Languaging!

The Exploratory Learning and Teaching Newsletter of
Dokkyo University • No. 11 • Summer 2008

Plus Reader's Forum, Website Recommendations, The Chatroom and more!

Welcome to Languaging! No. 11!

A sunny side to a rainy season!

Welcome to the 11th issue of *Languaging!* ("Leg's 11 on the go," as an Australian bingo caller might say), the newsletter that makes our work a little more interesting by sharing views about teaching and language learning. Once again we have a nice assortment of topics from a wide range of writers, including students, undergrad and graduate, and teachers, faculty and adjunct, from Dokkyo University and beyond from as far off as Brazil. We welcome and thank them all for enriching our community with their words.

Appropriately enough, issue 11 has 11 articles. **Ana Maria Barcelos** helps us to reflect on the thought patterns that can have a very significant impact on our work and personal lives. **Stewart Fulton** expands upon this theme by offering practical guidelines for in-class error correction. Languaging's most prolific writer, 4th year student **Yuko Iwasaki**, shares her first teacher experience reflections with us. **Tim Murphey**, having recently recovered from an intense Russian Polka dance experience, shares his enthusiasm for personalized writing on the topic of intense positive experiences. And there are no flies on **Naoki Sekimoto's** lunch. He's back in this issue with a Brown Bag Tuesday review. **Tetsuya Fukuda**, shares practical data on just how much our students know about giving presentations. **Jeroen Bode** presents part two of his research into the usage of a particular type of Japanese expression, Yoji Jukugo. **Paul Doré** shares very little of his own thoughts, but a lot of his students' thoughts and how reading them helps him to work more effectively and happily.

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As always, we would like to thank our many guest editors, **Tim Murphey, Tetsuya Fukuda, Yuko Iwasaki, Robert Palka, Takeshi Kikuchi and Keiko Okada**, for all of their help.

Paul's seasonal tip: This summer, don't forget to 'slip, slop, and slap'. Slip on a shirt, slop on the sunscreen and slap on a hat! That summer sun can be intense! Happy reading!

The editors of Languaging! No. 11

Christopher Carpenter
Yuko Iwasaki
Paul Doré

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Share your learning and teaching explorations! *Languaging!* is a place to experiment, not just write about experiments. Think about your favorite ways of teaching and learning – fun ways to learn that could help others. Think about the data you might collect and share in our informal newsletter: keeping a journal, recording your changing feelings and ideas, having friends observe your classes, visiting friends' classes, getting feedback from students on your classes, your materials, or the whole education system! Read a good book? Write about it. Have a good idea? Write about it. Had a good conversation? Write about it!

Get your ideas out in Languaging!
Ask your students to submit their ideas, too!
Send submissions for *Languaging! No. 12* by November 15th to the editors at languaging @yahoo.com

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Ye Olde Standard Disclaimer: The opinions and views expressed in *Languaging!* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors nor of Dokkyo University (and maybe not even of the authors - after all people change their minds all the time!). Nevertheless, we hope you enjoy!

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"See Also" Contents:

Learning from Mistakes

Ana Maria Ferreira Barcelos
Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Brazil

The word *mistake* itself makes a lot of people feel frightened, scared. Mistakes are bad. So, we've been told over and over and over, all of our lives. I am no different. I remember my mom's beliefs about mistakes: "You can't fail or make mistakes. They are really bad". I see my brothers' and sisters' fearful of trying new things – the fear of failure paralyzes. Being the youngest of seven, I may have not been as scared of mistakes as my brothers and sisters, but still the fear of making mistakes has made up a great part of my life and still does to a certain extent, but I have learned to accept my failures more with time.

"Can you imagine living in a perfect world where no one made any mistakes? What would happen if we celebrated mistakes more?"

The way we are brought up influences our beliefs and our attitudes towards life. Whether we dare to risk and fail as many times as necessary to get what we want or whether we shy away from the opportunities of challenge and growth that life presents us at every minute has to do with the kinds of thoughts our environment feeds us (i.e. empowering thoughts or "junkthoughts" – Murphey, 1998). I have felt scared of failing and trying many times and have felt the worst part of mistakes: the guilt, the regret and remorse after having made a mistake, and paradoxically for not having tried for fear of making a mistake. This is certainly related to how I was brought up as well as to other factors. It has taken me a lot of reading, living, experiencing, failing and most importantly, learning from my mistakes to learn to accept me for who I am: IMPERFECTLY human!

Some people, however, believe they are machines – they can never fail or make a mistake. And they

like to emphasize other people's mistakes. It is not enough for them to feel bad about their own mistakes, complaining all the time, but they also want to put others down, by overly criticizing them for making silly mistakes sometimes. Why does this happen? Dewey once said, we are not machines and that is why we act on faith and beliefs. And we may fail. But that is the fun part of it. Can you imagine living in a perfect world where no one made any mistakes? What would happen if we celebrated mistakes more?

Being an English teacher in Brazil, I have been inspired by the work of Tim Murphey, especially by the ideas put forth in his book, *Language Hungry*. One of the chapters I discuss in class with my students is "Apreshiating Misteakes". Students feel surprised at the idea that making mistakes is ok. We also read many other chapters from this book, in an attempt to help them feel more confident about themselves and about their language competence. In other words, my goal in having them read and discuss the chapters is to help them find new identities for themselves as language learners and future language teachers.

I wanted to reflect a bit more about mistakes with my third year language students at my university here in Brazil. One group had already presented about the mistakes chapter in the middle of the semester, but I wanted to discuss it more explicitly with them at the end of the semester. I wanted to see where they were in the process of changing their beliefs about mistakes. I'd like to share with other teachers and researchers how this experience went.

I started by asking students to discuss in pairs some questions about mistakes (see appendix). After they discussed in pairs, I asked them to share their views with the whole class. Not many students wanted to share their views in the open though, but two students did. One of them said that he had changed. At first he became conscious that mistakes are ok, but he thought of this only about others, not about himself. He was still demanding with himself. In other words, we can say that he was in the transition phase of change. This is a phase when you acknowledge the value of the new beliefs and talk about them, but they are really not incorporated into one's practice yet. But then, he saw that his teacher (myself in this case) made mistakes too (this was a

bit embarrassing) and then he thought: "If Ana Maria Barcelos can make mistakes, so can I." I guess I was a good near peer role model for my student – making mistakes and showing I'm human!

Another student said that she felt more pressure and fear of making mistakes speaking in that class because she was a teacher and she believed everybody wanted her to be perfect. Only these two students shared their feelings. The others didn't, but still, I asked them just to confirm if they had changed. Some had, but some were still in the process of changing. That means they had started thinking about it, but they hadn't changed yet, they were still afraid – mainly of others. One student commented in the small group that she feels sorry for others when she speaks because she believes others will find her boring since she doesn't really say what she wants for fear of failing. She also said that she doesn't like to talk to more proficient learners because she feels stupid. Another student disagreed with her and said that when she sees other people who know more than her, she tries to study more. I hope that this comment from a near peer model can help this student to see that we have to compare ourselves with ourselves and not to others, as Murphey (1998) suggests. This is such a common thought in classes in Brazil. Students usually say: "I don't speak because other students know more than I do". I usually tell them: "So what?" I think you can learn from them. We can all learn from each other.

After this short discussion, I gave them a text on reasons for celebrating mistakes (Ellis, 1994) and each student read one reason silently. Then, they got together in two big groups and each one talked about what they had read. So, students had to listen attentively to each other to know all the eight reasons for celebrating mistakes. After that, we had an open discussion in which students commented on the text and gave their opinions on it. I could see that both groups enjoyed discussing this and even told stories of their mistakes in the group. They were having a good time and being so reflective expressing their feelings and helping others to become more conscious of their beliefs. It was very rewarding to me as a teacher to see this reflective moment that I hope can transform their lives as well as their identities as language learners and future English teachers.

