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Fostering Student Independence Through a Community Revitalization PBL Course

ABSTRACT

This article describes a recurring Project-Based Learning (PBL) course based on learner discovery of local issues and community revitalization at the University of Fukui. From 2021 to 2023, PBL students worked with a local experiential travel organization to promote its activities and the surrounding area to a domestic and international audience. In the 2021 iteration, students focused on multilingual promotion using SNS platforms due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. From 2022 onward, learners researched the challenges faced by organizations and institutions in the area and worked with them and relevant government agencies to create multilingual events and promotion pamphlets. In this article, we will introduce the overall context and the structure of the course and discuss the development of metacognitive skills and independent action in learners through learner perspectives and our own observations.

Keywords: PBL, student independence, learner development, community engagement

CONTEXT

Community revitalization is one of the pillars of the School of Global and Community Studies (GCS) at the University of Fukui. As the [official website](#) states, “the revitalization of local economies has become an urgent task as even local businesses expand into more global activities” (para. 1). As a response to this call, we developed a project-based learning (PBL) course that investigates the untapped potential of the Fukui community and introduces lesser-known attractions, experiential activities, and local revitalization efforts to an international audience. The [Educational Goals](#) of the department mention this as one of the objectives of the GCS program: “We want students to have the ability to investigate various complex issues involving local community and global society, and train them to be resources with holistic and practical knowhow to engage in problem-solving and contribute to the development of the local community and the global society” (para. 1). In this article, we will tell the story of how our students developed metacognitive skills and independence in our PBL course.

THE ROLE OF PBL WITHIN THE GCS CURRICULUM

Ours is not the only PBL course that GCS students take – in fact, PBL is recognized as a pillar of our department. All students enroll in PBL courses in their first, second, and third year, with some PBL projects spanning multiple semesters to two years. To emphasize the importance of PBL in the curriculum, the [GCS website](#) states that, “[t]hrough a curriculum centered on *Project-Based Learning*, students will understand society in the real world and acquire the independent skills to adapt to changing circumstances while developing critical thinking skills and decision-making for pursuing and solving challenges” (para. 4 [our emphasis]).

In their second year, GCS students can choose which PBL course/project they will join. The course we co-facilitate is the only one available in the second year involving an English component and accepts international students in an attempt to capture the spirit of connecting the local community with global perspectives.

WHAT IS PBL?

Our interpretation of PBL is that of *project-* rather than *problem-*based learning. However, our choice of projects stems from issues that are affecting the Fukui area, in line with the GCS philosophy. Simultaneously and in tune with the theme of the LD30 conference, we focus on the centrality of the learners, the interactions among them and other stakeholders, and their efforts leading to the final product. Rather than conforming to one monolithic definition of PBL, our approach integrates underlying concepts in the literature with the context of the department and the area we work in.

We refined our style in conducting PBL over several iterations of the course and experimented with different balances of facilitator control and learner autonomy, different degrees of scaffolding, and different emphases on skill learning and fieldwork. Based on our previous experiences and observations, we will introduce two models we believe can support learner independence as learners develop their projects. Then, we will provide an overview of how we adopted each of the two models in previous PBL courses. Finally, we will explain how these influenced the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 iterations of our PBL – which we call the *Deep Fukui* project.

THE GENESIS OF DEEP FUKUI: TWO MODELS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Creating a community revitalization PBL course involves ideating a project and the path for it to come to realization. We think there are two models (and a whole range in between them) that can be realistically adopted for a course intended to be relevant in the community while fostering student growth. While the two models will eventually converge as the learners start engaging in on-site research and project development, they stem from profoundly different starting points. We call these two original models, the *up-and-running* model and the *got-nothing* model.

THE UP-AND-RUNNING MODEL (2017-2018 PBL)

The “up-and-running model” is designed for learners to have a quick entry into their PBL project. This is achieved by them joining a project that has already been set up by the facilitators, and in which the outcome of the project and external stakeholders have been established in advance. Here we will break down schematically how we achieved this in one past course.

1. The facilitators create the relationship with the cooperating organizations

The theme of this particular PBL course was 地酒 (*jizake*, local sake). We found local sake breweries, restaurants, and shops willing to cooperate in a domestic and international promotion project.

2. Facilitators and learners negotiate the needs of the cooperating organizations

We facilitated the first contact between the learners and the organization they chose to research and promote. This was to ensure that the learners understood the needs of the organization and the nature and predetermined outcomes of the project.

3. Learners gather information

Working in teams, students visited rice fields, sake breweries, and specialty stores and conducted interviews on-site to learn more about the cycle of sake production and the issues the industry faces with the decrease in popularity of sake and dwindling sales.

4. Implement the promotion

Learners collected their findings in two promotional pamphlets (English and Japanese versions) of their production and design (see Artifact 1). They also engaged in public relations regarding distribution of the pamphlets.

5. Present and review the results

The learners presented their project development and the final product at a large-scale presentation event at the university before engaging in reflection on their achievements and the challenges they had faced.



