMI classes
- Need to investigate IoC in EMI in Japanese universities

Enablers and Blockers of IoC

Leask (2015) uses the term “enablers” to describe the factors that support IoC and “blockers” for factors that could be an obstacle to its realization.

Cultural

Cultural enablers/blockers derive from the values, beliefs and dominant ways of thinking in the discipline

Institutional

Institutional enablers/blockers are those related to the ways in which a university organizes itself as it goes about its business.

Personal

Personal enablers/blockers are related to the mindset and skillset of individuals. The capacity, willingness and commitments of the faculty members.

Phase 1 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that faculty members perceive to enable or block the internationalization of the curriculum in EMI programs?
2. How have IoC dynamics changed because of the pandemic? What are the new possibilities?

Pilot study methodology

Qualitative research methods:

- **Analyze documents** and reports published by the government and the universities to understand the new policies and changes that involve IoC at the university level
- **Semi-structured interviews** with 11 faculty members from 3 national and 5 private universities involved in EMI programs to find out the current situation and challenges of IoC at the program level.

Information about interview participants

	Career stage	EMI Program/Course	Type	EMI model
1	Professor	Social Science	Private	GHR
2	Professor	Social Science	Private	Crossroad
3	Professor	Social Science	Private	Crossroad
4	Professor	Social Science	Private	Crossroad
5	Professor	Social Science	National	Crossroad
6	Professor	<u>STEM</u>	National	Crossroad
7	Associate Professor	Social Science	National	GHR
8	Associate Professor	Social Science/Humanities	Private	GHR
9	Assistant Professor	Social Science	Private	GHR
10	Assistant Professor	Social Science	Private	Crossroad
11	Assistant Professor	Social Science	Private	Crossroad

Limitations:

- No 'Dejima' model
- Underrepresentation of STEM disciplines
- No local public university represented

Findings: (RQ1 - What are the factors that faculty members perceive to enable or block the internationalization of the curriculum in EMI programs?)

Level	Blocker	Enabler
<p>Cultural</p> <p>(values, beliefs and dominant ways of thinking in the discipline)</p>	<p>Disciplinary presumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard science is universal, and loC irrelevant • international studies are automatically 'international' 	<p>Some fields and subjects are conducive to loC, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics on environment issues, global studies
<p>Institutional</p> <p>(the ways in which a university organizes itself as it goes about its business)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutions cannot force faculty members to teach certain content or in a certain way – Academic freedom - Competition between departments - Conservative culture resistant to change - Marginalization of young/ contract-based faculty (willing but powerless) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longstanding commitment to faculty autonomy allows for academic freedom in the classroom

Findings (RQ1) cont.

Level	Blocker	Enabler
<p>Personal</p> <p>(the mindset, skillset, willingness and commitment of individuals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge and motivation • Initiating IoC means increased workload • Those interviewed described a teacher-dominated approach, ignoring the centrality (and diversity) of the learner argued for in dominant theories of intercultural communicative competence (Moeller & Osborn, 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members own research area • Study abroad experience • Understanding of importance of IoC • Knowledge of ICT, and different way of conducting IoC (such as COIL) • Capable faculty member being a leader of internationalization • awareness of own cultural biases
<p>Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative internationalization: success determined by increases in international students, faculty, programs, etc, at the expense of qualitative reform • Funded COIL program (an enabler) could hinder development of COIL/VSM in other world regions • Formal curricular innovation entails application process and approval by the Ministry of Education (MEXT), changes limited to four- year cycles • Policy changes outside of HE – English language teaching requirement in elementary schools meant uninterested/low English ability sts required to take some EMI classes, shifting the dynamic 	<p>An exception – the funded COIL project between JHEIs and US (and other) partners</p>

Other findings:

- Leask's framework posits that **IoC must be grounded in the academic discipline** which constitutes the content and learning objectives of an internationalized curriculum, **but many GHR and Crossroads EMI programs lacked a disciplinary foundation**, incorporating a range of subjects from the Humanities and Social Sciences and supplemented by CLIL-type English language classes to respond to the needs and academic interests of both international and domestic students. As IoC cannot be grounded in a particular academic culture in these cases, there must be some other foundation or pedagogical approach upon which to develop an internationalized curriculum.
- **Government strategies and policies are central** in shaping forms of internationalization in Japan. In the Japanese context (and elsewhere?), the government-level is influential as a blocker/enabler and should be added to the analytical framework.

RQ2. How have IoC dynamics changed because of the pandemic? What are the new possibilities?

