

Curriculum: What do teachers do and what do students think of it?

Michael Carroll
Lynne Douglas
Marlen Harrison
Chie Tsurii
*Momoyama Gakuin
University, Osaka*

Reference Data:

Carroll, M., Douglas, L., Harrison, M., & Tsurii, C. (2005). Curriculum: What do teachers do and what do students think of it? In K. Bradford-Watts, C. Ikeguchi, & M. Swanson (Eds.) *JALT2004 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Curriculum renewal is happening in universities all over Japan, often driven from above, with limited data as to what actually goes on in classrooms. However, this approach takes no account of the professional skills and classroom experience of the teachers, nor the experiences and expectations of the students at the centre of the process. Almost every successful curriculum innovation, if not driven by teachers themselves, has substantial scope for teachers' understandings to inform decisions. This paper describes an approach to curriculum change that Markee (1997) calls a 'linkage model,' in which support and direction is provided from the top, but curriculum processes are informed by the practical knowledge of teachers and learners. The paper describes the rich picture that emerged when teachers and students in a university program were surveyed and interviewed, and the authors discuss the implications for program changes.

さまざまな大学でカリキュラム改革が行われているが、たいいてい場合は組織の上部によって決定されており、実際に教室でどのようなことが行われているのか十分に把握されずに改革が実行されていることが多いのではないだろうか。しかし、このような形でのカリキュラム改革は、各教員の専門家としての知識や技術、そして現場での経験を無視したものであると言える。また、教育活動の中心である学習者の経験や期待も無視したものである。成功したカリキュラム改革を見てみると、現場の教師自身によって決定されたものでなくとも、決定に際して教員の意見が十分に反映され、教員との合意のもとに決定されたものがほとんどである。本稿で詳述するカリキュラムデザインの取り組みは、Markee (1997)が「linkage model」と呼んだもので、サポートや指示は管理運営側から与えられるが、同時に、教師と学習者の実際の経験や知識がカリキュラム編成プロセスにおいて影響を与えるというものである。本研究では、教師と学習者についてアンケート調査とインタビューを行った。これらの調査から得られたさまざまなデータを提示し、カリキュラム改革に向けて示唆される点について論じる。

The notion that curriculum is more than simply a set of documents, that it encompasses the whole array of social relations that operate in classrooms and throughout educational institutions is not a new one. The Stenhouse formulation of curriculum as a set of understandings shared by teachers (Stenhouse, 1977), and David Tripp's systematic set of relations between particular people, objects, events, and circumstances (Tripp, 1987 p.7) are perhaps perspectives that most teachers intuitively understand. Nevertheless, they are worth bearing in mind when we think about institutional changes, how they come about, and how they work their way through the systems to which they are applied. It's easy to think that all that is necessary to change a curriculum is to draw up a plan and give out instructions. But once we get back to the view of curriculum as residing in the social situation of the classroom, and think of 'curriculum', as all those things that go on in and out of the classroom which have an influence on student learning, then we can see that in order to change that situation we need to go beyond this kind of prescriptive documentation (though it may still be a good starting point).

Perhaps the most important dimension along which curriculum changes vary is in the extent to which they are led from the top or the bottom of an organization. Markee (1997) describes five models of curriculum change, and concludes that top-down approaches are the least effective and bottom-up ones the most effective. However, he points out that there is considerable variation along the top-down, bottom-up continuum, and he recognizes that solely bottom-up developments are not suitable for all situations. While it appears to be true that instances where groups of teachers spontaneously develop new ways of working, through discussions arising out of their everyday work, are indeed often the best models of enduring and highly evaluated change, it does not necessarily follow that institutional initiatives have no role to play. First, such grass-roots-based changes usually take place in institutions with strong support structures, and second, institutions themselves (as administrators and managers) are also participants in these social situations, and thus have 'rights' to initiate changes. The crucial point for Markee is not where the impetus for change comes from, but the level of consultation and shared decision making. In cases where initiatives are top-driven there is a real danger, some would say a high probability, of them being rejected or subverted (Gibbons 1989). Sue Hood, one of the designers of the Certificate of Spoken and Written English widely implemented in Australia in the mid-1990s, points out that to varying degrees, 'in resilient and resourceful ways [teachers find] that they can continue to do what they have always done [...] regardless of the impositions of policy.' (Hood, 1995, p32) And it is not just a case of deliberate subversion. If teachers are not involved in thinking through the changes, and do not fully understand them, they may in fact be unable

to implement them effectively. There is thus always a need for serious consideration of the ways changes are communicated, especially to teachers, and the extent of the support mechanisms and feedback responsiveness. In other words, curriculum design, even when it comes from the top down, if it recognizes the crucial role of teachers in implementing it, must take responsibility for supporting teachers through its implementation, listening to their concerns and acting on them. A new curriculum must have sufficient flexibility to allow teachers' knowledge of the real situation at the classroom level to have an influence – from the bottom-up. It is not too much to say, then, that curriculum innovations will succeed or fail according to the extent to which teachers in particular, and to some extent students too, feel that they are meaningfully involved in the process of change. (Menges 1997; Claire and Adger 2000; Mackenzie 2002)

