

A Letter from the Editor

Friends and Colleagues,

Greetings! These are times of change for *On CUE*. In fact, this is the last time this journal will appear under that title. After fifteen volumes, it will be succeeded by *The On CUE Journal* later this year. This change marks the culmination of a long evolution for this journal—from a small newsletter to a peer reviewed journal.

This issue includes two feature articles. First, **Yang Tao** explains how she developed an inventory of learner autonomy, using a questionnaire to identify six factors related to learner autonomy. Next, **Justine Ross** reflects on the development and implementation of a creative writing course for Japanese university students.

In *Research Digest*, **Ahmar Mahboob** offers a unique perspective on assessing language proficiency that goes beyond standardized testing. And **Manami Suzuki** considers the role of self-efficacy in learning and academic achievement, looking at the theoretical backgrounds of self-efficacy and introducing empirical studies that suggest a relationship between students' self-efficacy beliefs and academic attainment.

In *Opinion & Perspective*, **Michael Guest** responds to **Yoko Ichige's** recent feature article on the validity of university entrance exams for evaluating English communicative ability.

In *From the Chalkface*, **James Porcaro** expands the traditional parameters of public speaking courses, outlining successful instructional practices that he has used with lower to low-intermediate proficiency students. Also in *Chalkface*, **Scott Bingham** describes how he incorporated intensive and extensive reading activities in a freshman reading course.

This issue includes one *Conference Review*. **David Ockert** shares his experiences at JALT CALL 2006 and previews JALT CALL 2007.

Starting with this issue, CUE SIG officers will write brief status reports, keeping members up to date on the state of their SIG. These reports round out the current issue.

In addition to the name change, there are several changes to the CUE executive to report. **Matt Apple** takes over as Coordinator, replacing **Phil McCasland**, who has moved on to become Programs Chair for JALT. **Terry Fellner** takes over for Matt as Treasurer. Finally, **Dexter Da Silva** takes over as Publications Chair and Editor of *The On CUE Journal*. I wish him luck with this challenging and rewarding position.

We hope you enjoy 15.1.

Mike Hood
On CUE Editor

From the Editor

Construction of an Inventory of Learner Autonomy

YANG Tao

Kansai University

Feature Article: Yang

学習者オートノミー（自主性）は観察が困難な内面的要因であるために、現時点ではそれを評価する方法が確立されていない。本論は、まずアンケート調査に固有の問題点について論じたのち、日本人EFL学生に関する学習者オートノミーの目録を作成することにより、学習者オートノミー評価指標の提示を試みる。アンケート調査のために収集されたデータに因子分析法を用いることにより、日本人EFL学生の中で自主的学習者の傾向を示す6つの要因が選択された。この因子分析の結果、日本人EFL学習者は自発性・計画性・柔軟性に比較的乏しく、その反面、自制心・実行力・集中力に秀でていることが示された。従って、学習者オートノミーを育てるために重要なのは、学習者に如何にして自身の学習に対する自己管理能力を植えつけるか、という点である。

In language education, researchers have been cultivating various methods to improve learner autonomy, which aims to help language learners take control over their learning (Dickinson, 1987; Benson, 2001; Benson & Voller, 1997; Permberson et al., 1996; Scharle & Szabó, 2000). Since learner autonomy is an internal factor which is difficult to observe, there is presently no specific method to assess it (Benson, 2001, p. 51; Yang, 2006) and only a few (e.g., Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999) studies have provided detailed information on how and to what degree learner autonomy is enhanced. As we seek to understand invisible things, introspective methods such as questionnaires, reports, and interviews have often

been utilized (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Takeuchi, 2003). There are many advantages of using questionnaires. As Griffiee (1999) summarizes: (1) you can collect a large amount of data in a fairly short time; (2) they are easier and less expensive than other forms of data collection; (3) questionnaires can be used to research almost any aspect of teaching or learning; and (4) they can be easily used in a field setting such as classrooms. However, a questionnaire is not easily made. Kamahara et al (1998) and Shizuka, Takeuchi, and Yoshizawa (2001) emphasize that before a questionnaire can be used for research purposes, its construction, piloting, and the results of the pilot study must be reported to determine its validity and reliability (Takeuchi, 2003, p. 242). Therefore, in this study, despite the problems pointed out by Takeuchi (2003), an inventory of learner autonomy for Japanese EFL learners has been developed, aiming to provide a scale to assess learner autonomy. Factor analysis of the inventory indicates that Japanese EFL learners in this study are somewhat poor at self-initiative, making plans, and flexibility, while they are quite good at self-control, taking action and concentration.

Method

A 56-item questionnaire on learner autonomy was constructed as a scale to measure the degree of learner autonomy for Japanese

EFL learners (see Appendix).

A five point Likert-scale was used: never or almost never true for me, generally not true for me, somewhat true for me, generally true for me, and always or almost always true for me. It was originally designed in Japanese, the students' native language.

Procedure: Validity and Reliability

In order to have higher validation evidence, as Griffiee (1999) indicates, more experts' opinions are necessary. Therefore, in making this questionnaire, more than 15 post-graduate students (including the author), studying foreign language education, most of whom were in-service junior or senior high school teachers, contributed their opinions on defining learner autonomy in Japanese. Initially 79 items were collected. After adjustments, 56 items were chosen to be the first precepts of learner autonomy. The questionnaire included directions for the student with a sample item, the 56-item instrument, and a scoring worksheet on which students recorded their answers.

Before the pilot, the Japanese meanings of each item were checked by post-graduates to make sure that participants could understand the items clearly and precisely. Then, 197 student responses to the 56-item questionnaire were completed as a pilot to determine which items to keep and which to revise or eliminate. The items with high correlation coefficients (over 0.8) were reconsidered to see whether the content was repeated or not. In the end, 13 items were removed. The questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.989, indicating high reliability.

Participants

A total of 396 valid responses were collected for analysis. The participants' proficiency level is typically intermediate, with

an average placement score of 89 out of 200 possible points. The average TOEIC score was 360. Students were told that (1) their participation was voluntary; (2) their responses would remain confidential; and (3) the results would not be considered for their grades, but just for general information concerning their attitude toward English study.

Results of the Inventory of Learner Autonomy

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation on SPSS version 12.0 and Excel 2000 was adopted (see Table 1). An eigenvalue of 1.0 was taken as the threshold and a cutoff of 0.32 was set for meaningful loading of each item. Items which registered less than 0.32 were excluded. A total of 33 items loaded on to six factors, accounting for 37.84% of the variance. Before doing the factor analysis, the mean and standard deviation of each item was calculated to see whether some items showed a ceiling effect and/or floor effect. Consequently, nine items were removed. The items showing high correlation coefficients (over 0.8) were reconsidered. Cronbach's alpha reliability of total items for factor analysis was 0.92, which seemed to be satisfactorily high. Six factors ($r = 0.92$) (see Table 2) were chosen to indicate autonomous learner tendencies for Japanese intermediate EFL learners. Each of the six factors was discussed and named jointly by the graduate students and the author's instructor as mentioned earlier.

Table 1. *Conditions of Factor Analysis*

Criterion	Option used
Extraction	Principal Component Analysis
Rotation	Varimax
Eigenvalue	<1.0
Loading	>0.32

Factor 1 (self-initiative) explains 11.29% of the variance ($r = 0.89$). All nine items are related to using English as much as possible actively and voluntarily. However, the average score for this factor is only 2.78 (see Table 3), lowest among the six factors. It is suggested that Japanese learners in this study are not interested in using English and not active in their English studies as anticipated. They are not willing to search for opportunities to be involved in their own language learning (item 55, 53, 6, 20, 48 and 14). If they were bored by what they were doing, there was no possibility for autonomous learning at all.

Five items loading on Factor 2 are related making to plans in learning English ($r = 0.80$). The average of these items is low—2.81 (see Table 3), which suggests that Japanese learners are poor at making plans and they don't see self-learning as necessary.

Factor 3 (self-control) contains 6 items emphasizing self-management ($r = 0.74$). For example, item 28, "Once the class starts, I feel like studying"; Item 5, "I pay more attention to the lessons if we are practicing something I am not so good at". The average score of factor 3—3.24 is higher than factor 1 and 2 (see Table 3), which indicates that the Japanese students are good at managing their learning in various ways: reviewing after the class; taking actions after careful consideration; doing more reflection to understand the points; and working to improve their weakness. According to Victori and Lockhart (1995), developing a sense of self-control prepares learners to assume responsibility of their own learning. So from this aspect, Japanese learners in this study have potential to manage their learning well.

Factor 4 is defined by 6 items suggesting learners' flexibility ($r = 0.72$). It includes whether or not learners are able to change

their learning methods according to different needs (item 44, 45 & 46), to choose suitable learning materials (item 43), to create satisfactory learning environment (item 42), and to use time efficiently (item 31). The average score is the number 2 lowest among the six factors (see Table 3), which leads us to assume that the Japanese students in this study don't seem to know what to do in learning, nor how to learn English especially they are poor at changing their learning methods; regulating their learning materials based on their needs; and are not known to create a good study environment for themselves.

Factor 5 includes 5 different statements on taking actions ($r = 0.68$). The average score is 3.5, which is the highest among the six factors (see Table 3). Five variables indicate that Japanese students in this study would take action once a decision was made (item 25 & 32), and they were patient and tolerate enough to continue upon the decided action (item 29). Thus, from certain aspects, if they have a clear and well made determination they are willing to take action immediately and actively.

Only three items loaded on Factor 6, all of which are about concentration ($r = 0.52$). The average score is 3.0 (see Table 3) which is intermediate among the six factors. It suggests that Japanese learners have no problem concentrating when other people are speaking in English (item 17), they can study English no matter their mood (item 21) and they are able to concentrate on their studies even if they happen to hear other people talking (item 16)

Table 2. *Six Factors by Principal Component Analysis (Varimax Rotation $\alpha = 0.92$)*

	F1	F2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6	h2
Self-initiative $\alpha = 0.891$							
55. I want to find a job where I can use English later	0.83	0.09	0.01	0.03	0.08	0.06	0.71
53. I want to study in English-speaking countries in the future	0.74	-0.02	0.05	0.08	0.16	-0.10	0.63
50. I enjoy studying English, so I learn it because I want to	0.71	0.27	0.14	0.10	0.04	0.16	0.71
6. I look for opportunities to use English as much as possible.	0.65	0.30	0.19	-0.01	0.11	0.06	0.65
20. I study English voluntarily	0.61	0.45	0.14	0.10	0.05	0.14	0.72
56. I find information about English by myself, e.g. Study aboard	0.60	0.10	0.08	0.37	0.01	0.10	0.55
7. I try to find as many ways as I can to improve my English	0.51	0.34	0.18	0.11	0.07	-0.15	0.56
48. I check my English proficiency by taking TOEIC or EIKEN voluntarily.	0.46	0.10	0.09	0.21	-0.04	0.01	0.30
14. I think about my progress in learning English .	0.41	0.38	0.12	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.45
Making plans $\alpha = 0.792$							
22. I am determined to attain the target which I set for my English studies	0.37	0.63	0.23	0.16	0.17	0.06	0.70
24. I make my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	0.35	0.59	0.24	0.22	0.04	0.15	0.62
23. I prefer to plug away diligently at my English study.	0.23	0.42	0.28	0.16	0.03	0.11	0.37
15. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	0.30	0.37	0.37	0.26	0.02	0.06	0.49
19. I carry out the plans I make (os)	-0.00	0.36	0.17	0.26	0.24	0.34	0.41
Self-control $\alpha = 0.74$							
28. Once the class starts, I feel like studying (os)	0.13	0.05	0.57	0.06	0.02	0.28	0.53
30. I check to make sure that I understood the lesson (os)	0.12	0.22	0.55	0.12	0.11	0.21	0.49
5. I pay more attention to the lessons if we are practicing something I am not so good at.	0.08	0.22	0.46	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.30
33. Before study or work, I consider a lot (os)	0.08	0.06	0.45	0.17	0.11	0.05	0.26
26. I reflect on what I learn and look for something important (os)	0.04	0.01	0.39	0.38	0.32	0.11	0.44
11. I try to improve my weaknesses (os)	0.19	0.34	0.37	0.27	0.09	-0.03	0.44
Flexibility $\alpha = 0.722$							
45. I know the methods which suit me best and use them	0.20	0.28	0.05	0.53	0.11	0.20	0.51
43. I make use of good material, eg. Internet, when I study English at home	0.27	0.05	0.13	0.45	0.01	0.01	0.34
31. I use time effectively (os)	0.02	0.14	0.14	0.44	0.40	0.35	0.53
46. I change my study content and target according to my needs	0.17	0.18	0.31	0.37	0.15	0.12	0.37
42. I try to have a good environment to study English, eg. I clean up my table, when I study English at home.	0.19	0.22	0.22	0.33	0.06	0.14	0.31
44. I try to use other methods if the method of English study does not suit me (os).	0.02	0.08	0.16	0.33	0.21	0.02	0.24
Taking actions $\alpha = 0.675$							
25. If I decide to do something, I will act immediately (os)	0.04	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.65	0.08	0.46
32. I do things actively (os)	0.14	0.08	0.13	0.19	0.60	0.08	0.50
29. I try to complete the things I have decided to do (os)	0.01	0.23	0.40	0.01	0.45	0.06	0.42
51. I have all kinds of interests not limited to English	0.31	-0.13	0.24	0.00	0.35	0.05	0.41
Concentration $\alpha = 0.521$							
17. I pay attention when someone is speaking in English	0.33	0.15	0.31	-0.03	0.07	0.44	0.50
21. I can study English no matter what mood I am in	0.14	0.28	0.10	0.14	0.13	0.43	0.35
16. I concentrate on my studies even if I happen to hear other people talking (os)	-0.04	-0.03	0.15	0.09	0.09	0.42	0.23
Total % variance	11.29	17.75	23.98	29.03	33.44	37.84	