- The forced shift to online/hybrid modes of teaching provided an exogenous shock to Japanese universities, highlighting:
- Considerable technological deficiencies in both infrastructure and teaching capacity
 - The value of considering new approaches to teaching and learning (e.g. flipped classrooms, pre-recorded lectures)
 - The challenges inherent in high-quality online provision (e.g. privacy issues, meaningful interactions including successful intercultural exchange)
 - **The possibilities for the expansion of IoC through COIL**

Thus...

From phase 1 to phase 2



IoC in EMI

- IoC was never the focus of the Japanese government as its internationalization of higher education strategy.
- That is why we wanted to understand the current situation of IoC and its enablers and blockers.

Japanese government recently promotes COIL

COIL and IoC

- Although the government promotes COIL for strengthening universities partnerships for student mobility, it is also a form of IoC (i.e. internationalization at home).
- This relatively new pedagogical approach has its own challenges.
- We would like to investigate what COIL projects can bring in IoC development of Japanese higher education.

Objectives

Aim: To understand whether the government driven COIL project could promote IoC among educators in Japanese universities.

- To understand how far existing COIL classes are collaborated (synchronous, asynchronous, etc.) with partner institutions
- To uncover the challenges of COIL
- To analyze the outcomes of the COIL projects

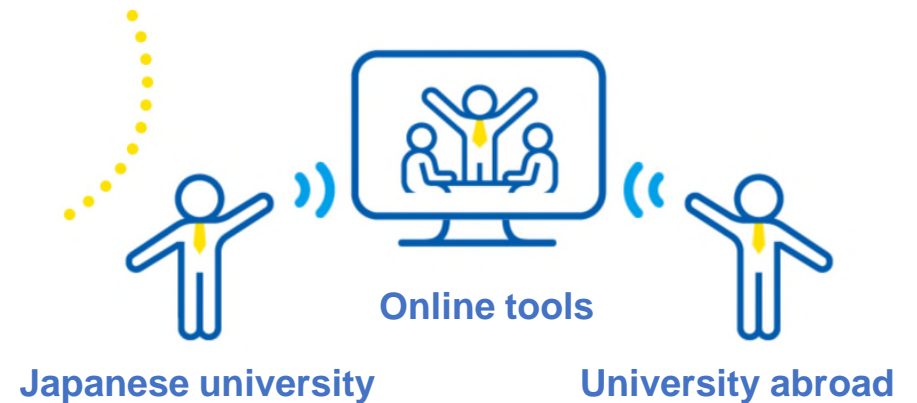
In progress....

COIL in Japan

Japanese government funding project 2018-2023 (10million-40million yen per year): “Project for Strengthening the Global Development Capabilities of Universities: Support for the formation of inter-university exchange with the United States and other countries using COIL”



13 universities/ 10 projects got funded
Aim to have partnership with 64 US universities and 12 other universities

