

Shifting Lenses: Examining a Field Study Studio with Different Cultural Perspectives

Field Study Studio Experience of Japanese Students in Curitiba, Brazil

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Abstract

This article examines the effectiveness of a field study studio taking place in a different cultural environments. The author conducted a field study studio that brought twelve Japanese University students to Curitiba, Brazil.

The article first explains the backdrop of the field study including Meijigakuin University, where the author works, and the proliferation of the “field study studio” in the Japanese universities. Secondly, the article explains the actual field study studio that took place in Curitiba and its objectives and, three principle goals. The first goal was to provide students with opportunities to broaden their international perspective (Students cannot rely on their Japanese cultural lenses to understand their foreign cultural experiences). They have to be humble and sensitive in order to shift their cultural lenses to perceive the foreign landscape. The second goal was to provide students with a good example of city planning. Good city planning is difficult to understand by only reading verbal information and is much more effective if the students learn by engaging their body and directly experience the space. Students have the opportunity to grasp the real outcome of good city planning if they see it through their own eyes, instead of relying on second hand information. The third goal was to emphasize active learning in the field. Without textbooks, students have to develop their hypothesis from their first-hand information obtained through the field study. They have to be independent and active to execute the research. Students are challenged to practice self-learning and problem solving within a limited timeframe. The article also analyzes the outcomes of this field study studio from both students' evaluations and the instructor's observations.

In brief, the students had positive responses. They said they learned more about themselves. One of the main reasons to study and conduct research is to know one's self. Thinking is an act that enhances one's identity and the course provides the opportunity to “think” independently using one's brain and direct experience, rather than relying on the Internet or the literature. Many students also articulated that they understood the importance of good city planning and its policy. They have also learned that they lack the academic knowledge that would have helped them to conduct their research more smoothly and readily. They mentioned that the international cultural experience helped them to broaden their perspectives and they also appreciated the friendships they were able to cultivate with Brazilian students who collaborated with them on their assignments. In conclusion, the article will discuss and examine the cross-cultural field study studio as a pedagogical method and make suggestions for future improvements.

Introduction

In 2003, three faculty members of Meijigakuin University of Tokyo in Japan started the yearly-based Field Study Studio course. The author is responsible for two field study studio courses. The course that this article examines took place in Curitiba, Brazil from February 14th to 28th. The twelve students of Meijigakuin University, all sophomores, participated in this course.

The students took lectures in the morning and went out to see the actual city planning projects in the afternoon for the first week. In the second week, the students were divided into three groups: environmental planning; transportation planning; and housing and community development. They conducted individual research on these topics with support from the Brazilian university students. The Brazilian students functioned as teaching assistants and helped the Japanese students navigate through problems arising in the completion of the assignment.

This article explains the three principle goals of the field study studio. The first goal was to provide students with opportunities to broaden their international perspective. Students cannot rely on their Japanese cultural lenses to understand their foreign cultural experiences. They have to be humble and sensitive in order to shift their cultural lenses to perceive the foreign landscape. Second, it tries to provide students with a good example of city planning. Good city planning is very difficult to understand by just digesting verbal information. It is much more effective if the students learn by engaging their body and directly experiencing the space. Students have the opportunity to see and grasp the real outcome of good city planning through their own eyes, not only through the Internet or textbook. Third, it emphasizes active learning in the field. Without textbooks, students have to develop their hypothesis from their first-hand information obtained through the field study. They have to be independent and active to execute the research. Students are challenged to practice self-learning and problem solving within a limited timeframe. The article also analyzes the outcome of this field study studio from both students' evaluations and instructor's observations.

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The Background Information: Who has Foreign Lenses?

About Meijigakuin University

Meijigakuin University is one of the oldest Christian institutions in Japan. Its beginnings stretch back to the mid-nineteenth century, when Japan emerged from a long period of feudalism and self-imposed isolation, and was forced to encounter modern Western civilization. Meijigakuin University was founded in 1877 by the collaborative efforts of Protestant missionaries. Dr. James C. Hepburn was one of the most important figures. He was the first president of the university, well known for his Japanese-English dictionary, the “Hepburn” system of Romanization, and for his contribution to Japanese medicine.

