

# An Experimental Learning Community: Linking Research, Students and Community

Barry Grossman

There has recently been enormous educational interest in the idea of learning communities. In some programs, students are asked to volunteer in their community, as part of a credit course or as an extra-curricular activity. In other programs, students are asked to help other students on campus, acting as consultants or advisors to lower grade students. Still other programs link students and businesses in the community, forming a type of partnership to enhance a community service or to increase communication between the business and the school for some mutual benefit. And still others mix and match aspects of these to form very unique, very individualized programs for students, businesses and community alike. In this paper, I will describe a short-term, experimental learning community that I organized and taught for Hashikami Town in Aomori Prefecture. This program was called the “Saturday English Community” and was a bi-weekly English program for elementary school age students. The curriculum was based on Howard Gardner’s “Multiple Intelligences Theory” and the program incorporated elements of service-learning; namely, the assistance of a research student at Hachinohe University.

The first background section will introduce the basic types of learning communities; the second background section will introduce the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, especially as it pertains to English as a foreign language; the final section will outline the project proposal from first draft proposals through final project approval. A discussion section at the end will point the reader towards the future of learning communities and their importance in our society.

## Learning Communities

Learning community. In most educational databases, inputting these two words into the search engine will hit an amazing array of books and articles on the subject. However, upon further research, you will find that many authors are talking about different things. Some emphasize schools that get help teaching the students from their surrounding community. Others focus on partnerships between two organizations, such as schools and for-profit businesses, NGOs, or NPOs. Still others zoom in on students and volunteerism, or students working for the community as part of a class, or as a resume building activity. Before discussing learning communities, we must be clear about what we mean by this. Because of the complexity and variety of learning communities, even within the field of education, it is difficult to find or create a definition that both fits all types of learning communities and narrows the definition enough to be useful. One of the best definitions I have found explains what learning communities do, not merely what they are. “Learning communities engage in a wide range of

activities centered on teaching and learning. These activities include individual and collaborative curriculum development projects, the review and analysis of student work, teachers' presentations to their peers and others, action research and collaborative inquiry activities, and collaborative reflective work." (Martin-Kniep, 2004: 2-3) There are basically three kinds of learning community; the professional learning community, the curriculum-oriented learning community, and the service-learning community.

The professional learning community consists of a group of people in one area of expertise (for example, teachers, lawyers, plumbers) whose aim is to improve some aspects of their profession or immediate situation in order to benefit their clientele. In the case of education, the goal has been one, "in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit." (SEDL, 1997) In professional communities, teachers and administrators (and hopefully students) get together, discuss how to improve a situation, create an action plan, and take steps to implement that plan so that students may reap the benefits. The emphasis in professional learning communities is on honest, beneficial communication. Traditionally in the U.S., the classroom has been an isolated phenomenon where the teacher is the head of his/her dominion, not allowing it to be invaded, poked apart, or analyzed by outsiders. A professional learning community purposefully opens up the classroom to all who share an interest in the students' well-being. This creates an environment where trust and communication is practiced on a daily basis, and this arouses similar traits in the students. Hord (1997) lists the possible results and outcomes for both teachers and students of creating a professional learning community:

"For staff, the following results have been observed:

- reduction of isolation of teachers
- increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school and increased vigor in working to strengthen the mission
- shared responsibility for the total development of students and collective responsibility for students' success
- powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and that creates new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners
- increased meaning and understanding of the content that teachers teach and the roles they play in helping all students achieve expectations
- higher likelihood that teachers will be well informed, professionally renewed, and inspired to inspire students
- more satisfaction, higher morale, and lower rates of absenteeism
- significant advances in adapting teaching to the students, accomplished more quickly than in traditional schools
- commitment to making significant and lasting changes and
- higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental systematic change

For students, the results include:

- decreased dropout rate and fewer classes “skipped”
- lower rate of absenteeism
- increased learning that is distributed more equitably in the smaller high schools
- greater gains in math, science, history, and reading than in traditional schools and
- smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds. (Hord, 1997: 27-28)

Positive results like these are seen time and time again whenever healthy professional learning communities are created and nurtured. The Center on Restructuring Schools (CORS) at the University of Wisconsin found strong learning communities were concretely linked to quality of student learning, support for teachers, improved test scores, and an increase in teacher responsibility for student learning. (Kruse and Louis, 2001: 12-13)

