Building Intercultural Connections in the Gender Studies Classroom

Report of Fieldwork / Practice

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Abstract

This paper uses the example of the Tokubetsu Eigo Gender Studies class to highlight challenges present in multicultural classrooms and suggest ways to overcome these issues with the view to facilitating successful intercultural communication and learning. These suggestions are the result of action research in the classroom and three years of collected and analyzed focus group oral recorded feedback. In particular, this paper presents the need for a strong and cohesive classroom culture that is maintained through the use of team-building and self-disclosure activities.

Keywords: gender, multicultural, team-building, self-disclosure, intercultural communication

Introduction

The multicultural classroom may seem like the ideal learning environment, a nexus for today's global, interculturally competent leaders, and in many ways, it is a rich resource. However, diversity does not automatically converge into peaceful and productive communication and therefore a multicultural classroom must be carefully managed to reap the potential learning benefits. To create cohesion and guide intercultural learning, the instructor must first be aware of the challenges to be overcome and next competently craft a cohesive culture that students desire to join. In this paper, I will use the example of my advanced level elective gender studies course to both outline the plethora of challenges present in multicultural classrooms and detail techniques that have been effective in creating intercultural connections. The paper initially outlines the diversity present within the class, next it details the challenges this can present and finally suggests how a cohesive classroom culture can be built and maintained through the use of self-disclosure and team building activities. The findings presented in this paper have been informed by hour-long focus group feedback recordings, which are taken at the end of each semester. Students are told about this feedback session in advance and are asked to complete consent forms indicating the purposes for which they agree their data to be used. All data used for this paper was gathered from students consenting to their feedback

being used for research purposes and in accordance with following ethical procedures outlined by the institution.

Gender Studies and Diversity

   As one of the newest electives in the Tokubetsu Eigo program, Gender Studies is in its third year. It is a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course with high-level English requirements, and thus is attractive to exchange students as well as highly motivated domestic students and therefore the course has been able to maintain more or less a 50-50 ratio of these two groups. In terms of motivation, Gender Studies attracts hardworking Japanese students in their first and second year who either want to challenge themselves academically or prepare for the atmosphere of a study abroad classroom. It also draws Japanese students who have returned from studying abroad who want to replicate and continue the atmosphere of their study abroad experience. Kikokushijo (overseas sojourn returnee) students also seem drawn to this class. Most students who take the course do so because of the subject matter, but several Japanese students are attracted purely by the fact that the course gives them the chance to interact with exchange students and several exchange students take the course in order to meet and engage in dialogue with Japanese students who have a high level of English fluency. In terms of nationalities other than Japanese, the course has attracted students from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Great Britain, New Zealand, the U.S.A. and Mexico. Correspondingly, a vast number of first languages have been represented. Although English is the lingua franca and the language of instruction, the ability to use the language fluently ranges from upper intermediate to native. Unsurprisingly, students have also come from a variety of religious, ethnic and political backgrounds. Disclosed religious affiliations have included Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim and atheist and this sometimes has an impact on how students approach course material. As one student stated in the course feedback, *"My parents would be like, 'Why are you attending this class?' because my parents are Catholic, and they're really strict Catholics. That's why I never told them that I was attending this class. They would be, like, 'What are you doing?' but I learned a lot. Widened my horizons."* (Gender Studies (GS) participant) Students also represent a variety of ages as the course is open to all Japanese students from first to fourth year and exchange students also vary in age due to some being undergraduates and others being either postgraduate or mature students. In all courses, some diversity in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity is to be expected; however, a course named "Gender Studies" tends to attract those with personal interest in gender-related topics and therefore in each semester, several students have openly discussed that one of

their motivations for taking the course has been related to sexual orientation or gender identity considerations.

