ISSN 1341-2000

THE JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

Vol. 21

2015

THE INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES
MEIJI UNIVERSITY

THE JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES
MEIJI UNIVERSITY
VOLUME 21 March 31, 2015

The Institute of Humanities, Meiji University
1-1 Kanda-Surugadai Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 101-8301
TEL 03-3296-4135 FAX 03-3296-4283
ISSN 1341-2000
PRINTED IN JAPAN

THE JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES
MEIJI UNIVERSITY
VOLUME 21

CONTENTS

The Journal of Humanities, Meiji Univ., Vol. 21（*March 31, 2015*）, *1*−*10*

‘So You Knew FitzGerald’:
Oscar Wilde and *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

KOMIYA Ayaka

‘So You Knew FitzGerald’:
Oscar Wilde and *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*

KOMIYA Ayaka

The Picture of Dorian Gray is Oscar Wilde’s best-known work, which is often identified with *fin-de-siècle*, decadent literature. There are actually two versions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: the original novella form version published in *Lippincott’s Magazine* in June 1890, and the revised longer version which appeared in book form in 1891. *Lippincott’s* version, which comprised 13 chapters, received a storm of protest from reviewers. It was deemed so immoral that the July issues of *Lippincott’s Magazine* were withdrawn from bookstalls at railway stations. Although Wilde was undefeated by the harsh criticisms, he took some advice seriously. During his trial, in 1895, when Wilde was being tried for ‘gross indecency,’ he admitted that he made some alterations to the original version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* because ‘it had been pointed out . . . by . . . Mr Walter Pater . . . that a certain passage was liable to misconstruction.’[1] When he drafted some new chapters to make the 20-chapter novel, he revised the work in order to tone down some of the homoerotic aspects. The lengthened novel was published by Ward, Lock & Co. in April 1891.

Chapter 3 of the 1891 edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is one of the 6 new chapters added to the *Lippincott’s* version. The addition is significant as the chapter tells us about the nature of the hedonism of Lord Henry Wotton, whose philosophy in life is: ‘The only way to get rid of a temptation is yield to it.’[2] Lord Henry Wotton enchants Dorian Gray and others at a luncheon with his decadent *carpe diem* principles of ‘drink and be merry’:

> The praise of folly, as he [Lord Henry] went on, soared into a philosophy, and Philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad music of Pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her wine-stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the slow Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her like frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the seething grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat’s black, dripping, sloping sides. It was an extraordinary improvisation.[3]

---

1 Holland, p. 78.

2 Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 183.

3 My underline. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* p. 205.

This passage is usually accompanied by notes to explain 'Bacchante', 'Silenus' and 'Omar'. For instance, H. Montgomery Hyde explains that 'Bacchante' and 'Silenus' are both associated with Bacchus, the god of wine and intoxication, and that 'Omar' refers to 'Omar Khayyám, the Persian astronomer-poet who lived in the eleventh century. His chief work was *The Rubáiyát*, whose verse translation by Edward FitzGerald, first published in 1859, is justly famous.'[4] Yes, that is all very true, but this translation of an 11th-century Persian poem seems to have had much greater relevance for Oscar Wilde and therefore warrants more than a few lines of explanation. In this paper, I would like to show Wilde's personal attachment to FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* and consider the hitherto unnoted allusions to *Omar Khayyám* in Wilde's works.

First of all, when we come across *Omar Khayyám* in Wilde's works, we should be aware that it was a truly contemporary poem; most English people were not acquainted with the *Rubáiyát* until just before *Dorian Gray* was published. Arthur Ransome, who wrote the first serious study of Wilde, describes 1854, the year Wilde was born, thus:

> Leigh Hunt, De Quincey, and Macaulay were alive. Wordsworth had only been dead four years. Tennyson was writing "Maud" and "The Idylls of the King." Borrow was wandering in wild Wales and finishing "The Romany Rye." Browning was preparing "Men and Women" for the press. Dickens was the novelist of the day, and had half a dozen books yet to write. Thackeray was busy on "The Newcomes." Matthew Arnold was publishing his "Poems." FitzGerald was working underground in the mine from which he was to extract the roses of Omar.[5]

It was in 1859, five years after Wilde's birth, that Edward FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* was published by Bernard Quaritch. It caused no commotion at all for a while. Owing to FitzGerald's eccentricity, which made him take "more pains to avoid fame than others do to seek it," the work was slow to achieve popularity.[6] It was by pure luck that it caught the eyes of D.G. Rossetti and A.C. Swinburne in 1861, and the remaining copies were rescued from the 'penny box' outside Quaritch's bookshop. They became fascinated by the poem and introduced it to their friends in and out of their Pre-Raphaelite circle.[7] Before long, William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, George Meredith and John Ruskin had all turned into ardent admirers of *Omar Khayyám*.[8]

---

4 H. Montgomery Hyde, p. 159.

5 My underline. Ransome, p. 17.

6 Wright, *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, Vol. 1, p. x.

7 Swinburne recounts his discovery of *Omar Khayyám* in his letter of 4 March 1896 to Clement King Shorter, who was then president of the Omar Khayyám Club. See *Swinburne Letters*, 6: 96. He retells the story in a letter of 5 October 1904 to A. C. Benson. See *Swinburne Letters*, 6: 187−88.

8 Ruskin was so moved when he read *Omar Khayyám* in September 1863 that he wrote an enthusiastic letter to the then-unidentified "Translator of Omar Khayyám":

My dear and very dear Sir,

I do not in the least know who you are, but I do with all my soul pray you to find and translate

Edward FitzGerald died in 1883. Six years later, in 1889, the fifth and final revised edition was published as part of *The Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, which ensured the poem's widespread popularity in the 1890s. As Daniel Karlin writes, in 'the decade before Edward FitzGerald's death in 1883, his *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám* . . . became a fashion. . . . In the decade following his death, it became the rage.'[9] Fascination with Omar even gave birth to an 'Omar Khayyám Club' in 1892, whose membership included such noted literary figures as H. G. Wells, J. M. Barrie, Edmund Gosse and George Gissing.[10] Indeed, as Norman Page remarked, *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* was a "*fin de siècle* poem born before its time."[11]

Oscar Wilde is often regarded as the most notorious representative of *fin-de-siècle*, and his relatively short career as a writer coincides with the period when *Omar Khayyám* was at the very height of its popularity. Wilde's first published work was *Poems*, in 1881. *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* were published in 1888, followed by *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1890. He then became popular as a playwright, but his successful career came to an abrupt end when the Marquess of Queensberry left his abusive card at Wilde's club that read 'For Oscar Wilde posing somdomite [*sic*]', on 18 February, 1895.

Partly owing to its extraordinary popularity and partly due to the poem being half translation and half original work, FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* had rarely been studied as a serious work of art. Erik Gray, in the issue of *Victorian Poetry* commemorating the bicentennial of the birth of FitzGerald and the sesquicentennial of his *Rubáiyát* in 2009, summarizes the history of the poem's reception, and shows how it was neglected until *The Letters of Edward FitzGerald* was published in four volumes in 1980. *Omar Khayyám*'s influence on the later generation poets has been pointed out by Vinnie-Marie D'Ambrosio in *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubáiyát* (1989). Other than T. S. Eliot, her main subject, she mentions, for instance, Robert Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra," Rudyard Kipling's "The Rupaiyat of Omar Kal'vin," and A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*. D'Ambrosio also refers to Ezra Pound, who named his son "Omar" in 1926. However, she does not mention the name of Oscar Wilde, and thus far, nobody has pointed to the influence of *Omar Khayyám* on Wilde. And yet, as we shall see, Wilde had reasons to have a stronger attachment for FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* than his contemporaries.