– Jozan –

Tokoyama Sake Brewery is a family-run company which has operated since the Edo period (1804). Today, Yukiko Tokoyama is the eighth president (*kuramoto*) of this sake brewery, and Shinpei Tokoyama, the next president, is the current *toji* – the one who makes the sake. He engages in both production and sales of their main brand – Jozan. The mantra of Tokoyama Sake Brewery is *jokon*, which means “putting one’s heart and soul into every drop made.”

High-Quality Sake Rice
The rice used by Jozan is grown by farmers in Miyama, Fukui City, who work painstakingly to grow it. Miyama has clean water where fireflies live, pure air, and beautiful nature. Tokoyama Sake Brewery uses this rice from Miyama to produce its special sakes.

Jozan on the World Stage
There are more than 1,000 sake breweries in Japan, and the number of sake varieties numbers in the tens of thousands. Mr. Tokoyama, the ninth-generation brewer, is passionate about why the Jozan brand should be chosen over these other sakes. He wants Jozan to be in a class of its own, not just one of the many sakes in Japan. Now, Tokoyama Sake Brewery wants to spread Jozan around the world and, along with their brand, they wish to spread Japanese culture, history, and tradition.

The Magnificence of Fukui
Fukui is a leading area in the production of rice, immersed in a rich natural environment of lush, green mountains and pure water. In Fukui, rice farming is an art which is passed from generation to generation – as are other traditional crafts. In this spirit, Jozan spares no effort to brew a sake that is both soft and strong, and reflects the climate and natural features of Fukui.

Flagship Products

Jozan Junmai Chokara
[alc. 16-17%, 1800ml / 2545 yen+tax, 720ml / 1273 yen+tax]
Hyogo-ken produced Yamadanishiki (Polished ratio 60%)
「This sake has a mild rice flavor and a sophisticated sharpness」

Jozan Daiginjo Tokubetsusaibaimai Echizen Miyamanishiki
[alc. 16-17%, 720ml / 2700 yen+tax] Fukui-produced Miyamanishiki (Polished ratio 50%)
「This sake won the platinum award in the *Junmai Daiginjo* category of the sake contest *Kuramaster* in France. It has a mellow rice favor」

Company Information
Name: Tokoyama Sake Brewery (est. 1804)
Address: 1-19-10, Miyuki, Fukui City, Fukui JAPAN 910-0854
TEL: 0776-22-1541
Homepage: www.jozan.co.jp

Artifact 1: Sake x Fukui (2017-2018 PBL pamphlet cover and sample page)

THE GOT-NOTHING MODEL (2018-2019 PBL)

At the opposite end of the spectrum is another PBL style which we refer to as the “got-nothing” model. In this context, the learners explore a theme – in this example our selection was 体験 (*taiken*, hands-on experience) – without a predetermined idea of the issues they will tackle. On the contrary, they *find* an issue that catches their interest and can realistically contribute something towards. Similarly, they launch themselves into the project with no previously established contact or relationship. Below we explain how we implemented this model in 2018-2019.

1. Brainstorming session

At the beginning of the project, the group of learners brainstormed about and researched many *taiken* experiences offered in Fukui City and surrounding towns. They identified a number they wanted to promote to domestic and international tourists.

2. Students approach the organizations

After dividing into small teams, the learners selected strategies to make first contact with their chosen local organization and deliberate on the potential of collaborating towards a promotional project.

3. Learners gather information

The learners split into small teams to visit the organization they had contacted. There, they experienced the organization’s *taiken* (practical experience activity) first-hand and learned about the organization and its current challenges through interviews with representatives.

4. Implement the promotion

Possibly inspired by the final product of the previous PBL iteration, the learners opted to report the results of their research in the form of a promotional pamphlet in English (see Artifact 2).

5. Present and review the results

As in the previous year, this group of learners presented the final product of their research in presentation form at the end of the semester. Prior to that, they engaged in self- and peer-assessment to reflect on the PBL process and final result.



Artifact 2: Fukui Xperience – やってみよっさ (2018-2019 PBL pamphlet cover and sample page).

LEARNER INDEPENDENCE AND THE TWO MODELS

Reflecting on two years of PBL and planning for more to come, we reviewed our approach to PBL and our roles as course facilitators. This was not an easy endeavor, as we realized that the learners as individuals, with their diverse personalities, motivation, understanding and acceptance of the

PBL principles are major factors in the success of the project. We also determined that the course structure and logistics should support the learners' ability to make decisions freely, take risks, and learn from their experiences. To achieve this, we found ourselves gravitating towards the got-nothing model, which was the foundation for the two PBL iterations introduced in the next section.

