

A Report on the GlobalEnglish Program at Japan Women's University

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Introduction

The GlobalEnglish Program offers high quality, effective online English language instruction using multimedia coursework which includes text, audio, graphics and animation, record/play-back, and speech recognition to simulate real life English language communication experiences.

In October, 2002, twenty students at Japan Women's University were enrolled in the GlobalEnglish program to try it for one year. Shortly thereafter, Professor Naoko Fuwa Thornton encouraged me to submit a proposal for the *Nihon Joshi Daigaku Kyoin Kenkyu Shougakukin* to study the program. I received the award from President Goto at the Nishi Ikuta Campus on April 19, 2003 and began writing my 635 page report which was submitted in January, 2004.

Pedagogically, the GlobalEnglish Program is extremely sound because it first offers a placement test that measures the students' current level in English and tells them where to start their learning. In addition, the student receives individualized feedback on her progress. The program offers over 700 hours of course material, from beginner to advanced, including General English courses that use everyday contexts and language, and Business English courses that use business contexts and language. More importantly, GlobalEnglish allows the student to focus on and practice a specific skill that is important to her; for example: grammar, vocabulary, listening, or speaking.

Another important aspect of the Global English program is the wide range of activities found in each course and assignment, and the constant feedback offered to students on their progress. For example, the student can check her answers for each activity, repeat the activity as many times as necessary, and view her results for each assignment, including repeating all or part of the assignment as necessary before moving on to the next assignment. Furthermore, each course further tests the students' progress with two review tests and a course progress test. The student can repeat each test as many times as she wants until she is confident enough to move on to the next assignment or course. And all of this evaluation is done in a "safe" and "unthreatening" environment where no one sees the students' results except herself and, if she chooses, a GlobalEnglish teacher.

The GlobalEnglish Program

Every student who signs up with the GlobalEnglish program receives her own, personalized

home page called “My Page.” She will come here each time she logs in to work on her study plan and she can also get to all of the other areas of the GlobalEnglish program from this page. In addition, every student receives a personalized study plan, called “My Plan,” consisting of three main areas: “My Current Goals,” “My Schedule,” and “My Progress.” Other features include download-

Assignment	Topic	Expressions	Grammar
1	Greetings and Self-Introductions; Alphabet	Greetings and Self-Introductions; Alphabet	
2	Numbers 1-20; Feelings	Numbers 1-20; Feelings	The Simple-Present Tense of <i>Be</i> Statements and Contractions
3	Jobs and Countries	Where are you from?	The Simple-Present Tense of <i>Be</i> . Questions, Negatives, Short Answers, and Contractions.
4	Numbers 21-100; Time	Time	
5	School	Could you repeat that?	Singular/Plural; <i>There Is/There Are; How many are there?</i>
Review Test			
6	A House		Prepositions of Place <i>between, in, on, under</i>
7	Activities		The Present Progressive Tense
8	Places	Where is it?	Prepositions of Place <i>on, between, next to, across from</i>
9	Food		Articles
10	Colors, Clothes, Shopping, and Money	Shopping	
Review Test			
11	Calendar Dates	When's the (game?) What's the date?	Prepositions of Time <i>in, on, at</i>
12	Weekends		The Simple Present Tense
13	You and Your Family	Who is (she)?	The Simple Present Tense Questions, Negatives, Short Answers
14	Likes and Dislikes		<i>Why and Because;</i> Review of Questions
15	Daily Routines		Adverbs of Frequency
Review Test			
Course Progress Test			

ing assignments for working off-line, exploring the GlobalEnglish Course Catalog, and viewing the “Business Situations Index,” “Business Word of the Day,” and “Culture Notes.” Learning support includes an online dictionary, a “Traveling Translator,” “My Word List,” and “Talk with the Teacher.”

All of the Global English courses feature interactive assignments on a variety of topics, using the newest technology to help the student improve her reading, listening, and speaking skills. By clicking on any of the courses, the student can view the course outline and learning goals. For example:

General English/Basic Course: The GlobalEnglish courses can help you improve your speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and grammar skills. The chart below shows the topic for each assignment in this course. The chart also lists the new expressions and grammar you will learn.