Os: overall study, not specifically referring to English study.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for Six Factors in Subscale Mean Scores (N = 396)*

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self-initiative	2.78	1.47
Making plans	2.80	1.21
Self-control	3.24	0.98
Flexibility	2.79	1.29
Taking actions	3.52	1.12
Concentration	3.03	1.16
Total	3.00	1.23

Discussion

In this study, six factors were found to explain learner autonomy in Japanese EFL learning context: self-initiative, making plans, self-management, flexibility, taking actions and concentration. Among these factors, Table 3 indicates that Japanese EFL learners in this study have low self-initiative, low ability to make plans and they are unable to change their learning methods flexibly.

There is one possible reason may explain their low self-initiative. That is, under pressure for success in the university entrance examinations, many students may have studied English passively in their high school days. The goal of their learning was perhaps focused only on passing the examinations, so they might not have enjoyed learning it by themselves (Tanoue, 2004). Therefore, how to motivate our students and let them feel the happiness of using the language seems a way to improve learners' self-initiative.

One of the reasons why Japanese learners are poor at making plans is that the Japanese students have been used to being given plans and goals set by their teachers. It is widely acknowledged in Japan that teachers demonstrate their authority and students passively accept their teacher's instruction. Accordingly, Japanese learners tend to accept the teacher's authority in an unquestioning and

unchallenging manner (Usuki, 2003). Therefore, learners do not need to consider the necessity of making plans, not to mention they can save time for self-study in order to reach the goals they set for themselves. As a result, without enough repetitive own learning, they fail to make their learning successful. From this respect, we need to bolster support by helping students make plans for their learning contents and learning progress, as well as guiding them to continue their plans, until their desired results are achieved.

Japanese learners in this study have low flexibility of changing their learning methods. They don't seem to know what to do in learning, nor how to learn English especially they are poor at changing their learning methods; regulating their learning materials based on their needs; and are not known to create a good study environment for themselves. It may be necessary for students to know a variety of learning strategies, to have many opportunities to make use of them, and to regulate their learning for different needs.

Conclusion

In this study, an inventory as a way to measure learner autonomy for Japanese EFL learners was constructed. Factor analysis of the inventory indicates that these Japanese intermediate EFL learners are comparatively poor at self-initiative, making plans, and flexibility, while they are quite good at self-control, taking action and concentration. The main issue in promoting learner autonomy is, therefore, how we as teachers can help and encourage learners take charge of and continue their own learning.

Bearing these in mind, perhaps we should consciously do more of the following in our teaching:

1) steer our students away from using unchallenging forms of traditional spoon-fed learning methods, and towards more challenging and interesting points through further voluntary study;

2) provide our students with various study skills and learning strategies to satisfy different needs for different purposes, in order to encourage the flexibility toward language study;

3) cultivate our students with self-management skills as stated in Dickinson (1987) in order to help them set goals, make plans, monitor and evaluate their own language learning;

4) give our students various tasks to finish at home, in order to encourage them to take control of their study schedule until they can do it themselves little by little and learning facilities such as self-access learning center should be provided for students to learn language anytime at their will to react their potential for learning;

5) care about our students to the greatest possible degree and to develop rapport with them, giving them help when they need it. It is like a partnership as stated by Harmer (2001: 26).

In autonomous learning teachers need to change their traditional roles from focusing on the grammar-translation method to becoming active participants, monitors, consultants in language teaching and working closely with students' language learning in order to help students become real autonomous learners (Aoki, 1999; Benson & Voller, 1997; Cotterall & Crabbe, 1999; Harmer, 2001).

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Appendix: Inventory of Learner Autonomy

Read the following statements carefully. If it is always true for you, choose 5. If it is never true for you, choose 1. Circle your answers on the answer sheet.

5. always true for me (80%-100%)
 4. generally true for me (60%-80%)
 3. somewhat true for me (50%)
 2. generally not true for me (25%-40%)
 1. never or almost never true for me (0%-20%)

Example: I study English by myself. If you study English by yourself four times a week, you should choose 4.

1. It is important for me to learn English.
2. I study English voluntarily.
3. Sometimes I study things that the teacher did not give as a task (os).
4. I study things which I didn't learn from my English class (os).
5. I pay more attention to the lessons if we are practicing something I am not good at.
6. I look for opportunities to use English as much as possible.
7. I try to find as many ways as I can to improve my English.
8. I think about my methods of learning English and whether they are good or not.
9. I know my good points and my weaknesses.
10. I try to develop my good points (os)
11. I try to improve my weaknesses (os).
12. I notice my mistakes and use that information to help me do better (os).
13. I write down my feelings towards English studies in a language learning diary.

14. I think about my progress in learning English.
 15. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better..
 16. I concentrate on my studies even if I happen to hear other people talking (os).
 17. I pay attention when someone is speaking in English.
 18. I plan how I learn English.
 19. I carry out the plans I make (os).
 20. I study English voluntarily.
 21. I can study English no matter what mood I am in.
 22. I am determined to attain the target which I set for my English study.
 23. I prefer to plug away diligently at my English studies.
 24. I make my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
 25. If I decide to do something, I will act immediately (os).
 26. I reflect on what I learn and look for something important (os).
 27. I am well aware of my studies (os).
 28. Once the class starts, I feel like studying (os).
 29. I try to complete the things I have decided to do (os).
 30. I check to make sure that I understood the lesson (os).
 31. I use time effectively (os).
 32. I do things actively (os).
 33. Before study or work, I consider a lot (os).
 34. Even with limited time, I try to study English regularly.
 35. I have a strong will and am not be easily influenced by others (os).
 36. I am satisfied with my English studies at college.
 37. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
 38. If I have a question about English, I will ask my teacher
 39. If I have a question about English, I will talk with my friends.
 40. If I come across foreigners in the street, I will talk to them in English.
 41. I practice English with people outside class.
 42. I try to have a good environment to study English, e.g. I clean up my table when I study English at home.
 43. I make use of good materials and resources when I study English at home.
 44. I try to use other methods if one method of English study does not suit me (os).
 45. I know the method which suits me best and use it.
 46. I change my study content and target according to my needs.
 47. I always want to be a good English learner.
 48. I check my English proficiency by taking TOEIC or EIKEN voluntarily.
 49. I dream of being a good English speaker.
 50. I enjoy studying English, so I learn it because I want to.
 51. I have all kinds of interests not limited to English.
 52. I want to communicate with foreigners in English.
 53. I want to study in English-speaking countries in the future.
 54. I think English is important to my future.
 55. I want to find a job where I can use English later.
 56. I find information about English by myself, e.g. Study aboard.
- os: stands for overall study, not specifically referring to English study.

Reflections on a Creative Writing Course for Japanese University English Majors

Justine Ross

Kyoto Sangyo University

本稿は、著者が計画し、京都女子大学で英語学専攻の4年生に対して実施したクリエイティブライティング（創作英作文）のコースに焦点を当てている。このコースはライティング教授法において支配的な二つの手法—ジャンルアプローチ及びプロセスライティングアプローチ—を組み合わせで用いた。児童文学作品を典拠とするジャンルに焦点を当て、学生が自分自身の童話を書くことでプロセスライティングの訓練を行った。この二面アプローチは、熟達度レベルの異なる複数の学生集団においてその有効性が認められた。本稿の末尾には、学生による創作文からの抜粋を付録とした。

Introduction

According to Honna & Takeshita (2005), educational achievement by Japanese students have fallen over the last 25 years. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2003) released an Educational policy document outlining achievement goals for Japanese students of English entitled *Regarding the establishment of an action plan to cultivate Japanese with English abilities*. One of the learning outcomes envisaged in this document for university level students studying English is for them to be able to use English to participate successfully in international exchange.

The learning outcomes specified by MEXT indicate that the level of proficiency to be reached by Japanese university students should be that of advanced level learners by the time they graduate. But there are problems. The declining birth rate in Japan (and the subsequent decline of the student population) has led many universities to lower their entrance requirements in order to maintain their enrolment figures. The result of such economics-driven admission policies is that classes are often composed of students with only basic English ability. Teachers are left with the difficult task of helping these students while attempting to achieve the valid, if unrealistic, English language learning goals set forth by MEXT. This dilemma suggests that there is a strong need to develop curricula that cater to the varied learning needs of our students.

Creative Writing for University English Classes

Terrell Franz (2005, p. 13) describes creative writing in the EFL classroom as an “avenue of success for students who are not necessarily successful in a conversation classroom that stresses only speaking and listening skills.” From a psychoanalytical perspective, creative writing may be seen as a key to unlocking the unconscious mind (Harris, 2001). Creative writing gives students the opportunity to express themselves in ways

that a communicative class does not. “Most English language programs and classes at Japanese universities offer listening and speaking in foreign-taught classrooms and sentence-level translation skills in Japanese-taught classrooms.” (Wachs, 1993, as cited in Terrel Franz, 2005, p. 13.) Thus, an argument can be made that there is a need to further develop writing curricula offered to Japanese EFL students.

Teaching Approaches for ESL/EFL Creative Writing

Reflecting on thirty years of experience in ESL/ EFL, Richards (2002, p. 24) defines ESL/EFL approaches to the teaching of writing as “dynamic” and adds that they are “generating an increasing amount of research.” Approaches to teaching ESL writing originate in L1 learning theories, such as the process writing approach and the genre approach (Bradford-Watts, 2003). However, there is no approach specifically tailored for teaching writing to the EFL learner, according to Muncie (2002). Although there may not be a particular approach for teaching EFL writing, there is a substantial body of literature detailing different pedagogies for teaching EFL writing in areas like academic writing, business English and creative writing (Collie & Slater, 2001; Raimes, 1983; White, 1995).

As previously mentioned, ESL writing pedagogy focuses on either the process writing approach or the genre approach. The author incorporated parts of both approaches into a course for EFL students specializing in the writing of children’s literature. The genre approach is used to expose students to various writing styles, relevant vocabulary, and grammatical structures commonly found in a particular writing genre. In contrast, the process writing approach is used to provide

students with the repetitive practice needed to refine the finished written product. In this course, more emphasis is placed on the process writing approach.

Time restraints also necessitated combining the two approaches. The students would only study creative writing during one 90-minute class over a twelve-week semester. The genre approach is based on exposing students to various writing styles in order to help them understand and replicate the vocabulary and grammatical structures used for each particular genre studied. However, given the limited class time available to do this, the author was concerned that less-able students would struggle to achieve acceptable levels of competence in all the genres covered. Instead, the author decided to focus only on one genre that was deemed to be basic enough to allow low-proficiency students to achieve the set learning outcomes by the end of the course while stimulating and challenging the more advanced students. With these priorities in mind, children’s literature was chosen as the literary genre for the creative writing class.