Omar Khayyám is mentioned a number of times in Wilde's letters, but the most noteworthy is this letter he wrote to Louis Wilkinson in 1899:

---

some more of Omar Khayyám for us. I never did — till this day — read anything so glorious, to my mind as this poem — (10th. 11th. 12th. pages if one were to choose) — More — more — please more — and that I am ever gratefully and respectfully yours.

See Terhune, p. 212. The letter finally reached FitzGerald in 1873, after being handed to Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard University, who discovered the name of the translator in his talk with Thomas Carlyle, who was a close friend of FitzGerald's.

9 Daniel Karlin, p. xi.

10 See *The Book of the Omar Khayyám Club 1892–1910*, pp. 211–12.

11 Page, p. 152.

> So you knew FitzGerald. His *Omar* is a masterpiece of art: I feel proud that a kinsman of mine — Sir Ralph Ouseley — brought the first manuscript of Omar Kháyyám [*sic*] to England: to Europe perhaps: it is the beautiful Bodleian manuscript: which I suppose you have seen.[12]

Louis Wilkinson was a schoolboy at Radley, Oxford, eager to become acquainted with Wilde, whom he had never met. He seems to have told Wilde that he liked Shakespeare and Omar in order to flatter him and attract his attention.

Wilde's memory is incorrect here because it was in fact Sir Ralph's son, Sir William Ouseley (1767−1842), the Orientalist, who found the beautiful manuscript of the *rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám, copied at Shiraz in Persia in 1460, and brought it back to England. The Ouseley manuscript was purchased by Oxford University's Bodleian Library in 1844, and it was this manuscript that Edward FitzGerald mainly consulted when he translated and composed his version of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*.

The Ouseleys were a prominent Anglo-Irish family. According to Robert Harborough Sherard, a friend of Wilde's who later became the author of *The Life of Oscar Wilde* (1906), remembers Wilde proudly talking about his connection with the Ouseleys: 'Thomas Wilde married a Miss Fynn, who was related by descent to the eminent families of Surridge and Ouseley of Dunmore in the county of Galway. The Ouseleys were most distinguished people.'[13] Wilde's recognition of his kinship with Sir Ralph Ouseley must have strengthened his affinity for *Omar Khayyám*.

It is not certain when and how Wilde became acquainted with the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. However, it is definite that he was already familiar with it before the publication of *The Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald* made the poem widely accessible. As early as 1887, Wilde makes an allusion to it in "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," published in the *Court and Society Review*. Lord Arthur Savile becomes depressed when a chiromantist reads ominous signs on his palms. He mourns over his doom using metaphors from *Omar Khayyám*:

> Were we no better than chessmen, moved by an unseen power, vessels the potter fashions at his fancy, for honour or for shame?[14]

These metaphors of "chessmen" and "the potter" are clearly allusions to the quatrains of *Omar Khayyám* in which the relationship between God and Man are represented through the metaphors of a chess player and his chessmen, and a potter and his pot.[15] Thus, quatrain 49 runs:

---

12 *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, pp. 787−88.

13 Sherard, p. 8.

14 Oscar Wilde, "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," *Complete Shorter Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), p. 27.

15 This metaphor of "potter and pot" is also used by Walter Pater in "Sebastian Van Stork." See Walter Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, p. 108. Pater had a copy of the third edition of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1872) in his own library. See Inman, ed., *Walter Pater's Reading*, p. 335.

‘Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.[16]

The potter-pot relationship is sung in several quatrains. For example, in quatrain 60:

And, strange to tell, among the Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
“Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?”

Similarly, in quatrain 63:

None answer’d this; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
“They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?”

To the *fin-de-siècle* readers who had only recently familiarized themselves with the *Rubáiyát*, these allusions to *Omar Khayyám* must have been easy to identify.

In 1888, Wilde published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, a collection of children’s tales, which included ‘The Nightingale and the Rose.’ This was not his original tale but is actually his retelling of a well-known Persian fairy tale of a nightingale who falls in love with a white rose and sings to it until he sacrifices his life for the beauty of the rose, which in the end, turns into a red rose. Both the nightingale and the rose are important motifs in Persian literature, and they appear repeatedly in *Omar Khayyám* as well. Quatrain 6 is perhaps the most significant:

And David’s Lips are lock’t; but in divine
High piping Pehlevi, with ‘Wine! Wine! Wine!
‘*Red* Wine!’— the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her’s to’Incarnadine.

The nightingale in Wilde’s tale also sings his life out in order to ‘incarnadine’ the rose.

Allusions to *Omar Khayyám* can also be found in Wilde’s last literary production, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898). It is a 654-line poem bearing not his name but his number in prison, ‘C.3.3.’ It records his harrowing memories of a fellow prisoner who was hanged for murdering his wife.

16 My quotations are from the first edition, which was regarded as the “best edition” by the lovers of *Omar Khayyám*.

Concerning this ballad, various influences have been noted elsewhere, including the influence of A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, which was published in 1896, during Wilde's imprisonment. According to Frank Harris, Wilde received a copy of the book from a friend, Reginald Turner, and 'owed most of his inspiration [for *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*] to *A Shropshire Lad*.'[17] Ruth Robins also gives an incisive comparison of the poetry of Housman and Wilde, who "tried to articulate same-sex love, the love that dare not speak its name, via the strategy of a poetic code."[18] While the similarities between *A Shropshire Lad* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* are persuasive, it should be added that they both have an echo of the same poem—viz. that of *Omar Khayyám*.[19]

It is in the refrain of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* that we detect a striking echo of *Omar Khayyám*:

> I never saw a man who looked
> With such a wistful eye
> Upon that little tent of blue
> Which prisoners call the sky,[20]

Let us now consider the 52nd quatrain of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*:

> And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
> Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
> Lift not thy hands to *It* for help — for It
> Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

Not only does Wilde imitate the rhythms found in FitzGerald's translation, but he refers to the sky using the word "tent," which has a strong association with Omar Khayyám. "Khayyám" in Persian means, literally, a "tent-maker," a notion which was derived from his being also an astronomer, one who studied the "tent," i.e., the sky. This was known to the readers of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, as it had been explained by FitzGerald in his introduction. Indeed, Omar Khayyám was often specifically referred to as "the tent-maker" by his admirers.[21] Wilde's

---

17 Harris, *Oscar Wilde*, pp. 227ff.

18 It is worth noting that FitzGerald's homosexuality was also suspected by Havelock Ellis:
> In a writer of the first order, Edward FitzGerald, to whom we owe the immortal and highly individualized version of *Omar Khayyám*, it is easy to trace an element of homosexuality, though it appears never to have reached full and conscious development. (Ellis, 1: 50−51)

19 D'Ambrosio refers to Housman's stanzas as imitative of *Omar Khayyám*. D'Ambrosio, *Eliot Possessed*, p. 103.

20 My underline. Oscar Wilde, *Complete Poetry*, p. 152. See also p. 155 and p. 165.

21 For example, Swinburne, in a letter recounting his first encounter with the translation, writes, "As to the immortal tent-maker himself, I believe I may claim to be one of his earliest English believers." See *Swinburne Letters*, 6: 96.

use of the word "tent" in reference to the sky in this stanza, therefore, is a double allusion to *Omar Khayyám*. This allusion adds a profound dimension to the image of the prisoner looking wistfully at the sky, the sky of which *Omar Khayyám* sings, but a sky that gives no religious succour.