This is the ideal. In reality, though, even when all members’ intentions are in the right place, things just don’t seem to click and not very much productive, creative activity seems to get completed. Members may have personality conflicts, different ideas about education, personal agendas, scheduling problems, or a host of other possible negative influences on the group. These dysfunctional communities may be missing one of the following attributes of effective professional learning communities: shared norms and values (the what, why, and how of that community), focus on student learning (keeping the student in mind at all times), deprivatized practice (allowing others to view and review your work), reflective dialogue (critically analyzing each others’ tactics, strategies and performances objectively), and collaboration (working holistically). (Kruse and Louis, 2001: 6) When these are present, the possibility for creative output for the teachers as well as a healthier, more effective learning atmosphere for the students is the result

The second type of learning community focuses more on learning communities as they occur within a curriculum or course design, usually, but not always within the context of a university. They strive to create a deeper, more integrative atmosphere for students so that they can get the most out of their educational efforts. Classes are linked by the administration, course credits are shared by departments, student work is cooperatively assessed by instructors, and a variety of other creative innovations are installed into a once separatist curriculum. These learning communities are particularly popular in the freshman year, where some students get lost in the jungle of the complex, sometimes lonely college community. In all of these various (community) programs, “...learning communities initiatives share some basic characteristics:

- Organizing students and faculty into smaller groups
- Encouraging integration of the curriculum
- Helping students establish academic and social support networks
- Providing a setting for students to be socialized to the expectations of college
- Bringing faculty together in more meaningful ways

- Focusing faculty and students on learning outcomes
- Providing a setting for community-based delivery of academic support programs
- Offering a critical lens for examining the first-year experience”

(Shapiro and Levine, 1999: 3-6)

When learning communities are implemented, new, exciting, spontaneous learning and teaching is a likely result. New personal and professional relationships form between faculty and students in an environment of mutual learning. This kind of “new growth” can be seen at the University of Maryland.

“When the University of Maryland initiated College Park Scholars in 1994, the impulse and the funding came from the division of academic affairs. In the first round, the requirements were minimal. College Park Scholars considers each learning community a program. Each thematic program had to be interdisciplinary, be sponsored by an academic college, have a tenured professor as a director, and convene a cross-disciplinary advisory board of faculty from different departments and colleges. The necessary collaborations that grew out of the discussion of curriculum and course offerings created new alliances on campus among faculty in different departments and different disciplines. For example, the Science, Technology, and Society program had an advisory board that included faculty from engineering, history, and philosophy. These cross-departmental collaborations expanded the pool of potential majors by tapping undeclared students who had an interest in this area. They also allowed faculty to explore innovative courses since they had dedicated resources- time, graduate assistants, supplemental money for curriculum enhancements- with which to experiment.”

(Shapiro and Levine, 1999: 48)

As the example above shows, once the wheels of a learning community are in motion, it can lead to exciting new curricular models for learning, and students can benefit greatly from these interdisciplinary “alliances”. Traditionally, students saw each discipline as separate, compartmentalizing learning. With the new paradigm, a fusion of ideas from previously unrelated areas of study develop to synthesize learning and coax the student into more creative ways of thinking.

Combining aspects of education and the workplace wraps up the background section on learning communities. This is called “service-learning” and is described as, “...a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning” (Jacoby, 1996: 5) Service-learning gets the student out into the community collaborating with its members, experiencing the theories learned in the classroom and putting those theories into practice. Those experiences are thought about, synthesized, and newly

created into concepts that incorporate the learner's own being. He/She then presents these new ideas to the teacher, mentor, or cooperative learning group where they are discussed and analyzed for depth, clarity, and validity as it relates to that field of study.

The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2001) outlines nine principles of good community-campus partnerships:

1. Partners have agreed upon mission, goals, and measurable outcomes for the partnership.
2. The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
3. The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also addresses areas that need improvement.
4. The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
5. There is clear, open, and accessible communication between partners, making it an ongoing priority to listen to each need, develop a common language, and validate/clarify the meaning of terms.
6. Roles, norms, and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners.
7. There is feedback to, among, and from all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
8. Partners share the credit for the partnership's accomplishments.
9. Partnerships take time to develop and evolve over time.