Meijigakuin University aims to provide both the resources and atmosphere needed to educate men and women for the future. The curriculum and academic community encourages students to develop critical perspectives on various fields of study, and provides them with the knowledge and skills required to address the complexities of modern life. Today Meijigakuin University consists of two campuses, one in the middle of Tokyo metropolitan and the other in the suburban setting of Yokohama city. There were 12,864 students were enrolled in the university on April 1, 2003.

About the Field Study Studio

Meijigakuin University officially started its field study studio in 2003. It provided a couple of courses in 2002 to test their feasibility. Due to its success, the faculty of economics made the field study studio part of the regular curriculum beginning in 2003. There are five “field study studio” courses provided annually and three faculty members are responsible for them. The author is responsible for two courses. In the 2003–2004 school year, the places that the field courses took place were the Philippines, Bolivia, Peking (China), Northern California, and Curitiba (Brazil). The author has taken students to Northern California and Curitiba.

The field study studio is coupled with another prerequisite course called “Case Study.” The case study course provides students with basic knowledge and the methodology needed for them to “survive” in the field study studio. Students who want to participate in the field study studio for Curitiba, have to complete the case study course that introduces them to various cities of the world and their city planning strategies. This course is taught by the author.

Meijigakuin University has defined the “Field Study” course as a two week seminar type class that takes place in the “actual field”, and “the actual field” usually means a foreign environment that can provoke students’ intellectual interest.

Field Study is Attracting Attention in Japanese Academic Circles

Everybody Wants to Change the Lenses!

The course generally called “field study” has recently been getting more attention and inter-

est among universities in Japan. Many universities are realizing that the university cannot respond to the various needs of society by only providing lectures in a classroom (Iwami, 2004). Keisen Joshigakuen University has implemented a curriculum in 1999 that takes students to various fields such as Bangladesh, Thailand, Germany, New Zealand, and Laos for a period between ten days to two weeks. Its objective is to obtain first hand experience from the field that is alien to the student¹.

Osaka Sangyo University started “field study” class in 2001². It places importance on the independence of students to conduct their research work in the field³. Hiroshi Nakano, the Faculty head on Human Environment of the University, considers that the field study class provides an opportunity to learn and to realize oneself⁴.

The Economic Department of Kokugakuin University has had its “field study” class since 2003. In 2003, they visited Thailand for 11 days. The objective was to profoundly understand how people in the third world live and the effect of economic development policy that has been imposed on these people. In addition, the class also aims to enhance students' ability to identify the problem.

In addition to these curriculums, Rikkyo University (Department of Community Welfare), Chuo University (General Policy Department), Hiroshima Shudou University, Kanto-Gakuin University and Tokyo University of Agriculture, all have initiated such a “field study” class.

As these experiences show, the “field study” course has become popular in Japanese academic circles. In general, these schools have adopted the “field study” course for the following reasons.

- Students should not only study in the classroom but also go out into the field and experience what is actually going on.
- It enhances students' awareness of the importance of self-disciplined learning.
- It helps to widen students' global perspective.
- It should also be noted that many Japanese Universities has entered the very competitive era due to the decrease of the teenage population. Therefore, many universities are now trying to recruit as many students as they can to make their operation financially feasible, and field study course is expected to draw students.

Students

Field study studio in Curitiba, Brazil was conducted from February 14 to February 27. Twelve sophomore students of Meijigakuin University participated. They all belong to the Economics' Department and have had no design background. They have been exposed to planning and city planning policy in the class called “Case Study” with the author, in the fall semester beginning October of 2003, and going to January 2004. The case study class was a prerequisite to taking the field study.

The author had decided to visit Curitiba for field study because of the following reasons.

- It provides students with an excellent and rare model of good city planning.
- There are institutions including city government and a university that is willing to cooperate with us.

- Curitiba is located in the southern Hemisphere and provides ideal weather in February.