To end the discussion and to show them it is ok to make mistakes we sang the Affirmation song (Murphey, 2007: See Appendix) "I love mistakes". This was a great way of ending the discussion and of celebrating mistakes! I believe it has helped at least one very shy student, who is usually very afraid of making mistakes and who said he hadn't changed his belief in the beginning of the class. However, at the end of the class, he came up to me and

said: "You see, I think I have changed now". He didn't give more details, but I did notice he was feeling more confident about himself and even started conversation with a native speaker teacher who was sitting in that class!

It takes time to change a belief and there are lots of factors and variables involved such as the people and the environment and how much that belief is central in our web of beliefs – the more central and more connected to our emotions and identity, the more difficult to change them. So, for some students it can take some time before they start feeling comfortable about mistakes. And the fact that they're learning in the classroom may bring a lot of inhibition. The classroom has its own social pressures and challenges, even when we try to build a comfortable atmosphere. This is another typical belief that usually comes hand in hand with the belief of making mistakes – other people's opinion about you – what will they think about me? How will they see me? Being accepted by the community of learners in the classroom is crucial to their identities as language learners.

One of my favorite writings is by a great Brazilian female writer, Cecilia Meireles, who once wrote: "don't try to eliminate your faults. You never know which one supports the whole building." In other words, mistakes are part of who we are. Accepting mistakes means accepting ourselves. When we accept ourselves, we are more able to enjoy our life-long learning journey in the company of other wonderfully imperfect human beings. We also become more tolerant of others' "imperfections" which in turn, helps us to enjoy and savor life more. I think that this is one lesson that every teacher can learn – not only to accept himself/herself more as an imperfect human being, but also show students that it's ok to make mistakes!

I'd like to thank Tim Murphey for his infectious enthusiasm for teaching and learning, as well as for showing my students it is ok to make mistakes, which has contaminated them during his visit to Brazil in July 2007 and which, I'm sure, contributed to this very reflective discussion in class. Obrigado Tim!

About the writer

Ana Maria Barcelos is an Assistant Professor of English at the Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil. Her research interests are beliefs about language learning and teaching. She is co-editor (with Paula Kalaja) of *Beliefs about SLA: New Research Approaches* (2003), as well as the forthcoming *Narratives of Learning and Teaching EFL*.

Works cited in this article

Ellis, D. (1994). *Becoming a Master Student* (7th edition). Boston, MA: Houghton Mufflin.

Murphey, T. (1998). *Language Hungry.* Tokyo: MacMillan.

Murphey, T. (2007). *Affirmation Songs.* CD.

Appendix (See "Mistakes," page 37)

Offering Correction in an Oral Communication class

Stewart Fulton, Dokkyo University

Over-correction, and the negative affects it has on learner confidence and motivation is well-understood in the language teaching field. Assuming the reader is well aware of these issues, I will move directly into the discussion of positive correction. Three merits of note include boosting confidence, aiding retention, and encouraging error recognition skills. And that's just the teacher! This article presents some basic criteria for offering correction in an oral communication class.

Consider the following conversation:

A. *What did you do last weekend?*
B. *I went Shinjuku and watch movie with my friends. I was enjoy.*
A. *Have you thought what will you do next weekend?*
B. *I will go to shopping at afternoon and play with my boyfriend.*

Would you correct errors such as these? If so, what, when and how would you correct them?

What and when to correct:

First we must be aware of whether what was said falls into what we'll call "mistakes" or "errors". Mistakes, being slight slips of the tongue, are previously learned language used incorrectly. This may be because of a momentary lapse in concentration or an old habit resurfacing. If we look at the example conversation above, we could assume that lower-intermediate students are familiar with the past participle, and prepositions of place and time. As such, Student B made a mistake with each.

Errors, on the other hand, are when students incorrectly produce language that hasn't yet been studied. This may result from trying to apply rules from their native tongue, or they have taken a previously studied English rule, and extended it to a new, unfamiliar situation. Student A uses an embedded question, possibly just beyond his/her ability when asking,

"Have you thought what will you do next weekend?" Student A does not know that the word order is different from a simple question. Similarly, Student B said, "I was enjoy", probably not having studied the "It was enjoyable" / "I enjoyed it" relationship. In addition, she translates directly from Japanese (inducing a raised eye-brow from the teacher) when saying, "play with my boyfriend".

With these in mind, we can now answer what to correct. We can assume that there are four mistakes in the example conversation. Likewise, there are three errors, although at least the embedded question can be left alone. When we correct an error, we must also be prepared to teach new material, running the risk of distraction from the lesson's focus. Embedded questions could easily consume a lesson or two to teach, drill, practice and apply, so it would probably be wise to ignore the error with an intermediate class.

The first portion of a lesson is often devoted to the target language. We present the material and reinforce it with drills for the students. The drills make the language familiar. If, for example, the focus of the lesson is be able to + infinitive (with past/future tenses and interrogative form), the pattern will likely begin to become automatic. Leave a mistake uncorrected at this stage, and students could establish the wrong pattern. The habit will be much more difficult to break in the future.

Moving from controlled to semi-controlled activities allows us, as teachers, to monitor any mistakes that may crop up with the target material, as well as with English studied in previous lessons. Focus on the majority of the mistakes with the target language, as correctly producing this language is the priority. As for other mistakes, only the more frequent should be covered. For instance, in the example conversation, "...go to shopping" should be tackled.

Finally, the last portion of the lesson should be devoted to the students being allowed to use the language freely. This means creating the environment for the students to combine the lesson's new material with their own grammar and vocabulary in natural conversations and situations. The more chance they have to apply new language in their own contexts, the more likely it will stick. Role plays, discussions, presentations, or task-based activities work extremely

well. But, because of the nature of these, it is impossible for the teacher to jump in, stop the flow of conversation, correct, and expect students to continue where they left off.

Take notes at this final stage and present the mistakes at the end of the lesson for review. This ensures the students use the language uninterrupted and naturally. If there were many mistakes with the target language, use it as a guide for future lessons; spending more time on drills and practice. If there were many mistakes with previously studied language, use it as a guide when assigning homework or scheduling a review lesson. If there were errors, but few mistakes, we've done a great job; establishing a good balance between fluency and accuracy, as the students correctly use what was taught and feel confident enough to experiment with the language, which is exactly what we're after.

"Group correction has the potential to foster teamwork, as well as a sense of support in the classroom."

How to correct:

To nurture proficient speakers of English we must offer correction in the classroom. We can employ teacher-to-student correction, self-correction, group correction, or student-to-student correction.

Direct teacher-to-student correction is probably the most obvious, and certainly within the number of classes I have personally observed, the most frequently used method. As in, "Hiro, we don't say, 'I like listen to music'; we say, 'I like listening to music'. Remember, 'like' plus 'ing'"? But this kind of correction proves to be the least beneficial because:

1. *It creates a teacher-centered lesson, which an oral communication class should be anything but.*
2. *Direct correction from the teacher prevents students from noticing their mistakes, robbing them of the opportunity to take responsibility for their own language acquisition.*
3. *It negatively affects confidence and can be intimidating if done with little finesse (especially if you are a 6'5" man, such as myself, and your student is a doe-eyed freshman!).*
4. *It lowers language retention.*

It would be over-simplifying to

state that this type of correction has no place in the classroom. It does, especially in the early stages of the lesson when the students first practice the target language. Direct feedback from the teacher is important here as students are unfamiliar with the new material so cannot yet judge what is right and what is wrong. Very low-level students also benefit from teacher-to-student correction. However, we can facilitate correction through other techniques: Self-correction and group correction.

Self-correction:

In a class that focuses on conversation and self-responsibility, students should correct their English fairly frequently. Thus, they increasingly notice problem areas, both individual weak points and those connected to their native language. For example, Japanese learners often drop articles (a/an/the) and plurals. Even advanced learners have this problem. With repeated self-correction, students better remember the right language and use it, establishing the right pattern and habits, which leads to correct use of language over time. In addition, when students catch and correct their own mistakes, their confidence increases.