The image that these principles outlines is one that necessitates a new way of thinking about higher education and the relationship between the university and the community it belongs to. Traditionally, universities were put on a very high pedestal out of reach of the "common" folk. The service-learning paradigm equates the university and community and gives each equal voice in decision-making as well as benefit-sharing. Roles of each and what they have to offer is different; each is seen as complementing the other for the students' and community members' gain. "From our experience, we know that campus-community partnerships have the potential to be far more (than simply transactional). They can be dynamic, joint creations in which all the people involved create knowledge, transact power, mix personal and institutional interests, and make meaning." (Jacoby, 2003: 25) This will help the community in the long run by generating community members who believe in working and learning together and in sharing responsibility for community education, in all its different aspects, from the lecture hall to the community center to the gymnasium to the home and to the playground. "In a learning community the links between non-formal and formal learning are integrated in an approach that recognizes, values, and celebrates learning in all its forms throughout an individual's lifespan, and in the life-wide settings of family, community, and workplace." (Thomas, 2003) Even the traditionally conservative and slow-moving "U.S. Department of Education... established the

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) “to raise student achievement and improve schools by building alliances among businesses, community organizations, families, and schools by promoting family-school relationships.” (Flaxman, 2001: 107)

The amount of information taught is not to blame for the ills of the school and recent drop in test scores. The educational infrastructure itself with its typically isolated approach left teachers, parents, and community members tugging at different ends of the same proverbial rope. This left students confused, and these competing influences created learners with who lacked focus in modern society. The learning community, in all its varieties, has proven to be a very effective tool against this kind of signal crossing, molding learners more willing to listen to others and more willing to work with different points of view in order to find a solution to the problem at hand. “Today one could make the case that their (education’s) most serious challenge is educating a generation of responsible citizens who will be ready and willing to accept leadership roles and participate as citizens. Learning communities are particularly good at fostering that kind of coherent, purposeful education.” (Shapiro and Levine: 44) What more, really, could we ask of education than this?

### Multiple Intelligences Theory

What has the typical student done to prepare his/her self for entrance into society, where the possible range of careers is almost limitless? Furthermore, how has the student prepared for the “working world”, which relies heavily on productive output (writing business reports; number crunching, analysis, and feedback to branches of the company; creating a new design for a product and explaining the details; jointly organizing meetings; cooperating with foreigners in creating a new international marketing strategy, etc.) This output is essential in our society, to “show what you know”. Imagine the following scenario: An office worker for a big fashion design company is given three weeks to research the international fashion market for a new style of shoe the company hopes to produce. The worker researches recent trends in the market for three weeks, nonstop. The deadline approaches and the boss asks to see the results of the work. The worker responds, “Results? I thought you just wanted me to study. Why don’t you test me on the material?” It sounds ridiculous, but if we examine what our students are actually doing in the classroom, we will see that that is exactly what we are training them for. In Japan, the Ministry of Science and Education has also realized this, and has recently started to reform the English education practices of Junior and Senior high schools to include and focus on more communicative English strategies, paying more attention to verbal output, student creativity and ingenuity, more student-oriented learning and less rote memorization. This is also true of the English lessons given in the “Period of Integrated Study” classes in elementary schools. In the “Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities”, the expressions “problem-solving, communicative, variety of activities, student-centered, self-expression, having fun, student interest, individual differences” are repeated over and over. (2000)

This focus on problem-solving, being student-centered, and individual differences is the

heart of Multiple Intelligences Theory. Some children can calculate math problems effortlessly, some students can draw three-dimensional objects that seem to float in space, some are good at sports or dancing, some at playing a musical instrument. This is common knowledge; all of us are different and have different kinds of `abilities`. However, when examining teaching methods in public education, there seems to be discord between knowing this fact and using this as a tool for education. Traditionally, teachers lecture, hand out worksheets with simple manipulations, and give written exams. If a student can memorize (at least until the test is over!) and regurgitate those bits of information back to the teacher, then the expectations of the teacher and educational system have been fulfilled. In the English class, this may work well for those children with natural linguistic skills, but what about all the other students who have different natural abilities?

Multiple Intelligences Theory is a cognitive theory of human intellect that claims eight different “intelligences “ that we all possess, in some combination, from birth. Each of these bio-psychological (occurring in both the body and the mind) potentials can be triggered and nurtured from infant-hood to adulthood, or they can be left unsupported as raw, under-developed intelligence. Evidence for these intelligences comes from a variety of sources; special populations (idiot savants, genius individuals, etc.), brain research (brain damage to one area of the brain affects one or a few specialized skills or thoughts, brain scanning results), and social sciences (some cultures value different types of skills differently). One criterion for an intelligence is that it is localized in the brain, i.e., there is a specific area of the brain that is responsible for that intelligence. Another criterion to show that a person possesses an intelligence is that the person is able to use knowledge creatively in order to solve numerous real or theoretical problems. This problem-solving ability is crucial for success in society. (Gardner, 1983, 1999) The Japanese Ministry of Science and Education (2000) agrees. “It is necessary for students to learn not only by thinking but also through experiential learning and problem-solving so that they can develop practical skills and qualities, and mature...” and “...to have students `identify issues, learn, think, and judge by themselves, to develop better problem-solving qualities and skills` and also to have students `acquire learning and thinking skills, engage in problem-solving and investigative activities on their own, deal with problems with a creative attitude, and consider their own ways of living.`” (122)

