

MIC-AP NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of MIC-AP

School Year 2015-2016 March, 2016

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Miyazaki International College
1405 Kano, Kiyotake,
Miyazaki 889-1605, Japan

2015-2016 Project Summary

The Acceleration Program for University Education Rebuilding (AP) project (Theme I and II) at MIC is now in its second year. This year the working groups of the project further widened the scope of their research and activities to develop the foundations for visualization of learning outcomes. In the first semester, tablet PCs were issued to all freshmen and an e-Portfolio system was installed. e-Portfolio orientations, introduction of the rubric-based syllabus and administration of CAT tests were some of the activities of the second semester. In November, MIC held the Active Learning Symposium, providing the institution a great opportunity to share the activities and research results of all the working groups of the project with educators of other schools and other members of MIC.

What is "Active Learning" ?

"Active Learning" is defined in the glossary published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology as follows: "It refers to all kinds of teaching and learning methods that incorporate active participation in learning by learners, which are different from the type of education conducted through one-way lecturing by teachers. Development of versatile abilities such as cognitive, ethical and social ability, and gaining culture, knowledge and experience is sought by active participation in learning by learners. It includes discovery learning, problem solving, experiential learning and exploratory learning. Inside classroom activities such as group discussion, debate and group work are also effective active learning methods." The Active Learning Working Group of MIC also refers to the definition provided by Bonwell and Eison (1991): "instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing."

ACTIVE LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

Active Learning Documentation: The Way Forward Developing Critical Thinking through Active Learning

Our first Active Learning Symposium was held on November 28th at MIC. The event brought together university faculty and staff and high school and middle school teachers that share an interest in active learning. The symposium began with welcome greetings from MIC President, Dr. Masateru Nagata, followed by a speech on the meaning of this symposium by Dr. Benjamin Peters. Dr. Anne Howard and Lecturer Cathrine Mork gave a presentation entitled "Active Learning Documentation: The Way Forward". This presentation summarized the work of the Active Learning working group formed to enhance and to conduct research on active learning at MIC as a part of the AP project. Dr. Howard and Ms. Mork presented their analysis of active learning methods collected via questionnaire, class observations and interviews with faculty. They described the matrix that divides methods into four quadrants, thus clarifying the characteristics of active learning methods at MIC.



In the afternoon session, Dr. Gregory Dunne and Dr. Benjamin Peters gave presentations entitled "Developing Critical Thinking through Active Learning". The presentations introduced the critical thinking assessment test (CAT) developed by Tennessee Technical Institute (TTU) that were administered to MIC students as a part of the AP project. They also introduced how critical thinking can be developed in particular fields of study through methods also developed by TTU. After the presentation, the audience was encouraged to participate in one of three active learning workshops: "Active learning and tablet PCs" run by Dr. Jenice Lusk, "Active learning and critical thinking" run by Lecturer Monica Hamciuc and "Active learning and the e-portfolio" run by Dr. Debra Occhi. Participants learned how active learning can be enhanced by use of tablet PCs, critical thinking methods, and the e-portfolio system through the workshop.

Working Group Activity Highlights: e-Portfolio Introduction to MIC

Background:

The School of International Liberal Arts of MIC has been using the open-source LMS: Moodle since 2005. The open source e-Portfolio system Mahara was chosen to introduce the e-Portfolio to MIC as a part of the AP grant as it can be easily linked with Moodle. With the Mahoodle system, reflective learning as well as visualization of learning outcomes became possible.

Orientation:

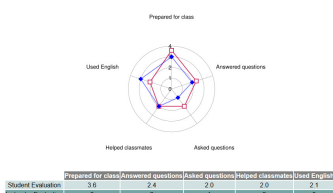
A series of faculty orientation sessions for Moodle and Mahara were conducted to instruct faculty on how to use the new system and how each function can be used in their classes. This was followed by orientation for freshmen in the School of International Liberal Arts who received tablet PCs through the AP project. Then orientations were expanded to upper classmen and students in the School of Education. Students were asked to upload their files and create and submit their e-portfolio pages using Mahara.



In the Classroom: Information Technology & Environmental Issues:

As students recorded their learning outcomes by using the e-Portfolio system's journal function, they were encouraged to reflect on their learning. Students also submitted assignments and homework to the system for classes where instructors used rubrics for grading. Giving virtual badges to reward and encourage students' work and evaluating students with ladder charts also became possible with use of the e-portfolio System.

Class Performance Evaluation



Mahara generated PAGE by the e-Portfolio Working Group

The screenshot shows the Mahara e-Portfolio system interface. It includes a top navigation bar with links like Dashboard, Content, Portfolio, and Groups. Below this, there's a section titled 'e-Portfolioワーキンググループ' (e-Portfolio Working Group) with a description of the system and its use. The main content area displays a 'Mahara generated PAGE' with various sections including 'MoodleとMaharaの連携' (Moodle and Mahara integration), 'Moodleとアクティブラーニング' (Moodle and Active Learning), and 'Maharaとアクティブラーニング' (Mahara and Active Learning). The page also features a 'Feedback' section with a form for users to provide input.

2015-2016 AP Activities

- April** Establishment of the e-Portfolio Center.
- June** Tablet PCs issued to the freshmen class.
- July** Establishment of the e-Portfolio system.
Administration of the TTU CAT test.
- Aug.** Faculty participation in CAT workshops in the US.
- Sep.** FD seminar to introduce Rubrics.
e-Portfolio orientation for faculty.
- Oct.** Commencement of e-Portfolio orientation for students.
- Nov.** The 1st Active Learning Symposium.
- Feb.** Administration of the TTU CAT test.
- March** FD seminar for orientation to the rubric-based syllabus.

2016-2017 AP Plan

- April** Institution-wide introduction of the rubric-based syllabus
e-Portfolio orientation for faculty
e-Portfolio orientation for students
- May** Tablet PC orientation
Active learning FD
- June** Development of MIC Critical Thinking Assessment Test (MIC-CAT) starts
- Oct.** MIC-CAT pilot administration
- Nov.** The 2nd Active Learning Symposium
- Jan.** Assessment on outcome of working group activities