Personally, I use two methods. One is when I hear a mistake during pair work. Simply by putting both hands up (in a stop gesture) and saying "Hang on, please say that again?" students become accustomed that this signals a mistake in their previous sentence, prompting a self-review and oral correction. The other I generally use with lower level students. Take, for example, the common grammar mistake, "What do you like music?" Again, stopping the pair briefly, I show one hand - palm facing the student - signaling the finger on his/her left as "What", and the last finger, on his/her right, as "music", inviting the student to ask the same question again. A prompt of wiggling the first finger while saying "what" and the last finger while saying "like" is usually enough for the student to rearrange the incorrect grammar. On correct production of the language, I congratulate the student and ask them to say it once more, this time a little faster, bringing all fingers together as a cue. The result is often a smile of accomplishment from the student, followed by a "Well done!" from me, and with the mistake self-corrected and much more likely to be remembered, I move on to the next pair. This technique also works for mistakes such as "I went to shopping yesterday" and many other short sentences.

Group correction:

Students don't always catch their own mistakes, no matter how skilled they may be. Or perhaps you don't want to interrupt an activity. Or maybe you feel as though you have corrected too much during the lesson already, so teacher-to-student correction is out of the question, too. Group correction is an alternative, with peers in small groups of up to five working to identify mistakes.

The idea is that the groups work together to help one another. With role plays, presentations, interviews, debates, or any other type of group activity, students note mistakes for a feedback session later. Similarly, one student can sit out, observe the conversation, and take notes. Other students then rotate out to observe as the activity continues. A correction session follows in which the students make a list of all the mistakes heard and correct them together, with no focus on who said what, rather what was said. Always stress that feedback should be positive, and that everyone benefits by pointing out and correcting mistakes together.

Group correction has the potential to foster teamwork, as well as a sense of support in the classroom. Both are important in creating a positive learning environment where students can feel comfortable experimenting with the language. It also provides the opportunity for students to notice language problems without help or interruption by the teacher. Unfortunately, this also means that any errors (unfamiliar language, or language above the students' ability level) will remain uncorrected. This negative point may be over-looked in view of the increased student talk time. And anyway, you can still monitor the groups for any common errors.

At first, I found the set up and execution of various correction techniques a little clumsy. But, with time and repetition, my students soon learned what was expected of them and things began to run much more smoothly. As with all good teaching, experimenting is the key.

Conclusion:

If any of the techniques for correction are overused, their effectiveness becomes limited. In a typical class, some combination of teacher-to-student, self-correction, and peer-to-peer correction probably provides the most benefit. It ensures that you have the chance to point out problems with the language. It also helps students to build confidence and responsibility through self-correction, plus language recognition skills while correcting others. When employed together, we produce proficient speakers of English. And

that's exactly what we want.

About the writer

Stewart teaches oral communication classes at Dokkyo University. He also teaches at Saitama University where he is involved in an international program teaching students from various parts of Asia. He has three years management and teacher training experience for an English conversation school in Tokyo where he published a national training manual.

Further Reading:

Scrivener, Jim (1994). *Learning Teaching.* MacMillan LanguageHouse.

Readers!

Languaging! wants your feedback! Please send us your comments, reactions and reflections, however brief, positive or critical. One way send feedback is to post your comments online at the **Readers Forum** webpage on our website at

http://www.geocities.com/languaging

Alternatively, you can send your comments by email to

languaging@yahoo.com

In the subject line, write "Readers Forum." Please tell us which articles you are commenting on.

Readers' Forum

Inspiring Newsletter!

Estee Soon

May 27th, 2008:

Dear editors and readers,

This is one of the most wonderful newsletter I ever come across. I was surfing the net and somehow the word Languaging! just caught my attention.

After reading Languaging!, I'm really encouraged by lots of articles here. Not only you're sharing teaching ideas, you've also provided invaluable insights from students and teachers. I particularly fall in love with your Sparkling Summer 2006 issue. I like these 2 articles – "Random Acts of Kindness" and "The Talk & Move Exercise." I'm hoping to incorporate these new ideas in class next semester – to spark their passion and to make them sparkle in English class! I'm sure my students will be thrilled.

Besides that, your newsletter has also inspired me to start a newsletter here. I think I want to get teachers from other community colleges involved in creating it – to contribute ideas and share our thoughts the way you do in Languaging!

Thank you for making these resources available and easily accessible. Surely I'll recommend this site to my fellow colleagues in Malaysia. Ganbante!

Cheers,
Estee Soon

My First Teaching Experience:
Volunteer English Teaching at Sakae Elementary School

Yuko Iwasaki, Dokkyo University

I major in English and this is my 4th year at Dokkyo University. I am taking a class on teaching curriculum and I'm thinking of getting a license to be a JHS and HS English teacher. This June, I went to my former junior/senior high school to begin student teaching practice. I taught junior high school age students, with the help of their regular teachers. I was a little nervous at first, but I enjoyed learning a lot about teaching.

I had my first teaching experience last year. I'd like to tell you about this experience. There was an announcement about volunteer English teaching in elementary schools in April. This volunteer position was for 3rd and 4th year university students who wish to be an English teacher. There were three schools that we could choose from. Two of them were as an assistant of an assistant language teacher (ALT) who is a native speaker. In the other school, we could make group of two or three university students and then, together, we would plan and hold classes. This was the first time teaching for me, so I decided to be an assistant for an ALT. I volunteered for English classes from last June to this March in Sakae Elementary School near Dokkyo.

"'Relax and enjoy.' This is what my teacher … told me … It was good advice. So this term, I just set goals of relaxing and making good friendships with students."

There are two reasons I decided to volunteer at Sakae. First, I wanted to have more confidence before student teaching at my junior/senior high school. As I said above, I've never had teaching experiences before, and I wanted to get used to the situation. Also, my friend who volunteered at the same school before recommended it to me since the kids are so cute and nice. She had great experiences teaching them English. Second, in my

previous article, I had written about why I am against English education in public elementary schools, but I didn't know the actual situation from a teacher's perspective, so I wanted to find out the truth for myself.

As for the regular ALTs, there are three ALTs in this school. I worked with Allan, a native English teacher from the Philippines. Allan teaches 3rd and 4th grade students, and the other two ALTs teach 5th and 6th grade students. 3rd and 4th students study with Allan every other week, and other weeks, they study English watching an English video. For example, once when students were learning about insects, they watched a video about insects, too. I worked on 1st and 2nd period, every other Friday, and I taught 4th grade students with Allan.

At Sakae, students begin studying English in the 3rd grade. They don't have textbooks or workbooks for English classes, but we do many different kinds of activities. We teach one topic for a month and review the same topic several times so they have many chances to practice. The style for English classes in this elementary school was team-teaching by three teachers (an ALT, a volunteer teacher, and the homeroom teacher). ALTs prepare lessons from their own materials and some materials are provided by the school. When a volunteer teacher comes, the ALT tells us what we're going to do in the class. Also, the homeroom teacher is in the classroom and helps us with the students. The homeroom teacher usually doesn't know what the class will be till it begins.

I began volunteer teaching on June 8th, 2007. In the beginning, because this was the first experience to teach students, I was really nervous and my voice was often too quiet. The homeroom teacher had to ask me to speak louder since students couldn't hear me well, especially those who sat in the back seats. During the first term, I was always nervous and sometimes I would get a cramp in my leg after going back to the teachers' room. Allan always told me to relax after the class and I tried to, but when the class began, especially when I had to talk in front of the students, I still became nervous. But I kept telling myself to enjoy the atmosphere and gradually I felt a bit more relaxed. "Relax and enjoy." This is what my teacher, Tim Murphey, told me

every time in his teaching methods class. It was good advice. So this term, I just set goals of relaxing and making good friendships with students.

In the second term, another volunteer student (my friend) changed her work schedule from Friday to Thursday. So I began teaching another two classes with 3rd grade students until a new volunteer teacher could come. When I visited 3rd graders for the first time, I thought the atmosphere was completely different. Since this is the first year for them to study English, they seemed to be really interested in English. We used some Japanese for 3rd graders to make sure of their understanding for what Allan said. For 4th graders, at first I did the same thing to them because I didn't know what I should do. But one day, the principal told me that it's no good to use Japanese for them. 4th graders are getting used to using English, so it's better to use only English at the class, he said. So I began using mostly English and only translating when necessary. This worked well.