Years of research were conducted at Harvard University’s Project Zero under the supervision of Dr. Howard Gardner, Professor of Psychology and Cognition. Dr. Gardner has identified eight “intelligences”. These are: Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Naturalist, Intra-personal, and Interpersonal.

“Linguistic intelligence is the ability to think in words and to use language creatively in the domain they find themselves in... Logical-Mathematical intelligence makes it possible to calculate, quantify, consider propositions and hypotheses, and carry out complex mathematical operations... Spatial intelligence involves the capacity to think in three-dimensional ways and enables one to perceive external imagery, to recreate, transform, or modify images, to navigate oneself and objects through space, and to produce or decode graphic information... Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence allows a person to

manipulate objects and fine-tune physical skills... Musical intelligence is seen in individuals who possess a sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone... Naturalist intelligence consists of observing patterns in nature, identifying and classifying objects, and understanding natural and man-made systems... Intra-personal intelligence refers to the ability to construct an accurate perception of oneself and to use such knowledge in planning and directing one's life... Inter-personal intelligence is the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others..." (Campbell, 1999: xvi)

Dr. Gardner, discussing educational applications of the theory, states that we may be able to teach (and students may learn) many subjects in which the students have difficulty when the material is presented in the preferred intelligence medium. (Gardner, 1993) So, for example, a student having trouble in mathematics may benefit from explanations and models of mathematics presented in linguistic, musical, or spatial terms, or a student who has trouble learning a second language may learn to grasp the new linguistic system when presented in a variety of other intelligence mediums. Furthermore, with regard to language, being able to communicate effectively involves the development of interpersonal intelligence. Creating a revised self-image in the target culture and breaking down affective filters most likely comes under the intra-personal intelligence realm. Systematizing new grammatical concepts in the target environment would have at least some connections to logical-mathematical intelligence. Spatial intelligence would be challenged when faced with geography and decoding new visual clues in the target language and culture. Learning the tempo and rhythm of the target language also seems to be enhanced by a "musical" ear. Categorizing parts of morphology and semantics calls for naturalistic ability. Learning new gestures and facial expressions uses some bodily-kinesthetic ability.

It is logical, therefore, when approaching the teaching of a second language and foreign cultures, to take into account these different aspects of what learning a foreign language entails. All of the factors above cannot be addressed when the teaching methods and activities are not "in sync" with the realities of the situation, namely, that learning a second language and culture involves all of our senses, perceptions, and preconceptions. Mastery of a second language depends upon our ability to map these new sounds, thoughts, and feelings onto our existing mindsets, and the effectiveness of that learning depends upon the way in which these are presented and allowed to be processed by the young minds of our students. It follows that material presented in the preferred manner of each student is the quickest way to achieve that success, i.e., a Multiple Intelligences approach to teaching.

### **The First Proposal:** Saturday Community Education Program

The following project proposal was translated into Japanese and presented in person to the Hashikami Town Hall, Social Education Department :

"This program is designed to teach people of all ages in the town of Hashikami. Its purpose is to provide community learning, leadership, and multi-generational educational exchange opportunities for all members of the community. The educational theory driving the program is based on the Dr. Howard Gardner's (Professor, Harvard University) "Theory of



Multiple Intelligences” , which states that each person is endowed with eight independent intelligence types; Logical-Mathematical, Linguistic, Spatial, Musical, Naturalist, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Inter-personal, and Intra-personal. (An explanation of the eight intelligences follows, but has been deleted here to avoid repetition.)

This program aims to support all Intelligences by:

- 1) Providing guidance and support for all eight intelligences.
- 2) Creating opportunities for the participants to learn from other members of the community who are (or have been) professionally engaged in some craft or profession.
- 3) Allowing the participants the chance to explore their educational interests while helping to improve their sense of community involvement.