Right from the beginning of his writing career, Oscar Wilde has been criticized for being derivative — or plagiaristic. His first volume of *Poems* was rejected by the library of the Oxford Union because these poems were:

> for the most part not by their putative father at all, but by a number of better known and more deservedly reputed authors. They are in fact by William Shakespeare, by Philip Sidney, by John Donne, by Lord Byron, by William Morris, By Algernon Swinburne, and by sixty more. . . . The Union Library already contains better and fuller editions of all of these poets.[22]

He did not seem to mind as he went on borrowing blatantly. He once wrote that the 'originality, I mean, which we ask from the artist, is originality of treatment, not of subject', and then went on to state in the style of aphorism:

> It is only the unimaginative who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything.[23]

FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* was certainly one more source of his creative appropriation, but it was probably somewhat more special for Wilde because of his personal connection with this famous poem.

Selected Bibliography

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Edward FitzGerald's The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004.

Clodd, Edward ed. *The Book of the Omar Khayyám Club 1892−1910*. London: n. p., 1910.

D'Ambrosio, Vinnie-Marie. *Eliot Possessed: T. S. Eliot and FitzGerald's Rubáiyát*. New York: New York UP, 1989.

Ellis, Havelock. "Sexual Inversion." *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. 2 vols. New York: Random House, 1942.

Ellman, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Vintage, 1988.

Gray, Erik, ed. 'Edward FitzGerald and the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: An Anniversary Issue.*' *Victorian Poetry*. 46.1 (2008).

Harris, Frank. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Dorset, 1989.

Hart-Davis, Rupert, ed. *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*. London: Hart-Davis, 1962.

Holland, Merlin. *Irish Peacock and Scarlet Marquess: The Real Trial of Oscar Wilde*. New York: The

22 Quoted in Ellman, p. 146.

23 Wilde, 'Olivia at the Lyceum,' *Selected Journalism*, p. 54.

Fourth Estate, 2003.
Hyde, H. Montgomery. *The Annotated Oscar Wilde*. London: Orbis, 1982.
Inman, Billie Andrew, ed. *Walter Pater's Reading: A Bibliography of His Library Borrowings and Literary References, 1858−1873*. New York: Garland, 1981.
Page, Norman. "Larger Hopes and the New Hedonisms." *Tennyson: Seven Essays*. Ed. Philip Collins. New York: St. Martin's, 1992.
Pater, Walter. "Sebastian Van Stork." *Imaginary Portraits*. London: Macmillan, 1910.
Pearce, Joseph. *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004.
Poole, Adrian, et al., eds. *FitzGerald's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám: Popularity and Neglect*. London: Anthem, 2011.
Powell, Kerry and Peter Raby, eds. *Oscar Wilde in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013.
Ransome, Arthur. *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study*. London: Methuen, 1912.
Swinburne, Algernon Charles. *The Yale Edition of Swinburne Letters*. 6 vols. New Haven: Yale UP, 1959−62.
Terhune, Alfred McKinley. *Life of Edward FitzGerald*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1947.
Tufescu, Fiona. *Oscar Wilde's Plagiarism: The Triumph of Art over Ego*. Dublin: Irish Academic P, 2008.
Wilde, Oscar. *Complete Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
_____. "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime." *Complete Shorter Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
_____. *Selected Journalism*. Ed. Anya Clayworth. Oxford: Oxford UP: 2004.
_____. *The Picture of Dorian Gray: The 1890 and 1891 Texts*. Ed. Joseph Bristow. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. Gen. Ed. Ian Small. Vol. 3 Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.
Wright, William Aldis, ed. *Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*. 3 vols. London: Macmillan, 1889.

The Journal of Humanities, Meiji Univ., Vol. 21（*March 31, 2015*）, *11*−*32*

Theme-based Content Courses as a Carrier for Skill Development in Postgraduate English for General Academic Purposes

Evelyn J. NAOUMI

Theme-based Content Courses as a Carrier for Skill Development in Postgraduate English for General Academic Purposes

Evelyn J. NAOUMI

Abstract

Contexts in tertiary education in Japan are changing. More courses are taught through the medium of English, the number of overseas students is increasing and there are more opportunities for students to attend international events overseas and in Japan at which the common language is English. The subject of this paper is a course for postgraduate intermediate communication in academic settings course developed to address student difficulties with listening to lectures, note-taking, research presentation and discussion in English. Two theme-based content courses, "An Introduction to Africa" and "Environmental Issues" developed by the author, are offered per year as carriers for developing these skills. Research into English for General Academic Purposes（EGAP）provides a framework for course design. The development of the courses draws heavily on research into Content-based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and research into related areas, such as what kind of materials and task can be compiled and created by the teacher.

This paper begins with an overview of pertinent key research in the above fields and then describes the elements of the courses developed by the author. The main part of the paper consists of data from student comments about their reactions to the course and their perceptions of their skill development and increased confidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the course concept. The paper concludes with the implications of these findings for future course development and research in both the author's institution and similar pedagogical contexts.

Keywords: Curriculum Development Cycle, Theme-based courses, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), Content-Based Instruction (CBI), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Teaching Tasks and Materials

I. Introduction

Language course and curriculum design require consideration of what learners need and how this acquisition can be facilitated, particularly in contexts in which there is limited exposure to the target language and there are constraints imposed by challenging discipline-specific course loads. Moreover, there is often a mismatch between what skills learners perceive as needed and what skills are actually needed for them to perform with confidence in a second language and this

mismatch is constantly fluctuating. Finally, the teaching contexts also change constantly. For example, the context of postgraduate education at the tertiary level in Japan is changing to one in which the students come from different linguistic, educational and cultural backgrounds. As more discipline-specific courses are offered in English at postgraduate level in Japanese universities, there is consequently a need to create English academic support classes that can be tailored to meet the needs of students from these diverse backgrounds. Although each discipline has its own specific vocabulary and conventions for writing and presentation, many of the basic academic skills transcend individual disciplines and can be taught through English for General Academic purposes (EGAP) in interdisciplinary academic support classes. The courses described in this paper are one element of the inter-faculty English academic support program in the Graduate School.

These courses focus on three areas of difficulty for students: lectures, discussion and presentation of research that may impact on their performance in discipline-specific classes taught by content specialists and also at international conferences. These difficulties are not only caused by a lack of vocabulary, a common student perception, but are often due to a lack of exposure to academic skills, particularly those connected to their awareness of how discourse is constructed. Moreover, few students have experience of interaction in academic settings and need an opportunity to practice such interaction. Poor performance may consequently lead to a loss of confidence and in some cases a decrease in motivation. One characteristic of regular discipline specific classes is that they are built around a course theme and recycle content and vocabulary. Recent research in Japanese seminar courses taught by Japanese content specialists has confirmed the preference for an approach that challenges students to critically review different perspectives on a single theme and then synthesize these. This research has implications for academic support classes preparing students for courses taught through the medium of English in Japan (Brown & Adamson, 2013). However, lectures available in commercial EGAP materials with accompanying activities tend to cover a variety of themes within one course. This diversity may add to the cognitive burden of the students and detract from skill development, as well as not reflecting the reality of discipline specific classes referred to above.

Building on the findings of research into EGAP, content-based pedagogy (CBI) and its European counterpart Content and Language Integrated Learning (CILL), and choice of materials and tasks, two lecture based courses using the themes, 'An Introduction to Africa' and "Environmental Issues" were developed as a carrier for the development of key academic skills such as lecture listening strategies, note-taking, participation in discussion, and presenting research. The objective is to engage students with timely and interesting topics and materials centered round a common theme in a course focusing on key academic skill development not so much the acquisition of content. Although the overall content of the course is generalized to enable recycling of skills and vocabulary, most students make final presentations that reflect their research interests and provide both students and the teacher with new perspectives on the content themes.