The new volunteer teacher came from the 9th of November. She was in the same seminar as the previous volunteer student. After she came, there were two volunteer teachers in the 3rd grade because she let me stay in the classes with her. This term, students became so friendly that in 4th grade, sometimes after a game, they came to us and we were asked to write autograph for them. Also, when I saw some students outside of school, they said "Hello, Ms. Yuko." I was pleased with them. This term, I didn't feel as nervous as before and I enjoyed teaching and studying with the students. They sometimes became noisy, but they were really active!

The third term was my last as a volunteer teacher. This term, I taught 4 classes the same as the second term. The last volunteering day was the 7th of March. This day, we didn't have a new topic but instead we reviewed what we had studied this school year. We wrote all the topics we had studied on the blackboard. We had studied one topic for each month, and there were eight or nine topics on the blackboard for both grades. At the end of the classes, we got thank-you cards from all students! That was a pleasant surprise!

Let me give you an example of a typical lesson with Allan. This class was for 3rd graders and it was one of my impressive classes. On that

day, we practiced body parts. First, we reviewed the previous class, animals. We showed picture cards and practiced pronunciations. Then, we went on to the main topic for that day, 'Body parts'. First, we showed picture cards (head, shoulders, knees, toes, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hair) and practiced pronunciation. Then, I prepared CD and played the song, 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes'. We asked students to touch the part with song. At first, we were to play once, but they were so active and asked us, "Once more, once more." So we played twice that day. Allan seemed tired since the day of this class was in October and he was sweating.

The last activity for that day was "Fukuwarai" (Face making). We prepared two sets of face pictures and parts of the face (eyes, ears, mouth, nose, hair). Then, we divided them into two groups, Group A and Group B. Before we began the game, we taught direction words (up, down, left, right, stop) and practiced them. Then, Allan and I each picked a student. They came to the blackboard and we blindfolded them. We gave each student at the same part of the face as one of the groups. We showed what part to give other students, but we didn't tell the blindfolded students what we gave.

"Three, two, one, go!" They began putting the part of the face on the board and the other students were saying, "Up, up, up… Stop. Left, left…" and so on. Each group of students was telling each girl/boy and each group was saying different directions, so they became very noisy.

When all parts of the face were on the board and students went to their seats, Allan comments, "Wow, it's a monster!" for one group, and for the other, "Wow, that's an alien!" Everyone including me laughed.

In this class, I think students were so active and full of excitement! The class was in the second term and I got used to the class atmosphere, so I could enjoy the class and students seemed to enjoy the class. At first during the classes, I tried to enjoy, but I got butterflies in my stomach and the feeling of nervous was ahead of the feeling of enjoy. Sometimes I thought students seemed to notice my feeling of nervous. One time when I translated what Allan said, my voice was tremulous. Be confident! Enjoy the atmosphere and relax. I set my goal for student-teaching in June.

I think students have fun in Sakae's English classes. I don't know about 5th and 6th grades, but 3rd and 4th graders are so interested in English that their classes are very fun. Despite only having English class once every two weeks, students seemed to learn a lot of vocabulary and remember English words well. This surprised me every time.

At first before I began this volunteer work, I was worried if I could do well since this was the first time to be a teacher, but thanks to the teachers and students at Sakae, I really enjoyed volunteering. I learned that a teacher has to enjoy classes as well as students. If the teacher doesn't enjoy the class, the students can't either.

My job at Sakae has finished but sometimes when I see students who I taught with Allan, they greet me even now. Because they were 3rd and 4th graders when I was there, they are still in Sakae Elementary School. I hope they continue to enjoy and learn a lot through their school lives. It was really nice experience for me and I enjoyed them a lot. Thank you for the precious experience, everyone!

About the writer

Yuko Iwasaki is a 4th year student in the English Department at Dokkyo University. She has recently completed her student teaching, which she plans to describe in the next issue of *Languaging!*

The Chatroom!

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An Intensely Positive Experience Quick-Write

Tim Murphey, Kanda University of International Studies

We had about 15 minutes to the end of class in the last period of the day. I told the rather tired university students that I wanted them to do a quick-write about an intensely positive experience (IPE). I explained that in a quick-write they were to write whatever came into their minds about the topic and not to worry about grammar or vocabulary and that if they did not know the word to write it in Japanese, but to try to do it as much as possible in English. They were not to stop but rather to write continuously for five minutes. I said, "Your hand should hurt at the end."

"I was in awe and almost moved to tears by this class that was completely engaged by an activity."

I explained what an IPE was by giving them three personal examples: my recent trip to Malaysia in which I met a diverse group of Malaysians and stayed up talking half the night, my retreat with my freshman class for 2 days, and a recent tennis game. I told them I thought of all these then chose the first to write about. I told them truthfully that I had written about it at lunch time and that I was amazed how positive it made me feel. I showed them an article that I was reading about IPE research (Burton and King, 2003) in which they had 90 university students write essays for 20 minutes a day for three days, half about IPEs, and the other half about mundane topics (e.g. describing their shoes). Then they were able to look at their health records three months prior to the experiment and three months after (all students had indicated the university health center as their main source for medical care). They found that those who wrote IPEs "suffered significantly fewer illness after writing relative to the control group" (p. 158). So not only can writing IPEs make you feel better

emotionally but also enhance your overall health.

My students started writing with about 12 minutes left as I turned on some background music. Walking around I confirmed they were engaged and not stopping for corrections or to erase anything. I thought to myself that when they finished I would get them to tell each other what they wrote or even read each other's and talk about them for the time remaining. But I was in for a surprise.

When 5 minutes was up, I turned off the music and was getting ready to clap my hands to get their attention, as I often do, but they were all writing so diligently and so engaged. So I lowered my hands without clapping and looked at them writing as if it were an essay test about to end. So I told myself I would wait until a few at least stopped writing and looked up at me. But they didn't. They just kept on writing—for another 5 minutes in silence without any music—several going on to multiple pages—a true state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). I was in awe and almost moved to tears by this class that was completely engaged by an activity. But it was not the activity. I know. It was their content, THEIR Intensely Positive Experience.

Finally the bell rang for the end of class and I expected them to stop and prepare to leave, but only one student did—the others kept on writing for another minute or two. As the last two were still writing I said, "Wonderful. You wrote for 10 minutes, not 5! I am looking forward to reading them!" And I am.

After class I went back to the article and found the original description of the IPE prompt and understood that maybe my explanation was sufficient to make them think along the original prompt's lines from Maslow 1971:

> Think of the most wonderful experience or experiences in your life, happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music, or suddenly "being hit" by a book or painting or from some great creative moment. Choose one such experience or moment. Try to imagine yourself at that moment, including all the feelings and emotions associated with the experience. Now write about the experience in as much detail as possible trying to include the feelings, thoughts, and emotions that

were present at the time. Please try your best to re-experience the emotions involved. (Burton & King, 2003, p. 155)

Try it! Try it yourself first. Then do it with all your classes. Not only is it good for their spontaneous English development, but it is good for their attitudes toward English classes and, most importantly, their physical and emotional health.

About the writer

Tim Murphey is a language teacher and researcher at Kanda University of International Studies and beyond. Recently he has been investigating the wisdom of crowds through attribution analysis of language learning histories.

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'Brown Bag Tuesday'
from a Student's Point of View

Naoki Sekimoto, Dokkyo University

Last school year (2007/2008) during the fall semester, a group of teachers and students began sitting down together for during lunch on Tuesdays for what we called: "Brown Bag Tuesdays." This was an "open, informal presentations series" on "ways to make our jobs easier, more fun and more effective." Basically it was just an excuse for teachers (or teachers in training) to sit down together and "talk shop." Each week a different guest presenter would open up the conversation on a particular topic. Below are the observations of one regular "Brown Bagger":

'Brown Bag Tuesday' What a comfortable and at-home sound it has! In fact, I could not understand the meaning of it at first. Someone explained that people used to bring their lunches to school or work in a brown bag and thus a "brown bag meeting" was during lunch. In November and December 2007, I attended four or five 'brown bags'in the Dokkyo Teacher's Lounge.