About Curitiba

Curitiba is the capital of the State of Paraná, Brazil. The city possesses 1.6 million people (2001) and its metropolitan region has 24 municipalities and more than 2.5 million people. The city is at an altitude of 908 meters, which makes its climate quite pleasant most of the year (Prefeitura da Cidade Curitiba/IPPUC, 2003).

Curitiba provides the world with an innovative model of how to integrate transportation planning, land use planning and community development. It is also world famous for its waste recycling program that earned a United Nation's award in 1992. It has succeeded in park and open space development, providing citizens with 50 square meters of park and open space per capita. This is second only to Oslo, Norway and Christchurch, New Zealand, despite the fact that it had less than 1 square meters of park and open space per capita in 1965 (Hattori, 2004). The Master Plan that was outlined in 1965 is considered to be a masterpiece of city planning and the city has been following this plan for nearly 40 years (IPPUC, 1996).

Many people have publicized the city's planning achievement worldwide (Beatley and Manning 1997, Cervero 1998, Hattori 2000b, 2002, 2004, Leitman and Rabinovitch 1993). It has also received many awards, including the United Nation's Environmental Program for Garbage Purchasing Program in 1990, World Conference on Global Commons Award for Environment Preservation Program in 1992, and the International Flower Exhibition Award for Flower Street Project in 1990, and so on (IPPUC, 1997).

Supporting Institutions

To conduct a good field study studio course in the foreign environment, it is imperative to find good counter partners. In the case of Curitiba, I selected two counter partners. In selecting the partners, I set three criteria. The first criterion was that the partner should be able to provide the students with space and facilities to work. The second criterion was that the partner should be able to coordinate several lecturers so the students can learn the basic knowledge before going out into the field to do their research. The third criterion was that the partner should be able to coordinate Brazilian students who can help the Japanese students conduct their research. These criteria would make it quite rational to choose a university as a partner. However, in the case of Curitiba, there was an institution that was more suited to our needs than a university. Curitiba has Unilivre⁵, a NPO that has the capability of coordinating lecturers for our needs and has a lassroom and computer facilities that students can utilize. Therefore, we asked Unilivre for field study support. The problem was Unilivre did not have university students, therefore, we also asked PUCPR (Pontificia Universidade Católica de Paraná) for support. They both agreed to help our field study studio.

Unilivre coordinated the morning lecture for the first week of our stay in Curitiba (refer **Table 1** for detailed schedule). They also provided a room for the students to do research and provided a couple of computers as well. They prepared lunch for the students. The support of

Table 1

Date	Time	Program	Lecturer	Place
February, 16	9 h 00	Presentation of Unilivre	Helio Amaral (Unilivre)	Open University for the Environment
	10 h 30	History of Curitiba	Elton Luiz Barz (Historian)	Open University for the Environment
	10 h 45	Presentation of the Transportation System		Open University for the Environment
	13 h 00	Curitiba City Field Tour		Flower Street
	15 h 00	Curitiba City Field Tour		Historic District
February, 17	8 h 30	Curitiba's Environmental Urban Planning		Open University for the Environment
	10 h 30	Transportation Planning	Luiz Filla (URBS)	Open University for the Environment
	12 h 00	Discussion with PUC students		Open University for the Environment
	13 h 30	Curitiba City Field Tour		Bus System
	18 h 00	Meeting with PUC students		
February, 18	8 h 30	Park Planning and Policy	Reinaldo Pilotto (SMMA)	Open University for the Environment
	10 h 30	Curitiba City Field Tour		Jardim Botanico
				Tangui Park
				Tingi Park
				Barigui Park
				Passauna Park
February, 19	8 h 30	Social and Economic Problems	Ana Cristina Jayme (FAS)	Open University for the Environment
	10 h 30	Urban Waste and Recycling Programs	Gisele Martins dos Anjos (Public Garbage Department)	Open University for the Environment
	13 h 00	Curitiba City Field Tour		Social Housing at Irai Barrage
February, 20	8 h 30	Curitiba City Field Tour		Urban Waste and Social Program at Industrial City
	12 h 00			Santa Felicidade
	14 h 00			Recycling Unit at Campo Magro
February, 21	12 h 00	Arrive at Hotel Santuario Nhundiaquara		Hotel Santuario Nhundiaquara
	12 h 30	Lecture about Atlantic Rain Forest	Mr. Hitoshi Nakamura (Former Head of Environmental Department of Curitiba)	In the vicinity of Hotel Santuario Nhundiaquara
	14 h 00	Field Tour at Atlantic Rain Forest		In the vicinity of Hotel Santuario Nhundiaquara
February, 22	8 h 30	Visit to Paranagua		
	15 h 00	Leave Paranagua to Curitiba		
February, 23		Voluntary Study by Group		
February, 24		Voluntary Study by Group		