This paper begins with an overview of the research that underpins the development of lecture based courses around a theme which have been developed by a language teacher in order

to improve targeted academic skills. The elements of the courses are then introduced and discussed. Then data from student self evaluations of their skill development through end of course reflections and a listening rubric try to establish whether these courses are effective in developing skills that students need to interact better in English academic setting from students' viewpoints. Finally, some implications for academic skill development in academic support courses are offered.

II. Overview of pertinent research

This section will give a brief overview of research into EGAP, CBI and CLIL, and the design of materials and tasks that has relevance for this paper. It is divided into four parts: needs analysis, course development, materials and task development, and ongoing evaluation, which are key steps in Dudley-Evans and St. John's language curriculum development cycle (1998). In this paper curriculum refers to the objectives, methodology and learner and teacher roles. I use the word course to specify the two theme-based courses discussed in this paper.

1. Student needs analysis in EAGP

The first area of research addresses the identification of student needs in academic contexts and provides a useful framework for both overall curriculum development and individual course development. Before discussing the concept of identifying student needs, some background on EGAP and the curriculum development model is necessary.

EGAP is a sub-division of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and has much to offer the curriculum designer. One of the best known definitions is by Hutchison and Walters (1987, p. 19) who argue that "ESP, then, is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning." At that time, the idea of ESP as a distinctive methodology was rejected. However in a later definition by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) the term 'methodology' is accepted, "In our definition we stress two aspects of ESP methodology: all ESP teaching should reflect the methodology of the disciplines and professions it serves; and in more specific ESP teaching the nature of the interaction of between the teacher and the student may be very different from that in a general English class. This is what we mean then we say that specific ESP teaching has its own methodology" (p. 4). This identification of specific contexts with specific learners is a very important feature of ESP and Dudley-Evans and St. John use a continuum from 1, general English courses to 5, specific support courses for content academic courses or one-to one business teaching situations. The course described in this paper is position 3 on the continuum, "EGAP/EGBP courses based on common-core language and skills not related to specific disciplines or professions" (Dudley-Evans & St.John, p. 9). The teaching context in this paper is inter-disciplinary therefore the focus needs to be on identifying common core vocabulary and skills that cross disciplines.

Consequently, EGAP as a part of ESP does offer practitioners tools for curriculum and more specific course design. One of the most important is the creation of a context specific curriculum development cycle:

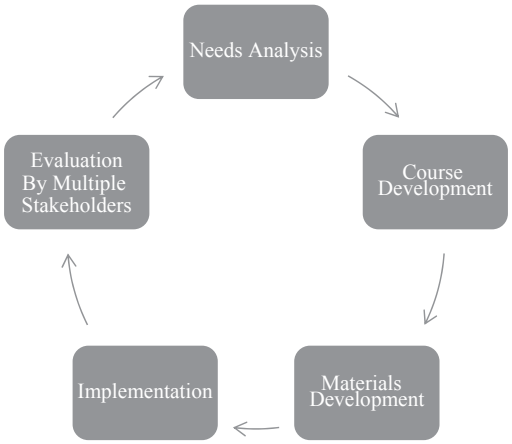

Figure 1 English for Specific Purposes: The Curriculum Development Cycle
(Adapted from Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998)

As this figure shows, a key first step in EGAP curriculum design, materials development and subsequent curriculum evaluation is needs analysis, a rapidly evolving area in ESP, which is the subject of much debate. Nevertheless, an ongoing problem for teachers is the need to address both students' perceived needs, i.e. a lack of vocabulary, as well as unperceived needs, such as pragmatic skills, which can be more difficult to identify. One problematic area for students is lectures given by specialist content lecturers and note taking. Research to date has attempted to identify where some of the problems may lie.

Jordan (1997) introduces a James (1977) summary of three main areas: decoding; comprehending; and taking notes. Using research by Flowerdew (1994) and Benson (1994) he argues that decoding or recognizing what has been said and comprehension requires second language learners to be very familiar with spoken English structures, lecturing styles and accents as well as being able to listen to long stretches of discourse without interruption and simultaneously process information visually on blackboards or slides. Furthermore, research by Allison and Tauroza (1995) identifies the actual discourse of the lecture as problematic for second language learners. These are areas, which many of the students taking the interdisciplinary academic support program have little experience in. Jordan (1997) also argues that note-taking, too, requires students to differentiate between key information and unimportant information, to develop a way of writing the information down and finally to be able to use the notes to replicate the key content. Thus, note taking and replication of lecture content is another area our students lack practice in and it is difficult for content specialists to determine whether poor acquisition of content is the result of a lack of specialist knowledge or proficiency in English.

Participation in discussion in seminars too is problematic. Jordan (1997) lists some of the difficulties second language learners face as including the speed of others' speech, a culturally-based reluctance to speak out in front of others, an inability to think on their feet in English, a

lack of specialist knowledge and a lack of pragmatic skills and language in English. All of these problems appear in interdisciplinary communication classes.

The final key area is oral presentation skills. Jordan (1997) again points out that research indicates that many students are unfamiliar with the conventions of academic presentations, the use of signaling devices, and particularly lexical ones, in addition to more obvious problems such as poor pronunciation or intonation. Furthermore, most students have little or no experience in making presentations in English. Student self-introductions in the context of this paper at the beginning of the course often refer to lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation and fear of making a presentation in English.

Some solutions are also offered. There have been many studies on vocabulary acquisition and, although controversial, a core academic vocabulary is available for teachers designing their own courses. Developments in corpus linguistics also offer teachers the tools for designing more meaningful vocabulary exercises. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) advocate the use of authentic lecture video clips to supplement listening activities that are often read from written texts and lack the hesitations, use of colloquialisms and lecture styles that mark authentic listening and these are now available. Textbooks for teaching discussion and academic presentation skills are becoming more widespread. Nevertheless, such textbooks offer many different topics and only a few have developed around a theme. Always, the best option, although time consuming, is for practitioners to develop their own courses and materials to fit their particular contexts. One way is to adopt an approach which combines attractive teacher compiled content with language learning objectives.

2. Content-based pedagogy in EGAP course development

Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989; 2003) define content-based instruction (CBI) as 'the integration of particular content with language teaching aims' (p. 2) and give five rationales for its implementation:

1. The content-based language curriculum takes into account the needs and the interests of the learners.
2. It incorporates the eventual uses the learner will make of the target language.
3. It builds on the students' previous learning experiences.
4. It allows focus on use as well as usage.
5. It offers learners the necessary conditions for second language learning by exposing them to meaningful language in use.

(Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003, p. x)

These features correspond to the needs identified in EGAP research literature. For the purposes of this paper, one important feature is the CBI continuum (p. 23), which moves from theme-based at the language class end through sheltered and adjunct to mainstream classes at the other end. Theme-based classes are content classes taught by language specialists, sheltered classes are specifically for second language learners and are taught by content specialists, adjunct classes are language classes for second language learners enrolled in mainstream classes taught by content specialists. Theme-based instruction thus implies "that the topic is selected for its linguistic

appropriateness, as well as for its timeliness and for its interest and relative novelty to the widest variety of students" (p. 27) and that:

> Ideal candidates for topics in an EAP context are those that encompass a variety of academic disciplines and allow students to expand their own knowledge base (Fein & Baldwin, 1986). These topics should also allow for a logical development of ideas (Bycina, 1986) and should help facilitate students' eventual entry into regular subject-area classes (Allen & Howard, 1981). Finally, since language teachers in a theme-based course assume responsibility for teaching the topic, they must be enthusiastic enough about the topic to stimulate student interest; therefore, they must feel confident about their general knowledge about the topic or to be willing to invest some time in becoming familiar with the topic. (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003, p. 27).