The informal and comfortable lunch meetings were really nice for me, because I could understand how some native English-speaking teachers conducted their classes as well as what kind of beliefs and impressions they had of students. These were short 25 minute presentations after which most of us had to run to our next class.

Mr. Joe Falout (from Nihon University) introduced the concepts of 'de-motivation' and 're-motivation', and offered activities to invite students to get re-motivated. Ms. Jodie Stephenson introduced 'ways to stimulate learning outside of the classroom' mainly getting students listen to music and movies daily through Internet or web-pages and to record their own voices. Mr. Robert Durham introduced an efficient way to evaluate students with a computer program, GradeQuick®. Mr. Scott introduced also an efficient way to evaluate students daily by handmade cards with identification photographs attached

on them. And, Mr. Chris Carpenter introduced a way to evaluate students and to grasp students' identity and thinking well with handmade cards. Not only academic but also fun topics, such as Christmas materials and songs, were shared during the lunches.

Since it was a small and informal group meeting, every participant was invited to ask as many questions as they liked. As for me too, after I finished listening or during other participants' opinion, I had several chances to ask questions, and of course, I could tell them my opinion from a student's point of view.

Ms. Risa Aoki (from Tokai University) wrote in the conclusion of her essay, titled 'Go Observe and Accept Observers! See Through Someone Else's Eyes and See What You've Been Missing,' "I think observation is very advantageous for both the observer and the teacher who is observed." (Languaging! No.10, p. 9). And, in my belief, just only having lunch with other teachers or students, over whatever topic concerning daily teaching, also seems very advantageous for each participants.

The more the Brown Bag gathers participants' voices from now on as well, the more precious the bag is going to be, I guess. Anyway, it was a really nice opportunity for me to attend those meetings at lunch. I am very happy with that.

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More Students Learning Basic Presentation Skills in High School

A Report on the Results of a Brief Survey

Tetsuya Fukuda • Dokkyo University

Background

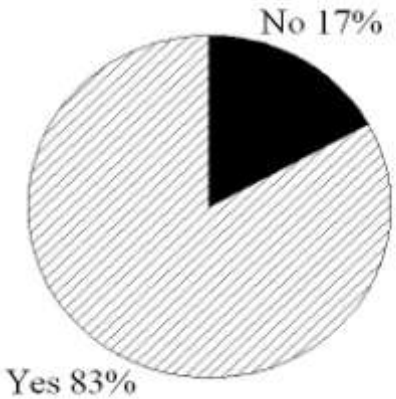
In my writing and reading classes, I require my students to make a presentation in English. Presentation is sometimes considered to be only for upper-level classes, but it is also possible to do such activities in low-level classes as well. The majority of my class fall into this category. While some of my students seem accustomed to making a presentation, others don't. It may come as a surprise to many teachers at the university level, but there is a course called *Joho* (translated as Information Studies) in high schools, which has been officially required in Japan since 2003. An important part of this course is learning basic presentation skills. In fact, twelve out of the thirteen official high school textbooks of *Joho* have a section of presentation. In order to find out whether our students have really studied presentation in their *Joho* classes, I conducted a survey at Dokkyo University in May 2007.

Method

Participants. Ninety-five university freshmen from the departments of law, economics and foreign languages participated in the survey. Theoretically, ninety of them should have taken the *Joho* course, except for one Chinese student who did not have *Joho* in high school, and four other students over twenty-two years old.

Figure 1

Information Studies in High School



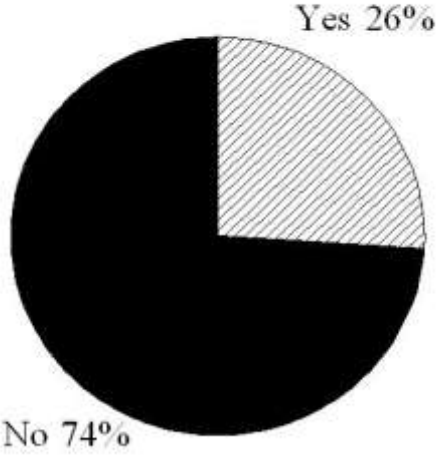
When they were in high school, *Joho* was not a required subject.

Data Collection. I asked them two questions, namely whether they had taken the course called *Joho* in high school, and if so, what they had studied in the course.

Results

Although about 95% of the respondents should have taken the course, to the question of whether they took the *Joho* course in high school or not, only 83% answered yes, while 17% answered no (see Figure 1). About half of the students answered that they learned how to use presentation software such as PowerPoint. As for presentation activities, 26% of them said they had done at least one group presentation, and 20% said they had done at least one individual presentation. Nearly 75% indicated that they had never done presentations in high school (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Presentation Experience



Discussion

As *Joho* is a required course, the results might seem surprising, but not to those familiar with the Japanese education and exam system. In Japan, each university creates an independent entrance test for its applicants to take, with each university deciding the subjects in which it will test applicants. Since information studies is not a subject usually included in the entrance exams for college, it tends to be downplayed by both teachers and students.

Generally speaking, students sitting for a test at a national university may well take an exam with seven subjects in contrast to perhaps three at a private university. Still, information studies is extremely unlikely to be one of them. Consequently some schools intentionally ignore the requirement to teach it, or teach it in such a way that topics of more direct relevance to the entrance exam can be covered. In fact, it was found in 2006 that 247 high schools all over Japan did not have *Joho* classes. (1)

Some of the participants in this

survey who replied that they had not studied information studies indicated that there was not such a course as *Joho* at their high school. Others answered they had indeed enrolled in a course called *Joho* but they did not study anything in the designated textbook for that class. Instead, the course typically consisted of advanced math or Japanese lessons (two subject areas directly relevant to entrance exams). One of the participants in this survey wrote, "the teachers rationalized that such studies also constituted a kind of 'information studies.'"

As for the second question on students' exposure to basic presentation skills, these numbers may look surprisingly large to many teachers. Before the survey, I expected less than 10% had learned how to use PowerPoint and still fewer students had ever made a presentation. The implication of these results is that, even though presentation activities in high school are conducted in Japanese, at least some of the students have already made a presentation in high school.

Conclusion

The data obviously suggests some practical implications for university teachers when asking students to do presentations. If a quarter of them have had the experience of doing presentations, they become a valuable resource for students who haven't. For example, when doing presentation activities in university classes, the teacher might consider grouping students such that there is at least one experienced student in each group. There is also more chance for peer evaluations, class discussions about various presentation elements, and other student-centered activities that take advantage of this resource. On the other hand, teachers should keep in mind that a large portion of their classes have never done presentations before.

About the writer

Tetsuya Fukuda is a father and English teacher at a number of universities around the Tokyo area. His research interests include issues of student demotivation and remotivation. He is also an avid soccer fan.

Notes

(1) Monbukagaku-sho (MEXT), (2006), On the issues of untaken required classes, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/18/12/06121404/001.htm

四字熟語

Yoji Jukugo Part 2:

Expressing a Complete Message in Just Four Character Combinations

Jeroen Bode • Tsukuba University Foreign Language Centre

A continuation of the discussion: A short resumé

In the previous issue of *Languaging!* (*No. 10*) I introduced the phenomenon of "*yoji jukugo*" in the Japanese language. I tried to make a distinction between two groups; here we could just simply refer to them as "historical" ("true") *yoji jukugo* and "new" ("false") *yoji jukugo*. With this in mind it would be possible to judge quickly to which of the two groups a case of a four-character compound belongs.

In Part 1, I described a survey I conducted to learn more about native Japanese speakers use these compounds. In particular, I wanted to find out which were still in daily use. I believe such information could be used to support not only learners of Japanese, but also those who are engaged in the line of work as translators and/or interpreters Japanese. Below I will report on the results of this questionnaire.