A University Creative Writing Course for Japanese Students

The students described in this article are enrolled in the Department of English of Kyoto Women’s University. These students will sit for exams to become elementary school teachers. The genre of children’s literature was chosen for the fourth-year creative writing class because it related directly to the students’ elementary education studies and to their future careers as elementary school teachers.

The learning objectives of this curriculum were to introduce popular English children’s stories for analysis of their written structure and to train students to read out aloud in front

of a classroom audience in an entertaining manner. Students were asked to write and illustrate an original children's story by the end of semester. This story had to be of a linguistic standard sufficient to merit it being read aloud to elementary school children.

Student-Centered Approaches and Authentic Texts

Research into ESL/EFL pedagogy and student learning strategies indicates that student-centered approaches support accelerated language acquisition. These approaches also empower and motivate students to become actively involved in their own language learning (Cotteral, 2000; Ghosn, 2002; Spelleri, 2004; Keplinger, 2001; Heyden, 2001; Edwards, 2004; Terrell Franz, 2005). Furthermore, the use of authentic texts in second language teaching has been shown to increase student motivation (Ghosn, 2002; Bamford & Day, 1997; Spelleri, 2004; Randolph, 2001). "The use of 'authentic texts' is one of the most important criteria acknowledged by writers of textbooks for language teaching" (Feng & Byram, 2002, p. 58). These ideas are shared by the author and are reflected in the university creative writing course illustrated by the following case study.

Process

Becoming Familiar with the Genre

In the first three weeks of class, students were given popular English language children's stories to read, analyze, and summarize. Next, they repeated the same analytical tasks with Japanese children's stories translated into English. At this stage, the learning objective was to become familiar with the genre of children's literature, especially with

the vocabulary, themes, and grammatical structures found in this kind of fiction.

Reading Aloud/Narration Techniques

By the second week, students had chosen an English children's story that they would read aloud in class in the fourth week. They repeated this task with a Japanese children's story translated into English in the sixth week. Course assessment was based on these two short presentations and on a final presentation in which students read their own stories aloud to their classmates.

The English storybooks were accompanied by a cassette recording of the story. Students were instructed to listen to the cassette for homework, reading aloud as they listened. In this way, they learned how good narration makes a story come alive, and they could practice storytelling techniques, such as variations in voice projection, pitch, and pace. Prior to the fourth week, students were given a demonstration and short lecture on how some of these techniques can be used effectively when reading aloud to children. This lecture also aimed to teach students how to introduce a book to young children as an experienced elementary school teacher might. Such an introduction would include information about the author and the illustrations. This was to be put into practice through an open dialogue with the young pupils who would be encouraged to voice their opinions concerning the book (e.g., questions about what a certain character in the story should or should not do, or the moral of the story).

Story Maps

While listening to their classmates read an English children's story aloud, audience members had to produce a story map that

plotted the characters and storyline. This was done with the use of short sentences or just single words on a piece of paper, with arrows indicating the progression of the story. This story map exposed common structures and themes found in children's literature. The students then began to plan their original story by creating their own story map.

Story Writing & Revision Process

The diagram below illustrates the steps used in the process writing approach that were followed in this creative writing course. After completing the story map, students consulted with the teacher about the content of the story and its length (steps 1 through 4). They then revised the original story plot or proceeded to write their first draft (steps 3 through 5). This initial draft was handed in for correction in week 7 and was returned to the student in week 8 (steps 5 and 6).

the teacher to eliminate major grammatical errors before the final draft of the story was typed up and handed in (steps 6 and 7).

Final Version

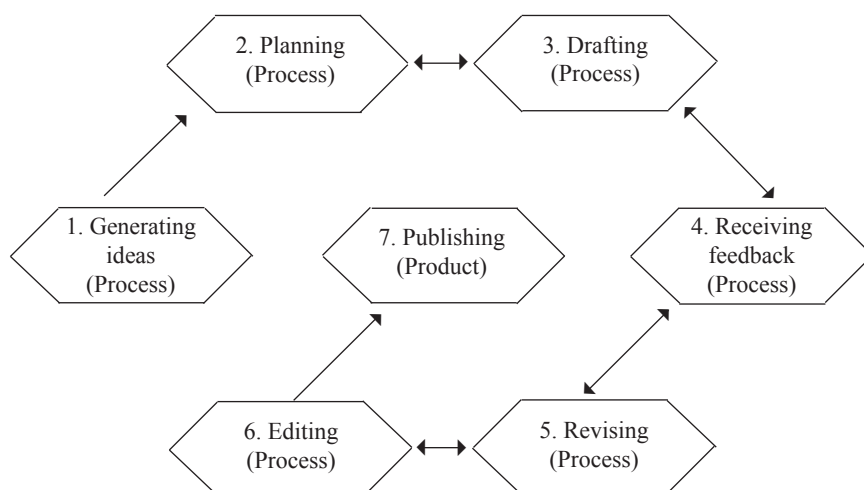
Each student produced a children's story that was original and uplifting. Themes included a focus on friendship, caring for pets, and looking after the environment.

Storybook Presentation

As part of their final grade, students presented their storybook to the class in the final meeting of the semester. In this presentation, students explained why they had chosen the theme. They then read their story aloud and subsequently invited questions and comments in English from their peers. The short early semester presentations on English and Japanese children's stories helped students

feel more at ease during their final presentation, regardless of their English ability. The remainder of the course grade was based on the quality of the finished product, the content of the story, and the final class presentation.

The Process Writing Approach



(Terrell Franz, 2005, p. 13)

Students were graded on grammatical accuracy for their first draft. The written work produced by each student was corrected by

completion of the one-semester creative writing course detailed in this paper, students were motivated and better equipped to teach

Discussion

It became apparent to the author that, upon

and inspire young children to enjoy learning English. Furthermore, the process writing approach practiced in this course gave students confidence because they knew that their finished product would be error free.

Use of the genre of children's literature enabled all students to write a story using simple vocabulary while tackling head-on the challenging linguistic and creative task of narrating a children's story. Some students had more difficulty than others deciding on the level of English vocabulary appropriate for primary school children, and they required additional guidance to achieve a suitable outcome.

Conclusion

This case study shows that while students come to class with various levels of language proficiency, creative writing offers an avenue for all students to improve their English writing skills. While the discrepancy between current educational policies in Japan and learner English proficiency persists, it is the firm belief of the author that English language educators should strive to improve language learning outcomes in a practical and common sense manner that makes allowances for individual learners' EFL ability.

The curriculum described here aimed to cater to the wide range of English proficiency that university students had attained prior to the commencement of the creative writing course. The process writing approach gave students the opportunity to produce a piece of English fiction of which they could feel proud. This course was unlike traditional listening and speaking classes because students who would not normally achieve high results in the typical communication classroom due to a lack of confidence in their English oral ability did well in the creative writing class. Those students who already possessed a high

level of competence in English were able to build on that ability and produce interesting stories, as illustrated in the appendix of this paper. Creative writing provided students the opportunity to express their creative side and to put to good use all that they had learned during their previous English studies.

MEXT has outlined language-learning goals for high achieving students, but as educators have experienced, our classes are not always filled with such able students. In the course devised and taught by the author, creative writing gave mixed ability students the experience of success in achieving an attainable English language-learning goal.

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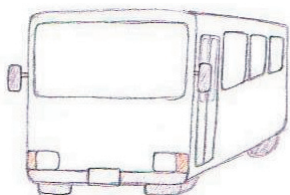
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Appendix

A Cat in Another Town, by Yuka Akimoto

This is a story about a little girl who goes in search of her lost cat. Along the way, she befriends a boy and finds out that her cat is the re-incarnation of the boy's grandmother. What follows is an extract from the story.

One day, a girl called Tomoko was searching for her cat named Tama. Tama was an old female cat and she suddenly disappeared. Tomoko was looking for her everyday, but she never found her. That day, she decided to visit the next town in secret from her parents. She had never been to other towns without her mother, but she really wanted to find her cat and save her.



Tomoko took the bus to the next town. She was uneasy, but also had hope. She watched houses passing away. Then she began to feel sleepy. She dozed off at her seat and the bus rolled along the street. Then Tomoko heard a bell ringing in her dream. Suddenly someone tapped her shoulder. She woke up. A boy was standing beside her and smiling. "Hello. You slept well. Where are you going?" the boy said.



Over the Rain, by Miki Takadono

This is a story about a little girl called Nami who finds a dragon who is dying as a result of people who have polluted the dragon's natural environment. From her efforts to help the dragon, Nami discovers the importance of protecting our delicate environment. What follows is an extract from the story.

Once upon a time, a chief of a village was in trouble. There was no rain for a long time, so he and his people had poor crops. He looked around the dried field and was at a loss what to do. At that very moment, something had crawled in front of him. It was a white snake.

He picked it up and said, "I'll give you anything if you help me..." That night, the land was soaked with rain. People rejoiced at the unexpected blessing, as did the chief too. In the rain, a young man knocked on the chief's door. The young man said, "I am the white snake which you asked to help, and in fact, I am Dragon who manages rain. The thing is...I desire to take your daughter for my bride as your promise." The chief was astonished and sorrowful to part with his daughter, though, he kept the promise. Dragon and the daughter climbed up the mountain and returned to where he lived. Since then, the village never had a draught again. It was said because Dragon always kept an eye on the village.

Nami was in trouble. It was a hot day in June. Actually, it was boiling. All the rivers in the town were dried up. Although Nami loved swimming, she couldn't because there was not enough water. The climate was unusual--no rain for weeks. "I'm dying to go for a swim." She said to herself and walked down the street on the way home from school. Then, a shrine at the side of the street caught her eye. Nami stopped to take a longer look. It was forlorn and nobody was there. Nami looked over the shrine and then went back to her home. She didn't notice a woman watching her.



Research Digest

Toward a Familiarity-Based Approach to Language Proficiency

Ahmar Mahboob
University of Sydney

The following article is a reprint, with the kind permission from Dr. Ahmar Mahboob, from the newsletter of the Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL Caucus, NNEST Newsletter, Volume 8, Number 1, May 2006, published by Teachers of English to Speaker of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL).

One of the hardest concepts to tackle in teaching English as a second language (TESOL) and applied linguistics is that of language proficiency: How do we define language proficiency? How proficient does one need to be to be an effective teacher? In some countries (such as China), teachers' language proficiency is measured by standardized tests. However, research has shown that standardized tests fail to take localized use of language into context. In addition, my on-going research with Lia Kamhi-Stein has shown that although teachers' language proficiency as measured by language tests is an indicator of their use or non-use of the target language in class, some teachers with low language proficiency scores do use the target language in their classes. We argue that such use may be explained by looking at teachers' belief systems. However, no model of language proficiency or how it relates to language teaching has been presented. Such

a model is of interest to TESOL in general, but is especially relevant to non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs)—since NNESTs often have to deal with questions about their language proficiency. In this essay, I will introduce a framework that we can use to understand the notion of language proficiency. This familiarity-based approach to language proficiency draws on our understanding of research on World Englishes and genre analysis.

Given our understanding of World Englishes, we know that the English language undergoes linguistic adjustments when it is taken up in different regions. In terms of language proficiency, World Englishes gives us an understanding that we are proficient in the variety of English that we are most familiar with. We might be proficient speakers of Chinese or Pakistani English, but not of Australian English. Likewise, proficiency in Anglo-American English and Afro-American English does not mean the same thing. Our understanding of different Englishes is in part a result of our familiarity with them. Thus, a speaker of Chinese English will find another speaker of the same variety easy to understand and mark them as proficient, but may find a speaker of Sri Lankan English harder to follow and mark them as less

proficient (and vice versa). However, with exposure and interaction, these perceptions change. Thus, a definition of proficiency needs to be flexible and take the familiarity of language into consideration.