There will be six different groups in six different locations. Each group will focus on (but not be limited to) three intelligences. Those groups are:

- 1) Musical [ + inter and intra-personal]
- 2) Mathematical/Logical [ + inter and intra-personal]
- 3) Spatial [ + inter and intra-personal]
- 4) Bodily/Kinesthetic [ + inter and intra-personal]
- 5) Naturalist [ + inter and intra-personal]
- 6) Linguistic [ + inter and intra-personal]

The focus of all groups is on creatively solving problems that occur within each domain (a domain is a social and/or cultural setting for a particular activity). Activities of each group will include the intra- and inter-personal intelligences in order to strengthen self awareness and empathy within each participant as well as helping them learn the specific content of each domain. Each group leader (community member) and assistant leader (Hachinohe University student) will help participants strengthen their abilities in these intelligences by guiding them through the following tasks:

- 1) Exploring the Domain - Introducing participants to the domain content.
- 2) Analyzing the Domain - Ability to critically analyze work in the domain.
- 3) Experiencing the Domain- Attend workshops and internships.
- 4) Creating in the Domain- Create original work in the domain.
- 5) Performing in the Domain- Bi-yearly MI performance festivals\* (September, March.)
- 6) Reflection in the Domain- Both group leaders and participants keep journals of their experiences\*\*.

\* MI Festivals - these bi-yearly festivals mark the end of each time period and are a chance for the participants to show their progress to the rest of the community. Each participant in each group creatively displays their learning until that point. The presentation is entirely dependent on the participant and his/her discussions with the group leader and assistant leader. The

festival may be held inside a gymnasium where each group has its own “corner of displays” .  
(Another possibility is to organize one large presentation based on a theme where each group becomes part of the whole.)

\*\* Journals- Participants write in their journals the last 30 minutes of every class. They should answer the following questions:

What did they do that day? ; What did they enjoy doing? Why did they enjoy it? ;  
What didn't they enjoy? Why didn't they enjoy it? ; What were some things they know  
now that they didn't know before? ; What intelligences did they use? Which didn't  
they use? ; What would they like to do next time?

Group leaders and assistant leaders also need to keep weekly journals. They should answer the following:

What did they do today? ; What worked well? Why? ; What didn't work well? Why? ;  
Which students seemed positively involved with the activities? ; Which students  
seemed bored or preoccupied? How can you reach those students next time? ; How did  
the activities done today complement MI theory? ; What are your plans for next week?

The program will run for three hours every Saturday morning, from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm. Hashikami Town will provide the locations for each group. Group Leaders (community members) and Assistant Leaders (Hachinohe University students) will be hired on a part-time basis, paid by the organization chosen to be responsible for financial matters.

Other points of consideration and questions:

- 1) For a period of three months, Group Leaders and Assistant Leaders will be trained in the practices of teaching with a Multiple Intelligences approach.
- 2) Community leaders and other working and talented community members will be solicited for their help in giving workshops and accepting short-term apprentices.
- 3) Locations will be secured in which all six intelligence groups may learn without competing for space nor interfering in the lessons of other groups.
- 4) Details of funding need to be arranged. How much will the participants pay? Will Hashikami Town and Hachinohe University contribute funds?
- 5) What role will the other members of the community play?
- 6) Who do we need approval from? Who do we need to inform?
- 7) What kind of advertising needs to be done?
- 8) Who will the group leaders be? Will they be teachers or community members or a mix?
- 9) Will participants be allowed free movement between groups or will there be some fixed organization? If fixed, what will be the criteria for deciding?"

Although very rough and meant only as a first draft, this proposal was treated enthusiastically by the Social Education department, and I was asked to draw up a budget

proposal. Being motivated at the chance to implement the program, I drew up five proposals, ranging from relatively inexpensive, relying on charity from businesses and volunteers, to more expensive, paying a stipend for all working members. Each is found in Appendix A.

About a month and a half later, a meeting was arranged to discuss the budget; the proposals were copied, passed around to the parties involved, and explained. A few questions were asked, heads nodded, and I was told that the proposal would be considered. I waited.

After all proposals were denied on the grounds of insufficient funding, inappropriateness of asking for charity for a town-sponsored program, and difficulties in transportation, a ¥100,000 “helping fund” (available to any group or individual in Hashikami Town wishing to create a community education program) was offered and received. Due to the above situation, the nature of the program was narrowed from general education to English as a foreign language (EFL) education. The final program is explained below.