Table 1 (つづき)

Date	Time	Program	Lecturer	Place
February, 25	8 h 30	Lecture about Working with Mayor Jaime Lerner	Mr. Hitoshi Nakamura (Former Head of Environmental Department of Curitiba)	Open University for the Environment
	11 h 00	Voluntary Study by Group		
	15 h 00	Visit to Former Mayor Jaime Lerner		Jaime Lerner's Office
February, 26	9 h 00	Voluntary Study by Group		
	15 h 00	Presentation of the Study		Open University for the Environment
February, 27		Leave Hotel for Japan		
February, 28				
February, 29		Arrive at Tokyo, Narita Airport		

Unilivre allowed us use our time more efficiently and students were able to concentrate on their study. Meijigakuin University paid the actual expense to Unilivre.

PUCPR's support was more voluntarily. We asked the professor who is in charge of the city Planning and Architecture Department to recruit PUCPR students who would be willing to help our students do their research. Six students volunteered to participate.

My first intention was to form three research groups that consist of four Meijigakuin University's students and two PUCPR's students. Since the six students of PUCPR who joined us all majored in urban design or architecture, and the twelve students of Meijigakuin University majored in social science (economics) and did not have design background, I considered that it would be a good combination to do some planning project together. However, due to the lack of language capability and experience of the Japanese students, I had to give up my original idea. The PUCPR students helped the Meijigakuin University students do their research. They helped to make appointments for research interviews; they worked as translators when the Japanese students were conducting the questionnaire survey, and they were willing to consult and give advice whenever Japanese students had questions. As a result, the role of PUCPR students became more like a teaching assistant rather than working partners. The relationship was not equal, however, it was a mutual learning experience in terms of trying to understand each other despite the different cultural backgrounds and the different university majors.

Objective: Why did We Shift Our Lenses?

The objectives of the field study studio in Curitiba are threefold. First, it provides students with international experience to broaden their global perspective. Second, it provides students with a good example of city planning, helping students understand what planning policy can do to change the future of a city. Third, it tries to develop students' independence and enhance their willingness to learn.

The first objective was established since it has become more and more important to have a cosmopolitan perspective due to the growth of the global economy. The Japanese economy is quite intertwined with the global economy, and with the advent of the Internet and other communication devices, the economical and cultural dependence on other parts of the world has increased to the level that is difficult to neglect. Therefore, it is essential for university students to learn and understand the rest of the world.

The second objective was set since I considered that “seeing is believing” is an effective way to understand good city planning and planning policy. What is a good planning policy or design policy? What is good urban design? The plan or design can be good on paper, but if it is not implemented, how good can it be? In the field of planning or design, theory cannot exceed reality. To make matters worse, actual planning or policy is skewed by politicians and/or business entities. Japan has been quite unsuccessful in realizing good city planning policy or urban design for a long time (Hatta, 1997). Therefore, students who study city planning policy and/or urban design have difficulty converting the theories they learned in lectures to the real world (Tsutsumi, 2004). As a university faculty who is responsible for teaching city planning and policy including urban design policy, it is difficult to teach city planning theory in just a classroom setting. It is much more persuasive for students if they go out from campus and learn from the real world.