It follows, then, that before we can change anything in such a complex social situation as a curriculum, we need to understand what it is that we are changing. In other words we need to talk to teachers and students to find out how they perceive these objects events and circumstances in the classrooms they share. This paper describes a project in which teachers and students were surveyed using questionnaires, interviews, and structured discussions to find out what was happening in their classes. The paper also includes a short summary of discussions that took place at the conference presentation.

A Survey of Teachers and Students

The project was carried out in the third year of reform of the English language curriculum in a faculty of Letters at

a medium sized private university in Western Japan. In the first attempt at reform, a committee had chosen a textbook and issued directives to teachers. At the end of the first year it became clear that opposition to the text, chosen with little consultation, was nearly universal, and was expressed simply through non-compliance. The set text was withdrawn and this project was eventually set up to investigate current classroom practices. Teachers were invited to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 1.) and take part in a structured interview (Appendix 2.) focusing on their course design processes, actual classroom activities, assessment systems and rationales and so on. Following this, students were surveyed and interviewed in focus groups to gain some understanding of their perceptions of needs and the extent to which those needs were currently being met.

The student and teacher questionnaires were carried out in the latter half of 2003 and early 2004, followed up by face to face interviews. Nine oral communication lecturers and five reading lecturers took part. In addition a questionnaire was administered to 251 first year students, and two structured interviews carried out with fourteen of them. Both teachers and students were asked about their objectives, and the way they realised these objectives through their course design and activities. They were also asked about materials, homework, assessment of students, and course evaluation. In addition, teachers were asked about the extent of their contact with other teachers, and students were asked about their perceptions of the amounts of English and Japanese used in their classes

Data from Teacher Questionnaire and Interviews

The teacher questionnaire and additional questions for teacher interviews are shown in Appendices 1 and 2, and tables of responses to the questionnaire are shown in Appendices 3a-f.

Objectives and activities

Oral Communication: There were broadly four categories of objectives: practical listening and speaking skills and motivation, vocabulary building, building meta-linguistic knowledge, and learning skills. All the interviewees aimed to increase students' fluency, and several (four out of nine) aimed to increase students' confidence and to broaden students' vocabulary. Five out of the nine aimed to enable students to give opinions in English. Five interviewees also expected students to be able to work in groups by the end of the course. Three interviewees mentioned 'speaking in front of the class' as an objective, and two mentioned 'having positive experiences using English.' In contrast with the universal objective of fluency, only three interviewees mentioned 'accuracy' as an objective.

Reading: There were three groups of objectives: skills development, vocabulary building and awareness of other cultures.

Most Oral communication teachers mentioned integrated skills activities: LSRW leading to oral tasks. The focus was clearly on creating opportunities for students to speak in class, and to build confidence and fluency.

Reading teachers mentioned a wide range of activities, with the most popular being training in reading skills through explicit teaching and practice of skimming, scanning, guessing

from context, and doing exercises to build understanding of structure. Also mentioned were speed reading, reading aloud along with a tape recording, silent reading, and vocabulary building homework and quizzes. In addition, some reading teachers mentioned activities based on using the issues raised by texts for discussion or reflective writing.

Materials

Oral Communication: Most interviewees (8 out of 9) used one or more textbooks either in class or as the originals for photocopied worksheets. Similarly eight used audio-visual materials (textbook CDs, movies, textbook videos), and six created their own materials for games. Three interviewees used CDs as stimuli for oral activities, and two teachers used bi-lingual NHK educational programs for raising awareness of the importance of English.

Two interviewees used realia (pamphlets, objects, booklets, visual materials from their own country, materials for games), three used graded readers and other reading texts and articles, and four used materials from the internet for vocabulary building and preparation for oral presentations. In addition three interviewees wrote their own texts.

Reading: Similarly, all interviewees used a textbook. A wide variety of other materials were used including other textbooks, audiovisual materials, worksheets and handouts, materials from the internet and articles in magazines or newspapers.