### **Project Proposal:** “Saturday English Community” (SEC)

The proposal process for the ¥100,000 stipend is very simple. An application is filled out stating the purpose of the program, how it will benefit the community, who will be involved, and what the funds will be used for. This is given to the Social Education department for preliminary approval. If approved, then the application is handed in to the Financial Affairs Division, where the program is officially recorded and given the green light (or not). If the application is not preliminarily approved, suggested changes are given. If those changes are made, the application is then given to the Financial Affairs Division. All stipends are paid after completion of the program, where a similar process is undergone. A program completion form is filled out, stating the purpose of the program, the benefits to the community, the persons involved, the funds used, and final comments. This is given to the Financial Affairs Division and filed. A few weeks later, a “completion letter” is mailed out to the program head. Included in the envelop is a bank transfer form, which is to be completed and mailed back to the Financial Affairs Division, who then sets a date for the transmission of funds.

Having been turned down for the previous proposal, I decided to keep the program as simple as possible. I decided to focus on two points; service-learning for the University students and Multiple Intelligences (my other area of research.) Having very little funding available, I recruited only one student from my university, a research student now in the Teacher Education program, who was hoping to get her elementary school teaching license. I explained the outline of the program, lent her a book on Multiple Intelligences and a few video tapes on using Multiple Intelligences in the classroom, and asked her to think about assisting me in the program. Although not for class credit, she (to my relief) agreed that the opportunity was valuable for her future career as well as for her resume. A stipend and contact hours were agreed upon. We met weekly before and during the program. Before the program started, we discussed class activities, designed flyers for distribution, filled out the applications, and together, created form out of idea. Furthermore, she was responsible for receiving calls from parents about the program, accepting and registering applicants, and collecting tuition. I was

responsible for overseeing the program, contacting the Town Office (although not necessary, progress reports were verbally given to the Social Education department), buying and/ or finding class materials, and making class syllabus outlines. Jointly, in each weekly meeting for the duration the program, we discussed each of our impressions of the previous class, ideas for class activities for the next class, and engaged in problem solving. At the end of the program, she handed in a short synopsis of the program, reflecting on her experiences, both in terms of general education and Multiple Intelligences. This is provided in Appendix B.

In the middle of September 2003, the Saturday English Community sent out its recruitment flyers (over 4,000) in the town of Hashikami. In the letter, it explained that a new English program would begin and stated the time, place and the names of instructors. It also included a very brief explanation of Multiple Intelligences Theory and how this would practically translate into actual class activities. Classes were to be held for two hours each on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and were scheduled twice a month for three months (from October to December, 2003) a total of six classes. The students' grade ranges were from elementary first year through sixth year at a price of 1,000 per student for the whole program (to pay for materials and mid-class snacks). On the pamphlet, a maximum of 40 students was listed to avoid too large a student-teacher ratio. The class schedule was the following:

- Class 1: Linguistic Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)
- Class 2: Mathematical Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)
- Class 3: Spatial Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)
- Class 4: Musical Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)
- Class 5: Naturalistic Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)
- Class 6: Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (plus inter and intra personal intelligences)

The calls started coming in. The first day of class rolled around, and we had our forty students, plus three students who enrolled the first day of class. (Although we set a limit of forty students, it was decided that the additional three students would not over-burden the teaching staff and so were allowed to register.) Due to the focus and limited length of this report, the details of class activities will not be included. All activities were, however, carefully selected in order to create a learning environment that was experiential, diverse, and in the spirit of Multiple Intelligence Theory. Attendance statistics show the popularity of the course (85%), and considering the day (Saturday) and the competition from family obligations, school clubs, playing, etc., we consider the program a success. However, one class had to be cancelled due to a snap election (the community center space is also used as a voting station), and so the Spatial and Musical class activities were combined into one, two-hour period, making a total of five classes for the entire program. During one class session, a representative from the Social Education Department came in to take pictures and wrote a small article about the program and put it in the Town newsletter. During a different class, the local newspaper covered the program with a lengthy article, pictures, and student comments. I am hoping that this exposure will create opportunities for learning and for other programs to be designed, discussed, created

and implemented.