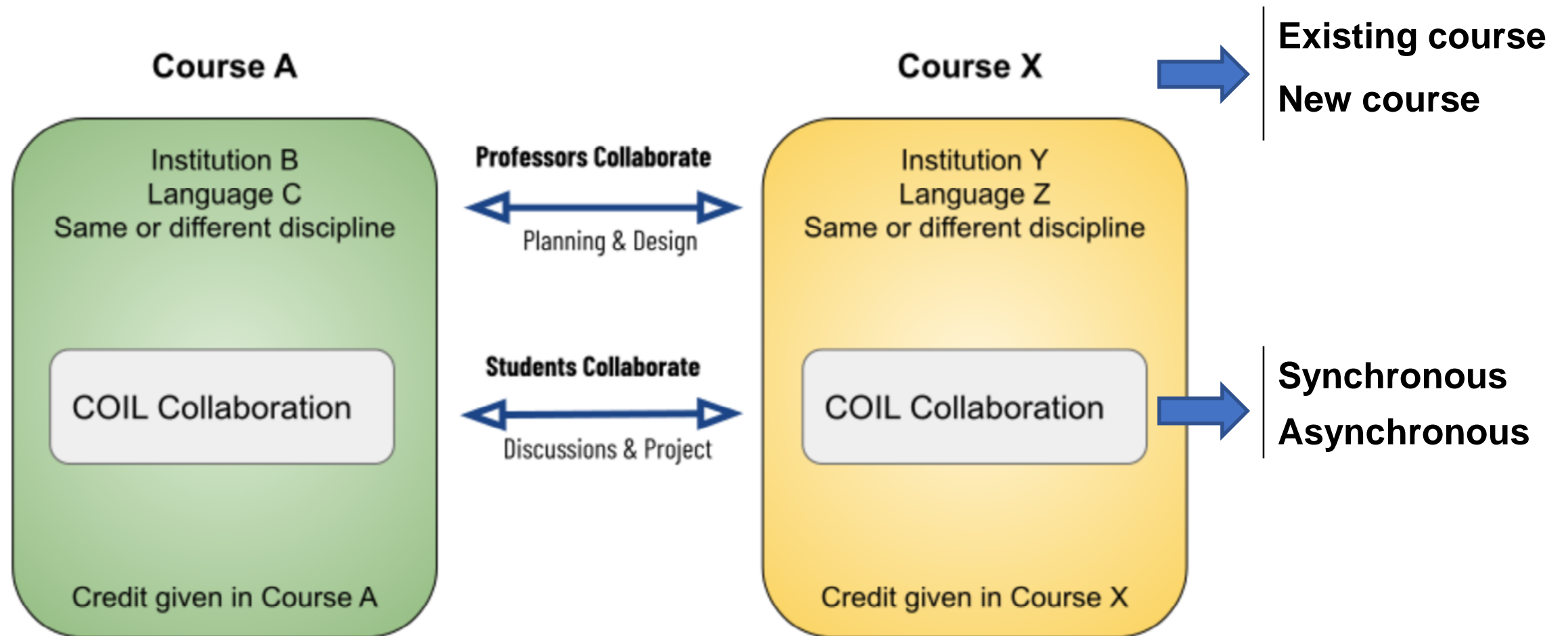


Source: <http://www.coil.osaka-cu.ac.jp/about/>

Titles of funded COIL projects

- Japan-US Unique Program by COIL
- Japan-America Program for COIL style Education of World-leading Global **Engineering** Specialists
- Trans-Pacific Collaborative Online International Learning for **Multiculturalism** and **Conflict-Resilience**
- Japan-US Educational Initiative on Creating **Games** as a Comprehensive Artistic Practice
- US-Kagoshima-Asia Triad Program in Multi-Polar World
- Developing Global Leaders in the Pacific Island Region for its **Sustainable Development** via COIL Technology
- Program to develop collaborative Japan-US **social innovators**
- Development of Exploratory COIL Programs toward **Human Security** and **Multicultural Coexistence**
- Connecting Japan and the U.S through NU4-COIL2: A Regionally Deep-Rooted Tailor-Made Educational Program
- COIL Plus Program to Develop **Global Career Mindset**

COIL - Modes



Challenges

- **Finding partner educator:** Need to find a partner who is willing to collaborate and flexible to change the curriculum. Often personal connections are used.
- **Subject:** Need to learn about partner's curriculum and find common ground of both courses, so as not to deviate from the purpose of the both courses.
- **Language ability:** English tends to be the language of instruction and if you are not familiar with English, it's a hassle and difficult.
- **Willingness:** The educators are in charge of COIL on a volunteer basis, and they don't get paid extra for doing COIL. However, there are educators who find it interesting and valuable, and willing to get involved.

Expected and unexpected outcome

- **Government:** To raise the number of MOUs and increase the student's mobility → however due to COVID-19 pandemic student mobility decreased
 - **University:** To gain international recognition by signing MOUs, to increase inbound and outbound student mobility → Now COIL is one of the few activities that counts as “international”
 - **Faculty member:** To enhance students intercultural awareness, communication skills etc.
 - **Unexpected:**
 - Importance of COIL just as an internationalization at home initiative.
 - Learning opportunities for faculty themselves. It could raise faculty members IoC awareness.
 - Relationships with partner faculty members may lead to academic collaborations.
- need to be investigated

Discussion: Can COIL promote IoC among the educators?

There are two different ideas about internationalization:

Internationalization



Centralized internationalization

- Directed toward the dominant ideas, knowledge or standards
- Having partnership with only a certain type of universities
- Limiting the language of instruction to English
- Presuming that a discipline is already “international”

Pluralistic internationalization

- Accepting all kinds of ideas and knowledge and be aware of our own knowledge bias
- Having partnership with different types of universities from around the world
- Not limiting the language of instruction to English

Moving forward

- We will be conducting more interviews with faculty members involved in COIL projects.
- Also plan to research and analyze the outcomes of IoC from students' perspectives.
- Interested to explore the IoC in STEM area.

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Thank you for listening!

We welcome your comments and questions

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