Although there were few textbooks used by more than one teacher, the types were quite similar. As expected, most oral communication teachers used conversation based

texts, or integrated texts, while reading teachers choices were divided between reading skills texts and reading comprehension texts. Reasons for choice of textbook were also a little different. While both groups mentioned student-related topics, and appropriacy of level, oral communication teachers mentioned attractive formatting, and flexibility; and reading teachers mentioned fit with course objectives, and suitability for Japanese contexts. Several teachers noted that it was difficult to gauge the right level of textbook, particularly if they were not informed of the level of their class prior to the textbook selection period.

Homework

Most Oral Communication interviewees said they gave some homework (8 out of 9). The amounts ranged from occasional tasks (TOEFL preparation, completion of classwork, reports, reading or project-type work) (5 interviewees) to weekly assignments based on the textbook, or journal writing (3 interviewees). One of the latter interviewees required students to write 75 journal entries (5 per week).

Reading interviewees only occasionally gave assignments, up to five times per semester, but more often required students to prepare for class by doing prior reading, vocabulary study, revision for quizzes, or completion of unfinished classwork. As for the Oral communication teachers, the amounts of this type of homework varied between occasionally and after every class. Reading teachers also required homework associated with graded readers: reading at least 180 pages, and writing one or two book reports.

Assessment

All the oral communication teachers used some form of continuous or task-based assessment. Most used a combination of attendance and participation, classwork and homework, and some in addition used objective examination-like tasks (speaking tests for instance).

Reading teachers placed more reliance on tests (usually 65-80% of the final grade), but also used attendance and participation, homework (including graded readers book reports), and quizzes.

In both groups some teachers used a point system which they converted to grades, while others, especially oral communication teachers, awarded only grades. There was considerable variation in the way these scores were reported to students. In reading classes there was mostly an even spread of grades from A to C, with some variation between 5% and 20% for D. There was around a 10% drop-out rate (X).

Course Evaluation

Interviewees used one of two methods of evaluating their courses: student feedback, or observation and assessment of students, or a combination of both.

All interviewees said that they would value communication with the teachers of other courses. In reflecting on the aborted curriculum of 2002, most were positive about the possibility of communication between reading, writing and oral communication teachers (though not necessarily about the message book method, and not at all about the shared text). 6 out of the 9 complained that

this was not possible in the current system. Some noted that their main source of information was conversation with the students, but this did not give them a comprehensive picture.

It was suggested that the one kind of useful communication was general information about what activities students did in class, and about what homework they were given. Another was information about students' performance, especially where problems arose. Several teachers also suggested that some kind of thematic connection between reading and oral communication classes would be beneficial.

Other Responses and Suggestions

Teachers offered responses in addition to the nine questions asked. These comments were related to course objectives and materials, organization of classes, and content.

Course objectives and materials

- Eight teachers said that the Objectives (distributed by the Faculty) were achievable for students between upper beginner and advanced English levels, but it did not include levels below this.
- One teacher requested a community access file for teachers' lesson plans and materials (contributed by teachers) with an indication of topic and application, as part of a lightly structured curriculum approach.

Organization of Classes

- Some teachers appeared to be unaware that *Bungakubu* students were streamed according to

the results of the ITP test, while others complained that they were not informed of the results of the test for their students individually, nor even the level of the class they were teaching. While some teachers used their own initial diagnostic test, one teacher suggested that a common test (made available by the Faculty but not compulsory) would be useful.

- Five teachers requested that oral English class sizes be restricted to between 20 to 25 students. Twenty students was the ideal number for oral activities.
- Almost all teachers would welcome more information about students' other classes, and especially reading teachers would like to see some thematic connection between reading and oral communication classes.

Content

There were several comments and suggestions about the kind of content that best suited oral communication classes:

- Specific purposes course components (General English, business, study, travel, etc)
- A mini skills package with the theme of "responsibility" to be used as an introduction for very low level first year students to be administered bilingually at the beginning of the course
- Dictionary skills at upper beginner (+)level for first year students

- Sequenced listening skills
- Reading as an important part of oral communication: to provide material for talk
- Learning styles important when developing lessons and materials

Data from Student Questionnaire and Interviews

A questionnaire (Appendix 4) was administered to 251 first year students, to examine their perceptions about their classes. The questionnaire was administered in Japanese during end-of-the-year placement testing. The questionnaire was created so that student's and teachers responses could be contrasted and to develop a richer picture as to how student's perceive their learning environment. Responses (Appendices 4a-i.) were then explored in greater depth by interviewing small groups of students in both English and Japanese.