Challenges

Avoiding Cultural Diversity

The diversity outlined above is clearly a rich resource but as interculturalist Dr. Milton Bennett (1998) outlines, our natural response to difference is not to engage but to avoid:

> Our initial response to difference is usually to avoid it. Imagine, if you will, a group of our primate ancestors gathered around their fire, gnawing on the day's catch. Another group of primates comes into view, heading toward the fire. I wonder how often the first group looked up and said (in effect), "Ah, cultural diversity, how wonderful." More likely it was fight or flight, and things have not changed that much since then. We flee to the suburbs or behind walls to avoid cultural difference, and if we are forced to confront it, there often is a fight. (pp. 1–2)

In a similar way, it is foolish to think that any of our students will echo the sentiment, *"ah, cultural diversity, how wonderful,"* even if they have just returned from overseas or are in Japan to study abroad. Although a few brave souls may attempt some small talk, the first few weeks tend to see the classroom divided as Japanese students seek solace in the familiar and exchange students enter the classroom in a pack (safety in numbers) having regrouped after another class or walked together from the Kyoto Sangyo University dormitory, "International House". These two already formed cultures of "inside" (we, Japanese) and "outside" (foreigners) is one of the artificial divides that may be apparent in multicultural classrooms; and dismantling it is an important step to tapping into that resource and building intercultural connections within your classroom. Before discussing how to do so, it is necessary to highlight two other major differences that will also impact the multicultural classroom.

Difference of educational culture

One of the first apparent differences will be that of educational cultures. Whereas a student from a Northern European or Northern American country may have been encouraged to critically evaluate and directly question any information being presented by the instructor, an Asian student is more likely to interpret this as a disrespectful challenge to authority than as a welcomed engagement in debate. As, Voskuil (2012) says of her Chinese students, *"My Chinese students were typically extremely*

polite and respectful: a pleasure and a boon to classroom management, but an aspect that sometimes made it difficult to instigate critical debate." (pp. 160) Cultural differences with regard to power distance also change students' expectations with regard to their and their teacher's roles. Is the teacher a leader or a facilitator? Should students critique each other or seek consensus? What kind of register is appropriate and where is the academic / personal divide? How much homework should students receive and what kind? What kinds of topics are appropriate for discussion?

To illustrate this last point with an example, it is hard to approach the study of gender without at some point discussing sexuality. As Bates (2012) observed, *"I have found that students can be dismissive of queer theorists' attempts to challenge essentialist assumptions about sexual identity, and / or embarrassed to discuss sexuality."* (pp. 50) Indeed, I found this sentiment about embarrassment reflected in the focus group recorded feedback about the course. In the feedback session, I ask the question, "What surprised or shocked you?" One student explained, *"…we don't often hear or use the word "sex" in Japan, but most students said "sex" very directly so I was surprised."* (GS Participant)

With regard to the differences concerning direct critical engagement and power distance issues such as the teacher's role and appropriate register, a frank discussion explicitly detailing classroom culture and expectations can go a long way to bring the students closer together. The logistics of homework can also be worked out in order to offer some flexibility to match different learning styles and preferences. However, the biggest challenge is likely to be the pre-existing perspectives students bring to the course about the content.

Difference of prior knowledge

With different educational cultures also comes a different level of exposure to and different perspectives on various subjects. Gender studies, for example, is often seen as a "western" topic. As Sunderland states (2012) *"The idea of feminism as associated with the West is exacerbated on Gender and Languages courses by the fact that most of the research reported does indeed come from Western countries…"* (pg. 113). Therefore two trends are apparent. The first is that students from Northern Europe and North America are more likely to have formally studied the topic of gender prior to taking the course. The second is that students from these countries are also more likely to view gender as a *social* phenomenon, perceiving gender to be a social construct, whereas students from Asian countries are more likely to consider gender as a biologically dictated division. My experience of Japanese (and also some other Asian) students is similar to how Voskuil (2012) describes her students' reactions in China:

…most of my Chinese students had not previously considered the possibility that beliefs about

gender might be 'constructed' as opposed to 'organic'. Undergraduates were generally per-plexed by this idea, often pointing to social norms as their guide to defining concepts such as 'gender' and 'sex'." (pp. 165)

In my experience, these students are aware of gender differences but they are likely to consider them "natural." These students may be able to identify, for example, "men's jobs" (e.g. firefighter) and "women's jobs" (e.g. parent) but will justify these kinds of gender roles on biological grounds such as "Men are *biologically* stronger and thus more suited to being firefighters and women are *biologically* programmed to be connected to their child since conception and have a *natural* mothering instinct." Alternatively, they may believe that although gender roles are different, they are equal in society. This sentiment was voiced by a Japanese student in the feedback session, *"I thought that gender equality has been reached in Japanese society, before I took this class."* (GS participant)