Each of these assignments has different learning goals which include:

Learning Goals/General English	
Basic Course (Beginner): At the end of this course, a student who successfully completes the coursework can do the following:	
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand basic expressions about self, work, hobbies, and daily routines in predictable situations. Understand basic greetings and introductions. Understand simple references to telling time. Understand simple references to rooms and objects in homes and schools. Understand basic directions. Understand basic statements about feelings. Understand numbers 1-100. Understand the alphabet.
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greet others and introduce oneself. Ask for and give personal details such as name, job, nationality, and family. Make basic statements about feelings. Ask for and give the time. Talk about calendar dates and money. Shop for basic items. Talk about events or activities in the present. Ask for directions. Spell one's name.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the meaning of basic learned phrases and sentences.
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and use approximately 250 vocabulary items.

The “Community” section of GlobalEnglish allows students to communicate with users from all over the world, allowing students to practice the English they have learned. For example, a student can go to an online classroom or write a message in the Discussion Center. These activities are fun, easy, and a great way for students to make new friends. In “Text Chat,” students can communicate with GlobalEnglish members from more than 200 countries in one of three “Chat Rooms.” In the “Discussion Center,” students can read what other people have to say about inter-

esting topics, and then write her own message. Topics include food, travel, culture, and entertainment. In addition, the student can talk about her GlobalEnglish coursework in the Business English or General English course discussion. In “Talk with the Teacher,” students can participate in an online classroom and talk with a teacher and other GlobalEnglish members live on the Internet. The room is open seven days a week.

The “Skills Center” feature of GlobalEnglish complements the students’ coursework with focused practice in specific skill areas: listening, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking. In the “Listening” section, the student can practice listening and test her comprehension which will improve her skills and increase her confidence to participate in conversations. For example, the student can practice listening for specific types of information in common, “real-life” situations. In addition, she can read the conversations to make sure that she understands everything being said. To practice, the student first selects her language level, “Beginner,” “Intermediate,” or “Advanced.” Next, she looks at the different topics and chooses an activity that interests her.

Testing

In addition to the review tests and course progress tests, GlobalEnglish offers “The Global English Placement Test,” “TOEIC Test Preparation,” and “TOEFL Test Preparation.” The placement test helps the student choose the GlobalEnglish course that is right for her. The TOEIC and TOEFL test preparation will help improve the student’s TOEIC and TOEFL test score with practice tests and study tips.

Resources

The GlobalEnglish website also offers the “GlobalEnglish Magazine” which is updated weekly. The magazine includes a weekly feature story, such as “Famous Left-Handed People,” which is divided into a beginner, intermediate, and advanced level. For example:

WEEKLY FEATURE		
Famous Left-Handed People What do Albert Einstein, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Jack the Ripper all have in common? They were all left-handed. Are southpaws different from right-handed people?		
Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced

In the “Business Corner,” the student can read business-related news articles which are also divided into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. In the “World News” section, the student can read about a variety of topics from around the world, again divided into three levels of difficulty. In the “Lifestyles & Culture” section, the student can read about current trends, entertainment, fashion, interviews, etc. In the “Games Center,” the student can choose from a variety of games and activities which include: “Quiz Show,” “Crossword Puzzle,” “Word Search,” and “Karaoke.” For example, in the “Karaoke” section, the student reads the lyrics and practices singing along to songs. She can also make suggestions for the kinds of songs she would like to hear. In addition, there is a weekly poll that the student can respond to. And finally, there is a “Business Word of the Day.”

The GlobalEnglish program contains many useful resources for students. These include a “Translation Dictionary” in which students can look up words in English or in their native language (including Japanese) and see their translations. For example, if the student types in the English word “Hello,” she will see: **hello**, *interj.* 1. 今日は (greeting). 2. もしもし (answering telephone).

There is also an “English Dictionary” which students can use to look up words in English and see their English definitions. GlobalEnglish uses a link to the online *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, which contains over 200,000 entries featuring 10,000 new words and senses, 70,000 audio word pronunciations, 900 full-page color illustrations, language notes, and word-root appendixes. In addition to the translation dictionary, the “Resources” page also includes “Translation Tools” which students can use to translate any word, anywhere on the Internet, quickly and easily using the “Traveling Translator.” The student can also translate any word by clicking on the “Translate Word” link.