Details and Results

In my previous article I failed to mention that the questionnaire was restricted to just one area, actually one prefecture, of Japan, namely: Ibaraki. The whole of Japan would have been more reliable for statistical purposes.

Other restrictions concerned the age group between 20 – 70 and the kind of occupations. This was to see if *yoji jukugo* are used by members of society not any longer in school.

One difficulty in using the questionnaire was the unequal number of respondents. For instance out of 240 respondents, the biggest group of company workers had 76 respondents, while the smallest group were the public office workers with 4 members. As for the matter of frequency the highest score was for the answer of occasionally using *yoji jukugo* by the respondents (Bode, 2008).

In my first article I already referred to the groups of

respondents briefly, but now for reference I would like to give here the exact number for each group:

Fire fighting:	10
Police:	27
SDF:	9
Companies:	76
(6 subgroups)	
Club members:	14
Driving school:	10
Public office:	4
University:	19
Education/general:	14
(2 subgroups)	
Students:	8
(2 subgroups)	
Others:	28
(4 subgroups)	
Control group:	21
(3 subgroups)	
Total (n) =	**240**

*Subgroups = e.g. to facilitate the grouping of multiple divisions

The results were not influenced by work or professional experiences, as I expected them to be. Most of the members gave similar answers. Some representative examples I will discuss below.

Examples from the questionnaire

First of all, the answers I expected to receive from this questionnaire were not supplied at all by the respondents. For instance, among the police respondents (27) I was convinced to receive a lot of times: *Ichimô dajin* (一網打尽 - round up criminals [like a school of fish]), but instead it was only given once. Similarly, among the SDF-members (9) the expression *heisha kyôki* (兵者凶器 - arms are unlucky things) was completely absent in their answers (Bode, 2008). Initially I thought *yoji jukugo* with special meanings like the ones above would end up in professional language of certain groups.

In *Languaging! No. 10* I already gave a preliminary indication of some recurrent phrases in the answers then. Not surprisingly in comparing the end results with all the groups the outcome is still strikingly similar. Number 1 still seems to be *isshôkenmei* (一生懸命 - [do something] with all one's effort [with one's whole life on the line]). This is followed up secondly with *ichigo ichie* (一期一会 – Every encounter is unique.). Both are highly visible in every group's lists, with *isshôkenmei* chosen number 1 among the 12 groups and subgroups. *Ichigo ichie* is present in the remaining 8 groups and subgroups (Bode, 2008).

Other frequently listed yoji jukugo by the respondents are:

- *Yûjû fudan* (優柔不断 - indecision)
- *Rinki ôhen* (臨機応変 - flexibility)
- *Jigô jitoku* (自業自得 - one's deeds and its outcome in rewards or punishments)

- *Ishin denshin* (以心伝心 - mind to mind study)
- *Isseki nichô* (一石二鳥 - to kill two birds by one stone)
- *Tantô chokunyû* (単刀直入 - cut right to the heart of the matter)
- *Jûnin toiro* (十人十色 - there are as many opinions as there are people)

These examples are in all the groups and subgroups more or less recurrent. For a full account I should mention that the list in my article of the *Tsukuba-Ronshû* also include those that are predominantly present in the individual groups. But for a universal comparison they could be considered as singular occurrences. A full study into a statistical familiarity of *yoji jukugo* can be found in Takahashi Masanobu's 2005 publication. He also includes in his paper examples that have a low score among the answers of the 640 respondents (university students).

The "false" yoji jukugo

This special group of four characters is remarkably small in the answers of the respondents, only 44 items. Normally they do not present a problem in understanding what they mean (please refer to my article for the full list of the Ronshû of Tsukuba University, p.128 -129)

Conclusion

The nine *yoji jukugo* above are clearly not restricted to a single profession. As a matter of fact they were given by persons of different social positions and occupations. Furthermore, the contents of these nine are also applicable in other situations (like in personal life and thoughts) in addition to merely considering them in a professional sense. Probably they are to some extent an indication of what is considered important in Japanese culture in view of a person's character (both in merits and demerits). One matter that could be researched further would be if there is a certain noticeable decline, both in use and understanding of these interesting expressions, by age or different generations.

About the writer

Since 2005, Jeroen has worked for Tsukuba University Foreign Language Centre as a part-time lecturer. In 2007 he began also working as an independent official translator of Japanese.

Erratum: Languaging! No. 10, p. 42. "*Kentai icchi* (懸体一致)": the kanji should in fact be: *kentai icchi* (懸待一致)

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The Magic of Journaling
A Conversation on the Benefits of Student Journals

Christopher Carpenter and Keiko Okada
Dokkyo University

The following is a short conversation the authors, Keiko Okada (KO) and Christopher Carpenter (CC), recently had on the subject of student journals. This year they are both using journals in some of their classes. Keiko is new to class journals, but has already found the experience very useful, even gratifying, for a variety of reasons. Christopher also uses them in various formats, and he was interested to hear about her approach and impressions. The two of them sat down over coffee one evening and shared the following ideas about the uses and benefits of classroom journals.

"I get so much positive feedback for the class, but also I feel that writing in the journal actually makes students more interested in what we are doing in the class."

CC: When I think of journaling, my first thought is that it can be a powerful reflective tool for anyone who decides to keep a journal. Over the years I've experimented with diaries and journals in my classes. I know you've begun trying them with your students too, and I am interested in hearing your impressions. First of all, what interested you about journals and what made you want to try them in your classes?

KO: Well, I wasn't too familiar with the concept of reflection in learning until I attended a presentation by Jodie Stephenson at Asia TEFL a couple years ago. I had an interest in journals, but my impression was that it could really mean a lot of extra work for the teacher. I saw Tim (Murphey) walking around school with all of these notebooks and he was always reading them. It looked like a lot of work. But Jodie's presentation really helped me understand the value of journals, so I was interested and wanted to try it.

CC: Yes, I remember Tim always carrying his "action logs" in his back pack. It weighed a ton!

KO: Yes, but then you and Jodie showed me this journal format, and I thought, oh, I can handle that. I looked like a very manageable way to

experiment with journaling and I decided to try it in a few classes this year. So I took your format and adjusted it for my own classes.

CC: Yes, so basically the format we are both using is just a small booklet that the teacher makes at the beginning of the semester (by folding a number of B4 sized sheets in half) and then hands out to all of the students. There are just enough pages for each day of the semester, plus a couple for final reflections. It makes it much easier to carry around.

KO: Exactly. I've done portfolios in my writing classes, and had students buy their own file notebooks that they could personalize, but it was just a burden to carry around. Sometimes you need to look at these materials when you are on the road, and I just found it to be too much. But this format is much more manageable.

CC: Yes. So let's just talk for a minute about what goes in these journals. There is a page for each day and space to write comments (see Figure 1, , for a sample journal page). Also, you have a space for the students to list the activities for each day and rate their interest, usefulness and difficulty. Again, Tim Murphey is a big proponent of action logs. Do you tell students what activities to write every day?

KO: No, the students think about it and write down what they remember. Sometimes they keep their journals open during class and actually write down the activities as we go along.

CC: I think that is interesting because sometimes students have a very different idea of what is going on in the class than the teacher does. That can be very informative.

KO: Yes, sometimes I think we've done five activities, but they only write two! Other times someone will write, for example, "shadowing," and I will think, oh, that's right, I forgot we did that! I find rating the activities on a 1-5 scale to be very interesting too, though I wonder if it is not too detailed.

CC: Yes, often I am pretty sure I know what student's feel about the activities we do in class. But I am sometimes surprised. And sometimes there is a lot of diversity within the responses as well. But even if I am not surprised, there seems to be a lot of value in having students reflect on the particular activities of the class. It puts more responsibility on the students, makes them see the class in a more nuanced way.