## Discussion

As can be seen, the original project plan and the final project were very different realities stemming from the same idea, to have the university and community work together for a common good. I consider the Saturday English Community a first step in a long series of further community partnership developments; however, time and patience is needed to form trusting bonds and mutual respect from all parties involved. As Dodd and Konzal put so succinctly, “Changing thinking or changing school and communities is a developmental process that happens over time. And working with others, especially with people who don’t know each other well because their relationships have been distant and formal, takes time, lots of time.” (111) Especially in Japan, the typical relationship between university and community has been both distant and formal. With this small experimental program, I hoped to bring these two parties a little closer together. As the saying goes, “Getting your foot in the door is the first step”. But much more needs to be done in order to bring the university, community, and their respective administrations together to form holistic, caring learning communities that reach out to all members from poor to rich, young to old, educated and not so. We all have something positive to contribute to society. It is our responsibility as citizens to try to involve all members, as individuals and as a part of the group, into our community. When we have a strong sense of belonging, we are less likely to be destructive, uncaring, intolerant, and worst of all, apathetic to our surroundings. We create learning communities for our own benefit as well as that of others. What happens in the community affects us all. Improvement is incremental, but always begins with a first step.

## Appendix A

## Tentative Budgets for the Saturday Community Education Program

## #1

Group Leaders	¥2000 × 40 times × 6人	¥ 480,000
Assistant Group Leaders	¥1500 × 40 times × 6人	¥ 360,000
Program Assistant	¥1500 × 130 hours	¥ 195,000
Materials & Supplies	6 groups × ¥100,000	¥ 600,000
MI Festival (twice a year)	PR materials, supplies	¥ 400,000
Total		¥ 2,035,000

## #2

Group Leaders	¥2000 × 40 times x 6人	¥ 480,000
Assistant Group Leaders	¥1500 × 40 times x 6人	¥ 360,000
Program Assistant	¥1500 × 130 hours	¥ 195,000
Materials & Supplies	6 groups × ¥100,000	¥ 600,000
MI Festival (twice a year)	PR materials, supplies	¥ 400,000
Pre-total		¥ 2,035,000
Company Sponsors*	1 class = ¥500 × 40 times × 30 students	¥ + 600,000
Total		¥ 1,435,000

## #3

Group Leaders (Volunteer)		¥ 0
Assistant Group Leaders	¥1500 × 40 times x 6人	¥ 360,000
Program Assistant	¥1500 × 130 hours	¥ 195,000
Materials & Supplies	6 groups × ¥50,000	¥ 300,000
MI Festival (twice a year)	PR materials, supplies	¥ 200,000
Total		¥ 1,055,000

An Experimental Learning Community:  
Linking Research, Students and Community

#4

Group Leaders (Volunteer)		¥ 0
Assistant Group Leaders	¥1500 × 40 times x 6人	¥ 360,000
Program Assistant	¥1500 × 130 hours	¥ 195,000
Materials & Supplies	6 groups × ¥100,000	¥ 600,000
MI Festival (twice a year)	PR materials, supplies	¥ 400,000
Pre-total		¥ 2,035,000
Company Sponsors	1 class = ¥500 × 40 times × 30 students	¥ +600,000
Total		¥ 955,000

#5

Group Leaders (Volunteer)		¥ 0
Assistant Group Leaders	¥1500 × 40 times x 6人	¥ 360,000
Program Assistant	¥1500 × 130 hours	¥ 195,000
Materials & Supplies	6 groups × ¥50,000	¥ 300,000
MI Festival (twice a year)	PR materials, supplies	¥ 200,000
Pre-total		¥ 1,055,000
Company Sponsors	1 class = ¥500 x 40 times × 30 students	¥ +600,000
Total		¥ 455,000

## Appendix B

### サタデー・イングリッシュ・コミュニティを終えて

松山 智子, 八戸大学研究生 (教育自習)

当初、英語にほとんど触れていない小学生を対象に英語によるコミュニケーションを図るのはとても難しいことだと思っていた。なぜなら、このプログラムには多重知能理論を用いるという根幹があったからである。反面、生徒との効果的なコミュニケーションを計り、一人ひとりのことを知り、お互いを知り合うことは互いの信頼関係を生むことになり、それは現代教育において大いに叫ばれていることでもあり、このプログラムには大きな可能性が秘められているのではないかと期待する気持ちもあった。

私はアシスタントとしてバリー先生の補助をしたが、結論から申し上げますと今回のプログラムは大成功だったと思う。もちろんバリー先生の準備・指導等の賜物であるが、小学生の楽しそうな表情がその成功を如実に裏付けている。平均出席率が85%というのも児童にとって楽しく・有意義な時間を過ごすことができたからなのではないだろうか。