Question 1 asked students "*Which of the following activities did you do in English classes?*" For Reading classes, reading activities; translation activities; writing activities; reports; TOEIC / TOEFL preparation; and quizzes and tests were most commonly reported with more than 50 students responding positively for each of these activities. For Oral Communication classes, games; drama / role play; group and pair work; self and peer evaluation; oral presentations; speaking tests; parties and social activities; and pronunciation activities were most commonly reported with more than 100 students responding positively for each of these activities. In the "Other" category, students reported listening activities; music; and imagination activities for

Reading classes, and listening activities; written journals; and textbook use for Oral Communication classes.

Questions 2 and 3 asked students *“How much English did you / your classmates / your teacher speak in reading class?”* Students reported that both students and teachers spoke more English on average in Oral Communication classes than Reading classes.

Questions 4, 5, and 6 all asked students about textbooks: Textbooks were used by the majority of students in both classes, though slightly more often in Reading classes. Additionally, students perceived textbooks to be less effective in Oral Communication classes and the majority felt that shared textbooks among classes of the same type would not be effective in the future.

Question 7 asked students *“How many times did you have homework? What did you think of the amount? (for Reading and Oral Communication combined)”* There was considerable variation, but the majority of students reported having homework about six times per term and that the amount was just right.

Questions 8 and 9 asked students about assessment: The majority of students reported that they mostly understood the assessment system used for both reading and oral communication classes. Furthermore, the majority of students reported that they mostly understood how their own individual grades were determined in these classes.

Questions 10, 11 and 12 all asked students about Graded Readers: The majority of students reported reading 5 or 6 graded readers during the school year and enjoying them. The majority of students also felt that graded readers were somewhat or very effective in helping them to learn English.

Question 13 asked *“What do you want to learn from English classes at Momoyama? Be as specific as possible.”* More than 50 students reported wanting to learn English conversation and reading and listening were also commonly listed.

Question 14 asked *“Do you have any suggestions, requests or opinions concerning Bungakubu English classes?”* Responses varied but the most frequently occurring suggestions emphasized some form of speaking practice.

After completing the questionnaire, fourteen students met with a researcher in two groups (eleven students in one group and 3 in the other, approximately 45-60 minutes each session), to discuss the questionnaire.

Students perceived Oral Communication (OC) as being more important than their reading classes with speaking and conversation perceived as the most important skills. Students also recommended smaller class sizes and highlighted the importance for enthusiastic, friendly teachers. A variety of activities similar to those listed on the questionnaire were mentioned and students emphasized their view that teachers’ personalities and behaviors in class influenced the relationships formed. Overall, students reported enjoying their OC classes.

Students had less to say about the reading classes, but reported that they mostly enjoyed their graded readers, wanted opportunities to practice reading English from modern magazines and newspapers, and they all understood that they sometimes would have to read information that may not be of interest but that it was good experience. Students reiterated the importance of student-teacher rapport and suggested that students could practice information

learned in reading classes when in their OC classes. Overall, students reported enjoying their reading classes less than their OC classes.

Discussion

From the data above it appears that even though the current curriculum requirements are quite sparse and leave a great deal to teachers' discretion, there is in fact to a large extent a common approach, and broad agreement among teachers about what they should be doing, and what is appropriate for their students. There also seems to be considerable agreement among students as to both what they would like to happen and what actually happens in their classes.

Both reading and oral communication teachers have as their main goals skills building and vocabulary extension, and both groups teach a certain amount of meta-linguistic knowledge, and learning skills. Students appeared to agree with this approach in that overwhelmingly they said they wanted improve their practical communication ability. Both groups, but especially the reading group, felt that some link between the two classes would be advantageous. This could be in the form of sharing course outlines, using complementary themes and topics, or sharing information about student performance. If this were to occur it would clearly contribute to a greater focus on communication, and the reinforcement of vocabulary might be expected to result in greater success in vocabulary building.

Both groups use textbooks, but also use a wide range of other materials and activities both based on those texts and in addition to them. Students reported that both teachers and

students used more English in oral communication classes than in reading classes. Several teachers noted that textbook selection was difficult because they did not get sufficient information on their students before the beginning of classes. This is one area which has since been addressed, and teachers were informed of their classes for April 2005 by the preceding December.

Students reported a wide range of amounts of homework, from occasionally to twice weekly, and mostly they felt that the amount was more or less acceptable. There was more homework given in Oral Communication classes, though more preparatory reading was required in reading classes. Homework was often used for assessment, but not always. Both groups used a holistic approach, incorporating attendance and participation, class and homework, and objective measures such as quizzes, and tests (including speaking tests). Most students understood their assessment systems. And all teachers evaluated their own courses by a combination of student feedback from various sources and observation of student progress, in addition to the university-wide end of semester evaluation questionnaire carried out in every class.