In a different body of work, genre-based research has shown that language varies and

can be explained in relation to the context in which it is used. The language used in a formal business meeting is not the same as language used amongst friends at an evening party. In terms of teaching, the language used by a teacher in class is not the same as the language used by lawyers in the courts. In short, the language we

use is dependent on the context of use, and our ability to select and use appropriate language is related to our familiarity with the context. When we first encounter a unique situation, we are not always confident about the appropriateness or use of language. As we become familiar with the context and the genre, we are able to draw on our experience and use the appropriate style and register. The familiarity of context thus impacts our proficiency: we are not all equally proficient in different contexts and our familiarity with a genre impacts our ability to operate in it.

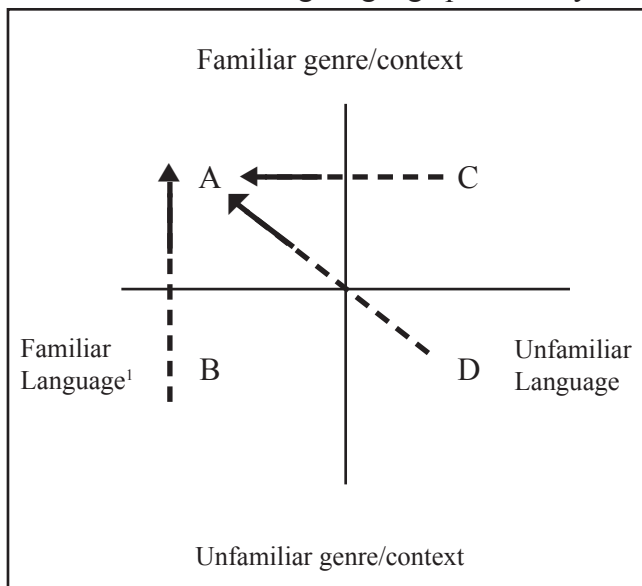
In trying to understand the concept of proficiency we have to consider both these

aspects. Figure 1 below shows that we can map the two dimensions (language and genre) along a familiar-unfamiliar continuum: we can be more or less familiar with a particular language (register, dialect, variety) and/or context. This mapping gives us four quadrants that show different ways

in which we can understand language proficiency.

The familiarity-based framework presented in Figure 1 above suggests that the nature of language proficiency varies based on our familiarity or unfamiliarity with a particular language dialect, or variety and the context of use. The figure shows that there are four broad categories in which we can understand language

Figure 1. A familiarity-based framework for understanding language proficiency.



¹Language here refers to a dialect or a variety of a language.

proficiency. Proficiency in one quadrant does not mean or imply that a person will have proficiency in a different setting as well. The dotted arrows in the figure show that, over time, unfamiliar context and language variations may become familiar.

Quadrant A represents familiar context in which we also share the language variety. Most everyday language experiences may be placed in this quadrant, such as casual conversations with friends or family. This quadrant also includes expert or professional discourses that we engage in routinely as these discourses and genres have become familiar to us. Thus classroom talk for expe-

rienced teachers falls in this category.

Quadrant B represents new contexts of use, but contexts in which we use a familiar language. For example, when we interview for a job, we use language (professional or personal) that we are familiar with, but in a context that is new. If we have several interviews, then the context becomes unfamiliar as well.

Quadrant C represents use of unfamiliar language dialect or variety in a familiar genre. Many cross-cultural episodes fall in this quadrant. An example of this will be reading newspapers published in English in different countries. In this situation, we know what to expect (based on our understanding of the genre) in a news feature, an editorial, or perhaps a letter to the editor, but the language code is different and might contain linguistic forms and structures that we are not familiar with. In these contexts we need to use strategies to develop an understanding of the rules of this language variety. Once we develop this understanding (which might take varying degrees of effort, time, and exposure), we move to quadrant A where this language and genre both become familiar.

Finally, quadrant D represents new contexts and new language forms. This may happen within our cultural contexts, for example when we graduate from high school and enter the university, we find that the language of higher education and academics is different from other language forms. This may also happen when we travel and find ourselves talking to people with an unfamiliar dialect and in contexts that we are not familiar with. For example, if we apply for a job overseas and are interviewed over phone by a person who speaks in a different variety, then we have to negotiate both an unfamiliar language variety and context. Perhaps proficiency in quadrant D is a higher category of language

proficiency—it includes linguistic strategies that enable communication in unique circumstances. However, this is not the type of proficiency that we should expect in all speakers (including native speakers). Also, as in quadrants B and C, frequent encounters with an unfamiliar context or language changes the nature of the speech event as these become familiar (quadrant A) to us.

One of the aspects that make this familiarity-based understanding of proficiency unique is that it does away with the distinction between native and non-native speakers. Such a separation is not important or relevant to teaching English as an additional language (EAL). Since proficiency is measured by both the control of the local variety of the language as well as the genre and the context of use, all speakers of English will find certain contexts and language structures more familiar than others. Additionally, to be able to work in non-familiar context and/or language variety, all speakers (whether native or non-native) will need to be able to use strategies that they can use to jointly co-construct a language variety that is meaningful to them.

An understanding of this familiarity-based framework impacts the way in which we look at standards in language teaching. One of the current debates in TESOL is whether we need to have language proficiency standards for language teachers—especially in case of NNESTs. The familiarity-based framework suggests that we need to tread very carefully in this area. It is difficult to establish standards for each of the four quadrants as our language proficiency varies in these. Thus, for language teachers to be efficient in their classes, they may have proficiency in classroom-specific language where they can use the target language appropriately within their limited context. They may not have or

need language skills or strategies to negotiate in other contexts (especially quadrants C or D). For example, many of the teachers that I have observed and worked with in Pakistan have low language proficiency as measured by a battery of language tests, but use English extensively in their classes. This is possible because they use familiar language (Pakistani English) that is domain specific (classroom and textbook based).

When asked to produce language in different contexts (essay writing, interviews) using a different language variety (a language test based on standard British English), they are unable to satisfy the requirements. Keeping this in mind, perhaps when we talk about language standards and language proficiency for language teachers, we need to keep both the domain of language use as well as the local language variety in mind.

Developing Students' Self-Efficacy Beliefs for their Language Learning and Academic Achievement

Manami Suzuki
Dokkyo University

Introduction

In this paper I will introduce the important role of self-efficacy in learning and academic achievement. I will explain theoretical backgrounds of self-efficacy and introduce two empirical studies in the field of educational psychology research, which provided evidence of the strong effect of university students' self-efficacy beliefs on academic attainment. I propose further replication research on self-efficacy in the contexts of second and foreign language (L2 and FL) learning, and suggest pedagogical implications to enhance students' self-efficacy from previous L2 literature and my own L2 and FL teaching experiences.

Definition of Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy has been developed "as a key component in social cognitive theory" in the field of educational psychology (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 83). Since Bandura (1977) first suggested a theory of self-efficacy beliefs and guideline for empirical research to measure it, self-efficacy has been regarded "as a highly effective predictor of students' motivation and learning" (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 82). Zimmerman (2000) introduced Bandura's (1977, 1997) definition of self-efficacy "as personal judgments of one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain designated goals" (p. 83). In other words, self-efficacy refers

to beliefs in one's abilities in activities such as writing, reading or academic achievement (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

Most importantly, self-efficacy beliefs have a strong effect on choice of action, degree of effort, persistence or emotional control in the phase of challenges or difficulties (Bandura, 1997; Chemers et al., 2001; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). According to a meta-analysis of Multon, Brown, and Lent (1991), self-efficacy beliefs were linked both to academic achievement ($r = .38$) and to persistence ($r = .34$). Students with self-efficacy "participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties" than those without self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 86). Thus, self-efficacy is one important factor of academic performance (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997).

Role of Self-Efficacy in the Processes of Self-Regulation and Motivation

Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) argued that there was strong relation between self-regulatory processes and self-efficacy. Self-regulation consists of three cyclical phases: (a) forethought (planning before learning);

(b) performance (maintaining attention and effort toward goals during learning; and (c) self-reflection (evaluation after learning (Alderman, 2004; Zimmerman, 1998). The three-stage model of self-regulation is compatible to Dörnyei's (2001) model of L2 learning motivation which comprises three stages: (a) preactional (selection of the goal and task); (b) actional (sustaining activities); and (c) postactional (retrospective self-evaluation).

Zimmerman (2001) explained the process of self-regulation:

Forethought processes, such as goal setting, set the stage for the performance phase, where strategies designed to attain the goals are deployed. Self-monitoring during performance produces feedback that is evaluated for progress and interpreted for meaning during the self-reflection phase. Self-reflections affect forethought goals regarding subsequent efforts to learn—completing the self-regulatory cycle. (p. 21)

In the models of self-regulation and motivation, each stage has reciprocal influence (Zimmerman, 2001; Dörnyei, 2001). Furthermore, the last phase (the self-reflection phase or postactional phase) affects learning in the future. Dörnyei (2001) suggested that learners' self-reflection in the retrospective stage "will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future" (p. 21). Alderman (2004) argued "[a] vision of a possible self—how we think about ourselves and the future—is the first step in developing self-regulation" (p. 164). Zimmerman (2000) proposed: Self-efficacy beliefs also provide students with a sense of agency to motivate their learning as goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and strategy use (p. 87).

Self-efficacious students have tended

to set higher goals and make more effort to achieve these goals (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). According to Alderman (2004), goals and goal setting play an important role in the processes of self-regulation. To summarize, self-efficacy centrally works in the processes of self-regulation, and influences motivation and academic achievement.

Empirical Studies of Self-Efficacy

There were many empirical studies which provided the validity of the effects of self-efficacy on academic performance (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivee, 1991; Chemers et al., 2001; Multon et al., 1991; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman et al., 1992; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Among them I select and introduce two relatively recent empirical studies: Chermes, Hu, and Garcia (2001); and Zimmerman and Bandura (1994). Participants in both studies were freshmen university students. In this paper, I will focus on university students' self-efficacy and their academic attainment.

Chermes, Hu, and Garcia (2001) examined the influence of academic self-efficacy and optimism on students' academic achievement, stress, health, and coping perception to retain in school, using a factor analysis. Participants were 373 freshman university students in the U.S. At the end of the first academic quarter, Chermes et al. collected the data: students' high school grade-point average (GPA); academic self-efficacy; optimism; academic expectations; and self-perceived coping capability. At the end of the school year, students' classroom performance (grades), personal adjustment, stress and health were measured. The Life Orientations Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985) was

used for assessment of optimism. Variables other than GPA and academic performance at university were measured using questionnaires with Likert scale items developed for the study. Instructors' narrative evaluations were deployed as the measure of academic performance. Chermes et al. used "common keywords (e.g., *outstanding*, *excellent*, *satisfactory*)" and rated levels of academic achievement in a range from 1 to 5 (p. 59). The results of their path analysis showed that students' academic self-efficacy and optimism directly influenced their academic performance and indirectly through academic expectations and self-perceived coping capability. Self-efficacy and optimism were strongly linked to freshman college students' academic achievement and adjustment at school.

Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) studied the role of self-efficacy with regard to the academic performance, regulation of writing, academic goals, self-evaluation on a writing course and final grade in the course. Self-regulation of writing processes was measured using a questionnaire. They used students' verbal aptitude scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) to measure academic performance. Participants were 95 freshmen university students in the United States. Their path analysis showed that students' self-efficacy for writing influenced their final writing grade both directly and indirectly through its effect on grade goal setting. Students' SAT verbal aptitude scores were not directly linked to writing course grades at university. Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) suggested that academic self-efficacy was the main factor in academic performance as well as goal setting.

These two studies I described above were conducted in the field of educational psychology. Cumming, Kim, and Eouanzoui

(in press) carried out a partial replication study of Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) in the ESL context in Canada. However, they mainly focused analysis on relation between ESL students' self-regulation for writing and motivation. Although they compared students' self-regulation of important aspects of writing processes with their TOEFL scores, they did not directly examine by path analysis the effect of self-efficacy for writing on their writing grade, writing proficiency or improvement. Further replication studies of self-efficacy are needed in the L2 or FL contexts.