KO: I think it helps them to remember the content of the activities as well. In the comments section, I have them write what we did in class, number one. Then, (two) they write their

Figure 1: Sample Class Journal Page

Class Date: _____

Activity Reflection

Today's Activities	I	U	D
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

※ (*5 = very interesting, useful, and too difficult; 0 = not interesting, not useful, and too easy.*)

Class Journal

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Self-Evaluation

1. I did my homework. _____
2. I came to class on time and prepared (i.e. with my homework, book, pen, paper, etc.). _____
3. I listened and participated in activities. _____
4. I asked questions when I didn't understand. _____
5. I used English about _____ % of the time (ex. 50%, 75%, etc.).
6. My goal for the next week is to use English _____% of the time.

Figure 1 is an example of a page from a class journal. Besides the space for reflective comments (Class Journal), students are asked to evaluate activities (Activity Reflection at top) by rating them on a scale from 0~5. They use the same scale for the Self-Evaluation (at bottom).

impressions and feelings about the activities. Then (number three), any other comments, thoughts or questions they have about the class or content, whatever they want to tell me. Sometimes I just get comments like, "Today is my birthday." It makes me very interested in their journals because it is not simply a monotonous description of what we did. They always write their impressions, for example, "I enjoyed today's class" or "I'm sorry I didn't do well on the quiz." It is a feedback for me, and it helps me understand the students better.

CC: Also, I see you have a section for self-reflection on each page. It is kind of a participation self-evaluation, for example, effort on homework, speaking English in class, and so on. Do you find that useful?

KO: Yes. Especially the part where they note how often they spoke English or Japanese in the class. Then they make a goal for the next class. They will often add comments, like, "Today I only spoke English a couple of times, but I really want to speak more. I'll do my best next week." This gives me a lot of information. I often do group work in my classes, but of course there are some groups that don't work together as well and everyone just does their own thing. But now I can see when students want to speak.

CC: So is it a lot of work for you to go through their journals before every class? Do you spend a lot of time correcting them? I can see you give a lot of comments on every page.

KO: Well, I do not correct any grammatical mistakes. I give comments like, "yes," or "okay," or "great!" It still takes time, but I can do a class of 30 students in about 45 minutes. So it is really manageable. And actually it is fun to read through them. It's much more interesting than grading compositions because I feel like I am talking to them. Even though I don't know all of the students yet – I almost know who is who – but I learn a lot about them through their writing and remember them better.

CC: Yes, it is a great tool for building student-teacher rapport, isn't it? Sometimes they will even write questions for me, about my opinion on something. Those little things really help me feel I know my students better.

KO: I give students 10 or 15 minutes at the end of each class to write in their journals, and they give them to me before they leave. So they don't take the journals home. I have them between classes. I often arrive early to give journals back and give students a chance to read my comments before class starts.

CC: Yes, that is also good for part-time

teachers who don't have an office. They don't need to find a way to collect them during the week. I used to do reflection worksheets and have students return them to me the following week, but the two week turn-around time was really too much. By the time they got my comments on their reflections, too much time had gone by for it to be as relevant.

KO: The most surprising thing for me has been the quality of student comments. I really didn't anticipate how much students would write and they really seem to enjoy it. I get so much positive feedback for the class, but also I feel that writing in the journal actually makes students more interested in what we are doing in the class. It makes them more focused on the content of the course, more attentive and observant, more …

CC: More invested, maybe? Yes, it is very interesting. For example, you would expect the feedback to be pretty uncritical since it isn't anonymous, but I often get very direct feedback on activities or things that students don't find useful, maybe, "This activity didn't work," or "I didn't like doing this." It's actually refreshing. But of course, usually the feedback tends to be positive, and that's good too. I think the students are forced to look a little more closely for the value of what they are doing. When they see the value and understand it for themselves, then probably they do become more invested in the class as a whole.

KO: One of the courses I'm using journals in is a reading course. We read different topics, do research, write up outlines and do presentations. This is a new class and approach for me and I was a little worried about what students would think of the content matter. But in their journals I am finding many comments about the content of the readings. So for example, we were reading about the dangers of cell phones. In their journals I found many comments: "I'm going to be more careful about how often I use my cell phone and keep the calls short." They are trying to find something to write in their journal, but at the same time they are paying more attention to the content. I can see they are really engaged by looking at their responses. This is something that I just wouldn't see without the journal, how they are feeling about what we're talking about. It is a great tool for me as I try new materials in my classes.

CC: It helps a teacher relax a little when they know students are engaged. If I know that we are all "on the same page" and I'm not losing anyone, I feel more confident. In classes that I don't use journals, I can sometimes feel a little paranoid about what my students are thinking, if they understand what I'm trying to do in the class.

KO: I always do group work in my classes. I like them to change groups often so that they have chances to work with different partners, but sometimes I'm not sure what the students think about that. But since using the journals I often find comments about how they enjoy meeting different people. Again, it is nice to know that they understand and appreciate these things.

(Continued on page 37)

'Student Voices' or 'Why I use Class Reflection Sheets'

Paul Doré, Tama University

I am definitely a proponent of class reflections sheets, class journals, or any other form of regular, focused student comment activity. The reflection sheets provide a multi-faceted and rich source of information for teachers. Every week in my class, I have the students write reflections on the class' activities. I ask them to comment on specific activities which I list on the board. I ask them to tell me the thoughts they had, how they 'felt', and what 'experiences' they had doing the activities. I tell them that knowing these things helps me to change our lessons' activities for the better. In a very short space, the students reveal to me so much more than several questionnaires could do. Moreover, lesson reflection sheets are much less time consuming to make than questionnaires, and can also become valuable sources of information for the students themselves if you get students to read each others reflection sheet from time to time.

"So I didn't only enjoy the storytelling but I also learned how to explain my thought effectually."

To illustrate what I mean, I have included a sample of the many varied types of comments I received in one recent class. These students are English majors in a Lecture Workshop class. In this class they were telling and retelling stories of a personal experience using a rotation format that allows them to have multiple partners in the class and many chances to recycle material. The comments below are given under headings indicating what I as a teacher feel I can learn from each comment (N.B. Comments are given as written by the students):

Critical feedback on activities as well as growing awareness of goals:
The time was too short to tell all of our group story that I had to shift

how to tell the story case by case. But in my opinion, this kind of situation is filling our lives, and we cope well with a situation every time. So I think today's [activity] was a good practice for our coping skill in English. Anyway, I spoke a lot that I felt very thirsty.

At first, I was thinking that repetition of telling a same story is useless. I just regarded it as a practice of speaking. But when I was going on my story telling I got to realize that my partner doesn't understand my words, and some appropriate words come up with me!!

Rotation storytelling was kind of difficult, but also really interesting to me … At first, we memorized the own sentences, but of course I forgot the sentence perfectly. So I had to explained the story with my own words. I think it was really good practice to speak English.

The more I told the story, the more I could tell it correctly.

…But I confused how the story goes on. Which part is ending? It trained me to rise my understanding.

Students' views of their own learning process beyond just this one class:
I could understand about 90 to 100% about other group's stories so I was really happy! But, I think my weak point about English is to put my ideas and then express in English. So I think I'll try speak English more and more in this class and other classes."

Perceived take away value of the lesson:
Also, we spoken in only English, so after this class, I was accustomed to speak and talk in English. I think that the students who major one language should … speak in the language all the time. We also should make opportunity to read the English book and to write the English sentence by ourselves.

Remembering past experiences for present day benefit, growth, enjoyment (see Murphey, IPE's, this issue):
Personal Experience story: I enjoyed to make the story because I could remember what I have done or felt at that time.

Chances for teacher-student rapport building:
By the way, do you like this season? I don't like this season, because it is humid season.

My reply: "Australians LOVE summer!"

Expression of challenges and needs:
I think that rotation storytelling and telling my partner's story are very difficult, but they are so useful. At this class, I learn difficulty how to tell a story with my words, and I was discouraged that I have few vocabulary."

Comments on peer interaction, interpersonal dynamics and the effects of near peer role models:
I felt a difficulty in doing the activities. But, my partner gave me a hint. I could enjoy this!