This provides the rationale for the selection of a theme-based course for EGAP specified skill development in the context described in this paper.

However, the next issue in the language curriculum cycle used in the author's teaching context is how to design such a course once the theme has been decided and a particular set of learners' needs have been determined. Stoller and Grabe (1997) offer a 6 T framework for CBI that is useful not only for course development but also course evaluation, two key features in the EGAP course development cycle. The first T is theme and they argue that themes should be based on 'conceptually important and relevant ideas for one's particular students and institutional setting' (p. 91). Texts refer to materials and they suggest these should include content texts compiled and generated by the instructors, content texts that generate tasks such as discussion, and outside content sources such as guest speakers. Topics refer to the choice of topics in the course and transitions are the connections between the topics. Threads, however, refer to the purpose of the course which is skill development. The final T is the tasks which actually generate learner language and ideas. This framework has already been discussed in the Japanese context. (Harmaans, 2000; Naoumi, 2010). However, the guidelines still remain generalized and the teacher must look else for more specific advice about what kind of elements, particularly for discourse structure and the selection of materials and tasks.

Recent research into Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a related field popular in Europe which has combined bilingual education, content-based instruction and immersion, identifies key issues for curriculum or course development. Of particular interest at the postgraduate level is the suggestion by Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) that the addition of the knowledge dimension in Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) revision of Bloom's taxonomy on lower and higher order thinking "provides a framework for exploring the demands of different types knowledge: conceptual, procedural and metacognitive" (p. 30). Bloom's taxonomy is often quoted in relation to case study methodology in business related contexts such as accounting which require analysis, critical thinking and problem solving.

Such research is part of the search to provide learners with the type of language they need to perform in class, i.e., what Mephisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) refer to as the language of learning, the language for learning and language through learning. According to their thinking, the language of learning is based on the concept that learners need to know the language register

occurring in specific discourse such as the scientific genre for example. However for these authors, the language for learning is closer to pragmatics and is designed to facilitate tasks such as description or evaluation by providing the learners with speech acts and also strategies. Finally they claim that the language through learning is the language that learners produce as they engage with the language and this Mephisto, Marsh and Frigols say "needs to be captured, recycled and developed strategically by teachers and learners" (p. 37). The next step is to apply these types of language to the design of the syllabus and the selection of tasks and materials which is the third step in the development cycle.

3. Materials and tasks for Skill Development in EGAP

Bacanegra-Valle (2010) has developed useful frameworks for evaluating and designing materials for the ESP classroom that can be applied to the theme-based courses in this paper. She asks two important questions. The first is whether there are materials available for the course and if not then materials must either be developed from scratch or authentic materials must be adapted by the teacher to suit the linguistic levels of the students. If however there are materials, then these must evaluated for suitability and if not, then new materials must be developed from scratch or authentic materials must be adapted. She warns also against oversimplification because ultimately students must deal with authentic materials. She then introduces some techniques for adapting materials based on the research of others. These are adding (by extending with more materials and expanding through adding something new), deleting (by subtracting sections or abridging), simplifying, reordering and replacing. All of these techniques can be applied in the compilation of materials by the teacher in a theme-based course. Teachers considering compiling authentic materials for theme-based courses need to apply these techniques and also evaluate their effectiveness.

Another important area is the creation of pre- and post-listening tasks for the lectures, strategy instruction, and presentation that engage the learners. There are many definitions of tasks but Nunan (2004) is very clear:

> My own definition is that a pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves the learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language whilst their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, middle and end (Nunan, 2004, p. 4).

There are many examples of pedagogical tasks for the teacher to choose from. In the course described in this paper, brainstorming tasks, vocabulary related tasks, establishing criteria, recreating lectures from note-taking sheets and dictoglosses are some of the tasks chosen. One very important task is the group presentation as the students must negotiate themes, allocate roles and research as well as practicing the final presentation.

Finally, research by Lynch and Maclean (2001) highlights the importance of immediate task repetition. This is done particularly at the beginning of the courses with brainstorming, mind mapping, summary and dictagloss activities. These tasks appear in later parts of the course and

enable recycling not only of tasks types but skills and vocabulary.

4. Ongoing Evaluation in EGAP

Evaluation appears in the cycle as the fifth step after the fourth, implementation and implies end of course evaluation. However, as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) stress, evaluation must be present at every part of the cycle. They offer some examples of evaluation instruments but the teacher is often constrained by the administrative requirements of the teaching context. Evaluation includes assessment of the student performance as well as evaluation of the course by students. In the courses in the paper, students needs have been established by research and observation of discipline specific classes taught through the medium of English, but it is important to look at pre-course student introductions and performance rubrics to reconfirm needs.

Stoller (2008) refers to the difficulty of assessment in content-based instruction and this is an area of ongoing concern. There is always a danger in theme-based classes that assessing content acquisition will be given more weight than assessing skill improvement. In the course in this paper, student self-assessment and peer assessment of skill improvement and the development of a critical perspective towards their own learning is important in assessment. An anonymous course evaluation questionnaire is also administered by the teacher at the end of the course.

III. Course elements

Based on needs analysis of the context through observation of content specific lectures given through the medium of English to students in accountancy and governance, student self-introductions at the beginning of the course and self and course evaluations at the end of the course and input from content specialists teaching through the medium of English, elements for the courses have been evolving since their introduction. This is in line with the language curriculum cycle outlined above. The following tables show the course elements for the most recent courses. Table 1 shows the course on Africa created for students in the humanities although sometimes students studying science at a different campus also enroll either due to scheduling constraints or a desire to interact with students from different study backgrounds. There is a need to offer different themes during the academic year to further student skill development. Table 2 shows the elements of a course on the environment, developed to appeal to students from all disciplines.

The elements in both these courses owe their inception to the 6 T framework developed by Stoller and Grabe (1997) and used by the author in the evolution of a lecture based course for Freshman English majors at a Japanese university (Naoumi, 2010). The first element in both courses, the themes of Africa and environmental issues meet the requirement that they should be based on “conceptually important and relevant for one’s particular students and institutional setting” (Stoller & Grabe, p. 9). Africa is an important although relatively still unstudied area in Asia. However, students at Meiji University have access to a large collection of materials on

Table 1 Course elements for introduction to Africa

Lecture topic	Discourse pattern and vocabulary	Pre-lecture tasks	Post-lecture tasks
Why should we study about Africa?	Opinion Reasons, data	Brainstorming	Comprehension, summary dictagloss
UNESCO world heritage in Africa	Description, process criteria adjectives transitions	Quiz The 5 slide talk	Individual presentation (5 slides)
Problems	Cause and effect Modifiers, group nouns	Vocabulary learning strategies	Comprehension Summary dictogloss
The effective presentation	Presentation structure describing visuals	Brainstorming criteria for presentation	Planning and executing a group presentation
Culture	Using different media	Music, literature and film knowledge quiz	Summary dictogloss
Tourism	Pros and cons, evaluative language	Effects of tourism	Debate
Guest speaker	Q & A	Brainstorming questions	Summary and reflection
The Importance of catering to the audience	Revision of presentation structure and discourse patterns	Criteria for evaluating a presentation	Individual Presentation

Table 2 Course elements for environmental issues

Lecture topic	Discourse pattern and vocabulary	Pre-lecture tasks	Post-lecture tasks
Why should we study environmental issues?	Opinion Describing data	Brainstorming	Comprehension, summary
Common Environmental issues	Cause-effect Problem-solution	The 5 Slide Talk	Individual presentations Q&A
Solutions and Implications	Evaluation- For and against	Vocabulary learning strategies	Summary Dictogloss Discussion
Presentation skills workshop	Presentation structure Visuals	Brainstorming criteria	Group presentation
UNESCO World heritage Sites	Description process criteria	UNESCO Quiz	Comprehension summary dictogloss
Eco-tourism Case Study	For and against	What is eco-tourism?	Class debate
Presentation skills workshop	Revision	Presentation Evaluation sheet	Individual Presentation

Africa in the library, overseas students from African countries are studying at the university and there are scholars researching different aspects of Africa making Africa a logical choice for an interdisciplinary theme-based course. Similarly, the environmental issues have relevance for all disciplines and lend themselves to an interdisciplinary exchange of content from different perspectives.