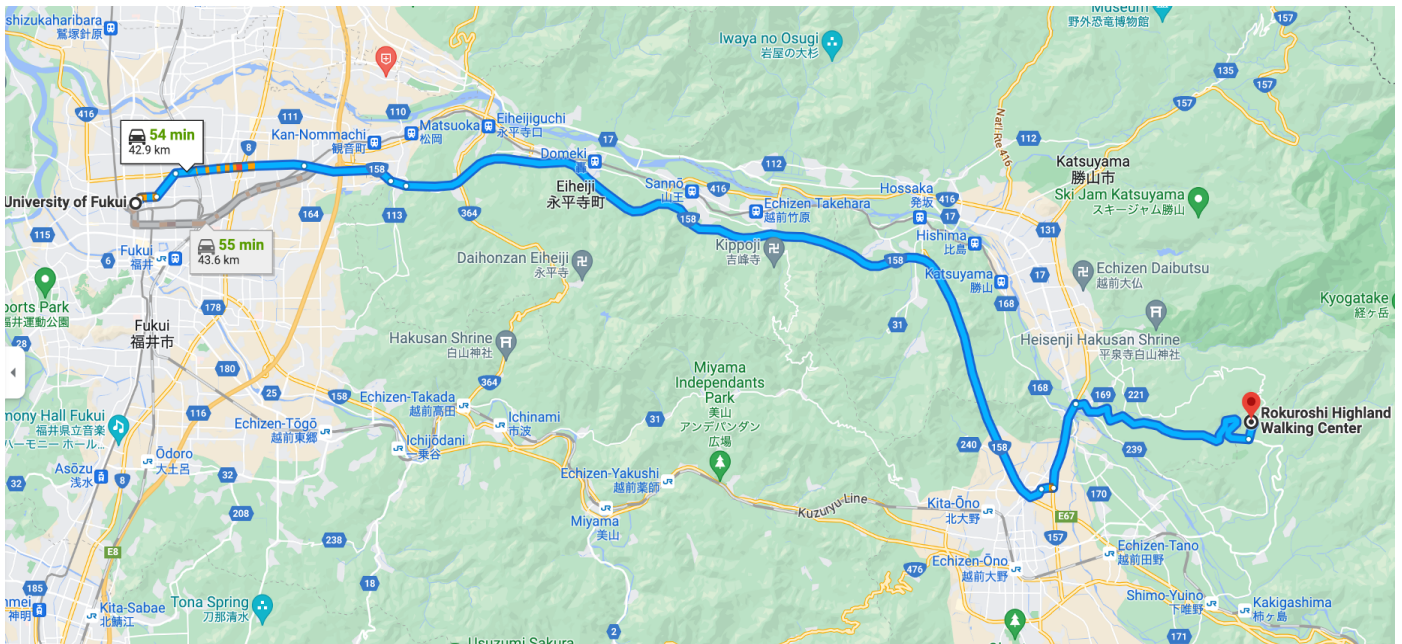
THE DEEP FUKUI PROJECT AND COURSE LOGISTICS

We first proposed the *Deep Fukui* PBL course as a framework that could be filled in with different yearly projects, all bound together by the common outcome of promoting local Fukui culture and experiences and providing multilingual PR support for audiences in Japan and abroad. The name *Deep Fukui* also encapsulates the essence of a project asking students to bring their research and PR talents to places beyond the well-known tourist spots in Fukui and find local hidden gems.

EXPLORING ROKUROSHI PLATEAU

Both iterations are based on the got-nothing model and have seen two separate groups of learners engage in the promotion of an experiential travel organization located in 六呂師高原 (*Rokuroshi kōgen*, Rokuroshi Highland), a remote location in an underserved area in the 奥越 (*Okuetsu*) region of Fukui Prefecture. The learners' on-site connection is an organization concerned with nature education and ecotourism, which offers an array of guided forest tours, work-stay programs, and *taiken* experiences in direct contact with nature.

Through fieldwork, the students discovered that Rokuroshi Highland used to be a popular resort area for skiing; now it only has a small number of services, pastures and woods, and stargazing spots. Most importantly, Rokuroshi Highland is an isolated area with limited public transportation, which constitutes the main challenge for community revitalization. Even traveling by car entails an almost one-hour ride from Fukui City center (see Artifact 3), and the steep hills discourage many cyclists. In addition, it is simply not as well-known as other points of interest in the Okuetsu region, like the Dinosaur Museum in Katsuyama City or the Echizen Ono Castle in Ono City.



Artifact 3: Reaching Rokuroshi Highland from Fukui City.

PBL COURSE LOGISTICS

The two iterations described below share the same syllabus (Artifact 4).

This is a project-based learning (PBL) course in which students will work in teams to research and learn about various local culture and history of Fukui, with the aim of [...] identifying certain challenges in the promotion both domestically and internationally of a local nature area of the Okuetsu region as well as creating and implementing solutions for these challenges.

Artifact 4: Extract from the course syllabus

Both PBL courses took place over the course of an academic year. The first semester focuses on steps (1), (2), and (3) (as described above) and ends with a review and report of the progress. The second semester resumes step (3) and mostly revolves around steps (4) and (5). The courses are formally scheduled to meet every other week for 180 minutes; however, the meeting times can be adapted to the needs of the stakeholders to allow for fieldwork, appointments with external actors, and personal schedules. In these two iterations of the Deep Fukui project, the flexible scheduling often translated into sporadic class meetings, while most of what would be normally considered “class time” was adjusted by the learners to fit the needs of their research and promotion efforts. Another shared feature of the two courses was two presentations – an in-class interim activity report at the end of July and a final presentation of the project in a school-wide PBL event in late January. Despite the similarities highlighted so far, the learners put their unique twist to their PBL activities and led their projects in different directions as narrated below.