The third objective was set to enhance the students' independence and willingness to learn, since many Japanese students nowadays act more like consumers than disciples of academic traditions. People in emerging consumer societies identify themselves with what they consume rather than what they produce (Hattori, 2000a). I assume that this social trend has eroded the psychology of university students as well. This consumers' attitude can be quite harmful to university students since it takes away the independent and aggressive attitude to study, and makes students more reluctant to learn. Since most of the companies' marketing strategy is not to let consumers think or decide, students who grow up in this consumer society lack the ability to think independently. The field study studio is designed so that the students must apply a positive and independent attitude, in order to get information necessary to complete the assignment. The fact that the students are in a foreign environment makes them more humble, which is not a typical character of consumers. With the tight schedule to complete their assignments, students tend to work much harder and with greater concentration. The fact that they are limited with their linguistic ability forces them to use their full senses and use much more imagination. It is, in a sense, a self-finding experience.

Methodology: How did We Shift Our Lenses?

On the first night we arrived in Curitiba, I asked each student to manifest his or her objectives and the goals he or she would like to accomplish during the two weeks in Curitiba. Students submitted their “manifesto” before leaving the Narita Airport, however, I considered that presenting their manifesto to other students would refresh their memory. I also considered that

understanding other students' determination would be beneficial for all students. The manifesto was recorded in videotape as verification so that the students would be responsible to their words and also to support my, not so reliable, memory.

For the first four days, students commuted to Unilivre, which is located at the northern hill of Curitiba, and attended morning lectures that were coordinated for us by Unilivre. The lectures are shown in **Table 1**.

After taking lunch at Unilivre, the students hopped on a bus that was provided courtesy of City Hall of Curitiba, and visited the actual projects that were described in the lectures. **Table 1** shows the sites and projects that students visited. The students had a project manager or someone familiar to give them an on-site lecture, and answer questions.

The first half of the field study was scheduled so that students could obtain a holistic image of Curitiba's planning policy. The students were showered with lots of new information. Students already had an idea of what they would like to learn and also a hypothesis for their research before arriving in Curitiba. However, with the newly acquired knowledge and also the field experience they had gathered, the students were given two days to revise their hypothesis.

The following Monday night, each student reported to the author about what they should do in the following days to accomplish his or her research. The students were shown the video that the author had taken on the first night in Curitiba. It was useful for students to be reminded about their initial ideas before being inundated with new information. Because Curitiba had lots of information and inspiration to offer, students were so overwhelmed that many of them could not construct his or her own ideas. Therefore, they spent two days deliberating over the information they had obtained.

Students spent the following days conducting their research⁶. Students were divided into three groups according to their interests. The three research topics were: transportation planning policy, environmental policy (especially focusing on recycling program), and housing and community development. Each group consisted of four Japanese students and two Brazilian students. Brazilian students functioned more like teaching assistants, as previously mentioned. However, they also appreciated the opportunity to look over the city and its planning policy once again and realized that they learned to see from different perspectives, by having discussion with Japanese students. Students gave their research presentations on Thursday evening, the day before they were leaving Unilivre. Brazilian students took the role as commentator. Some faculty members in PUCPR, a couple of researchers from Unilivre, a news reporter from local TV network, and Mr. Nakamura showed up for the students' presentations. The following describes what each group of students had discovered, and presented on Thursday.

Study Group 1: Transportation Planning

The students who chose "Transportation Planning" for their study topic conducted questionnaire surveys on the users of Curitiba's world famous bus system. The intention was to grasp its convenience but also to understand some of the problems associated with it. They found that many respondents appreciated the bus system, but a certain percent of people (69%) thought

there should be some improvements. The improvements that respondents identified were: "more frequency for the feeder-network buses," "eliminate molesters and pick-pockets from buses," "bigger bus tube station," "needs air conditioning," and so on.

The students analyzed the bus system of Curitiba. They found that it worked well since it developed its networks before the population growth, however, they pointed out that the growth seems to be catching up now and has begun to cause many problems. The students also found out through the questionnaire survey that many Curitibaños actually want to have a light rail system despite having a sophisticated bus system.