Administrative Aspects

The GlobalEnglish program offers two types of corporate reports: “Aggregate Reports,” which provide information about groups of users, and “Individual Progress Reports,” which provide information about an individual user. Within the Aggregate Reports is the “Activity Summary,” a report which shows overall activity by group and can be viewed by year, quarter, month or week. The Aggregate Reports also include a “User Report” which lists all users in a group. The “Activity” section provides an overview of each user’s activity, including number of assignments completed and the most recent date of use. The “Registration” section shows user registration data, including first name, last name, and date registered. In addition, the Aggregate Reports include “Activity by Course.” This report shows collective progress within the courses for each group. Information includes courses completed and courses in progress. Finally, the Aggregate Reports contain “Tests Results.” This report shows test data for individual users. The information can be sorted by various fields and provides user scores for the Placement Test and the TOEIC and TOEFL practice tests. The “Individual Progress Report” gives a detailed report on an individual user’s activity. It provides information on all courses, assignments, and tests completed and in progress. Lastly, the “Individual Activity Summary” report shows an individual user’s overall activity by year, quarter, month or week.

The GlobalEnglish program has a comprehensive administrative section divided into the following functions: “Group Administration” and “User Administration.” As an administrator, one can create a new group, add a user to a group, or delete a group. In addition, one can add new users, edit a user’s profile, or deactivate a registered user to make another space available in one’s company keycode group.

Trial Course at JWU

Of the 15 students who reported their TOEIC scores, the mean score was 531, which corresponds to an intermediate level of English ability. At the beginning of the course, each student

should have taken the GlobalEnglish General English Placement Test. Of the 10 students who took the test, the mean score was 504. The maximum points possible on the test is 750, so as a group, these students placed in an upper-intermediate category.

In May, 2003, the twenty students were sent the following questionnaire via E-mail:

1. Which courses have you completed?
2. How much time do you usually spend studying GlobalEnglish: Daily, Weekly, Monthly?
3. Do you think your English has improved in the following areas:
 - 1) Listening? Why?
 - 2) Speaking? Why?
 - 3) Reading? Why?
 - 4) Vocabulary? Why?
4. What is your most recent TOEIC score?
5. What is your general impression of GlobalEnglish? Please give both positive and negative comments.

Unfortunately, only five students responded as follows:

Student E

1. At the moment, I am working on Business English Course 9. I have not completed any courses yet because I changed my course plan.
2. I try to study GlobalEnglish everyday, but if I am too busy, I only study it once a week.
3. I think that my listening skills have improved a little. At first, I wasn't used to listening to topics about business and I couldn't understand the dialogs straightaway. However, now I can understand them at once. My speaking skills have improved. I don't stumble over words as much as I used to when reading aloud. My reading skills have improved very much and my TOEIC score shows this. My vocabulary has improved and I have learned many new words.
4. My most recent TOEIC score was 925 (480 Listening/445 Reading). This is my highest score. I have taken the test four times and my average score was 816 (452 Listening/364 Reading).
5. I like the fact that I can study GlobalEnglish whenever I want. However, I noticed that in some assignments, you have to go up and down the screen to complete the exercises. For example, there is an assignment in which you choose the right words from above (or below) and fill in the blanks. But if the text is long, you have to go up or down the screen to choose the correct word and then down or up again to the text. This is a bit troublesome.

Student G

1. I have completed General English Course 7.
2. I study GlobalEnglish monthly.
3. My listening has improved because I can listen to a lot of English. My speaking and reading have not improved. My vocabulary has improved because I have learned many new words.
4. My most recent TOEIC score was 775.
5. *No comment.

Student L

1. I have finished Course 3 and I am now studying Course 5.
2. It depends on my schedule. During spring vacation, for example, I studied GlobalEnglish daily. But now I only study it once in two weeks.
3. My listening skills have improved a little bit because each exercise has a listening section and I have a lot of chances to hear spoken English. I think my speaking skills have not improved because I didn't join the conversation classes on the web. My reading skills have improved a little because I read magazines in GlobalEnglish. My vocabulary has increased because I've learned many new words in GlobalEnglish.
4. My most recent TOEIC score was 515.
5. I think GlobalEnglish is a very convenient way to improve our English. But it depends on our efforts and our willingness to study. This can be said about studying other subjects, but especially GlobalEnglish.

Student N

1. I have completed General English Courses 4 and 5.
2. I study GlobalEnglish weekly.
3. My listening has improved because I listen to English CDs everyday. My speaking has improved because I speak with a GlobalEnglish teacher. My reading ability has not changed because I study very little. My vocabulary has not increased because I don't study enough.
4. My most recent TOEIC score was 530.
5. I have not used voice chat for six months because I don't know how to use it.