THE 2021-2022 ITERATION

Seven students joined our project-based course in 2021. In the first semester, fieldwork outings and direct community engagement were limited by COVID-19 restrictions. Therefore, the learners approached the partner organization via online meetings to learn more about their activities, challenges, and promotion campaigns. Upon learning that the organization has an Instagram and YouTube presence, the learners decided to leverage social media tools to expand the organization’s reach in the local and global community among younger people through pictures and short videos of the *taiken* experiences offered. At this stage, the group split into two teams, in charge of Instagram PR and YouTube PR, respectively.

After that, the two teams learned more about how engagement in social media works by analyzing successful creators and reading about the topic. Once COVID-19 restrictions were removed, the two teams planned on traveling to Rokuroshi Highland to join the *taiken* events themselves and start a cycle of “experience-plan-implement” seen in Artifact 5.



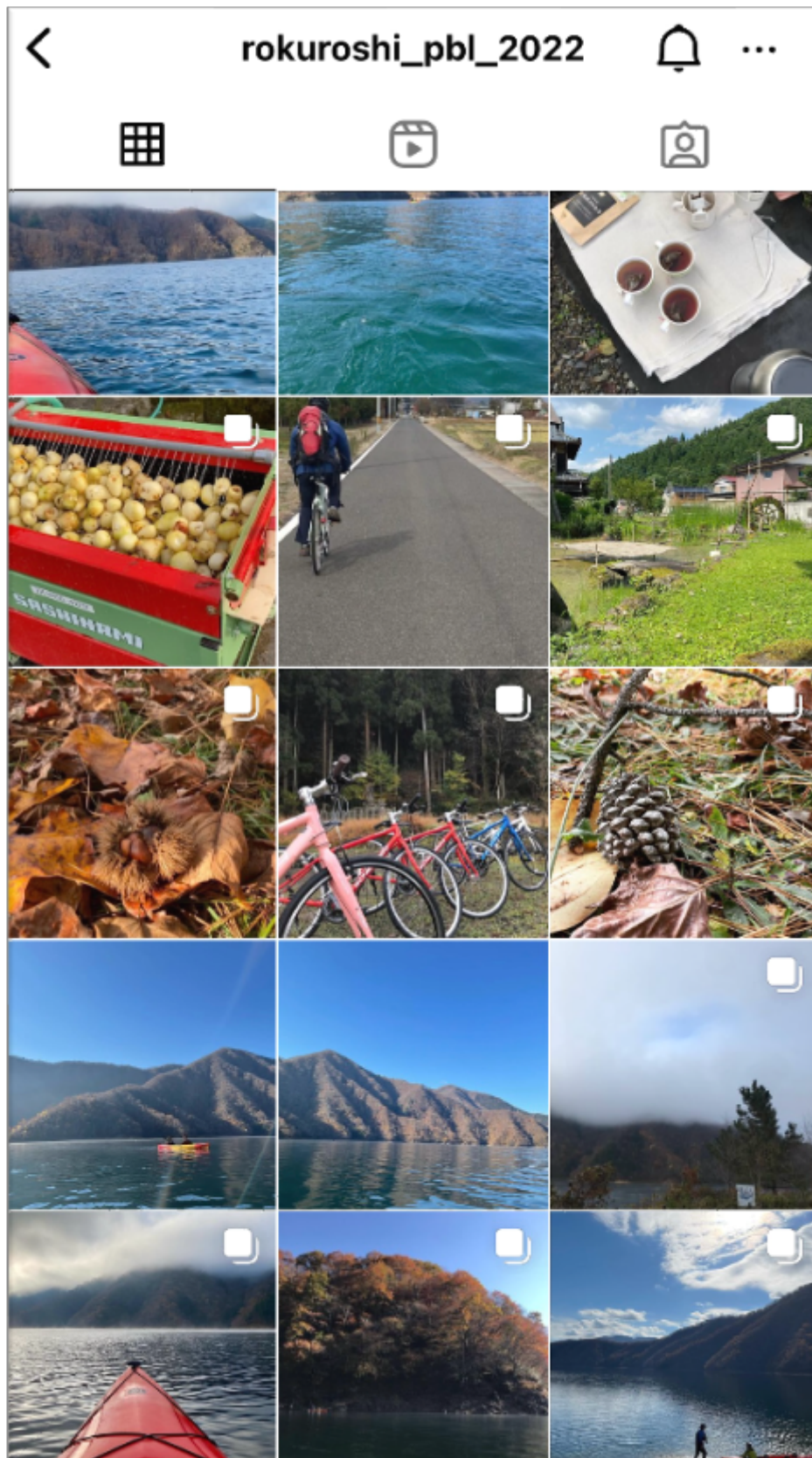
Artifact 5: The 2021-2022 PBL cycle

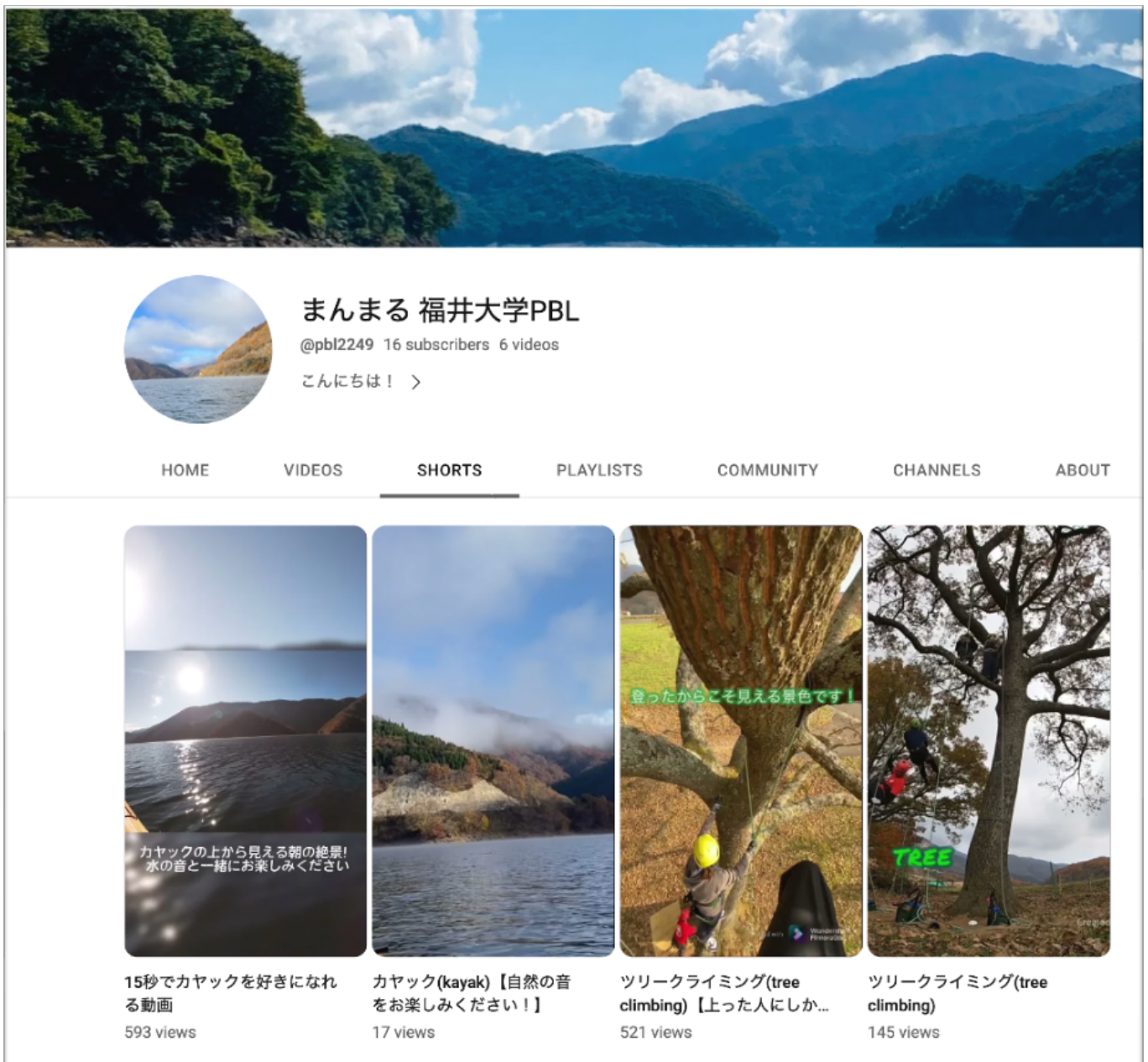
The two teams joined *taiken* experiences such as bike tours in Ono City, tree climbing, and kayaking on Lake Kuzuryu to acquaint themselves with the beauty of Rokuroshi Highland and fully understand the *taiken* experience. These were also occasions to learn more from the spokespeople of the cooperating organization. Then, informed by their first observations, the learners began planning the promotional efforts (e.g., identifying their audience and goals, deciding how much and which content to develop and how to calendarize their social media posts) in a proposal document ([sample](#)) submitted to the partner organization. The two teams submitted their proposals to us first, to which we gave feedback based on the idea's feasibility and appropriateness. After this, both groups joined a *taiken* experience again to take pictures and video footage for promotional materials.



Artifact 6: PR photos taken by the learners (bicycle tour and tree climbing)

From late November, the two teams continued their independent work to develop promotional materials – in this case, selecting/editing pictures and short videos to go on Instagram, and creating brief videos designed as YouTube Shorts. They also kept constant direct and spontaneous (meaning not facilitated by us) contact with the local organization to ensure that the materials were high quality and representative of the organization's communication style and goals.



