

Learner Voices and What They Can Tell Us

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Although Japanese university students are given the opportunity to rate the courses and instruction they receive, evaluations often take place either too late in the academic year to address current learners' concerns, or fail to produce responses of the detail and depth necessary to provide an accurate impression of learner sentiment. This paper examines three supplementary strategies for soliciting learner feedback on an ongoing basis. Through a discussion of the results and their implications for the classroom, it will be shown that learners' voices can provide valuable insights into our teaching and have a profound effect upon the day-to-day classroom decision-making process.

日本の大学生は、自分の受けている講座や指導を評価する機会に恵まれているが、評価は、しばしば、学生たちが感じている今の問題に注意を向けるには余りにも学年度の中で遅い時期に行われているか、あるいは学習者の感情を正確に印象づけるだけの詳細や深みをもつ回答を引き出すことができないかのいずれかである。この論文では、継続的に学習者の意見を求める3つの補足的な方法を考察する。そして、その結果やそれらの教室への影響を論ずることによって、学習者の声が、我々の教授法への貴重な洞察力を与え、日々の教室での意思決定過程に深い影響を及ぼし得ることを明らかにする。

Providing learners with the opportunity to give feedback on and make choices in their learning has been championed by many in the TESOL community (e.g., Benson, 2001; Hadfield, 1992; Nunan 1988). In this pursuit, officially administered learner evaluations of teachers and courses in the form of Student Evaluations of Teachers (SETs) and *anketo* (surveys) have been mandatory practices at Japanese universities since 1991 (Ruthven-Stuart, 2004). Despite the useful administrative and summative roles such evaluations play, however, a case can be made that the data *anketo* provide often proves insufficient if formative goals, such as using feedback to influence short-term lesson planning as well as both learner and teacher development, are considered. For such purposes, soliciting supplementary input may be necessary. This paper forms a preliminary status report on an ongoing action research project this writer is conducting in two classes at a university in the greater Tokyo area. In it, I will examine three methods of obtaining supplementary learner feedback as well as their implications for the two classes involved.

Rationale

As a language instructor, I often feel a tension between the requirement to submit a course syllabus prior to meeting a new group of learners on the one hand, and a desire for the course to be responsive and adaptable to the learners' needs, on the other. As Nunan (1988) noted:

The most useful information, relating to subjective learner needs, can be obtained only once a course has begun and a relationship is established between teachers and learners. It is these subjective needs, derivable from information on learners' wants, expectations and affective needs which are of most value in selecting content and methodology. (Nunan, p. 6)

To this end, in the classroom I often rely on learners' verbal responses, facial expressions, body language, and even classroom energy levels when gauging ongoing reactions to a course. Indeed, the dynamic nature of teaching often requires making instantaneous decisions based more on our feelings and instincts than anything concrete (Szesztay, 2004). Rather than rely solely on such impressions and observations alone, however, proactive steps such as surveying learners' regarding their wants and needs may also be useful. Although SETs and *anketo* could potentially fill such a role, they rarely lend themselves to the creation of either a more learner-centered classroom or a deeper understanding of the learners' ongoing reactions to a course.

First and foremost, *anketo* are generally administered only once late each academic semester. This infrequency makes it difficult for me to respond to shifts in learner sentiment,

gauge reactions to specific classroom activities, or make changes that benefit current learners. Altering future courses based upon the feedback provided, conversely, ignores the discrepancies that often exist between the subjective needs of different groups of learners. Furthermore, personal observation tells me that some learners hurriedly complete evaluations to gain longer breaks between classes, which raises questions of how much value learners see in the evaluation process and whether they feel changes result due to their participation. Finally, whether SETs are easily manipulated by lenient grading practices (Greenwald, 1997; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997; Johnson, 2002), or reflect teacher likeability more than overall effectiveness (Delucchi & Pelowski, 2000), also warrants consideration when reviewing their usefulness.

Methodology

This action research project was begun in April 2004. I used three feedback instruments to investigate how the learners' feelings evolved as the classes progressed. In particular, I was interested in how a better appreciation of the learners' subjective needs would influence my lesson planning and changes to course content and activities over time. Though I realized it would be hard to quantify, I was also curious how the resulting dialogue would affect the learners' sense of ownership with regards to the course. I sought to implement a research plan that, in Allwright's (1993) words, would not be "intrusive and parasitic" (p. 249) and took particular inspiration from his assertion that "Good research can be good pedagogy, and good pedagogy can itself be good research" (p. 258). In seeking to address the limitations

of *anketo*, I selected a combination of three instruments according to whether it allowed for the following: obtaining feedback on an ongoing basis, requiring a minimum of class time to complete, facilitating reflection on classroom activities and events soon after they happen, and requiring responses to only issues learners themselves deem important. One similarity these procedures and *anketo* share, however, is that in all cases learner anonymity is respected. Following a description of the participants and setting, each of the feedback instruments used will be described separately below.

