

Evaluating the Effect of a Content-based Course in Media Literacy on Students' Awareness of Gender Marginalization

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Abstract

This paper will introduce plans for a five-year longitudinal study—for which a government grant-in-aid is presently being sought—to be conducted at three universities in Japan. It will investigate the impact of a content-based instruction (CBI) course in media and gender literacy for EFL students majoring in English. Here, media literacy refers to the development of the skills to critically analyze and understand the messages related to the historical and contemporary marginalization of women in films and other popular media. Media with misogynistic tropes are often watched uncritically, leading viewers to absorb and unwittingly perpetuate patriarchal social conditioning (Murray, 2020). The 30-lesson course will be conducted once per year per participating university over the course of three years. It will introduce feminist film theories, provide students with tools to become critical media consumers, and, through pre-post surveys and analysis of written diary reflections, determine to what extent the materials and instruction increased students' ability to detect gender discrimination in films and various media. Narrative frames—written templates to guide and prompt the production of coherent reflections—as informed by Barkhuizen and Wette (2008), will be employed throughout to guide students' reflections. Further, narrative analysis of short L1 (Japanese) follow-up interviews will allow researchers to understand participants' experiences and measure their ability to apply gains in knowledge of gender marginalization. The results of this study will culminate in the creation of a textbook which would allow universities all around Japan to employ the course design at their own institutions.

Keywords: Content-based instruction (CBI), English for Academic Purpose (EAP), Narrative frames, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Japan