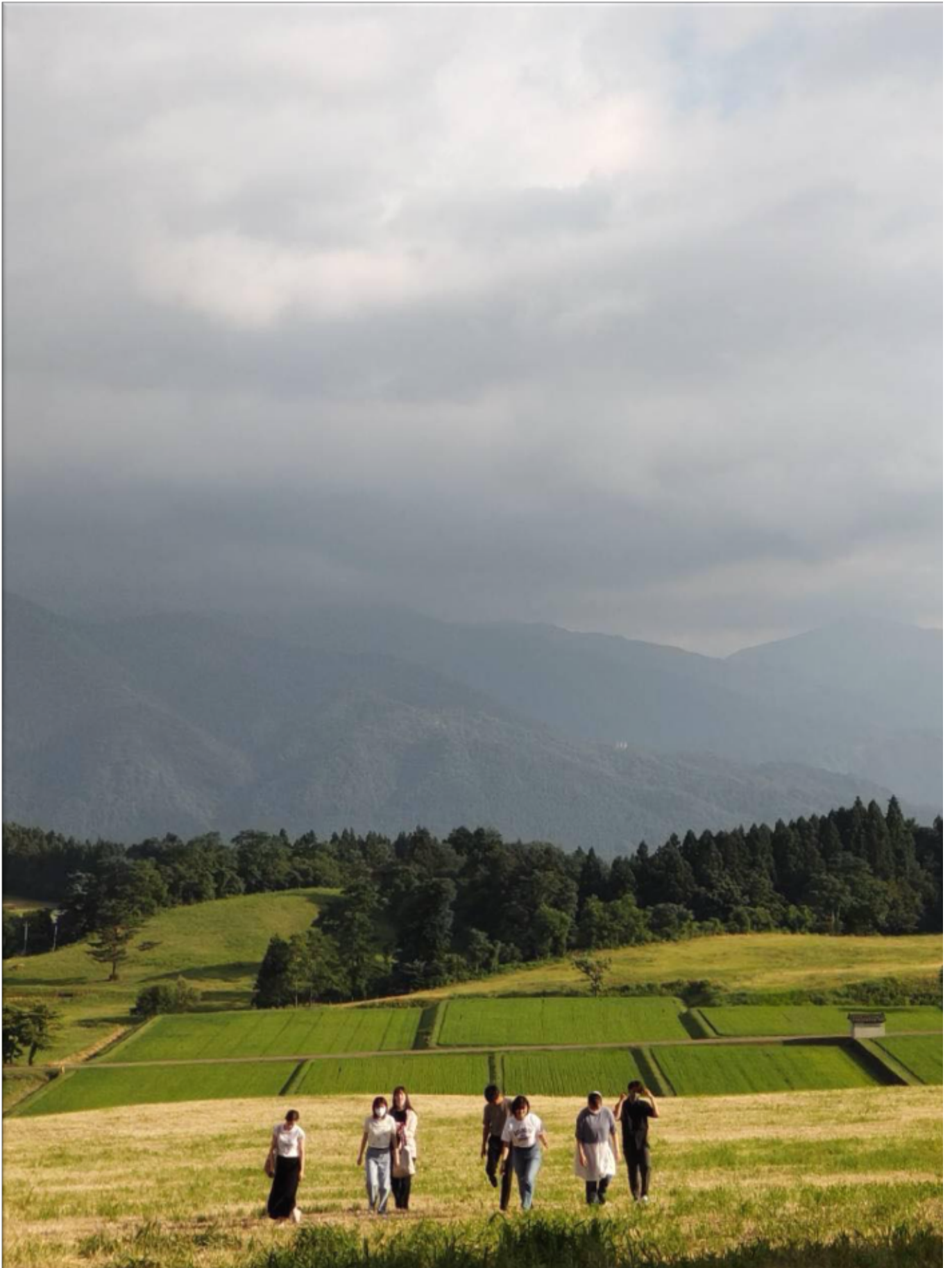


Artifact 7: Social media engagement (Instagram and YouTube teams)

At the end of the second semester, the two teams joined forces to prepare a 30-minute presentation reporting on their PBL activities and takeaways. The audience consisted of peers, other university instructors involved in PBL, and representatives of the organization – thus providing closure to a project that left, according to student reflections, all parties satisfied despite the challenges of remoteness of the area and difficulty in disseminating PR via Instagram and YouTube.

THE 2022-2023 ITERATION

At the beginning of the first semester, the new group of students – seven initially, which became five after two international students left to return home – met two student representatives of the previous iteration to learn about their activities and experiences in the PBL. The new group decided to continue the project theme from 2021-2022, but change directions by organizing in-person events and promoting other facilities in the Rokuroshi area targeting younger people.



Artifact 8: The 2022-2023 group in Rokuroshi

While the 2021-2022 PBL learner process could be described as an organic cycle, the activity of the 2022-2023 learners resembled a tide, surging with force, striking, and receding – a pattern that the group exhibited throughout the project.

After experiencing a day in the beauty of the natural surroundings of Rokuroshi Highland (Artifacts 8-9), interviewing the members of the collaborating organization, and brainstorming PR possibilities, they quickly decided on a plan to create a bilingual pamphlet collating the voices of actual visitors to the area. Following that, they settled on organizing an event at Rokuroshi Highland capitalizing on the local *taiken* activities in the forest (yoga, games, or movie screenings). Lastly, they chose to take over the social media accounts of the organization to showcase “live” takes of different activities in the area in all seasons. This was the first surge, decisions taken rapidly that soon transitioned into the implementation phase. The learners’ drive and goal orientation was so quick and forceful that we believed the end goal of this project would be accomplished in a short time. However, the learners realized the over-ambitious nature of their first proposal and ended up scrapping most of these initial ideas.