Study Group 2: Recycle and Environmental Policy

The students who chose "Recycle and Environmental Policy" for their study topic summarized Curitiba's "Garbage that is not Garbage" Program and the "Garbage Purchasing" Program. This group had prepared the Japanese data regarding "recycling" before leaving Japan, and was able to compare the data between the Japanese city and Curitiba.

They pointed out the differences of Curitiba's waste recycling system and that of the Japanese system. In Curitiba, people call the recyclable waste "garbage that is not garbage," whereas in Japan, people call it "nonflammable waste." The students pointed out the former word has come from the idea of recycling, whereas the latter comes from the standpoint of the government's convenience. They also found that there are similar problems between Japan and Curitiba, the lack of land for waste disposal, being one of them.

By conducting interviews with personnel, the students came to the conclusion that the success of Curitiba's recycle program was mainly due to the understanding and support of citizens. Curitiba has targeted elementary school children for environmental education since 1989. They thought that converting adults' thinking about waste was too large a task. This strategy was quite fruitful since children who had been educated became teachers to their parents.

The students concluded that another difference between Curitiba and Japan is the recognition of the waste problem. They think that the difference is primarily due to the existence of a good environmental education system. They advised that in order for Japan to have a better recycling system, environmental education should be strengthened and much more importance should be put on it.

Study Group 3: Housing and Community Development

This group of students had conducted statistical demographic surveys and questionnaires with citizens. From the statistical survey, they found that there is a great disparity between the rich and poor in Curitiba. This is quite different from Japanese society where the disparity between rich and poor is small. The students were shocked to find out that the graduation rate of high school students is around 40%, and university students around 3%, being much lower than that of Japan. They were also shocked with the fact that 250 thousand citizens (roughly 16% of the total city population) were living in slums. They also realized that 30% of the population of the city was living in social housing.

The social housing program of Curitiba is by far the best in the country. The students were impressed with its program but also learned there were many issues related to housing. The slum problems were quite alien to the students. They were impressed, however, with the job training system that Curitiba had been providing. The number of people who have graduated from the city's job training system was 35,500 in 2003, and their wage had increased 19% to 36%. They realized that many issues required the city's implementation of community development strategies but they also realized the deep social problems inherent in these.

This group of students came to the conclusion that the success of Curitiba's housing and community development was due to the importance placed on each individual's welfare. Curitiba's policies were developed through intense communication with people of all incomes. Curitiba was particularly good at having conversation with people living in slums. The students concluded that the capability to communicate with citizens and the philosophy to put human's welfare first, instead of economic development or industry's interest, were the main reasons that Curitiba was successful.

How did We Accomplish the Objective?

There were three principle objectives for this field study studio. The first objective, widening the students' global perspective, had been accomplished to a great extent. The collaboration with Brazilian students was eye opening, exciting, and an educational experience for the Japanese students. None of the participating students had ever been to Brazil, which made it even more fascinating for them.

"I also realized the importance of thinking globally. Before coming to Curitiba, I had much more narrow view about the world. (Student's comment)"

Working with Brazilian university students, the students learned to cooperate with people who have very different cultural and social backgrounds, but also the same social status as university students. The linguistic limitations and the fact that they knew very little about their research topic, meant that they could not proceed with their assignment without the help of the Brazilian students. The students were just so powerless. This fact made them realize that they were vulnerable in certain situations and had to seek support in order to get things done. They could not complete the assignment without asking for help.

"I have learned a lot from many people I met in Curitiba, especially from PUCPR's students. The friendship I have made with them has become my treasure. (Student's comment)"

"I was able to have a great time with PUCPR students and they inspired me a lot. (Student's comment)"

"I also learned the importance of communicating with other person whether they understood Japanese or not. (Student's comment)"

"I was also grateful for having the opportunity to meet and work with so many Brazilian students. It was wonderful. (Student's comment)"

The students also learned the similarities and differences of their counter peers. They not

only saw the difference in public policy and city planning but also the different set of values. It was quite astonishing and eye-opening for students to learn that there are slum communities, which is quite rare in Japan. Finding some social problems that Japan does not need to deal with helped them widen their perspectives.