Furthermore, students from North American or Northern European countries sometimes claim to be completely incapable of "seeing" any gender divisions, perhaps believing we have entered into some kind of post-gender age. As Naylor (2012) observes:

> Yet increasing numbers of students do find it difficult to think about how their own lives are gendered – particularly young students from developed countries for whom equality for them-selves seems a given. For such students the challenge is to unpick common sense, and helping them learn how to think critically about their own lives is a pivotal step. (pp. 35)

Naylor's suggestion to help students to think critically about their own lives, is one of the justifica-tions for the team building and self-disclosure activities that are introduced later in this paper. Naylor is not alone in observing that some students may have trouble seeing any form of gender inequality. Gender scholar, Sunderland (2012) reaffirms this sentiment by saying:

> Young undergraduates (or at least those who have not yet had to juggle parenthood and career), in my experience, sometimes consider that we are now living in a 'Golden Age' as regards gen-der, that all the battles have been won, and that feminism is outdated. Such young women also sometimes equate feminism with man-hating, drawing on the notion of the 'battle of the sexes', which presupposes that if someone gains, someone else loses – which I would argue is not (and never was) an understanding of most forms of feminism. (pp. 111)

These differences in perspectives present in my gender studies course are simply an example of

how multicultural classrooms are likely to represent a plethora of approaches not only to *how* to study, but also *what* it is they believe they are studying. It is my belief that these kinds of differences would present a challenge in most multicultural classrooms, regardless of the subject matter.

What is the solution?

Therefore, how do we reconcile these three huge points of diversity? The first being that multicultural classrooms are rich not only in *national* diversity but in age, religion, sexual orientation, politics, ethnicity, language, gender identity, and life experience. The second that multicultural classrooms ask students of varying educational backgrounds to come together under one educational arrangement. The last being that, although language pre-requisites may be in place, students' exposure to the content may be vastly different in depth and their perspectives about the subject may originate from incredibly different backgrounds. This paper will suggest a twofold approach: Build a classroom culture and then buy into that culture and maintain it throughout the semester, with a particular emphasis on doing so by using team building and self-disclosure activities.

Solution: Build a classroom culture

As previously mentioned, on day one, the classroom will be a patchwork of cultures – national cultures, educational cultures, communicative cultures – and the first step is to, of course, break up the natural group formations and to continually make sure that students are interacting with different people, every week. Second, the only way to facilitate real dialogue between these cultures is to collectively build another, an *inter*culture. Teachers will be familiar with the concept of building a classroom culture but for many, this boils down a simple list of rules presented within the first week: "Respect your classmates," "Don't be afraid to make mistakes," "Use first names," "Raise your hand if you want to speak." etc. There is nothing wrong with this kind of list, in fact it is probably very grounding for students to have these rules stated explicitly; however *more* is necessary. As Kathy Durkin states (As quoted by Voskuil, 2012), *"One of the aims of a lecturer should be to encourage understanding, respect and tolerance of cultural groups and alternative viewpoints through education."* (pp. 161) Thus, during the first week of classes, we collectively brainstorm ways in which educational cultures differ. This activity is important not just because it gives a chance to validate several different approaches (Yes, it's okay for you to interrupt the teacher with a question without raising your hand and yes, if you do raise your hand the teacher will also acknowledge you and yes, it is okay that there are students who are uncomfortable with being called upon directly and here is the language you will need to deflect the question to someone else) but additionally because it

makes everyone aware of how different educational contexts can be. It also gives the opportunity for the teacher to set some "meet-in-the-middle" goals to students. The teacher can challenge those students who are used to speaking directly and leading group discussions to act more as facilitators and group mediators. The teacher can challenge the quieter, higher context students to practice interrupting classmates and make themselves heard. The teacher can ask those with lower language ability to be comfortable saying, "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean" and those with higher language ability to grade their language appropriately for their group members. Explicitly stating that students' grades will reflect their ability to adapt to others' styles will encourage the spirit of intercultural connection teachers are looking to build in the classroom.