Artifact 9: The learners making tea out of leaves found in the Rokuroshi Highland woods

Recovering from this first setback, the learners became interested in hosting a stargazing event and planned for their “*final ideal*”: promoting Rokuroshi Highland as the destination for a romantic drive targeting young couples in a series of weekend stargazing events they labeled *hoshizora hammock*. However, this idea was scrapped as they could not receive permission from Ono City city hall. In their third surge, the learners visited Rokuroshi Highland again with the intention of finding suitable locations to host nature-themed events. From their reflections, we learned that they had the opportunity to secure the [Rokuroshi Walking Center](#), but were concerned about the dilapidated state of some of the fixtures. Independently, they decided to inquire with the Fukui Nature Conservation Center to use the Rokuroshi Walking Center and install new benches that they could purchase through local crowdfunding. They were cleared to use the Walking Center, but not allowed to renovate the outside fixtures. Some progress was made, but yet once more some backtracking proved necessary.

As summer came and went, the group of learners needed to take definitive action if they wanted to hold some kind of bilingual/multilingual event. They did so by planning and advertising for two events to take place on a weekend in November (one on Saturday and one on Sunday). They made a promotion poster and disseminated it in various strategic high-traffic locations in the Okuetsu area, as well as our university, and also spread the word among their acquaintances. In addition, they also conducted PR using teasers on Instagram. The first day of the event was quite successful, and the group welcomed, among others, families with children, and accompanied them to the woods to gather leaves, acorns, and wood chippings to make nature-based craft art (Artifact 10).



Artifact 10: Day 1 of the event

The second event on Sunday was compromised in part by awful weather, but the learners still managed to invite a group of fellow university students, made gel candles together and joined in a cheese-making *taiken* experience (Artifact 11).



Artifact 11: Day 2 of the event

After the events and reflection time, the learners decided to resume the early idea of a bilingual pamphlet to ensure there was an international component to the PBL course. One of the facilitators managed to secure funding, and the students designed two four-page brochures (one in Japanese, one in English) that would feature (1) a collage of pictures taken over a year in Rokuroshi Highland, (2) access information, (3) a hand-drawn map of the area with (4) a brief introduction to activities/facilities in Rokuroshi Highland (see Artifact 12). All pamphlet information was coordinated with the relevant stakeholders.

After the pamphlet was in print in February, the learners began disseminating them to prominent tourist points inside and outside of Fukui Prefecture (Artifact 13 – circled). They decided which tourist points to place the pamphlets, obtained permission to display or distribute the pamphlets there, and sent or hand-delivered them.

TAKEAWAYS

In this section, we will talk about the various takeaways we had from conducting this project-based learning class. Specifically, we will explain our observations of how activities were planned and implemented throughout the course by both the facilitators and students, ultimately reflecting on the independence the learners gained through the course structure. Then, we will share the learners' voices by referring to qualitative research and analysis we conducted through questionnaires, and the metacognitive skills we believed the learners gained in both iterations of the courses based on this research data and our own observations.



Artifact 12: Hand-drawn map to recommended locations and activities in Rokuroshi Highland.



Artifact 13: Rokuroshi Highland promotional pamphlets on display.

TAKEAWAY #1: LEARNER INDEPENDENCE THROUGH CLASS ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

Over the multiple iterations of this project-based learning course, we have seen an interesting phenomenon in which learners have taken more control of the activities as the course progresses throughout the year. For example, in the 2022-2023 iteration of the course, we initially set up the foundational meetings with the head of the organization in the Rokuroshi Highland area in May and June. However, as the learners and the head of the organization became more acquainted, we started to be bypassed as the contacts, to the point that by July we were not notified of meetings. In fact, this independence by learners in organizing meetings eventually extended to other organizations (government entities) and even the “final product” (events). This shift in agency from us, the facilitators, to the students reflected increasing independence by the group of learners, which we cautiously welcomed. While we encouraged them to work directly with the association, we would have appreciated more updates on major milestones as the ultimate course administrators. A similar pattern also appeared in the 2021-2022 iteration of the course.

TAKEAWAY #2: COURSE FACILITATORS FOSTER METACOGNITIVE SKILLS, OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS FOSTER CONCRETE SKILLS

As we had already conducted various iterations of this community-based PBL course since 2017, we decided to start collecting qualitative data on the students’ perceptions of the course in the 2021-2022 iteration. Specifically, we conducted a total of four questionnaires focusing on: (1) the goals the learners set and achieved, (2) the actual learning outcome they perceived for themselves, (3) their perceptions of the roles of the facilitators and the various representatives of organizations and what they learned from them, (4) learner descriptions of the various relationships they had throughout the course, and (5) concrete activities they found useful during the course.

We could discern a number of selective codes based on a socioconstructivist grounded theory model of analysis (Charmaz, 2014), allowing us to ascertain an interesting set of perceptions held by the students. The learners saw the relationship they had with representatives of organizations as one that fostered concrete skills development (data collection methods, knowledge of the local area, use of video equipment). In contrast, they saw the relationship they had with the facilitators, as one in which they gained metacognitive skills (time management, project management, problem solving).