Training for Self-Efficacy

In this section, I suggest some ways for developing L2/FL learners' self-efficacy, based on previous studies of social cognitive theory (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 1996; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

Introduction of Self-Regulatory Processes

It might be effective to introduce students to self-regulatory processes for developing their self-efficacy. According to Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997), self-efficacious students can manage triadic self-regulatory processes: environmental; behavioral; and personal processes. Students with high self-efficacy tend to produce good learning environments by trying to study in a silent room, utilize and develop human resources (e.g., study group, human network in a specific field) or learning resources (e.g., books, the Internet). Self-efficacious students can manage their time, set specific goals, evaluate their own academic performance, select appropriate strategies and have a clear men-

tal image of learning processes to success. Furthermore, such self-efficacious students can control their own behavior by promising themselves a reward in the processes of writing or reading (e.g., coffee break after finishing an assignment) or using self-verbalization, which are considered as mediations for problem solving or learning (Chi, 2000; Chi, de Leeuw, Chiu, & LaVancher, 1994; Chi, Lewis, Reimann, & Glaser, 1989; Schunk, Hanson & Cox, 1987). Teachers can introduce and recommend these models of self-regulatory processes to their students.

Teachers might provide students with opportunities to develop self-efficacy, asking students to set their academic goals, and evaluate and monitor their performance. For example, at the beginning of the semester I ask my students to set and write course goals for the term. After commenting, I return their goal statements. I implement students' self-evaluation in my writing course or a language learning strategy course at university, using a self-evaluation sheet (see Appendix A) as well as every week logs and portfolios. At the end of the semester, I ask them to write a reflection. Thereby, I give students the chance to employ a triadic self-regulatory process (a) forethought; (b) performance; and (c) self-reflection in their learning.

For establishing their learning environment, I recommend that students should make study groups and learn collaboratively both in and out of class. I try to employ as much pair work or group work as possible in my class. Moreover, I introduce learning resources (e.g., library research) and ask students to use for their L2 writing and presentation assignments.

Learning Strategy Instructions

Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) suggested that learning strategy training enhances students' self-efficacy. Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) suggested "[t]eaching students to use learning strategies enhances achievement outcomes, motivation, and perceptions of capabilities" (p. 42). Therefore, instructions for language learning might be effective for developing L2 learners' self-efficacy as well. Teachers can use Muranoi's (2006) list of L2 learning strategies such as memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies or socioaffective strategies (pp. 132-134). Students can fill in their answers to what extent they use each strategy for their L2 learning on the list, using a 5-point Likert scale. Muranoi shows the means and standard deviations of his students' answers on a list so that students can compare their strategy use with other students.

In my English reading classes, I teach reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, inferencing or attention to paraphrasing (Suzuki, in press). I also give my students a summary writing task or an oral reading practice which are considered important for reading (Brown, 2000; Hidi & Anderson, 1986). For developing oral communication, instructions for shadowing, summarizing, or self-talk might be effective (Murphey, 2001, 2006). Parallel reading and dictation could be introduced as good learning strategies for development of listening proficiency (Muranoi, 2006). Writing teachers can teach the effective use of brain storming, planning, self-verbalization, and self-evaluation and monitoring in the processes of writing (Zimmerman et al., 1996). Such strategy training could enhance students' self-efficacy for L2 learning.

Summary

In this paper I introduced the significant role of self-efficacy in learning and academic achievement. I explained the theoretical backgrounds and presented empirical studies of self-efficacy that are based on social cognitive theories. Implications for instructions to enhance self-efficacy were also provided.

I believe that students who acquire self-efficacy for L2 learning can apply these beliefs in the processes of self-regulated language learning toward their successes and achievements in life after they graduate from school. Self-efficacious people regulate themselves: they manage time, set and stay focused on a specific goal, strive toward it, evaluate and monitor their activities, and select appropriate and effective strategies for their goal attainment. They do this while developing a good environment around themselves. I hope that studies and practice of self-efficacy beliefs will be further carried out in the contexts of L2 and FL learning for learners' linguistic development and academic attainment.

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Appendix

Self-Assessment Sheet for a Writing Course

Name: _____

1. Participation _____
2. Number of Assignments (Essays) _____
3. Assessment of each work
 - 1 your self-introduction _____
 - 2 your goal _____
 - 3 the person/event that influenced your life. _____
 - 4 your recommendation _____
 - 5 a thank-you letter _____
 - 6 the Golden Week _____
 - 7 your favorite song/poem _____
 - 8 a business letter _____
 - 9 your e-mails _____
 - 10 your TWE essay _____
4. Assessment of your final paper.
 - 1 Organization (Does your paper have an introduction, a body part, and a conclusion?/ Does each paragraph has a topic sentence?/ Is each topic sentence supported enough?) _____
 - 2 Content (Did you choose a good and interesting topic for your audience?) _____
 - 3 Grammar (Is your paper free from all spelling/typing mistakes or grammatical mistakes?) _____
5. Total grade for the semester _____
6. Explain why you think you deserve the grade above.

Opinion & Perspective

A Response to Yoko Ichige's "Validity of Center Examinations for Assessment of Communicative Ability"

Mike Guest
Miyazaki University

Yoko Ichige's (2006) recently published research paper on the current university entrance examinations - focusing specifically on the center examinations - provides a worthy contribution to our understanding of these controversial tests. Recognizing that changes have been made to the content of the exams, as well as to the pedagogical principles presumed to underlie them, both Ichige and Kikuchi (2006) provide much-needed updates on Brown and Yamashita's seminal (1995) study. Ichige further recognizes the limitations of the research done by Brown and Yamashita, and by Kikuchi, in that the samples selected in these studies were from the English or Education department exams - not to mention Kikuchi's recognition that Brown and Yamashita's analysis was limited only to prestigious universities (p. 177). Instead, by focusing upon the Center Exam, Ichige is rightly presuming that this more widely-applied, broader based test is more representative of the whole Japanese university entrance exam experience.

Ichige's item-by-item analysis of the exam is particularly enlightening since a lot of previous research has been prone to making generalized conclusions about the nature of the exam without presenting or explaining individual items to the reader. Ichige's analysis is further helpful in that

it examines the different competencies that the various tasks are measuring. Ichige also utilizes several helpful tools of analysis, headed by Bachman's (1990) notions as to what constitutes communicative language ability. This approach helps to define more concisely the tasks within the test and pose relevant questions, as well as frame the test according to established guiding principles. However, there are also several areas in which I feel that Ichige's research falls short or requires further explanation. I also believe that it contains one fatal flaw, which I shall outline first.

The title of Ichige's paper is "Validity of Center Examinations for Assessment of Communicative Ability". Since, as Ichige correctly notes, Mombukagaku-sho (2003) suggested that colleges and high schools revise their entrance exam in order to properly assess communicative ability, it might seem a worthy task to find out if it is practicing what it preaches, or in other words, is Mombukagaku-sho also testing for communicative ability? Not surprisingly, Ichige's conclusion is that "it can hardly be said that the current center examination measures communicative ability appropriately" (p. 21).

But this is a forgone conclusion. The Center Exam makes no claim to be assessing communicative ability, nor could it. The

Center Exam is taken simultaneously, under very strict conditions, by over 500,000 applicants (as reported in the Daily Yomiuri newspaper, Jan. 20th, 2007) across the country. Objectivity in marking, given the test's value in determining which second stage exams an applicant can or should sit for, is absolutely crucial. Productive testing, such as interviews, interactive speech or essay writing, which Ichige finds lacking, would not only compromise this quest for strict objectivity but also create enormous timing problems as the current examination already fills two entire days with up to seven hours of testing per day. Furthermore, results of the test must be made known to examinees as soon as possible - usually within a week - necessitating machine-readable answers. Holding personal interviews, judging interactive speech skills or reading and marking essays or other productive writing would take an enormous amount of time and an unprecedented nation-wide effort of collaboration to ensure balanced standards. One must also not forget that entrance exams consist of other subjects besides English and that by increasing the time taken and the number of skills demanded, the entire process would become that much more unwieldy, stressful, and time-consuming for both test-takers and administrators.

And this is precisely why Mombukagaku-sho specifically made the request for colleges and high schools to include more communicative content on their exams - *because the Center Exam can't do it*. The burden of measuring communicative ability is thereby willfully passed on the second-stage exams. Therefore, to measure, let alone criticize, the current Center Exam for not addressing communicative skills is to address something that no one claims to be extant in the test in the first place. How can one measure the com-

municative applicability of a test that does not claim to be communicative - and in fact is so aware of its non-communicative form that it has actively asked other institutions to fill the gap in their tests? This is why I claim that the outcome of Ichige's research is a foregone conclusion.

Perhaps it would be opportune at this point to argue that Mombukagaku-sho, as well as their critics, might do well to mitigate their notion of "communicative" in order to avoid the awkward schism between university entrance exams and their stated ideal pedagogy. This could be achieved by re-establishing the notion of "communicative" not as meaning "real-life, authentic, productive skills" but rather as based upon the original notion of the communicative approach, that is that *tasks focus upon text meaning as opposed to text form*. And, as I have argued in both Guest (2000) and Guest (2006), and as Ichige's analysis of the Center Exam- if not her conclusions- further seems to confirm, Japanese university entrance exams are in fact largely meeting this definition of "communicative".

Ichige also makes an important point when she notes that "...what the center examination is intended to measure is not clear" (p. 21). After all, the concept of test validity is meaningful only when the content of a test suits its stated purpose, and without a purpose it clearly becomes difficult to measure validity. I would therefore like to propose a purpose. It is as follows: The purpose of the Center Exam is: 1) to measure the aptitude of Japanese students for academic study at Japanese universities; 2) to stratify examinees on the basis of this aptitude test in order to allow them to sit for appropriate second-stage (individual university) examinations.

What this implies is that the purpose of the test is not to attempt to measure "real-world"

skills in a native-speaker setting but rather *aptitude for academic work in a Japanese milieu*. Clearly this obviates the need for conversation-like items or real-life, interactive examples on the test and would rather orient the test towards slightly more formalized language, with an emphasis on reading. As a result, since the test is not preparation for study-abroad programs or workplace interactions with non-Japanese it would in fact be invalid to have such a focus on the Center Exam. This would also seem to render Ichige's application of Bachman's (1990) dichotomy of IA (interactional/ability) and RL (real/life performance) testing approaches, and her support for the latter, as moot.

The real dilemma though, as Ichige notes, is washback. Mombukagaku-sho wants a more communicative curriculum in high schools, but if the purpose of the Center Exam is as I proposed above it seems logical that university-track high schools in particular will provide preparation more in line with the Center Exam approach. However, this backwash effect is not a one-way street and may well be overstated. Mulvey (2001), Guest (2000) and Stout (2003) have all questioned the so-called washback effect, arguing that high school English content and pedagogy would in fact be very different if washback indeed had occurred. Moreover, test designers at universities and Mombukagaku-sho do take great pains to ensure that test content falls in line with what is taught in high school in terms of known structures, vocabulary and even test formatting. In other words, there is a strong argument for suggesting that high school pedagogy is in fact determining to some degree the nature and content of university entrance exams.

I was also concerned by a discrepancy noted between Ichige's insightful item-by-item analysis and her rather different conclusions.

In the analysis, Ichige rightly points out how certain questions demand the ability to process entire texts ("recognize the organization of a whole passage"), and "rhetorical organization", as well as an eye for the "sequencing of conversation" and other "conversational conventions", "coherence and cohesion", "interactiveness", "translation skill", and meta-linguistic cognitive skills while utilizing a wide variety of "text type, genre and mode of discourse" (pp. 16-18).

These descriptions apply particularly to the later questions which are weighted far more heavily than the more discrete-point based prior questions, although Ichige does not mention this. Moreover, they are very similar to the finding made in Guest's (2006) analysis of the same test. However, despite these (accurate, in my opinion) descriptions, Ichige suddenly characterizes the test holistically in her conclusion section as being "discrete-point testing" which leads to washback in the form of "...domination of the grammar-translation method in the classroom" (p.19), lacking extra-linguistic components, and not allowing for authenticity because of its emphasis upon "...discrete-point questions and the multiple-choice format" (p.19). In other words, this conclusion appears to be quite at odds with the findings she presents in her analysis and, not surprisingly, at odds with Guest's (2006) conclusions as well.