The above discussion will tackle the big "C" aspect of classroom culture, the exterior behaviors and expectations, but it is equally important to establish the small "c" aspect, the shared values of the classroom. The shared values that have worked in my classroom have included, "Talk about yourself but don't make assumptions about others" (You can say that *you* were good at math at school but don't assume that your partner, just because they are Asian, was also good at math. You can mention things about *your* parents but don't assume that your partner *wants* to talk about theirs or even that they were raised by both a father and a mother). "Affirm each other's identities" (i.e. If a student *looks* Asian but *says* they are German, they are German. If a student *looks* male but wants to be called by the female pronoun, please do so, etc.). "Be brave and curious" (Share as much as you feel comfortable with. Ask questions, but do so respectfully and without assumptions). "Be forgiving" (Remember we are all discussing in a lingua franca and questions or statements that may sound rude or assuming probably were not said with such intent). "Don't judge others" (All students are equally free to state their opinions and believe in opposing ideas). "Listen respectfully" (Dialogue and discussion need understanding of other people's opinions, even if you do not agree with them). "Don't be afraid to say, "I don't want to answer" or "I don't want to talk about that" (Know that everyone has their own personal limitations and that you have a right to express yours).

Although setting up such a classroom culture does take time, it is invaluable, especially in a content class where students should share experiences and opinions. In the case of Gender Studies, the discussion of the classroom culture is something many focus group participants mentioned that they appreciated. As one student elucidated:

> This is probably the only class where I can openly express myself and just be who I am without worrying about people staring at me or looking at me weird or even misgendering me because there's like the guidelines, at the beginning of the class, there's like, "Don't make assumptions about someone, don't ask questions that are too forward or like intrusive so that's nice, I feel

like I can relax in class. (GS participant)

However, there are a few points that are necessary to remember. First, it is not enough to do this in week one and never refer to it again. Students and teachers both need reminding, especially before discussions that have obvious potential to hurt someone's feelings. It is important to remind students about not making us / them type assumptions. As Bates (2012) outlines, using the example of gay and transgender identities as the form of assumption, *"…discussion can often involve a perpetuation of stereotypes, potentially creating an 'us and them' attitude that effectively others gay and transgender identities (precluding the notation that they may well be represented in the seminar room)."* (pp. 50) thus driving home the point that it is necessary to revisit the rule and remind students about trying not to make assumptions about others in discussions. Second, the teacher has to actively set the example of the classroom culture and adhere by all the rules. This includes not making any assumptions about students. Sunderland (2012) shares an illustrative point:

> What I have learned not to do is request a 'masculine' perspective from a particular male student: this is clearly not only unfair but also flies in the face of the need to challenge gender essentialism, a need that is likely to be seen as part and parcel of any twenty-first century Gender and Language course. (pp. 112)

Fundamentally, the instructor themselves must buy into the classroom culture and take an active role in maintaining it. The next section of this paper will explain how.

Buy into the Culture & Maintain it

It is easy to imagine that once you have created the above culture that everyone, teacher included, will be walking on eggshells. After all, if you tell students not to make assumptions about one another's family situations, ethnic background, gender identity, mental health or anything else that could be potentially identity-threatening, then how is it possible to engage in productive discussion without fear of giving offense? Of course, part of this lies in reminding students they are discussing in a second language and asking them to be generous and give each other the benefit of the doubt. However, there is only so much impact words can have and action can be more powerful. Action research in my gender studies classroom has convinced me that the best way to actively build a sense of trust and good will in the classroom is with inclusion of self-disclosure and team building activities.

Team-building

As a young intercultural trainer at a major language and intercultural training consultancy in London, I was struck by how much experienced trainers used team-building activities to foster cohesiveness and intercultural connections between their clients. Now, as a teacher, it doesn't surprise me that it also works in the classroom. Team-building levels the playing field. A student who has a lower level of English ability may possess excellent visual skills prized by their team members in a team-building task. Likewise, someone who is shy about communicating verbally may excel when it comes to strategizing or building something with their group members. Team-building places the focus on a different skill set to the usual academic setting and subsequently gives students the opportunity to contribute in a variety of skills and appreciate each other in new ways. It is also instinctively collaborative and bonding. Through team-building activities, students gain a real sense of achievement directly related to the fact that they were able to connect with the members of their group. Perhaps most importantly, it also often results in a good deal of laughter.