The guidelines for the second T, Texts that they should be a mixture of 'instructor-compiled', 'instructor-generated', 'task-generated' and 'external' content resources (Stoller & Grabe, p. 84), are very useful reminders that content for postgraduate students in particular needs to be a mixture of authentic and language learning materials drawn from a wide range of sources. The materials developed for the courses were compiled from a variety of sources including news and official websites as well as lectures specially prepared by the author. One of the most successful features of the course on Africa is African student guest speakers. However, the actual compilation of the materials owes much to the guidelines for adaption and creation outlined by Bacanegro-Valle (2010).

The choice of topics, threads and transitions help to give cohesion to both the content presented and the skill development during the courses. An important concept of course design is the transition during the fifteen weeks from instructor controlled materials, tasks and topics to student centered topics and materials reflecting individual student areas of interest and expertise, which is one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of interdisciplinary interaction. The topics chosen for the lectures aim to provide a general introduction to a wide range of aspects of Africa and are researched and written by the author. Another recent addition is a sub-topic, strategy instruction, particularly in relation to vocabulary acquisition.

The final T, tasks are vital in facilitating student transition from the initial teacher led approach to more natural student interaction. Task generation therefore has to draw on different aspects of research into integrating content into language learning (CLIL), particularly the incorporation of higher processing skills, material development reflecting discourse and the language triptych. The tasks begin with tasks revising the lower processing skills but as students become more familiar with the course, tasks drawing on the higher processing skills are incorporated.

As reviewed in the literature, the language triptych (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010, p. 36) focuses on three types of language: the language of learning, the language for learning and language through learning. In the initial weeks of the course there is an emphasis on not only the language of content, i.e. the language of learning, but the language of lecture discourse, discussion and presentation, i.e. the language for learning and finally post lecture tasks that provide opportunities for language through learning as the students interact with the content and one another.

The progression of topics therefore should not only enable the introduction and recycling of topic specific vocabulary but also patterns of discourse often used in lectures and tasks should complement this. Summary and replication of lecture content are very difficult tasks for the students who take our courses and here scaffolding through pre teaching of content specific and discourse related vocabulary and carefully prepared note taking outlines at the beginning of the

course reduce the student burden. The dictoglosses serve a different function as the students interact to recreate the meaning of a difficult passage in their own words. It cannot be emphasized enough that this is often the students' first experience of this kind of approach and it takes time for them to become comfortable in speaking out.

Tasks at the postgraduate level must also challenge the students to perform tasks based on Bloom's taxonomy revised by Andersen and Krathwohl in Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010). There has to be scaffolded exposure to the lower-order processing such as remembering, understanding and applying which appear in the lecture recall and summary tasks, but as postgraduates there must be tasks that involve the higher processing skills of analyzing, evaluating and creating which can be met by dictagloss, discussion and group presentations, all of which are used. The guest speaker in "An Introduction to Africa" provides the students with an opportunity to engage in a real-life task and to apply the skills they have gained through the course. Speakers to date have given presentations or have engaged in a dialogue with the students through questions. The second was more challenging but students did engage with the speaker. I would like to introduce guest speakers into "Environmental Issues" as well.

IV. Evaluating the courses

A vital stage in the language development cycle is evaluation and one thread of this course is the development of critical evaluation, both of peers and self. Students are encouraged to write short reflections in class at different times in the course on the content and their performance of the tasks. From 2014 a listening rubric is administered at the beginning and the end of the courses and peer evaluation sheets for the group and individual presentations is also completed. As part of the evaluation process students answer questions at the end of the course on their performance. A simple anonymous course evaluation is also completed by the students.

The findings presented in this section are based on the data collected from students over the last four years for Africa and the new course on environmental issues introduced for classes containing students from both the humanities and sciences (Environmental issues as a carrier for skill development for interdisciplinary science postgraduate students is a separate area of research). To protect student anonymity, the approach used is a general summary of the findings with some parts of student comments given as support. The students agreed to participate in research during these courses and to have their interactions recorded.

1. Theme relevance

The first issue for course evaluation was the students' reactions to the themes chosen for skill development and to what extent they concurred with the rationale behind the course and to see if perceptions of the theme had changed.

(ⅰ) Introduction to Africa

Although students concur that these courses are a good way to improve their English skill, reactions to the choice of theme were interesting. In particular, reactions to the course with Africa

as a theme are diversified. Some students were surprised by the idea of learning English through studying about Africa and this in the early years of the courses especially confirms their lack of awareness of its importance. During the brainstorming session at the beginning of the course on why Africa should be studied students quickly realize that they actually have a very superficial number of facts and stereotypical views of Africa and become more interested in the topic. For example, one student expressed a common perception at the beginning of the course that theme had no relevance to them:

> To tell the truth, I was very disappointed to hear the theme was Africa.

but this changed to "However, during this course I found to understand cross cultural understanding is very important" as the course begins to relate better to the specialist area of study. Others express awareness that Africa may be important in the future:

> Even though many African countries are late to develop economy, it is not a reason for me to imagine there.

and that more knowledge of the region is important.

> I really changed my view of African countries ... So I am really thankful for this lesson, because in this class I got useful information and knew the real sides of African countries. Before Africa was just a continent where exists far away from Japan. Now it is a continent I would like to visit.

The course also appealed to students whose field of study concerned aspects of the African economy or history:

> However, every class I can talk about Africa in English. It is interesting and so good time for me.

Such students also expressed the view that they had only thought of Africa in relation to their study and had never considered wider aspects.

The most interesting changes occur when the students find topics in Africa related to their own research such as a company's social corporate responsibility project for a commerce student. This change makes the course more relevant and meaningful as students work hard to communicate their field of study in English.

(ii) Environmental Issues

Self assessment comments from students taking this course too, viewed environmental content as a viable carrier for skill development. There was less initial resistance to the theme, particularly among science students, confirming its importance in their fields of studies; however, for many students in the humanities the theme's relevance was not immediately clear. Many said that they had never really studied environmental issues and for one student with good listening skills, the lack of background knowledge was challenging. As in the case of Africa, perceptions of environmental issues changed, "I considered environmental issues not related to me" but after researching an Olympics related issue, the student related the reactions of local environmental groups to the importance of education, the student's field of study:

> This attitude is very close to my perception of educational issues. Therefore I feel closer to environmental issues than before.

There were also changes in critical thinking as after listening to a science student's presentation on eco-friendly, one student decided to rethink the value of eco-friendly goods.

The courses also attract students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and effect a change in student perceptions. One Japanese student commented, "I seldom knew about the overseas environmental problem all were fresh." Another student from overseas commented:

> I used to think different countries may have different environment problems. I realized in some parts we have the same problems. We can learn from each country to solve the environment problems.