In the process of conducting questionnaires and interviews, we realised that teachers are gradually getting involved in communication networks. At first, when we asked teachers to take part in the questionnaires and interviews, they seemed to be reluctant to respond to the questionnaire and to have an interview because of the lack of time and negative impressions of the term "curriculum innovation." However, after some discussion of the purpose of project most teachers became keen to talk about their experiences and their ideas.

During the interview, we were told many times to publish the data, because teachers were interested in other teachers' responses. They expressed considerable interest in good activities other teachers were doing in other courses. This may be the most effective way of bringing about change: by sharing among teachers information about what they are doing, and why they are doing it. We believe that further interviews, or opportunities for discussion and sharing of our practice as teachers is worth doing in order to foster this growing sense of community.

Feedback from people attending the presentation

During the presentation of this paper, there was opportunity for discussion, the following is a summary of some of the ideas generated in those discussions. While the understanding of 'objectives' was broader for the participants in the discussion, there was broad agreement between them and the teachers in our survey on the types of activities that were appropriate.

Small Group Discussion (1)

This group discussed the first three questions in the questionnaire (to do with objectives and activities). For this group the objectives of teaching English in their situations were: (1) To make English enjoyable, (2) To communicate in a changing world, (3) To prepare students for the future, especially for jobs. Job-related objectives were considered important by participants teaching at vocational schools. Narrowly defined objectives can be easily drawn up for students learning English for specific situations, such

as service and travel industries. Regional development issues were also considered important. In Nagoya, a new international airport is now being constructed and an international exhibition will be held next year. Students living in Nagoya may well foresee increasing chances to use English. This is one of the main reasons why more classes in ESP are offered in the vocational schools in that area.

The activities most often mentioned by participants were emailing, discussions, and role plays. One teacher, emphasizing the importance of email, did not agree with the finding of our study that listening and speaking should be focused on more than reading and writing. He pointed out that reading and writing email is a more frequent activity for most people in business than having conversations. Ten years ago, in many businesses, executives, sales people, and engineers needed to go abroad for meetings more than ten times per year, but now they are likely to go at most twice a year due to the development of high speed communications. This means they have less need to speak English, face to face. The skill they need is reading and writing emails.

Small Group Discussion (2)

Participants commented on the project findings. While it was found that students enjoyed oral communication classes more than reading classes, it might be that students do not feel that "communication classes" are real study. It is not clear which type of class they feel they learn more in. In addition, teachers' personalities and enthusiasm and students' motivation are important factors to determine students' satisfaction level. This may cut across both types of class, or it may be influenced by the novelty value of the

non-Japanese teachers. Participants raised the question, what would have been the results if Japanese teachers had taught Oral Communication courses and non-Japanese teachers had taught Reading courses?

Conclusions

There is clearly a lot of thought being put into the planning and implementation of individual courses by teachers, and by and large student perceptions of those courses agree with what the teachers see themselves as trying to do. There are some suggestions that have been put forward by teachers, including those who attended the presentation, and others by students that may bear considering. Mostly, though, it would appear that there is a good case not for implementing any new kind of curriculum, but on the contrary for building on the strengths of the current one by sharing among teachers information about what they are doing, and why they are doing it. Already some small changes have come about. Teachers have been informed of their class levels in time to make informed textbook choices, there have been occasional lunchtime meetings, hesitant as yet, but nonetheless well meant, for teachers and faculty to exchange ideas, and there has been no further attempt to impose textbooks. Perhaps the greatest good that has come out of the project, though, is the increased communication among teachers, the sense that teachers' ideas are listened to and of importance. If these beginning steps are built on, a responsive and flexible administration could support teachers and students in developing the curriculum they have in a sustainable way.

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Appendix 1. Teacher questionnaire

Course name: _____
(eg Reading 1/ Oral communication 111, Writing II etc)

What are your objectives for this course ? (You may list objectives in your own words, or by marking the attached 'guidelines', deleting anything you feel is inappropriate and adding any you feel are missing.)

1. How do you design your course, based on these objectives?
2. What activities do you do in this course? Are they the same each week? Do you do units of work that continue over several classes? How do the activities contribute to your objectives?
3. What materials do you use in your classroom? (For example worksheets, materials for games, materials from the internet, textbooks, realia, audio-visual material ...)