Furthermore, team building is a way to fulfil the necessity of bringing all the students together to inhabit the same learning space. Focusing students on the class often involves a struggle against whatever experiences the student has had before coming to the class. Is their lunch sitting heavily in their stomach? Did they have a tense conversation with a partner? An argument with a friend? Did they get little sleep last night or were they bored in their last class? Teachers know that launching into a topic without first bringing students together is counterproductive, hence the popularity of ice-breakers or warm-ups at the start of classes. Team building and self-disclosure activities take roughly the same amount of time yet are arguably more purposeful in creating cohesion. Additionally, the fact that the student will have spent 15 minutes carefully constructing a tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows with group members, rather than mundanely asking about their weekends, will lend the students a sense of belonging to a "special," "different" or "odd" kind of class. This, in itself, brings the members of this "unusual" class together in a shared sense of belonging to a certain class culture. Focus-group feedback concerning these team-building activities has been overwhelmingly positive. Students observe how participating in such activities wakes them up, *"To be honest, right before this class, I had a really, really boring class. I was, like always slightly falling asleep. So, when I came here, and we have to stand up and move, and stuff, it wakes me up again for the class, so I really liked that."* (GS participant). Additionally, students have attributed their engagement to team building:

> I think it's such an open class atmosphere, and I probably shouldn't admit that, but usually in all the other classes, I play on my phone the entire time, but never in this class, because I feel like

I always have to pay attention, and I'm active. The atmosphere is so awake that I'm kind of, paying attention automatically. So I really like how open minded it is, and how everybody participates. The team-building helped for that, I think. (GS participant)

Finally, although multicultural classrooms can be stressful due to all the diversity and mixed language ability present, several students mentioned that team-building activities relaxed them before the class content commences, *"I sometimes thought before I come to this class I wanted to skip and I'm afraid to come to this class but the team building makes me more relaxed so this is very good for me."* (GS participant). Famous team building activities such as the human knot work very well but there are vast resources available online and teachers can choose activities that best suit their classroom contexts.

Self-disclosure activities

As mentioned above, team-building helps level the playing field, allows students to connect over non-academic skills, brings individuals closer together, gives a sense of achievement and builds cohesion and a sense of belonging to a "strange-kind-of-class" culture. However, in order to breed closeness in another way and to facilitate the building of trust, on alternate weeks, self-disclosure activities replace team-building. Extensive research has already been done into the effectiveness of self-disclosure in the classroom environment, especially with regard to instructor self-disclosure. Cayanus & Martin (2004) and Hill, Ah Yun, & Lindsay (2008) identified one aspect that makes an instructor seem approachable as the disclosure of personal information. They concluded such disclosure (as long as it is positive and seen as relevant) raises instructor credibility and encourages student participation. Negative or overly personal self-disclosure can have the opposite effect. McBride & Wahl (2005) argue that teachers often share anecdotes from their personal lives with students in order to illustrate course content and establish credibility and other research (Cayanus & Martin, 2008; Cayanus, Martin, & Goodboy, 2009) has pointed to a correlation between instructor self-disclosure and students' motivation and interest in course material. This is connected to the prior point of "buying into" the classroom culture. If a teacher is asking students to engage in self-disclosure activities, the instructor themselves must also be willing to participate in divulging some personal information. When students recognize this trust in them, they are more likely to return the trust.

In addition, self-disclosure activities sometimes give students the opportunity to connect the course content to their daily lives. As Naylor (2012) argues *"…my teaching experience leads me to conclude that students still need to start with what they know – their own lives – in order to learn how to*

be empathetic, insightful critics. Then they can move out of their world." (pp. 36) Structuring time into the course for the sharing of personal anecdotes is a great way to give students the chance to "start with what they know." In some courses, self-disclosure naturally takes place during group discussions but activities which promote a level of disclosure are a way to actively build connection and trust among students and with the teacher. Just as with team-building, the internet is an excellent resource for self-disclosure activities to suit the class and context. Therefore, I'd like to outline just one such activity as an example in this paper.