At this point it is imperative that a note be made regarding multiple-choice questions. There is a widespread, but unwarranted, belief that a multiple-choice format dictates a discrete-point approach, not to mention receptivity. Ichige seems to be aware of this, given her citation of Oller (1979), who argues that multiple-choice items can be revised to measure reading ability in a more authentic way, but Ichige claims that there are no questions of this type on the Center

Exam (p.18). This seems an odd pronouncement given the descriptions of the skills required from examinees to carry out the tasks from section 2 that I cited from Ichige's paper above.

Indeed, a multiple-choice format need not imply a discrete-point emphasis, and I would argue that there are in fact many such items on the Center Exam. For example, on the 2004 exam (the exam used in Guest's [2006] research: Senta Shiken [2005]) we may note on pp. 21-23 an extended reading section (#6) that is a story about two rival swimmers and the change in their relationship. Question 3 asks:

Why did Angela want to help Kate?

1. She wanted Angela to win.
2. The coach insisted that she do so.
3. Angela was a newcomer.
4. She understood how Angela felt.

Although this is a multiple-choice question, the correct answer (#4) can be determined only by following- and understanding- the flow of the story. It demands an ability to interpret the characters' feelings indirectly since the answer is not explicitly written anywhere in the text. In order to correctly answer the question one has to use holistic reading skills, including making inferences and interpreting motivations. This is not a discrete-point skill or question.

Likewise, section 4 (pp. 13-16) from the same test is a comparative essay about working hours and holidays in several countries. A graph is included but three of the coordinates on the graph (countries) have had their names crossed out, replaced with X, Y, and Z. Question A asks the examinees to fill in which countries match coordinates X, Y, and Z—a task that can be achieved only by: 1) reading and understanding the entire text; 2) collating the various information therein; 3) understanding the English graph; 4) making

the visual connection between written information and data. This is clearly not a discrete point task even though the answer is written in multiple-choice format (all answers are varied combinations of Japan, Germany and the USA). There are numerous similar tasks found all over the exam.

Finally, I must disagree with Ichige's claim that the form of the Center Exam indicates a view as to what language is, wherein Ichige characterizes the Center Exam as being "... based on the idea that language is a system consisting of linguistic elements governed by rules" (p.19). Although Ichige is surely correct in implying that language is not merely a combination of combined elements governed by rules, any test is bound to contain "linguistic elements" with some sense of being "rule-governed". These qualities are inescapable. In fact, while Ichige does note the test's gradual movement away from this narrower grammatical competence in the early sections towards more comprehensive modes and units of meaning, she instead characterizes this positive development as treating language as "...a kind of system consisting of independent elements with several hierarchical levels" (p. 17) simply because the test itself proceeds in such a manner. But, if a test is well-ordered, balanced, and divided into distinct sections (all of which would seem to be acceptable qualities of any test), would it be fair to criticize that test because language itself is not always well-ordered, balanced and divided into distinct sections? It seems that according to this criterion any well-made test could be likewise criticized. The format and content of a test can and does reflect other factors, such as administrative limitations and considerations for what and how examinees have studied up to this point - both of which I believe are far greater factors in determining test content and format.

Equally inevitable is the problem of a test developing test-wiseness in the examinee rather than purely measuring holistic language skills. This was a particular concern of Brown & Yamashita's (1995). If any test is taken seriously examinees are bound to familiarize themselves with the test's format and typical content, as well as awareness of the test's intentions and purposes. Thus, an emphasis upon test-wiseness is unavoidable. If the tasks were as discrete and narrow as Ichige characterizes them, this would be a problem but, as we have seen, the most heavily-weighted tasks do not demand discrete skills but what are routinely understood as more holistic, comprehensive reading skills. No amount of test-wiseness can prepare examinees for tasks that demand the ability to "recognize the organization of a whole passage", understand "rhetorical organization", sequence conversations, understand "conversational conventions", comprehend "coherence and cohesion", practice "interactiveness", and utilize "translation skills", as well as the ability to use meta-linguistic cognitive skills within a variety of text types, genres and modes of discourse.

Ichige's skilful item-by-item analysis is unfortunately scarred by these inconsistent, almost contradictory, conclusions and I would ask the researcher to reconsider the connections between the two in the light of my comments.

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From the Chalkface

Public Speaking Is Much More Than Speechmaking!

James W. Porcaro

Toyama University of International Studies

Introduction

College Public Speaking courses often seem to be limited to speechmaking. What a shame! There are so many other interesting, relevant, and productive modes of public speaking that can and should be included in such courses not only to provide variety to the instructional menu but also to develop particular skills in addition to those gained through speechmaking only.

The aim of a public speaking course fundamentally is to develop students' oral presentation skills and thus their ease, confidence, and effectiveness in speaking to groups of people. These skills include elements of voice control, such as projection, pace, phrasing, rhythm, intonation, articulation, and fluency of expression; elements of body language, such as posture, facial expressions, and gestures; and elements of audience rapport, such as eye contact, assurance, sincerity, and awareness of audience response.

In this article I outline several successful instructional practices other than speechmaking which I have employed in my university course with students generally at lower to mid-intermediate levels of English language proficiency. At the start I describe the practice of panel discussion in some detail and then summarize more briefly some other public speaking activities students have done in my course. They have responded to all these

activities with enthusiasm and worthy effort which have yielded very satisfying results.

Panel Discussion

Panel discussion is an instructional activity that extends students' public speaking beyond the presentation of a fixed text they have written and then either read or deliver from memory to an audience. It is especially feasible to include in the course program with smaller classes. Groups of about five students may be involved in each project. With larger classes of up to twenty students, the activity can be done more than once, with different topics, during the term or year to include all students in the end, or simply done with some students while others do different assigned projects.

The topic of tourism, for example, has worked very well in this format of a public forum. It follows on the "Visit Japan Campaign" that was inaugurated a few years ago by the Japanese government with the aim to raise the number of foreign visitors to Japan to at least ten million by 2010. Initially, students are assigned for homework to prepare to discuss in pairs, solely in English, of course, in the following class such items as: the reasons why Japan receives so few tourists (consistently past 30 on the international list of tourist arrivals); what should

be done to attract more foreign tourists to Japan, that is, what Japan should highlight to attract tourists from other countries; the best ways for tourists to see and learn about Japan; and the best places to go and things to do for various types of tourists.

For this kind of public speaking activity I do not assign or approve topics that are beyond students' general knowledge and would require research. Indeed, I do not permit any research because, in fact, it stunts originality and thoughtfulness. Almost always it would involve students going to the Internet, encyclopedias or other materials in Japanese and then translating passages or copying from English sources and presenting the content and language as their own. Such research precludes students from drawing on their general knowledge, exercising their own critical thinking, and using the English language proficiency and resources they have acquired, which are precisely the language learning objectives of the exercise. I do provide, however, some graphic data on the subject which students prepare to refer to in the panel presentation. (See the section below on graphic data.)

The following week, the students make a panel presentation as if they were participating in an international tourist industry association gathering. They are permitted access to very limited notes from their preparation in the previous lesson. They have not at all memorized anything they will say, though they are well-prepared and practiced for the forum. I act as the moderator of the event and direct the course of the discussion and who will speak, as is usually the case in such panel discussions. This not only maintains a good pace and coverage of the points on the agenda, but also eliminates any canned preparation and presentation by the students. They are aware that I could ask anyone of

them at any time to start or add to any of the points under discussion.

Teachers should invite to the classroom audience other teachers and students, especially foreign students on campus when the topic, such as tourism, is related to Japan. Even a limited expanded audience creates a more authentic atmosphere and a more dynamic exchange. Students must be adept at answering the many questions from the audience which is an intrinsic part of the activity.

The panel discussion may take up to the full ninety minutes of class time. Assessment of students' performance is based on the level of their achievement of the public speaking skills listed at the start of this article and the particular demands of this activity as just mentioned. If the activity is done later with other students, teachers can expect an accumulation of experience to raise the level of success.

Other Modes of Public Speaking

1. Recitation is the oral presentation of stories, poetry, and play scripts. It is a wonderful means by which students can develop the public speaking skills listed above and it is an activity adaptable to almost any level of students' English proficiency. (See Porcaro, 1999.) Working with narrative texts that include a clear story line, characters, and some dialogue, along with the opportunity for a range and force of dramatic expression, students are able to expand their oratorical practice beyond the requirements of most speech presentations. Particularly appropriate and appealing texts include the traditional tales of old Japan as related by Lafcadio Hearn, available in full (Hearn, 1971) or simplified (Hearn, 1983) versions. Poetry, as well, offers a wide range of possibilities. My collection for class use spans from Edgar

Allan Poe's classic "Annabel Lee" to Shel Silverstein's outrageous and delightful "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out". With the recitation of poetry, students learn additionally about pacing, rhythm, and appreciation of the sounds of words and the images and meanings they can convey through their oral presentation.

2. As follow-up with some stories used for recitation, story writing or dialog writing may be assigned and then utilized in turn for public speaking practice. Students may extend a story by telling from their imagination what happened after the given ending, or develop an alternative to the given course of events with a shift at some appropriate point in the story. Also, they may write, and then recite with a partner to the class, their own plausible dialog between characters in the story at dramatic moments.

3. Script writing is an entirely original task. Students think first of a subject that interests them and which they know something about, and then determine two well-known people, living or dead, from any place in the world or any time in history, related to that subject, who will talk with each other about some aspect of their mutual field of endeavor or life experience. (See Porcaro, 2001.) Oral presentation by the writer and a partner produces some fascinating listening for the class audience, such as James Dean and Leonardo DiCaprio discussing being movie idols in their respective generations, or Anne Frank and Chiune Sugihara sharing their experiences of the Holocaust. Script-writing not only integrates the four basic language skills in the course of the task, but also allows students to engage in interactive elocution with a partner, playing off one another in a dramatic style that they have wholly created.

4. Oral presentation of data given in graph-

ic forms has been mentioned as part of the content of panel discussions. In itself, it is an excellent practice of public speaking for students. Data that are particularly appealing to students as both presenters and audience deal with aspects of their own society, including demographics, education, crime, economics, social welfare, and so on. These kinds of data on Japan are available from several good sources, such as *The Asahi Shimbun Japan Almanac* or Web Japan <<http://web-japan.org/stat/index.html>>. They can be shown on an overhead projector or PowerPoint. Students work with a pointer referring to the graphic data while explaining to the class audience the information presented therein and offering comment and analysis from their general knowledge and reflection on the subject. Once again, this task extends students' oratorical practice beyond the skills of just delivering the text of a speech.

5. Public speaking may also be taken outside of the classroom. On most campuses throughout the year there are opportunities for at least some students in the class to speak to the real public, for example, at open campus events, explaining parts of the English program and conducting campus tours in English (which make a strong impression on visiting high school students sought for recruitment); at school festival activities; or as MC's at university-sponsored events, such as symposiums, that include the medium of English. Teachers should establish a regular role for their Public Speaking students in such events. It may be possible also in some circumstances to conduct public speaking exercises off campus at local places of interest. For example, some years ago I taught at a college near a large park with an area of reconstructed traditional rural houses from various parts of Japan. Students prepared from the informational materials available

small parts for each of them to explain on a guided tour of the site that they conducted for some other students and faculty from the college.

Conclusion

Quite a few students who take my Public Speaking course are in the teacher license program offered at the university. The course for them has an immediate value and clear relevance as preparation for the two-week classroom practice teaching they will do, as well as in the long term after graduation when they set out into the teaching profession itself. Several other students obtain jobs after graduation with companies where they start in sales positions. A good public speaking course can be a potentially valuable experience and training for many other fields students will enter. The skills they acquire in the English course certainly transfer to pub-

lic speaking in Japanese as well. To attract enrolment and to involve students in a varied and well-rounded learning experience that actualizes positive outcomes, I believe the course should offer much more than speech-making. Teachers may find some inspiration from the ideas related in this article.

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Integrating Extensive and Intensive Reading Activities in a Freshmen Reading Course

*Scott Bingham
Miyazaki Municipal University*

Summary

This article describes a 12-week reading course for freshmen university students. Students participate in an institution-wide Extensive Reading (ER) program that I have supplemented with Intensive Reading (IR) activities adapted from the SQ3R reading system. To teach and practice SQ3R, students read one graded reader approximately one level above their current level and complete weekly worksheets especially designed for this course.