4. If you use commercially produced materials, why did you choose those particular ones? How do they fit in with your course objectives?
5. Do you give homework? What? How much? How often?
6. How do you assess student achievement? How do you award grades at the end of each semester? How is your assessment related to your objectives? (For example, written/oral achievement tests, written/oral quizzes, participation and performance in class, homework, reports, journals, portfolios, oral presentations, ...)
7. How do you evaluate your course? (For example, questionnaires, comparing student performance at the beginning and end of the course, ...)
8. Do you know what happens in students' other English classes? (ie. If you are teaching reading, do you know what happens in the students' writing and oral communication classes?) If 'yes', How do you take this into account when designing your own course? If 'no', Would you like to know? If you knew, would you take it into account in designing your course?

Appendix 2. Additional questions for teacher interviews.

Skills

- What reading skills do you teach?
- What writing skills do you teach?
- What oral communication skills do you teach?

Graded Readers

- Do you like using them?
- Do your students like them?
- Are they useful?
- Has the students' reading, writing, listening or speaking improved since April, as a result of the readers?
- How do you use the readers?
- Do you think you used them too much? Not enough? About right?

TOEFL texts

- Did you use the TOEFL texts set by the Bungakubu?
- Were they useful?
- Too difficult? Too easy?

Common curriculum

- If Bungakubu were to institute a common curriculum what objectives would be suitable?
- Should such a curriculum have a set text?
- Should it prescribe activities? Tasks? Grammar? Vocabulary?

- What kind of assessment would be suitable?
- How should such a shared curriculum be evaluated?

Appendix 3a. Teacher Responses

Q1. What are your objectives for this course?

Objectives. Oral Communication	Objectives. Reading
Listening and Speaking skills To improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listening skills • initiation of conversation • pronunciation • Speaking before an audience • writing fluency as a means of improving speaking ability. 	Reading skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skimming & scanning • intensively for deep understanding • main ideas • understand phrases and expressions.
Meta-linguistic knowledge To become aware of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress patterns in sentences • importance of chunks of language • body language and gestures • communication styles 	Meta-linguistic knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand structure. • break down sentences into chunks (meaning units).
Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyday topics • NS English expressions. • reinforce classroom language. • appropriate responses in simulated situations. 	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use learning strategies for enlargement of vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes, etc.). • guess the meanings and master proper usage of key words by learning them in context. • understand idiomatic phrases.

Learning skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To become a reflective learner. • To foster problem-solving skills in group activities. • To take responsibility for learning. <p>To be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluate and self-correct. • use the teacher as a resource. • evaluate oneself in relation to others. <p>To increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequency of asking questions. • motivation and confidence. 	Learning skills <p>To use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning strategies for enlargement of vocabulary (synonyms, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes, etc.). • context for guessing. • monolingual dictionary.
Awareness of other cultures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce foreign language news articles at a beginner reading level. • develop students' understanding of international issues. • increase students' self-awareness through foreign language learning and understanding different cultures. • understand foreign cultures through English learning and to heighten interest in Japanese culture and language. 	

Appendix 3b. Teacher Responses

Q2. *How do you design your course, based on these objectives?* Q3. *What activities do you do in this course? Are they the same each week? Do you do units of work that continue over several classes? How do the activities contribute to your objectives?*

Oral Communication	Reading
All interviewees mentioned the following: Oral presentations everyday topics which students can respond to in Q & A format or oral presentations. narratives, cultural issues, student-based interests and textbook-generated topics for oral activities. Project work leading to oral presentations Pair work for listening and speaking Teacher feedback to students Information exchange Discussion	The following were mentioned: Skill building: explicit teaching of and practice in Skimming Scanning Guessing from context Chunking Summarizing (in English and Japanese) Sharing summaries with classmates Extensive reading Timed reading Reading aloud along with a tape Graded readers Intensive reading Comprehension questions (in English and Japanese)

<p>More than half mentioned the following:</p> <p>Self assessment</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Storytelling</p> <p>Video and audio clips</p> <p>Internet and email (penpals etc)</p> <p>Warm-up activities</p> <p>Acting and role play (e.g., realistic situations to increase understanding of language appropriate to the situation)</p> <p>Journals</p> <p>Communication and word games</p>	<p>Explicit teaching of structure, genre, vocabulary, and background knowledge</p> <p>Vocabulary</p> <p>Quizzes</p> <p>Home study (TOEFL practice)</p> <p>Listening to texts read aloud on tape</p> <p>Engaging with ideas</p> <p>Commenting on texts</p> <p>Discussing issues raised</p>
<p>Other activities mentioned:</p> <p>Timed conversations</p> <p>Graded and extensive reading</p> <p>Explicit teaching of useful phrases and Vocabulary</p> <p>Drilling and recycling</p> <p>Learning key sentences in question, answer, responses form</p> <p>Writing and then role-playing a prepared conversation</p> <p>Worksheets.</p> <p>Self-assessment</p>	

Appendix 3c. Teacher Responses

Q4. What materials do you use in your classroom?