2. Skill development

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the course is to use content as a carrier for skill development. The skills targeted were listening to lectures, note-taking, presentation of research and discussion skills. The early courses focused more summary of lectures and presentation of research, but the courses since 2013 have clearly focused on lecture listening skills, vocabulary acquisition and discussion skills in addition to listening note-taking and research presentation. The questions on the self-evaluation sheets were modified to reflect these concerns. The latest versions of the self-evaluation questions are in appendix one. The following comments are based on student self-reflections on skill development from 2010 to 2014.

(ⅰ) Understanding and recreating lectures

The development of this skill remains problematic and reflects the reality that most of our students face at conferences and studying in an English language medium. A number of activities were used in class to have the students work with the lecture content. Early in the course development I concentrated more on presentation activities but during the last two years the courses have had a better balance of activities related to recreation of lecture content using students' own linguistic resources and presentations. The tasks, individual and group oral and written summaries of the lectures revealed differences among the students' listening comprehension, which has been supported by recordings of the activities. Oral presentations by groups on dictogloss content reveal a similar picture. The comments by the students on the progress they have made illustrate these difficulties.

For some it was the challenge of keeping up with a longer stretch of discourse, and for many it was the first experience of class conducted entirely in English. One student said, "At the beginning I couldn't listen to your English", and another "found the sustained concentration very tiring at first". Others lost the thread of the lecture and said "It was difficult for me to keep pace with lectures, because I don't have skill of English listening and speaking." These students also commented that they did not give up feeling, "Honestly it is necessary for me more lectures to speak and listening in English freely." One student who could not understand at the beginning of the course went on to a second course commenting "I thought my skill of hearing English got quite better than the previous semester."

Many of these students also began to develop their own strategies for remembering vocabulary:

> The tough work for me now is increasing the vocabulary. In order to understand some terms without translating I noted the new words in my notebook and explained it in English.

Another student started to think about how to improve note-taking after overcoming the vocabulary barrier:

> After studying some specific vocabularies about Africa, like the names of African countries, particular diseases ... it is easier to understand the lectures. ... So what I need to work on is to improve my memory and how to take down the contents in shorthand.

Some commented about how difficult it was at first but all who finished the course confirmed the importance of not giving up.

There was an increased awareness of discourse and students reported trying to catch and write down the main points even if they were not completely successful trying to catch the main points. Another more experienced student commented on the difficulty of using what was in the lecture:

> ... even when I understood the lectures, I could not recreate them. It must be important take good notes, understand the lecture structures and increase my vocabulary to understand lectures more.

Another began to make it more of a habit to think about the discourse structure before listening in order to understand better.

One important development in listening skills was that for many students there was an improvement in understanding of other students' presentations although this remains an issue in multi-national classes.

From 2013 the students have been using a lecture-listening rubric (Table 3) developed to address the development of student awareness of keys areas identified in the literature. Only two students put themselves in the excellent category for all items although several circled 'understood the purpose of the lecture'. The majority see themselves as good for all items.

Table 3 Lecture listening rubric

Evaluation	Excellent	Good	Needs work
Purpose	Can understand the purpose of the lecture	Can guess the purpose of the lecture	Not sure of the purpose
Summary	Can give a complete summary of the lecture showing key points and details	Can use lecturer's discourse structure sheet to replicate the lecture	List of random key points
Vocabulary	Can guess new vocabulary from context	Can recognize pre-taught words in context	Can write down some of the pre-taught words but quickly lose the thread of the lecture
Opinion	Can use lecture content to give opinions	Can give an opinion but cannot support with detail from the lecture	No opinion

Unfortunately one or two remain unable to do more than just list the main points of the lecture and rely heavily on the note-taking frameworks. However their comments should that they are more aware for the need to acquire the items in the rubric. How to use this rubric more effectively and how to create more rubrics for other skills is an ongoing concern.

(ii) Research presentation skills

Presentation skill development has been an important part of these courses since their inception in 2010 although the activities have evolved to include more interaction, critical thinking and problem solving. Students have two workshops on presentation skills as part of the course and have a short 5 slide presentation, a group presentation and an individual presentation preferably related to their research area. The presentation skill development focused on the concept of 'audience', presentation structure, slide creation and use, delivery skills and Q&A. The self evaluation questions and peer evaluations sheets ask students to reflect on their present performance and to identify areas for future improvement. Some of the students' comments reflect their perceptions both of improvement and areas of difficulty.

A majority of students showed an increased awareness of the important elements of presentation and many commented at the beginning of the semester that this was either their first or second opportunity to present in English. Interestingly, in many cases student comments reflected their evaluations by their peers for both the group and individual presentations:

> The structure of my presentation has really become better. There is introduction, definition, detail and conclusion in my last presentation in this class. But at first just pictures and details are included.
>
> I believe that I was able to use my slides effectively due to teacher's advice. The points I paid attention to were basic structures, keeping slide simple and using pictures. These devices made my presentation effective.

The student who became interested in communicating a discipline related topic commented that:

> First the skill that I especially worked on was to stress important information because I had strong heart to convey importance of CSR to classmates. So I emphasized key words in my presentation. Second it was deciding where to pause. When I listened to teacher's presentation, I felt that a moderate pause was so effective. I used pausing effectively during the experience. Others said they began "to use my slides for not reading but "using".

Another added:

> In addition, I took care of being simple when I make my slides, for example the backgrounds of it are composed of one color and a few pictures.

(iii) Discussion skills

Students have opportunities to work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm ideas and vocabulary before the lectures. They also work together to summarize and replicate lectures. During the dictagloss the students listen to short passage on the previous lectures read at normal rate twice and have to work together in groups to recreate the meaning. As the students become more confident, the dictagloss concludes with a discussion question which forms the basis for a

group and whole class discussion. Other discussion topics are designed to encourage students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and come up with recommendations; one important discussion activity centers round the group presentation. In one 90 minute class students in groups have to decide a presentation theme, which student does what, and how many slides. Groups of three are allocated 15 minutes and groups of four are allocated twenty minutes. Students must report their decisions to the teacher at the end of the class.

Although the course has tried to create tasks for discussion, students perceive discussion skills as the most difficult, particularly in multi-cultural classes and the one area all students regardless of level regarded as needing much more practice. One example was:

> The problem that I could not summarize our opinions. We said our opinions each other but it was difficult to summarize it and make a story.

Another student found it difficult to negotiate a topic for a group presentation. Others could understand what the other group members said but could not contribute effectively. One student began to think about how to encourage less able speakers,

> ... Probably asking easy questions to answer, listening to their answers or opinions carefully, inferring what the speaker wants to say, and rephrasing it in easy English are what I need to practice now.

Tasks to encourage discussion and thus interaction situated around meaningful content and addressing the higher processing skills remain the biggest challenge for course development.

3. Materials and tasks

There were no specific questions about materials but students have made many useful suggestions, particularly those who have taken both courses. Some of the most important include a request for a combination of PowerPoint and non PowerPoint lectures, more visual information such videos from official sites and You Tube. Some have ideas for future course introducing other continents or a more narrowed theme.

There are requests for more meaningful discussion activities but these comments invariably lack details of what kind of activities would be effective and also more one to one involvement with the teacher.

4. Improved student confidence

As lack of skills may impact student confidence in class resulting in a lack of motivation to participate, it is important to discover whether student confidence has improved in spite of the time constraints of meeting once a week over fifteen weeks. Although not specifically asked about confidence, many of the students referred to this aspect of self-development:

> I didn't listen to English well. So I didn't understand English discussion. I listened to English calmly and understood slowly. According to those efforts I got over troubles.
>
> These times are valuable to talk with people in English. I didn't think that I would be able to listen to your lecture when the term was started. Now I can communicate with you and classmates in English. It is amazing for me.