Participants and Setting

The participants (Table one) are members of two classes enrolled in a second year English listening and speaking course offered by the Department of International Development. This mandatory class meets 90 minutes per week for a total of 23 sessions over two semesters. Although none are English majors, the learners' motivation seems fairly high based upon their active participation in the lessons and the feedback process itself. Furthermore, the learners have been streamed into two of the upper intermediate classes, which will be referred to as Class A and Class B, based upon G-TELP placement test results obtained at the start of the academic year. As noted in Table One, the participants' TOEIC scores averaged 342 for Class A and 422 for Class B. The participants range in age from 19 to 29 and, despite the presence of some international students in the class, the overwhelming majority are Japanese.

Table 1. Participant profiles at the start of the academic year.

Class	Enrollment	TOEIC scores	Age range	Sex
A	30 (26 Japanese, 4 other)	High 460 Low 205 (Average 342)	19-29 (Average 20)	23% male 77% female
B	36 (34 Japanese, 2 other)	High 705 Low 155 (Average 422)	19-26 (Average 19)	26% male 74% female

Instrument One: Feedback Strips

Beginning with the third session of the first semester, I distributed blank strips of paper measuring approximately 21 cm by 10 cm to learners prior to the end of class. Learners were asked to briefly comment on what aspects of the lesson they did or did not enjoy, activities they would like to try again or discontinue, as well as provide any suggestions for future lessons (Appendix 1). I kept instructions intentionally brief and somewhat vague to not overly distort or influence themes that might have otherwise emerged. Furthermore, I felt that by not requiring learners to respond to an extended series of questions as is traditionally the case with *anketo*, they might express themselves either in greater detail or more efficiently on items they deemed of interest. When learners felt they had nothing to contribute, I suggested simply writing “nothing” or “*nashi*” on the slips. The only strict instruction was that no names appear on the slips, hopefully creating a “safe” means of communication whereby learners would not fear censure for expressing themselves in an honest manner. Once underway, this

process allowed feedback collected at the end of one class to be summarized verbally or on the board at the beginning of the subsequent lesson, initiating an additional avenue of classroom dialogue that could continue throughout the year. In following up on their comments in this manner, I sought to enhance the exchange of ideas as well as convey the importance I placed upon their contributions, while also hoping the learners would come to view the process as useful as well (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993).

Instrument Two: Letters to the Teacher

After using Feedback Slips over the course of three months, I raised the possibility of learners providing more detailed feedback at the end of the first semester. Learners were given the option of bringing an anonymous Letter to the Teacher (Appendix 2) to the end of semester exam. We negotiated that learners bringing a letter of ten lines or more would receive a five-point bonus towards their exam grade, which in effect enabled the participants to inflate their first semester grades by 2 percent. Although learners had the freedom to write what they wished, I suggested the theme of changes they might like to see to the class in the second semester. In line with efforts to keep the dialogue process as transparent as possible, many of the results were compiled into Class Newsletters (Appendix 3) and distributed to learners at the first session of the second semester.

Instrument Three: 3-D Assessment sheets

Following the distribution of class newsletters in the first class of the second semester, learners were asked to fill

out 3-D Assessment forms (Appendix 4) at home. These forms, which were slightly modified versions of the model suggested by Graves and Mackenzie (1997), were the first instruments used in this project that featured a structured format and required learners to respond to a set series of questions. Although this could be seen as a departure from the unrestricted nature of the aforementioned instruments, or even an attempt to manipulate the nature of the results, such was not the intention. On the contrary, each questionnaire item mirrored concerns, whether relating to goal setting or factors either furthering or inhibiting learning, already suggested by some in the learners' Letters to the Teacher.

Results

Results from the different feedback instruments will be addressed separately. Discussion will be limited to themes that most influenced the direction of the classes over time.