Students

This reading course is for students in their first year at a small liberal arts college in Japan. Students major in liberal arts, languages, and/or multi-media. They have a core English curriculum made up of one or two CALL classes and one reading, writing, and grammar module.

The reading module consists of about 25 students and meets once a week for 90 minutes for 12 weeks. The Edinburgh Project for Extensive Reading (EPER) Placement/Progress Test (EPER, 1994, 1995) is administered before and after the course to determine student reading levels and assess progress. The average score on the pre-course EPER exam is 24 which corresponds to just between the Beginner and Elementary Level of the Macmillan Guided Readers.

Materials

For the ER component of this course, the students select graded readers from a large collection in the school library. For the in-class IR activities, the students also have a “class reader” which they read together in class. The reader I have chosen is “When Rain Clouds Gather” (Macmillan Guided Readers, Intermediate Level). Students also receive a weekly worksheet and a reading journal template.

Time Required

The course I describe below covers a twelve-week term. Each week students complete a weekly worksheet that has a variety of activities that should take a total of 90 minutes to complete. In most cases, students finish the weekly worksheets in 90 minutes, but if not the remainder is assigned as homework. Students also read one graded reader and complete a reading journal as homework each week. Most students report that this takes approximately 2 – 3 hours a week.

Rationale

Proponents of ER tell us that we need to motivate our students to read by allowing them to choose their own reading material at the level they feel most comfortable. However, in the real world, our students

will be faced with authentic material that has not been simplified, and whether they are motivated or not they need IR strategies that will help them cope with this more challenging material. Having considered both approaches, I have come to the conclusion that it is important that students find pleasure in reading and that well-motivated students will *probably* become better readers. There will also come a time when all students will need to know how to handle material that is far above their level. The purpose of this article is to introduce a university reading curriculum that attempts to integrate the best of both the ER and IR approaches.

When developing the IR component, I had two objectives in mind. First, I wanted to supplement the ER component with additional Intensive Reading activities that would help students deal with higher-level reading material. Second, I wanted to do so using a process-oriented approach. I strongly feel that students benefit from seeing learning, especially skills such as reading and writing, as a process. The process I have adapted for this course is the SQ3R system (Kemper, Meyer, & Sebranek, 1992; Robinson, 1970). SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. My main reason for selecting this approach is that I feel it is one of the most systematic approaches to teaching reading strategies. In addition, SQ3R incorporates all of the steps that I feel are important in teaching the process of reading.

The reading material I have chosen to teach SQ3R is the graded reader "When Rain Clouds Gather." The choice of using *graded* material to teach IR is a compromise. More traditional IR approaches use authentic material such as newspaper or magazine articles or short stories. By selecting graded material, I can be assured that the material we cover each week is at the same

level and that this level is difficult but not overwhelming. As mentioned before, the average student in this course is at a reading level which corresponds to the Macmillan Guided Reader's Elementary Level. "When Rain Clouds Gather" is one level above that and through my experience with using this book for several years, I have found that both the level and the story are perfectly suited to teaching SQ3R.

Procedure

Extensive Reading Component

Students are expected to read 10 graded readers each term. According to the scores they receive on the EPER Placement/Progress Test, students select readers appropriate to their level from the university library. For each graded reader, students are expected to complete one entry in a reading journal. The reading journal entry I have developed for this course consists of one A3-sized handout with three sections: Personal Vocabulary List, Summary, and Reaction.

Intensive Reading Component

In order to teach SQ3R, the students read one or two chapters of their class reader, "When Rain Clouds Gather," and complete a weekly worksheet that I have designed specifically to use with this story. For the first four weeks of class, the worksheets introduce and practice one or two steps in SQ3R. Starting with the fifth week, the worksheets incorporate all of the steps and class time is spent working in groups of four completing the worksheets.

Step 1: Survey

The activities in Survey are designed as pre-reading strategies which prepare the

discuss the illustrations. In their discussion, they are asked to draw conclusions as to how these illustrations connect to previously read chapters, and make inferences about what might happen next in the story. In addition, students are asked to search the illustrations for any unknown vocabulary. Once students have discussed the illustrations, they write a brief description which reinforces any new vocabulary they might have encountered.

In Activity 4, students work in groups to

[illegible]

unknown words allowing a more effective use of class time.

Step 2: Question

Question is also a pre-reading activity. In this step, students try to use all the information they have gained in Survey to make questions about what they are going to read. It is important to stress that the answers to the questions are not important at this stage. The goal of this activity is to make the students think more deeply about the story, help the students identify important points in the passage, and help the students predict what the story *might* be about.

Activity 6 of the worksheet focuses on the questions they should be thinking about later while they are reading. Ideally, students generate their own list of questions; however, I have found this activity is quite difficult for most freshmen. Therefore, until Week 10, I compromise by giving them questions I think are important. After Week 10, they write their own. The important point is to have students concentrating on something while they are reading. I have found this makes them much more active readers.

When students are finished with these steps, they are in a much better position to read and understand the text.

Step 3: Reading in Detail

Activity 7 introduces the next step. Students use what they learned in Survey to help read the text *in detail* while thinking about the questions made in Question. While reading, students should *actively* read the text by constantly asking and answering questions to themselves.

Step 4: Recite

Both Step 4 Recite and Step 5 Review are designed as post-reading activities. In Recite, the students are encouraged to talk about what they have been reading and learning. In these discussions, they should review out loud what they have read—the story, the plot, and the characters. They should also talk about any problems they have had understanding the text or any interesting points they have found. Finally, they should repeat out loud the answer to all the questions they have made in the previous step, Question. In class, they engage in discussions with their classmates. When alone, they are encouraged

Figure 2 Sample of Weekly Worksheet: Activity 6.

<p>III. Question</p> <p>Activity 6 Look at the following questions and think about them while you are Reading in Detail.</p> <p>Chapter Five</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who are these people? Write a description for each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Paulina Sebeso -Lorato Sebeso -Isaac Sebeso What had Paulina's life been like before coming to Golema Mmidi? What "terrible mistake" does Paulina think she had made? What advice does Mma-Millipede give Paulina about her relationship to Makhaya? Why does Makhaya want to forget his "old life" in South Africa? How is it different from his new life in Golema Mmidi? Why is Maria jealous of Makhaya? Why does Gilbert want to marry Maria so quickly? How does Paulina feel when she heard the news that Maria and Gilbert were getting married? Why does she feel this way? 	<p>to have one-sided discussions with themselves. The main point is to talk out loud about the text. In that way students can better understand what they have learned and identify any problems they might have had. In addition, students are also asked to summarize chapters page by page to reinforce what they</p>
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Figure 3 Sample of Weekly Worksheet: Activity 7 and 8.

IV. Read In Detail Activity 7 With the information from Survey and the questions from Question in mind, read Chapter 5 carefully. Try to read them from start to finish without stopping. Do not stop to use your dictionary or to answer the questions.
V. Recite Activity 8 Now, read the chapter AGAIN. After each page, stop, think, and then write a summary of the MAIN POINTS of that page. Repeat this with each page of the chapter. Don't translate the story word for word. Include in your summaries only the most important information form the story.
Chapter 5: Page 26

have learned. These summaries are an important part of the later step of Review.

Activity 8 of the worksheet has students read the chapter carefully through one time. Then, they read the chapter *again*. This time, students stop and write a summary after each page. I have them close their books while they are writing so that they are using what they learned and not copying from the book. I don't demand that students write their notes in English or Japanese. I encourage them to write in English because I feel that helps reinforce new vocabulary; however, I do feel that some students benefit greatly from hav-

ing to synthesize what they have read into Japanese. Since I cannot read the Japanese summaries, my assessment is based on how much they write. I can only hope that what they have written is satisfactory. With this in mind, I still have not decided whether summarizing in English or Japanese is most beneficial. Therefore, I leave it to the students to decide what they feel is best for them.

Activity 9 of the worksheet asks the students to first discuss and then write answers to the questions from Activity 6 as a group. When answering the questions, students are asked to only use the summaries they have

Figure 4 Sample of Weekly Worksheet: Activity 9.

Activity 9 Question Discussion In groups, discuss the questions from Activity 6. Use the summaries from Activity 8 to help you answer the questions. AFTER you have finished discussing all the questions, write your answers below. Try to use your own words and do not copy sentences from the story.
Chapter Five
1. Who are these people? Write a description of each.
-Paulina Sebeso
-Lorato Sebeso
-Isaac Sebeso
2. What had Paulina's life been like before coming to Golema Mmidi?

Figure 5 Sample of Weekly Worksheet: Activity 10.

<p>Activity 10 Work with your group and make 2 guesses about what you think MIGHT happen next in the story. Use your imagination and be creative!</p> <p>Guess 1</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Figure 6 Sample of Weekly Worksheet Activity 1, 2, and 3.

<p>I. Recite and Review</p> <p>Activity 1 WITH YOUR GROUP, review the notes you wrote and the answers to the questions on last week's print.</p> <p>Activity 2 WITH YOUR GROUP, each person read out loud the guesses they wrote on last week's print.</p> <p>Activity 3 WITH YOUR GROUP, review your New Word Lists from Chapters 1-4.</p>

written. This helps reinforce the importance of good note taking and the need to read the text carefully.

In Activity 10, students practice inferencing skills by using their imagination to make inferences as to what will happen next in the story. At first, many students hesitate to do this because they are concerned with having the "right" answer. Once they understand that there are no "right" answers, most students come up with very imaginative and well-thought-out guesses.

Step 5: Review

The last step in SQ3R is Review. This is both a post-reading activity and a pre-reading activity because it is done at the end of a reading session and at the beginning. Students should always try to use what they have learned in previous chapters to help them understand that they are going to read in the next. By using Review as both a post-reading and pre-reading strategy, the students are constantly reinforcing newly acquired material. I have found this circular approach is effective in maintaining long-term acquisition of newly acquired material. Therefore,

the Review activities are at the beginning of the worksheet. Activities 1, 2, and 3 ask the students to simply review the summaries, question answers, and New Word Lists from the previous week. Students then take turns reading their summaries out loud while the other members of the group listen and add any important information they might have missed.

Assessment

As outlined above, the course requires a lot of work from the students. Each week students complete two major pieces, the reading journal and the weekly worksheet. Assessment of this work requires quite a bit of work on the part of the instructor.

Reading journals are given points for quantity and quality. Quantity is simply how much the students complete. Quality is a subjective grade that depends on the activity. For the New Word List, I look at the variety of vocabulary students choose for their new words and related words. I also look at their original sentences and try to determine how much effort they put into writing sentences that demonstrate their understanding of the

word's meaning. Due to time constraints, it is difficult to give much more than a point grade on the Journals. However, while students are working on their weekly worksheets in class, I take time to have student conferences in which I give more personal evaluations of their journal entries.

The weekly worksheets are marked in two stages. After completion, worksheets are handed in and I check everything except for the answers to the questions in Activity 9. At the beginning of the following week's class, the worksheets are handed back to students to use in the Review activities (Activities 1-3) on the current week's worksheet. As they are reviewing the answers, students have an opportunity to compare their answers to their classmates' and add anything they feel is necessary. At the end of class, I give an answer sheet which the students use to self-correct their answers. The students then re-submit the worksheets for a final grade.

Reflections

I have outlined the curriculum for the freshmen reading class that I am currently teaching. This curriculum combines both an Extensive and Intensive Reading approach that not only allows students to pursue the joy of reading through graded readers, but also teaches valuable strategies for dealing with more difficult reading material. I have used this approach for several years and am very satisfied with the improvements the students have made in reading level, attitudes toward reading in a foreign language and their ability to cope with challenging reading material.

Having said this, I have to acknowledge that this approach asks a lot from both the students and me. During the course I am always asking myself, "Is it too much?" During the first few weeks of class, as students are getting used to the class, their classmates, and

to me, a handful of students give signs that the work might be a bit excessive. However, by the fourth or fifth week, students become accustomed to the work load and few have problems finishing their assignments.