The following comment highlights students' increased awareness of the need to study more English, nither to perceived as less important.

Until now I didn't study English. This class is good trigger that I study English. And I enjoyed this class. When I understand English I think happy so I want to study English from now on.

One common theme therefore in the students' comments is that although these courses were a challenging experience for many, they did not give up and they did begin to evaluate themselves and more importantly, began to find areas in their language proficiency to work on.

V. Conclusion and implications for future curriculum development

When students are exposed to and are interacting with discipline-specific content in English medium classes or at conferences, lack of listening, note-taking, research presentation and discussion skills are problematic for both students and faculty. Students find it difficult to keep pace with content and often lose confidence. This lack also makes it difficult for content specialist faculty to determine whether students are failing to acquire knowledge due to a lack of understanding of the content offered or a lack of English skills or a combination of the two.

Academic English support classes can begin to address these issues by offering courses that draw on research into areas like English for Academic Purposes, Content-based Instruction, and Content and Integrated Language Learning, and language teacher adaptation and creation of materials and tasks in a supportive class atmosphere. Such courses require teachers to both read research and to become researchers themselves.

Two theme-based courses for intermediate level communication have been developed over the course of several years to address these difficulties. The overall framework is the language curriculum development cycle adapted from Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998) but each step of this cycle draws on research into different areas both by applied linguists and teacher research practitioners (Jordan 1997; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Content-based instruction (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989; 2003) validates language teachers creating and compiling content around a theme that interests them in order to develop language related skills that students need in their discipline specific content courses. Stoller and Grabe (1997) offer a 6T framework for the theme-based approach and research into the theoretical aspect of content integrated language learning. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) offer insight into the need for higher processing skills and a clearer understanding of the language students need to access to interact both with content, their peers and the teacher in the classroom context. Research into materials (Bacanegra-Valle, 2010) again offers the teacher a clearer framework for creating and compiling their own materials and research into tasks (Nunan, 2004) more understanding of the nature of communicative tasks. Ongoing evaluation of the courses, materials, the changing needs of students are the key to such courses and this requires teachers to constantly evaluate and update the courses but also to conduct research and keep abreast of research in the field.

Students seem overall to accept the concept of theme-based courses for skill development and many gradually move towards sharing their own expertise and are interested to learn from

those in other disciplines. Many students are willing to reflect on their own progress and offer insightful self-evaluations at the end of the course on their performance and also on areas they need to improve. Most importantly many students comment on increased confidence in English and willingness to interact through the medium of English. They also comment on the value of interacting with students from other backgrounds, both disciplinary and cultural.

Nevertheless these comments remain subjective and the degree of individual skill development remains a difficult area for teachers to evaluate. In order for the teacher to gain a more objective view of student difficulties with listening to lectures, a listening rubric was introduced but this is only a first step. Another challenging area is discussion. Discourse analysis of transcripts of recordings of student interactions may be the next step to determine what kind of interaction is occurring and what kind of tasks facilitate it or inhibit it.

The most important feature of this kind of course development is that it forces practitioners to analyze their own teaching contexts within existing research and to develop an approach to teaching that reflects their own areas of interest and experiences and yet encourages the students to interact in English One future teacher made this positive comment:

> You chose a topic to study carefully, gave feedback to students' work, and taught useful strategies as well as English These efforts must develop students' English ability, motivate them and give them confidence.

Nevertheless, course evaluation comments ask for different themes and more classes with more interaction and better discussion tasks. Too many students still struggle with listening to lectures, note-taking, research presentation and discussion. Different contexts have different student needs and constraints but language teachers must be able to both identify these needs and constraints and to begin to address them by drawing on existing research and researching their own teaching contexts. It is hoped that the courses described here will give teachers a starting point for designing more courses that provide content as a carrier for such skill development. This is hopefully another step in the process of designing context specific academic support classes for students studying through the medium of English and students attending international conferences at which the medium of interaction is English.

References:

Allison, D. & Tauroza, S. (1995). The effect of discourse organization on lecture comprehension. *English for Specific Purposes*. Vol. 14. (2) pp. 157−173.

Bacanegra-Valle, A. (2010). Evaluating and designing materials for the ESP classroom. In M. Ruiz-Garrido, Palmer-Silveira, J., Fortanet-Gomez, I. (Eds.). *English for Professional and Academic Purposes*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Brinton, D. M., Snow, M, A. & Wesche, M. (2003). *Content-based second language instruction*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Brown, H. & Adamson, J. (2012). Localizing EAP in the light of the rise of English-medium instruction at Japanese universities. *OnCue Journal* Vol. 6 (3) pp. 5−20. Tokyo: JALT.

Dudley-Evans, T. & St. John, M. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Flowerdew, J. (1993). Content-based language instruction in an academic setting. *English for Specific*

Purposes. Vol. 12. pp. 121−138.

Flowerdew, J. & Miller, L. (1996). Lectures in a second language: Notes toward a cultural grammar. *English for Specific Purposes*. Vol. 15. (2) pp. 121−140.

Flowerdew, J. & Peacock, M. (2001). The EAP curriculum: Issues, methods and challenges. In J. Flowerdew & Peacock, M. (eds) *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haarmans, M. (2000). Applying the six Ts approach: Beyond Beijing. In A. S.Mackenzie (Ed.) Content in language education: Looking at the future. *Proceedings of the JALT CUE Conference 2000 held at Keisen University*. JALT.

Jordan, J. J. (1997). *English for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lynch, T. & Maclean, J. (2001). 'A case of exercising': Effects of immediate task repetition on learners' performance. In M. Bygate, Skehan, P. & Swain, M. (Eds.) *Researching pedagogic tasks second language learning, teaching and testing*. Harlow: Longman.

Mephisto, P., Marsh, D. & Frigols, M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL. Content and language integrated learning in bilingual and multilingual education.* Oxford: Macmillan.

Naoumi, E. J. (2010). Teaching academic skills in content-based courses. *The Journal of Humanities, Meiji Univ.*, Vol. 16, pp. 129−146.

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stoller, F. L. (2008). Content-based instruction. In *Encylopedia of Language Education*.Vol. 4 pp. 59−70.

Stoller, F. L. & Grabe, W. (1997). 'A six Ts approach to content-based education' in M. A Snow, & Brinton, D. (eds.) *The content-based classroom: Perspectives on integrating language and content*. New York: Longman.

Appendix 1

Self evaluation questions

Introduction to Africa

1. Did you improve your understanding of the lectures? How difficult did you find it to recreate the lectures?
2. When you worked on the presentations, how much did you consider the concept of audience?
3. Do you think you used your slides effectively during your final presentation?
4. What delivery skills do you think you have to work on?
5. What surprised you most about first the area and then the aspect you researched?
6. How much new information about Africa do you think you have retained?
7. How has your perception of African countries changed?
8. What kind of futures do you envision for Africa? What are Africa's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
9. Do you think this kind of course is a good way to improve your English skills

Environmental Issues

1. Did you improve your understanding of the lectures? How difficult did you find it to recreate the lectures?
2. How would you evaluate your acquisition of vocabulary? Are you using better strategies?
3. To what extent has your understanding of lecture structure improved?
4. What problems did you encounter in the discussion activities?
5. When you worked on the presentations how much did you consider the concept of "audience"?
6. Do you think you used your slides effectively during your final presentation?
7. Which delivery skills do you think you need to work on?
8. What surprised you most about the area you researched?
9. How much new information about environmental issues do you think you have retained?
10. How has your perception of environmental issues changed?
11. What do you need to work on in order to improve your understanding of lectures, discussion and presentation skills?
12. Do you think that this kind of course is a good way to improve your English skills?