<p>Course books Oral Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>English First Hand 1</i> • <i>J-Talk</i> • <i>Nice talking with you</i> • <i>A trip to Britain</i> • <i>Talking together</i> • <i>Topic Talk –Issues</i> • <i>Communication Strategies</i> (2nd year students) • Also materials taken from several coursebooks to allow for a topic based course 	<p>Course books Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cause and Effect</i> • <i>Independent Reader.</i> • <i>Insights Today.</i> • <i>Inspiring English.</i> • <i>News Break.</i> • <i>The Powerful Reader</i> • <i>Clearly Britain, Clearly Japan.</i> • <i>Reading Shukan ST.</i> • <i>Skills for Better Reading.</i> • <i>Words in Context.</i>
<p>Other Materials</p> <p>Audio-visual materials (CDs, movies, textbook videos), own materials for games</p> <p>CDs as stimuli for oral activities</p> <p>Bi-lingual NHK educational programs</p> <p>Other textbook(s)</p> <p>Worksheets / handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice in rapid reading • reading skills and for practice in rapid reading with these skills • checking students' comprehension of texts in the textbook • worksheets to write in main ideas of each paragraph of the texts in the textbook <p>Materials from the internet</p> <p>Articles in magazines or newspapers</p>	

Appendix 3d. Teacher Responses

Q5. *If you use commercially produced materials, why did you choose those particular ones? How do they fit in with your course objectives?*

Oral Communication	Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student-related topics • attractive, engaging visual format, which encourage students to use texts • easy to understand • clear information that can be used for oral activities • flexible enough to allow students to work at different levels • Integrated activities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) • communicative games for pair work activities (for lower level students). • to provide a framework for the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • author's views and claims fit course objectives • covers reading skills systematically and comprehensively • good for practicing rapid reading, vocabulary building • current topics which stimulate learners' interest; appropriate for university students; thought-provoking • appropriate difficulty level; variety of tasks • organization motivates students - sense of accomplishment • directions are written in Japanese (necessary for all but the highest level) • empathy of author with Japan • accompanying audiocassettes

Appendix 3e. Teacher Responses

Q7. *How do you assess student achievement? How do you award grades at the end of each semester? How is your assessment related to your objectives? (For example, written/ oral achievement tests, written/ oral quizzes, participation and performance in class, homework, reports, journals, portfolios, oral presentations)*

Oral Communication	Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pairwork • oral presentations • interviews (sometimes audio- or video-taped) • four to six units of work per semester, writing tasks (journals, emails) • portfolio (project, weekly reports, notebooks, self assessment) • quizzes on text book items or TOEFL-type • post quiz corrections • student self- evaluation • attendance and participation • pronunciation • tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tests • quizzes (vocabulary, TOEFL, textbook, etc) • reading reports • reading amount • attendance and participation • assignments (in one case only for borderline students)

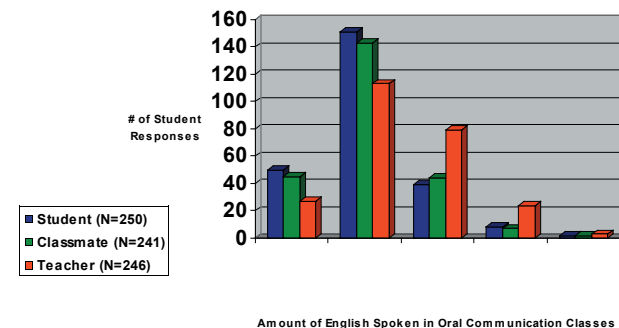
Appendix 3f. Teacher Responses

Q8. How do you evaluate your course? (For example, questionnaires, comparing student performance at the beginning and end of the course)

Student feedback	Observation and assessment
<p>Methods of student feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University questionnaire (reading teachers only; oral communication teachers did not mention this) Post-task evaluation questionnaires: rating activities according to set criteria Motivation graphs Self evaluation Free-writing feedback through journals Guided writing: 'What did you learn? What was most useful?' etc. 	<p>Methods of observation and assessment of student participation and progress included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation in class: participation and enthusiasm Comparing student work at the beginning of the course with work at the end Interviews on video or cassette tape Quizzes Reading speed