"I appreciate the meetings with many people including Mr. Nakamura of Unilivre and students of PUCPR. The discussion with students of PUCPR was quite informative and I have learned a lot from them. I especially appreciate them taking us to slums. It was a very good experience. (Student's comment)"

The second objective, learning good city planning through direct experience was accomplished to our content. This was mostly due to the fact that Curitiba, which is famous worldwide for its brilliant city planning policy and urban design, was an ideal city planning "textbook." With good interpretation from specialists including former mayor, Jaime Lerner, and former head of environmental department, Hitoshi Nakamura, the students learned about good city planning policy using their five senses.

"During the course of the field study, I had learned a lot from Curitiba. I was always asking myself what were the factors that made Curitiba environmental policy and city planning policy so successful. I came to a conclusion that the reason that Curitiba had been so successful was because it put people in priority. Every policy's premier objective is to make people's life and welfare better. This philosophy can be seen in transportation planning, community development, environmental planning, waste management and so on. These policies respect human more than automobile or industries. (Student's comment)"

"From my two weeks learning of Curitiba's urban planning policy, I have realized that Japanese government is over spending. Curitiba used wisdom, whereas Japanese cities tend to rely too much on money. (Student's perspective)"

"What I have learned from the field study is that it is essential to have both government and citizens to realize that they are responsible for making the city. I realized the importance of citizens' commitment in making city planning work. In addition, I have learned that in order to accomplish a plan, one needs faith and will to continue. (Student's perspective)"

"I have learned tremendously during two weeks stay in Curitiba. I was able to learn about waste problem and was quite impressed with the innovative measures that Curitiba had introduced in coping with this problem. (Student's perspective)"

The third objective, enhancing students' independence and willingness to learn, was also accomplished to a certain extent. Students were forced to work independently, and in an aggressive fashion. All the students, more or less, responded to my expectations. However, there were some differences among students. The students who had much more interest in city planning tended to learn more than the others. The interest that was cultivated and stimulated by the direct experience in Curitiba made students work harder. Some students had much more interest than other students.

Many students mentioned that they, themselves, learned more. The field study studio was, in a sense, a soul-searching process. Students were required to have a strong identity to analyze

the foreign environment. I kept reminding them that a person who does not realize oneself cannot realize others and the outside world, thus, students tried to think hard and extend their best effort to understand their research topic.

"I have learned my weakness by conducting this field study. The field study has provided me with the opportunity to understand myself better. I did learn about environmental policy of Curitiba, but what I learned most worthwhile from the field study was myself. (Student's comment)"

"Learning city planning and policy through field study has enhanced my ability to analyze and think profoundly. (Student's comment)"

"I appreciate the two-week experience. It has helped me to grow as a person. I also realized that language is quite essential in order to broaden myself. (Student's comment)"

"More than anything else, I have learned my strength and weakness. I understood the value of courses that are taught in my university. From now on, I will try to study hard and overcome my weakness and cultivate my strength. (Student's comment)"

"I have obtained a great amount from the field study. I think that the field study is self-learning experience. I think I have learned skill to observe things much more aggressively. (Student's comment)"

The Lessons Learned: What did We See by Our Shifting Lenses?

Mainly from the experience of the field study studio in Curitiba (with some knowledge I have acquired through the experience of field study studio in Northern California), the following components are considered to be essential for a field study studio to be successful.

1. The field context must possess content substantial for learning and it must be interesting enough to provoke the students' willingness to learn.
2. The existence of an interpreter in the field who does not give the answer but offers guidance to help students find a path.
3. The intellectual interests of the participating students.
4. The ability of the participating students to communicate with native people and also the good imagination to understand the environment by using various senses.

The first component depends on the field we chose and the second component depends on the faculty's ability to find the right person. The third and fourth components depend on the participating students which the faculty member does not have much control over.

In the case in Curitiba, the first component was fulfilled to a great extent. Curitiba provided the students with some of the best models of transportation planning, and environmental policy, especially that of recycling, housing and community development, as mentioned previously. The students learned quite a lot which was apparent from the reports they completed during the two weeks in Curitiba.