All That We Share

To lead into this activity, at the end of a class, I take five minutes to show students this advertisement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc

In the advertisement for TV2, a group of Danish people can be seen responding to a series of statements by stepping into a circle if they are true about themselves. The statements range from the light-hearted, "I was the class clown" to the more serious, "I was bullied." By stepping into the circle, participants come face to face with others who share the same truths. I replicate this activity in the classroom by first passing out small pieces of card and asking each student to write something that is true about themselves that they'd be willing to disclose to the group. It is important to stress that the balance you are trying to achieve is something *more* personal than what you usually eat for breakfast but not *so* personal that it will keep you up at night worrying. Students are often remarkably brave with this. I collect all the cards (they provide them anonymously), and place these statements randomly into a PowerPoint so that when participating in the activity the following week, students have the English support of being able to read the statement as well as hear it. Students silently step into the circle for whatever is true about themselves and see who they share these truths with. The instructor emphasises that other students should not verbally react and no one is allowed to push anyone else into the circle. After the activity is complete, students are given a few minutes to reflect, debrief and discuss the activity in pairs or small groups. In focus group feedback, self-disclosure activities are generally considered to be very valuable but this particular activity is often given special mention. Students agree that self-disclosure activities make them feel relaxed, *"I also feel that, for me personally, the self-disclosure exercises always help me relax, because I felt more connected to the people I'm going to talk to."* (GS participant), as well as more connected to their classmates due to knowledge they can gain about them that wouldn't usually come up in a classroom setting, *"It was interesting like, making us guys feel closer and connection. To know the different sides of each other"* (GS participant). Another student acknowledged that although it wasn't easy, it was a worthwhile activity by saying, *"It's difficult, actually, sharing your life, sometimes, is very difficult but*

it brings us close together." (GS participant). Finally, one student illustrated the domino effect of self-disclosure, how bravery begets bravery and how this knock-on effect really does create a more trusting culture:

> I could see how other people feel like me, or what I have in common with them, and also that I'm not alone. When it was a question where I was like, 'I don't know if I want to share that with everybody,' it was really interesting to see that other people shared it, and then I was braver to share it as well. So I really liked that. (GS participant)

In my own classroom setting, it is clear that both team-building and self-disclosure activities have helped foster the sense of an open, interculturally-communicative multicultural classroom environment. However, in order to maintain this, it is essential that the students do not feel pressured or threatened. For this reason, I have a very explicit opt-out clause. Before each activity, I make it abundantly clear that participation is 100% voluntary and if the activity sounds too uncomfortable to anyone, all they have to say is, "I'm out" and sit down or step out of the activity. I stress that no one is allowed to question them on this and it is everyone's right to do so whenever they wish without justification. Students seem to appreciate this. As one student said, *"I'm more of a shy person and sometimes I didn't do it but she left us the choice to not participate if we didn't want to so I was completely fine with it."*

Conclusion

The multicultural classroom may seem like the ideal learning environment for today's global, interculturally competent leaders and it absolutely can be. If teachers can build a solid classroom culture that students feel a real sense of belonging to, difference is minimized. Differences in English ability are overcome, as students feel comfortable enough to make mistakes and throw themselves into conversation with body language and other communication means. The differences in existing knowledge become less important as students form intercultural friendships and Line study groups to help each-other through the content. Students will do more or different kinds of homework than they are used to because they feel a sense of pride in belonging to the culture and they will adapt and ask questions because they feel validated and empowered. The diversity in terms of nationality, languages, age, gender-identity, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, politics, role, lifestyle, class and personality will of course still be present but instead of posing a threat, it will be the catalyst for dialogue. This student reflecting on her first time studying in a multicultural envi-

ronment, says,

> It was my first time, but every time I talk to other people in other countries and listen to their opinions, it gets me thinking afterwards. Am I wrong? Are they wrong? Are we both wrong? I don't know, it makes me think about it, which is great. (GS participant)

This sentiment of doubting your own opinions and giving equal validity to the opinions of diverse others, this is the moment when real open dialogue occurs. This is when we step out of our ethno-centric circles and where real intercultural learning begins.

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異文化間のつながりを育むジェンダー・スタディーズの教室：

フィールドワークと実践を通して

グ ロ ー テ　ジ ョ ア ナ　キ ャ ロ ラ イ ン

要　旨

　本稿では，特別英語「ジェンダー研究」の授業活動事例を用いて，多文化教室における課題を明らかにする。また，成功に導く異文化間コミュニケーションとその習得促進を目的とし，これらの課題への対処法について提言する。本稿における提言は，教室での実践研究活動および過去3年にわたり収集・分析してきたグループインタビューに基づく成果である。チーム形成および自己開示活動を通じて維持される強い結束力のある教室文化とその必要性について論じる。

キーワード：ジェンダー，多文化，チーム形成，自己開示，異文化間コミュニケーション