Student Q

1. I have completed General English Course 5 and Business English Course 4. I then took the level check test in Business English. Therefore, I jumped to Business English Course 8 and completed it. Now I am studying General English Course 6.
2. I usually spend 20 to 30 minutes a day and finish one assignment in a week in one to one and a half hours. In the Business English courses, there are more assignments than in the General English courses, so they take much longer to complete.
3. My listening has improved quite well. The more assignments and courses I pass, the more difficult they become. However, I can listen carefully and clearly as well as the previous assignment. My speaking ability has improved as well because unless I study GlobalEnglish, I don't have many chances to speak English. My reading ability has improved quite well because when I took the first level check test, my weak point was reading. However, I can get a high or perfect score on the review tests now.
4. My most recent TOEIC score was 725.
5. I can study English whenever I want using a computer and I can overcome my weak points such as reading. I also enjoy the animation and the shows. The grammar and phrase explanations are very straightforward. However, I think that there should not be translations available

in the activities. Instead, they should be on the answer pages. For example, there are Japanese translations in the reading activities and I often check them. Therefore, it is no wonder that I can get a perfect score. I will continue to study hard and I intend to complete Business English Course 10 by October.

At the end of September, 2003, the students were sent the following questionnaire via E-mail:

1. On average, how often did you use GlobalEnglish?
2. On average, how much time did you spend each time you logged on to GlobalEnglish?
3. How has GlobalEnglish benefited your English ability? Please give specific, detailed examples for your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
4. Do you have any complaints and/or suggestions for the GlobalEnglish Program?
5. What is your most recent TOEIC score?

Unfortunately, only one student responded to this survey as follows:

Student E

1. I used GlobalEnglish about three times a week.
2. I spent about an hour each time.
3. I think I have gotten used to listening to people speaking with various accents, and I can follow most of the dialogs without the help of the script. The speaking exercises have enabled me to speak more fluently. The reading exercises were interesting because the themes were all so new to me. Although I am able to read novels or stories for adults, I've always found articles dealing with business difficult to approach, but now it doesn't seem so difficult. I still need to practice writing. I also know that I have to abandon my way of thinking in Japanese and translating it into English.
4. I don't have any complaints. I will encourage my friends to use this program.
5. My most recent TOEIC score was 925.

Unfortunately, the students' use of the GlobalEnglish program began to decline after March, 2003 and dramatically decreased after July, 2003. In fact, only a few students have used the program on a regular basis. However, it seems that the program has helped to improve the students' English skills, particularly vocabulary, but only if they spend enough time studying. In the end, the students' successful progress is a direct result of their motivation to use the program. If the student is motivated, GlobalEnglish seems to be a great form of self-study. But if the student studies very little or not at all, the results are not so great. In short, GlobalEnglish is only effective if students use it on a regular basis.

Recommendations for the Future Use of the GlobalEnglish Program at JWU

Given the pedagogical depth of the GlobalEnglish Program, it is my recommendation that Japan Women's University continue to promote this program to its students. To truly learn a foreign language, a student *must* study the language *outside* of the classroom. Since the English language courses at JWU only meet once a week for ninety-minutes, the GlobalEnglish Program offers an excellent way for students to study English on their own, at any time and in any place with com-

puter/Internet access. Therefore, it is essential that this program is aggressively promoted at JWU so that more students become aware of this valuable language learning opportunity.

In addition, I believe that it is essential that an English Department faculty member, preferably a native speaker of English, oversee the JWU students enrolled in the program in an administrative capacity so that further research can be done on the students' use of the program and their progress in improving their English language skills. In fact, JWU might want to consider offering an experimental class for students who are subscribed to the program and wish to use it in a classroom setting. The new language labs at JWU would be the optimum place for such a class. Here, a teacher could monitor students actually using the program, offer help and advice, and provide additional classroom-based lessons related to the GlobalEnglish lessons. Perhaps such a class would further promote the use of the program from which more accurate statistical data could be retrieved and examined.

Considering all of the features offered in the GlobalEnglish Program, I firmly believe that a student who makes a concerted effort to use the program on a consistent basis will see dramatic improvement in her English language ability, including speaking, listening, grammar, reading, and especially vocabulary. One thing is for certain: students will only benefit from this program if they actively use the program. It is my hope that this report will give JWU the incentive to further investigate the benefits the GlobalEnglish Program offers our students.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the future of English language teaching in Japan. Thus, Japan Women's University has an excellent opportunity to make itself known as a college that promotes the use of the latest technology for language instruction.