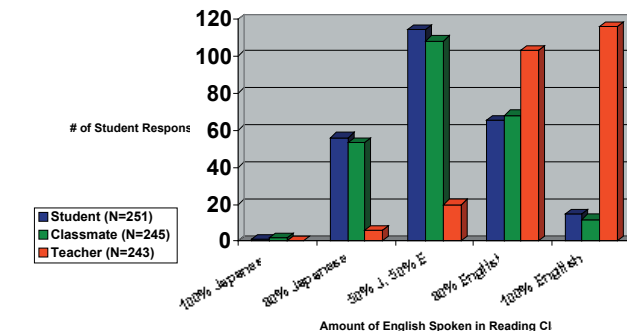
Appendix 4a. Student Responses

Q2. Oral Communication classes



Appendix 4b. Student Responses

Q2. Reading classes



Appendix 4c. Student Responses

Questions 4, 5 and 6. Textbooks

Question 4. *Did you use a textbook? (N=251)*

Reading

96% YES 3% NO 1% No Response

Oral Communication

72% YES 27% NO 1% No Response

Question 5. *Is it effective to use a text book? (N=241)*

Reading

89% YES 9% NO 2% No Response

Oral Communication

42% YES 55% NO 3% No Response

Question 6. *Do you think it would be effective to use a shared textbook? (N=239)*

Reading

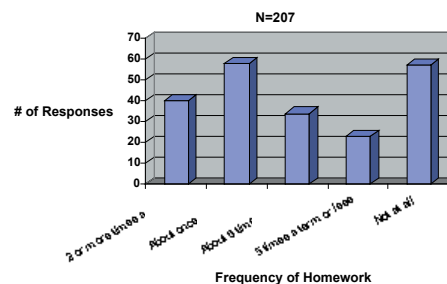
44% YES 52% NO 4% No Response

Oral Communication

33% YES 63% NO 4% No Response

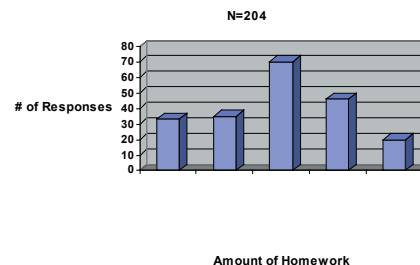
Appendix 4d. Student Responses

Q7. *Frequency of Homework*



Appendix 4e. Student Responses

Q7. *Amount of Homework*



Appendix 4f. Student Responses

Questions 8 and 9. *Assessment*

Question 8. *Do you understand the assessment system? (N=245)*

I Understand	15%
I mostly understand	66%
I understand a little	17%
I don't understand at all	2%

Question 9. *Do you understand how you were assessed and how your grades were determined? (N=247)*

I Understand	8%
I mostly understand	63%
I understand a little	19%
I don't understand at all	10%

Appendix 4g. Student Responses

Questions 10, 11 and 12. *Graded Readers.*

Question 10 *How many graded readers did you read this year? (N=244)*

2 readers or less:	11%
3 readers:	12%
4 readers:	17%
5 readers:	26%
6 or more:	34%

Question 11 *Did you enjoy reading the graded readers? (N=247)*

I enjoyed them very much	5%
I enjoyed them.	55.5%

I didn't enjoy them much.	31%
I didn't enjoy them at all.	8.5%

Question 12 *Are graded readers a good way to learn English? (N=248)*

I think they are very effective.	9%
I think they are somewhat effective.	69%
I don't think they are very effective.	20%
I think they are very ineffective.	2%

Appendix 4h. Student Questionnaire

Q 13. What do you want to learn from English classes at Momoyama? Be as specific as possible.

Responses included:

International Conversation	Daily English Skills
Understand other cultures	General English Skills
Social English Skills	Grammar
Listening	Reading
Understanding TV	Pronunciation
Decrease fear when speaking	Talk with native teachers
Higher level classes	More active participation
Understanding newspapers	Conversation more than grammar
Opportunities to talk	Future Job Qualifications
Practical English	To be perfect in English
Express opinions	To speak fluently
How to converse with foreigners	Thinking in English

Translation	English-only classes
Speaking	TOEIC preparation
TOEFL preparation	To have fun
Writing	Comprehension

Appendix 4i. Student Questionnaire

Q14 *Do you have any suggestions, requests or opinions concerning Bungakubu English classes?*

Opinions	Suggestions
Too much English Spoken	Want to speak fluently
Too low level	More English skills
Too high level	More TOEIC work
Good level	More opportunities to speak
School should separate students by skills	More daily English
Don't like quizzes	More communication with teacher
Didn't understand class	More pronunciation practice
Teacher was easy to understand	More time for discussion
Equal evaluation by teachers needed	More conversation with foreigners
Good teacher	More study abroad options
Bad teacher	More conversation practice
No English-speaking students were present	More writing practice
Liked English-only rule in class	Shared text would be good
Class was not interesting	Less homework
Fun class	Smaller classes
	More reading