It was a little difficult to tell my partners story. First I should decide the order of the stories and collect it. Then I thought how do I tell the stories in my own words. I did partners story telling twice. Both stories be catched by my partners, and they said that I perfectly understood.

Also, I found out that everyone talks in good English, so I thought I have to study more hard."

Growing perception of themselves as members of a group with a common goal (emphasis added):
We really enjoyed the rotation storytelling.

Evidence of growing communicative competence and confidence:
When I thought "This word is better to express this situation", I tried exchange original words to my words. So I didn't only enjoy the storytelling but I also learned how to explain my thought effectually.

Rotation Storytelling was so impressive as usual because face-to-face conversations to express the contents as detailed as we could are always challenging. It helps us know the character of each student so much further than before, as well. Then the explanation of my partner's story was far more challenging than any other activity! It requires us to bring out our true abilities for English expressions. I do want to keep on enjoying the whole rest of this class!!

Tim Murphey first introduced me to the lesson reflection sheets in 'Action Log' format about 3 years ago. Reading comments like those above on an almost weekly basis ignited and sustains a great interest and energy for my work. Can you believe it? I am happy working! What a lucky fool am I! He he, ha ha!

About the writer
Paul Doré is a coordinator of the English Shower Program at Tama University and, with his wife Natsuyo, a proud new parent of a beautiful little girl named Natali.

Mistakes: Continued from Page 6

Mistakes Appendix:
Learning from Misteakes: Lesson Plan

1. Discussion (pair work)
   - How do you feel about making mistakes? Is it different now than how you felt in the beginning of the semester?
   - If it is, what changed and what helped you change?

2. Why persist on talking about this? Is it so important? Why are mistakes important?

Short reading assignment.

3. What is your opinion about the reasons for celebrating mistakes? Would you add any other reason? Does that make you feel different about mistakes? Which reason did you most identify with?

4. Song: I love Misteakes (by Tim Murphey)

Doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya do
Doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya do
Do you dare to dare to dare to love to love to love
Do you dare to dare to dare to love to love to love

If I make a little mMisteakes
Well that's just part of my perfect plan
Being perfectly me
You see, I need my Misteakes
To make me what I want to be

Do you dare to dare to dare to love to love to love your Misteakes
doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya do
doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya doya do

I love Misteakes, I love Mistaykes,
I love Misteaks, I love Miss takes
They show I'm learning
They show I'm risking
They show I'm human
They show I'm living

5. Feedback

***

Journals: Continued from Page 32

CC: Exactly! When I make the boys and girls mix it up in my classes, they look so nervous approaching each other. Of course in their comments you can see they are happy to finally get the chance! You really get to see a side of the students wouldn't otherwise.

KO: At this point with the journals, it is just me and the student who are interacting. I am interested in making newsletters with student comments soon so that students can see what others have written. Also, Tim Murphey sometimes takes a break from checking the journals and asks students to trade journals with a partner one week, read each others' and give comments. I want to try that too!

About the writers
Keiko is a co-director of Dokkyo University's Interdepartmental English Program. Christopher is a co-coordinator of the Speaking in Academic Contexts course with in the same program.

Class Evaluation 授業評価

*** Do not write your name on this sheet of paper. ***
「このアンケートには名前を書かないで下さい。」

Instructor's Name 教師名_____ Class Title 講座名 _____

Student's Major 専攻_____ Year 年 _____ Day 日付 _____ Time 時限 _____

Please rate each of the following statements about this class with numbers from 1 - 5. Record the comments you have on particular statements, especially those statements which are starred (＊). At the bottom and on the back of this sheet, please write any general comments you have.

授業に関する以下の質問に１～５までの数字で答えてください。個人的な意見がある場合、特に＊マークがついている項目には、コメントを書いてください。このアンケート用紙の裏には、どんなことでも良いので何か思っていることを書いてください。

(5 = usually agree, 4 = often agree, 3 = sometimes agree, 2 = often disagree, 1 = usually disagree)
５＝いつも，４＝たいてい，３＝時々，２＝ほとんどない，１＝まったくない

About the teacher 教師について	*Rate* 評価（数字）*Comment* コメント
1. The teacher begins class on time. 時間通りに授業が始まる	____ _____
2. The teacher is prepared for lessons. 授業準備をしている	____ _____
3. The teacher presents the lesson material clearly. 授業内容を明確に説明してくれる	____ _____
4. The teacher speaks in the target language. 先生は英語で話す	____ _____
5. The teacher speaks clearly and at a good speed. 明瞭かつ聞きやすい速度で話す	____ _____*
6. The teacher is enthusiastic about the subject. 熱意を感じられる	____ _____
7. The teacher has a positive attitude toward the students. 生徒に対して積極的な態度である	____ _____
8. The teacher encourages all students to participate actively. 全生徒が積極的に参加するように促している	____ _____
9. The teacher motivates me to study and learn. 勉強をしようとやる気にさせてくれる	____ _____
10. I would recommend this teacher to other students. この先生を他の生徒にも勧めたい	____ _____

About content, structure & activities 授業内容、構成、活動について	*Rate* 評価（数字）*Comment* コメント
11. The goals of the course are clear and appropriate. 講座の目標は明確かつ適切である	____ _____
12. The grading policy is fair and clear. 成績のつけ方は公平かつ明瞭である	____ _____
13. The level of the textbook and/or other materials is appropriate. テキストや他の教材のレベルは適切である	____ _____*
14. The topics and themes of the class are interesting. 授業で扱う話題やテーマは面白い	____ _____
15. The activities are interesting and make me want to learn. 活動は楽しく、学習意欲がわく	____ _____
16. The activities are useful and help me learn. 活動は有効で学習の助けとなる	____ _____
17. The pace of the activities is appropriate. 活動のペースは適切である	____ _____ *
18. The amount of homework is appropriate. 宿題の量は適切である	____ _____ *
19. There are many chances to ask questions when I don't understand. 分からないことを質問する機会はよくある	____ _____
20. There are many chances to communicate in class. 授業内でコミュニケーションをとる機会はよくある	____ _____

About the class environment 授業環境について *Rate* 評価（数字）*Comment* コメント

21. It is easy to communicate with other students in this class.
    授業内で他の生徒と容易にコミュニケーションをすることができる ____ _____
22. Other students in this class participate actively and enthusiastically.
    他の生徒は授業に積極的に参加し熱心である ____ _____
23. I learn from other students in this class.
    授業中に他の生徒から学ぶことがある ____ _____
24. I do not hesitate to ask questions in this class.
    授業中に質問しにくくない ____ _____
25. I have made new friends in this class.
    授業で新しい友人ができた ____ _____

Overall class evaluation 授業評価全般 *Rate* 評価（数字）*Comment* コメント

26. I am generally satisfied with this class.
    授業におおむね満足している ____ _____
27. My _____ skills improved in this class.
    授業を受けて、私の～する能力が良くなった ____ _____
28. My interest in the subject grew because of this class.
    授業のおかげで英語に対する興味が高まった ____ _____
29. My confidence grew in this class.
    授業で自信がもてるようになった ____ _____
30. I would recommend this class to other students.
    この授業を他の生徒にも勧めたい ____ _____

Items specific to this class 特別項目 *Rate* 評価（数字）*Comment* コメント

31. _____ ____ _____
32. _____ ____ _____
33. _____ ____ _____
34. _____ ____ _____
35. _____ ____ _____

Other comments or suggestions for the teacher 教師へのコメントや提案

Please write other comments or suggestions for the teacher below.
その他教師にコメントや提案があれば、下に記入してください。

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

※ Thanks to Maria Trovel for coordinating the translation of this evaluation sheet.
Additional translation and proof-reading was done by Yuko Iwasaki. We hope you find it useful.

The Efficiency Column

Do you have suggestions for improving the way we work, teach or learn? Do you just like to rant? Write for The Efficiency Column! Disclaimer*: Each author's content and ranting is her or his own and not necessarily that of the newsletter.*