Combining these voices, and adding our own observations over the two years of the courses as interpretative anchors, we have determined a set of metacognitive skills in which we believe the learners showed considerable development over the year: (1) task orientation, (2) planning, (3) active listening, (4) self-evaluation, (5) self-correction, and (6) independence.

The first skill is *task-orientation*. This entails learners understanding elements of PBL “philosophy” as defined by Tyagi and Kannan (2013): a need to know, a driving question, student voice and choice, 21st-century skills (collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and use of technology), inquiry and innovation, feedback and revision, and a publicly presented product. In speaking with the organization, learners understood the needs of the organization, posited their own ideas and received feedback on those ideas, ultimately creating different “products” for public consumption (SNS pages, events, pamphlets).

In implementing this PBL philosophy, learners developed the second skill, *planning*. As mentioned above, they quickly took control of their own learning by organizing meetings with the outside organizations on their own. Their increased ability for *planning* also extends to the high degree of coordination needed to plan events and pamphlet/SNS layouts.

The learners also developed the third skill, *active listening*. This skill was particularly useful for understanding and interpreting the needs that the outside organizations had in order to ideate and implement action in order to help resolve those needs. They identified through initial interviews in the area that there was a severe lack of public transportation to the area. Furthermore, as they

developed their respective products, this skill was useful in adjusting the direction of the product as they received feedback from us or the outside organization.

The fourth skill, *self-evaluation*, was necessary for the learners to recognize when things were going in the right direction. This was fostered through weekly project journals that they filled in reflecting and assessing the week's activities, constantly refining the project through their individual judgment. For example, early on in the 2022-2023 iteration, the learners went back and forth on what their final product would be due to considerations such as project originality, concerns about fundraising and the length of time necessary, and events in January being snowed out. Eventually, they conducted the events, which they settled on after reflecting on the feasibility of their original plans.

The above two skills dovetail with the fifth skill, *self-correction*. The learners needed their *active listening* skills and *self-evaluation* skills in order to correct the trajectory of the project based on both their own evaluations and the evaluations of us and the outside organizations. For example, when the students realized the local government would not cooperate in creating more public transportation opportunities, they “corrected” course by planning a drive-and-stargaze event in the area (This was not implemented due to another similar event already being conducted in the area).

The final gain (and perhaps most important), is *independence*. Independence was far from an innate characteristic of either group of learners. However, in both iterations, we saw a slow build-up of confidence and development of independent decision-making over time, especially as the learners started leaving the classroom after the initial scaffolding and immersed themselves in the community through fieldwork. Already mentioned above, but by halfway through the course learners had already bypassed us as the contact points for organizations, and conducted almost all correspondence directly with multiple private and government organizations to develop their events or SNS content. By the end of the course, we could appreciate a degree of independent thought and action that neither needed nor relied excessively on facilitator guidance.

CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

After tweaking our approach multiple times, we came to believe that the got-nothing model is more functional to fostering metacognitive skills and independent origination, as exemplified in the 2022-2023 PBL outcomes. The 2023-2024 iteration of the Deep Fukui project is unsurprisingly based on this model. In this project, learners work with an organization in Katsuyama City that professionally engages in many activities to promote the local area (events, shop management, social media promotion). The learners have only been introduced to the new partner organization and the dozens of activities it is engaged in, so they truly have free choice to mimic the production of one of these projects or introduce a brand-new activity in which they will work with this organization.

The biggest challenge faced by the students in the 2021-2023 iterations of the PBL course was the travel time (for interviews and event coordination). For the 2023-2024 Deep Fukui project, in working with this organization in Katsuyama City, they are in an area that is relatively close to the university compared to Rokuroshi Highland, meaning shorter travel time which will hopefully translate into a more productive use of the time in project development.

As the project development area has changed, we cannot continue on the same exact research path following our learners' revitalization activities in the Rokuroshi Highland area. However, we can continue to explore the more abstract ideas we have presented. Specifically, we hope to develop the idea that the roles of facilitator and outside organization representatives were differentiated and crystallized throughout the implementation of the course. We are interested in understanding further the observation that the facilitators focus on metacognitive skills, providing the scaffolding needed for learners to avoid feeling like they are left on their own without the proper tools, while the content experts focus on concrete professional skills that the learners need in order to bring their vision and

the vision of the cooperating organization together and coordinate the efforts that will lead to the final project.

Furthermore, we have used our own observations to identify the metacognitive skills developed by students in a community revitalization project-based learning course: (1) task orientation, (2) planning, (3) active listening, (4) self-evaluation, and (5) self-correction. Another realization we had was the striking increase of (6) independent action in our students when given the opportunity and tools. After graduating, many GCS students end up working in local government or for organizations that contribute to the community, so by developing these skills in working directly with governments and community-centered organizations, they are actively developing the skills they can use from Day 1 in their future careers. We hope to refine our interpretations through observation and qualitative research conducted in the current iteration of the class. As a further research path, we plan on monitoring the English language use and development of the learners. Ultimately, in line with the conference feedback and our own subsequent reflections, we hope to develop and share easy-to-implement guidelines for PBL-in-English course design based on our successes and failures.

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