In addition to their being able to finish the work, the best indicator I have that I am not asking too much are the students' responses on post-course surveys. In these surveys, only a few students say the work was too much to handle each week. The vast majority say that the course was tough and they spent much more time doing homework in this class compared to their other classes. However, they also acknowledge that through this hard work, they feel a sense of accomplishment and that their reading ability has improved. With an average increase of one reading level over the 12-weeks, post-course results of the EPER Placement/Progress Exam confirm the students' impressions.

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Conference Review

Highlights of JALT CALL 2006

Looking Forward to JALT CALL 2007

David Ockert
Shinshu University

The CALL SIG conference, *Designing CALL for Wired and Wireless Environments*, was held on June 3 – 4, 2006 at Sapporo Gakuin University, a modern campus located just minutes from downtown Sapporo. This year green grass, deciduous trees, cool breezes, and blue skies welcomed our modern technology, wireless communication devices, and software to Sapporo for the CALL SIG conference.

On Saturday, registration began early—managed excellently by a team put together by Elaine Gilmour. Several new books were on offer including the official proceedings of the 2005 conference, *Glocalization: Bringing People Together*, edited by the CALL SIG coordinator and conference chair, Timothy Gutierrez. *The Changing Face of CALL*, the 2001 Conference Proceedings, was another popular sell. Additional books, videos, audio-cassettes and learning materials were on display from Cambridge University Press, Lexxica/Navisona, Pearson Longman, and Thomson Learning. Workshops began promptly at 10:00 and ended at 17:00, with more than twelve selections running concurrently. Fantastic! It made one wish they could be in two places at once.

The Saturday morning speakers included Tim Grose and Don Hinkelman, who presented *Open Source Placement Testing*. They examined the fact that several universities

are now designing and administering their own placement and progress assessments using inexpensive servers equipped with free, open-source software. They related how one university has used a fifty-question English placement test to place more than 1,000 freshmen university students into three levels of general English courses. Those of us with wireless notebooks were able to try this online test consisting of thirty listening items and twenty vocabulary and reading items. While my results remain confidential, it was definitely worthwhile to learn about this facet of education since many teachers rarely come into contact with what is otherwise considered an administrative procedure.

Another Saturday presentation was *Designing Digital Repositories for File Exchange* by Andrew Johnson. In his presentation, Johnson showed the audience members how to manage a variety of files such as web pages (.html), documents (.doc), presentations (.ppt), photos (.jpg), audio recordings (.mp3), video clips (.mov), interactive activities (.php), and whole courses from learning management systems such as *Moodle* (.zip). Johnson began by outlining the design process of an open source digital repository for language teachers that was started in early 2006. We had the opportunity to use the system and discuss the implications of copyright, server requirements, and how to search

for the various files held on the system.

The last presentation I attended was given by Robert Chartrand and Bill Pellowe on the uses of the popular iPod and how incorporating podcasting into the syllabus benefits students. They began with a demonstration of their own podcast, explaining how it is used in the classroom. The idea behind podcasts, in their opinion, is that language learning does not stop in the classroom; therefore, using portable MP3 players allows for mobility thus enhancing the opportunities for exposure to the target language in a variety of settings including while bicycling or walking, riding the train or subway, working at a computer or sitting in the library. Since podcasts can be made from any audio source, they offer authenticity from a wide variety of material readily available on the internet. This was a wonderfully informative presentation for those who have not yet considered using podcasts. We were encouraged to take advantage of this practical application of technology as both a unique source of listening material and a way to recycling listening materials that have already been taught.

While the day was packed with intellectually stimulating and pedagogically interesting workshops, the real treat was the Saturday evening buffet arranged by site co-chair, Seiichi Miyamachi. The cuisine included smoked salmon, crab, lamb, melon, and the unique Otaru beer—produced in Sapporo. Great job, Seiichi—we loved it!

Finally, Sunday's events began with a keynote address by Josef Colpaert. In addition to being a professor at the University of Antwerp, he also edits the CALL Journal and serves as Director of R&D for the Linguapolis Language Institute. He spoke on the transition from *Blended to Distributed Learning: The Importance of Pedagogy-based Specification*.

The 2006 conference also provided a venue for planning this year's event. Saturday's lunch was an opportunity to meet with the other SIG officers to plan the calendar. The 2007 Conference Chairs are Glenn Stockwell, editor of *The JALT CALL Journal*, Paul Lewis and Timothy Gutierrez. We have put together an experienced team of professionals to make this year's event the best ever.

The Keynote Speaker will be Mike Levy, Associate Professor, School of languages and Linguistics, Griffith University, Australia. Professor Levy has authored numerous books including *Computer Assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization* (Oxford University Press); *CALL Dimensions: Options and Issues in Computer Assisted Language Learning* with Glenn Stockwell (Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates); and the co-editor of *Teacher Education in Call* published by John Benjamins. Also, Professor Yasunari Harada, Faculty of Law, Waseda University will be the Plenary Speaker. Professor Harada is director of the Institute for Digital Enhancement and Cognitive Development. He co-authored *Studies in Korean and Japanese Linguistics and Natural Language Processing* (WIT, Inc.).

Due to the central location in Tokyo this year, the event organizers anticipate a larger than average turnout and encourage all interested to please make arrangements for accommodations as soon as possible. We are very excited about this year's event with so many wonderful presentations, friendly faces, and of course, lots of useful information to take home with you. Finally, members interested in joining us in Tokyo, joining the CALL SIG or inquiring about any of our many publications and related events, please visit our website at <www.jaltcall.org>. Looking forward to meeting you in Tokyo!

CUE SIG News

Officers' Reports

Officers' Reports

From the Coordinator

I am pleased and honored to take the baton from Out-going CUE SIG Coordinator Phil McCasland who will be taking over as JALT National Director of Programs. Phil has been working extremely hard over the past four years, wearing many volunteer hats as he became more and more involved at the national level. I wish him well, and hope he will stay in touch with CUE as a Member-at-Large officer.

After several years of dedicated, nigh-Herculean effort, Mike Hood will be stepping down from his position as Publications Chair. Mike has generously offered to assist incoming chair Dexter Da Silva as *OnCUE* transforms into *The OnCUE Journal* this fall. Etsuko Shimo has joined as a Member-at-Large, as well as the editor of the new quarterly e-mail newsletter *YouCUE*. We also have a new treasurer in Terry Fellner, who will help CUE maintain its strong financial standing during the upcoming year. Steve Quasha, who limelights as the JALT National Chapter Liaison, is assisting as a Co-chair of the 2007 CUE Conference.

I would like to give my thanks to Juanita Heigham (Membership Chair, 2007 CUE Conference Co-Chair) and Tim Micklas (Program Chair, Chalkface Editor), who will both stay on as officers for the upcoming year. I would also be remiss without thanking

Joseph Falout, Keith Ford, Stephen Snyder, and Stephen Ryan, for their assistance as *OnCUE* research digest editor, opinion and perspective editor, reviews and cyberpipeline editor, and proofreader coordinator, respectively.

This year, CUE hopes to provide continuing support to college and university educators throughout Japan by redoubling our efforts to improve the quality and timeliness of our SIG publications and by offering public forums such as the 2007 CUE Conference for SIG members to present and meet other educators with similar interests.

However, as a 100% volunteer organization, CUE only functions effectively through the efforts of each of its members. Would you like to help? If you would, here are a few suggestions:

1. Become a proofreader or reviewer for *OnCUE*.
2. Help address, stuff, and mail envelopes for *OnCUE* and other SIG publications.
3. Help out with the upcoming 2007 CUE Conference
4. Share your ideas about how to publicize and spread the word about CUE SIG
5. Donate an hour or two of your time at the CUE desk during national conferences
6. Write a research, review, or classroom

practice article for *OnCUE*

7. Assist with the CUE web page maintenance with your technical savvy
8. Submit a presentation proposal for the 2007 CUE Conference
9. Come to the CUE OGM at the 2007 CUE Conference and the AGM at the JALT 2007 conference and join in!

If you would like to become more active in the CUE SIG, please visit our new website at <http://jaltcue-sig.org> and contact one of the 2007 CUE Officers. We look forward to greeting new faces and making new friends in Nagoya!

Matt Apple
SIG Coordinator
mapple@mail.doshisha.ac.jp

From the Membership Chair

Hello fellow CUE members! I'm Juanita Heigham, the membership chair. I've been watching over the flock for the last two years, and I've seen the numbers as high as 450 and as low as 325. We are one of the largest JALT SIGs, but right now, we're in a bit of a slump with a current membership of about 340. This means that we need YOU to encourage your friends and colleagues to join or renew with CUE. We'd like to get our numbers up so that we can have a successful conference in June (more about this below)! So, please spread the word. Thanks!

Juanita Heigham
Membership Chair
jheigham@sugiyama-u.ac.jp

From the Conference Co-Chairs

Greetings from Sugiyama Jogakuen University in Nagoya, the host site for the 2007 CUE Conference. We, Juanita Heigham and Steve Quasha, are the co-chairs for this upcoming event. The conference has been in the making for several years, and it promises to be very exciting. We have joined together with Gifu-JALT, Nagoya-JALT and Toyohashi-JALT, and we expect great things from this joint venture. Like all CUE conferences, this one is focused on *you* and giving you the opportunity to develop yourself professionally as well as to expand your professional network in a comfortable environment. It will be a great chance for you to learn and have fun! For more information see the conference website <<http://jaltsig-cue.org>>. We hope to see you in June!

From the Programs Chair

As Program Chair, it's my job to contact speakers for CUE events and conferences. So, I am pleased to announce that Deryn Verity (Osaka Jogakuin) will be giving a workshop at the 2007 CUE Conference. Her topic will be "Neo-Vygotskian psychology," and her workshop is sure to offer an interesting, thought-provoking experience for conference participants.

I'm also currently the editor of the From the Chalkface section of *OnCUE*, which publishes your classroom lessons and techniques. Many of these activities are reproduced on our old web site (there's a link from the new CUE web page). We're always accepting new teaching materials ideas, so please don't hesitate to contact me. We also hope to hold a one-day mini-conference some time later this year; the one-day mini will give you a chance to demonstrate your own practical classroom projects. Check the CUE web site

for information in the near future.

Lastly, I hope to see you at the 2007 CUE Conference. I'm really looking forward to working with CUE members old and new.

Tim Micklas
Programs Chair
 tmicklas@yahoo.com

From the Publications Chair

It is with pleasure, mixed with some trepidation, to be taking over from Mike Hood as the Publications Chair – pleasure to be working with the CUE team and to be contributing more to CUE and to JALT, and trepidation because I'm aware that I do not know what I don't know. This fear is somewhat moderated by Mike's willingness to provide guidance over the initial period of transition. However, perhaps I should apologise in advance for any problems that may arise.

I do not envision any sudden revolutionary changes in the format or content during the transition, but rather slow evolutionary ones, as they appear necessary or worthwhile.

The quality of a journal depends largely on the quality of the contributions it receives, so one of my duties will be to continue to attract a variety of interesting, top quality papers. I ask for your support with this and for any suggestions that may enhance the quality of *The OnCUE Journal*.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the CUE Conference in Nagoya, and to receiving your contributions to *The OnCUE Journal* in the future.

Dexter Da Silva
Publications Chair
 dasilva@keisen.ac.jp

From the Treasurer

I am pleased and excited to be involved with the CUE SIG this year as Treasurer and look forward to coming year. I was a bit surprised to discover how much money CUE actually had when I took this position in November but believe that the amount provides us with a solid financial base to be very active in the coming year. When the financial year started in April 2006, CUE had 1,228,224 yen in reserves and its postal account. The largest expenses have been making a donation to JALT's new Splash Database (400,000 yen) in December, paying for the Miyazaki 2005 conference proceedings (174,200 yen) in October, printing costs of ON CUE (96,000 yen) in October and the honorarium of our featured speaker, Sarah Cotterall, at JALT 2006 (50,000). All told, money well spent.

As I mentioned this coming year promises to be a busy one. Currently our financial balance is 862,779 yen including our reserve funds. I expect our expenses to largely come from setting up CUE's new website and the 2007 CUE Conference in Nagoya at Sugi-yama Jogakuen University on June 23rd & 24th, the ON CUE journal and the sponsoring of two CUE members to JALT 2007 Conference in Tokyo.

Terry Fellner
Treasurer
 mark@cc.saga-u.ac.jp