The second component was also fulfilled to our content. Mr. Hitoshi Nakamura played a great role in interpreting the various projects and programs of Curitiba. Since he has been a leading figure in implementing many projects and programs, we were able to get in touch with

many people. He was a great inspiration to the students.

The third component depends on the student's character and the fourth component depends on the students' communication capability. The fourth component can be improved by discipline before going to the field. The third component is much more difficult to cure in a short period of time. Meijigakuin University has made the case study course a prerequisite for the field study studio in order to stimulate the student's interest. However, it is not always a perfect prescription. What students will gain from the field study studio depends on how willing they are to learn.

Conclusion

From two experiences of field study studio, I am confident that the field study studio is an exciting and concentrated learning experience for students, and that they tend to learn more in a short period of time. The fact that they gained information first-hand, from their own experience, rather than from second-hand sources such as books and the Internet, has made students realize the issues more intuitively and physically. This way of learning is especially important when you are in an environment that is quite alien to you.

There are a few problems that should be considered in conducting a field study studio. First, it costs a lot of money for a participating student. Field study studio is an effective learning method, however, how effective in terms of cost, may be questionable. Second, it is imperative to find supportive people and institutions in the location where the field study studio takes place. Luckily, in the case of Curitiba, we were able to find Mr. Hitoshi Nakamura, the former head of the Environmental Planning Department of Curitiba, but you cannot always expect a "Mr. Nakamura" to be there. In this case we were lucky; however, it is possible to be unlucky. Third, the participating student has to try his or her best in order to understand what the field offers. In order to get most out of the study, the student has to be very aggressive. There is not much that a professor can do if a student is not willing to learn. This was not a problem with students who participated in Curitiba, but I had one such student in the case of the Northern California field study.

In the era of the Internet and globalization, learning by experiencing a place has become more important than before. With the advent of the Internet, students are loaded with information. It is not like old days when acquiring information was most important, now it is the first hand experience, that makes students understand and broaden their views, as well as gain confidence.

A Few Suggestions for Future Improvements

The experience should seek a more mutual relationship between the two country's students. In the case of Curitiba, Brazilian students had much more to offer. It was difficult because of the language barrier, however, if a Brazilian University had the same kind of field study studio course in Japan, the relationship can be mutually beneficial.

It would have been better if the students who joined the field study studio took a similar kind of studio in Japan before going abroad. It would have made their life in Curitiba much easier. The length of stay could have been longer, however, this is a difficult issue because of financial concerns.

From the two experiences of conducting field study and the discussions that I had with the faculty members of Meijigakuin University who also were responsible for conducting the study, I strongly believe that the studio, as pedagogical method, is quite effective. The issues that were mentioned previously need to be overcome; still it has many more merits than demerits. Field study is not a new method, however, with the changes in society; notably globalization and the advent of the Internet, it has made it a more effective and valuable pedagogical method than in the old days.

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Notes

- 1 <http://www.keisen.ac.jp/univ/ningen/field.htm>
- 2 The school brochure of Osaka Sangyou University
- 3 The school brochure of Osaka Sangyou University
- 4 <http://www.obunsha.co.jp/gakka/area/hansin/naka.htm>
- 5 Unilivre, which is translated to the Open University for the Environment in English, was created to consider the relationship between the environment and human activities. It is located in Curitiba and it aims at disseminating environmental knowledge to all strata of society, contributing to raise citizens more aware of their rights and duties towards the environment.

In addition to providing reference in research, collection and diffusion of environmental knowledge, Unilivre also coordinates theme-focused groups, provides courses to the community and to professionals, organizes seminars, exhibits and conferences, develops environmental education activities for children, organizes visits for groups interested in environmental themes, and also offers a large specialized collection of documents and technical publications from the world over.

- 6 However, they did have some additional visits to IPPUC (City Planning Institution of Curitiba) on Thursday morning, and to former mayor Jaime Lerner's office on Thursday afternoon.

(2005 年 11 月 21 日経済学会受理)