児童を引きつけた魅力は、やはり多重知能理論に基づく毎回のプログラムの変化ではないだろうか。5回のプログラムのすべてに同じレッスンは2度と行なわれず、児童にとっては毎回のレッスンが楽しみであり、ワクワクするものだったはずである。具体例をあげると、各回のプログラムでは色々な知能に基づきながらも、座って英語の勉強をするという学校の授業で行なわれている英語だけではなく、付随する動作を体を使って表現したり、音楽にあわせて歌ったり、踊ったり、絵を描いたり、演奏したり、ゲームをしたりと多岐に渡る動作が盛り込まれていた。体を動かした後は、世界地図に色をつけながら世界中の人種の違いやそのルーツを学ぶことによってリラックスするなど、体全体を用いての静と動によるこのレッスンは、「英語の学習」という私がこれまで持っていた既存の概念の枠にとらわれず、「英語を用いて楽しくコミュニケーションをすることにより英語が身に付く」という新しい学習方法だった。

バリー先生のネイティブな発音に触れ、楽しく英語に浸ることができたこのコミュニティは、今後の学校教育に取り入れなければならない要素がたくさんあった。生徒にとっては、ひとつの教科を多方面から勉強することにより、今まで苦手だと思っていた科目がスムーズに理解できるのではないかと思う。また、自分の理解しやすい理論を知ることにより、対策を練ることもできるという利点もある。教える側は、これまでの座学での指導のみではなく、一人ひとりの可能性を見つけ、理解させる為にも、多くの知能に着目し、授業に反映できるよう努力しなければならないのではないだろうか。アメリカでは20年も前から行なわれている指導方法である。日本でも教育の分野で利用すべきではないだろうか。

教師になることを目指している私には、今回のこのプログラムに参加できたことは大収穫となった。実際の授業に反映させるには、指導時間の制限とその時間内にすべき指導範囲の過密さに翻弄されてしまいそうだが、指導方法を見直さなければいけないと強く感じ、勉強したプログラムだった。



## Works Cited

Campbell, Linda, Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Allyn & Bacon Publishing, 1999

Community-Campus partnerships for Health. *Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships* <<http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph/principles.html>> In Jacoby, Barbara and Associates. (2003). Building Partnerships for Service Learning. Page 14. Jossey-Bass Publishing. San Francisco, CA, USA.

Flaxman, Erwin. *The promise of Urban Schooling*. (Winter, 2001) : 9. Eric Review 8, no. 2. In Dodd, Anne Wescott and Konzal, Jean L. How Communities Build Stronger Schools. 2002. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, USA.

Gardner, Howard, Frames of Mind, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. Basic Books, 1983.

Gardner, Howard, Intelligence Reframed, Multiple Intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Basic Books, 1999.

Gardner, Howard, Multiple Intelligences, The Theory in Practice, Basic Books, 1993.

Hord, S.M. (1997) . Professional Learning Communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement. Austin: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. In Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) . *Issues...about Change*. Volume 6, Number 1, 1997. <<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>>.

Jacoby, B. (ed). Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996. In Jacoby, Barbara and Associates. (2003). Building Partnerships for Service Learning. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Jacoby, Barbara and Associates. (2003). Building Partnerships for Service Learning. Jossey-Bass Publishing. San Francisco, CA, USA.

Japan Ministry of Science and Education. (2000) "Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities"

Kruse, S., Louis, K.S., & Associates (Eds.) , *Professionalism and community: Perspectives on reforming urban schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. In Toole, James C. and Louis, Karen Seashore. (2001). *The Role of Professional Learning Communities in International Education* . University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development, CAREI

Reports. <<http://education.umn.edu/CAREI/papers/>>.

Martin-Kniep, Giselle O. (2004). *Developing Learning Communities Through Teacher Expertise*. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, California, USA.

Shapiro, Nancy S., & Levine, Jodi H. (1999). Creating Learning Communities; A Practical Guide to Winning Support, Organizing for Change, and Implementing Programs. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, USA.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). *Issues...about Change*. Volume 6, Number 1, 1997. <<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>>. In Astuto, T.A., Clark, D.L., Read, A-M., McGree, K. & Fernandez, L. deK.P. (1993). *Challenges to dominate assumptions controlling educational reform*. Andover, Massachusetts: Regional Laboratory for the Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands.

Thomas, Alan. (2003). *Education and Training Float on a Sea of Learning*. Micromedia Limited, Canadian Business and Current Affairs. LexisNexis Academic, <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>>