Feedback Slips

Despite a lack of strict accountability in collection methods, a comparison of the feedback slips returned against attendance records showed that Class A and B had return rates of 97 and 95 percent, respectively. A keyword analysis done on the data (Appendix 5) showed that although learners had the option of writing 'nothing' '*nashi*' on their feedback slips, this occurred on only nine occasions for both classes. Data was coded according to emerging themes and, as can be seen from the sample graphs in Appendix 6, the issues learners raised could vary significantly from week to week. Ideally, this reflects not only the dynamic nature

of the process but perhaps also negates the possibility that learners contributed feedback in a disengaged or mechanical manner. Although wide ranging in scope (see Appendix 7 for feedback samples representative of the various coding categories), the feedback influenced the direction of the classes and learner development in several ways.

At the most basic level, requests for certain activities proved useful when planning upcoming lessons. Specific grammar teaching points also arose from linguistic errors contained within the written the feedback.

One dilemma that presented itself near the beginning of the year was that many of the textbook listening activities were exceedingly lengthy. When the adverse affect this had on classroom speaking time was reflected in the Feedback Slips, considerations of how to address the situation through in-class discussion and Feedback Slip suggestions began. Over the following two weeks, the learners and I proposed four possible courses of action. Ultimately, it was agreed learners could select from two options, using either recordings or tape-scripts to complete the first half of the text exercises at home, according to their individual study preferences. Significantly, through this discussion and negotiation, both classes attained a more open understanding of how they wished classroom time to be used.

Beyond the implications for lesson planning and classroom negotiation, however, indicators of developmental gains in self-reflection and goal setting also surfaced, as the following comments indicate:

I'm lack of vocabulary, so I need more practice.
(Class A, 28/04/04)

PRONUNCIATION is difficult. But, I think, It is important for me! (Class B, 13/10/04)

I'm shy. But I want not to be shy. I speak English more. (Class B, 26/05/04)

This last comment is also noteworthy in that it acknowledges a gap between current behavior and an idealized view of participation, while also indicating an awareness of how to work towards change. As such, I believe this mirrors the findings of Usuki (2003) who documented a desire on the part of Japanese learners to move from patterns of passive to more active behavior in class.

Feedback Slips also offered an opportunity to engage in what Tannen (1991) defines as rapport talk, “a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. . . . displaying similarities and matching experiences” (p. 77), as reflected in the following examples:

I worried about your health. I like the song that you chose. It's very fun!!! I like this class! (Class B, 12/05/04)

Hi! I think you are very energetic today. English pronunciation is difficult for Japanese. We need to practice. I like salty food, too. It's delicious. See you again (Class B, 13/10/04)

Although over time fewer Feedback Slip items resulted in actual changes to classroom procedures, the process was continued as a safeguard measure and, more importantly perhaps, an ongoing reminder that learners could play a pivotal role in the direction of the course.

Instrument Two: Letters to the Teacher

Return rates for Letters to the Teacher were 100 percent for both classes. As a result of this feedback, more variety was introduced into class warm-up activities and class quizzes were revised. Previous vocabulary quizzes allowed learners to contribute self-selected items towards 50 percent of weekly testing totals. As grading such individualized tests required translation from Japanese to English to be done efficiently, however, the system was abandoned in favor of English-only standardized tests at the learners' request. Most interesting, however, was the effect that editing and compiling the Letters to the Teacher responses according to various themes into Class Newsletters had on Class B.

By the end of the first semester, Japanese use in the classroom had become an issue for Class B. The learners were particularly social and the genuine joy they displayed when interacting often seemed to push any considerations for remaining in the target language to the wayside. Indeed, other instructors had also expressed similar concerns about the group's apparent reluctance to either stay on task or remain in the target language. This issue was addressed several times and although awareness raising procedures, such as setting individual speaking goals at the start of each lesson, had been initiated, from my perspective the learners seemed generally unperturbed by this state of affairs. As the following comments show, however, the most obvious display of concern in their Letters to the Teacher was reserved for this very same issue:

My opinion is that I want to speak more people in English!!

I think it is good that we make percentage of speaking English (goals) in every class.

I regret not having spoken English too much in this class. I decide to speak English more from next lecture.

Although we knew that we have to speak in English in our class, we usually spoke in Japanese. It's difficult to speak in English, but I try to speak.

In this class, I enjoyed very much. But, we students are always using Japanese. I think we should use English only. Because we have no time to speak English except in class.

(My next) point is private talk. It is very noisy and deadens our enthusiasm. You must be more angry, and stop the private talk.

Given that this topic was not explicitly suggested for their Letters to the Teacher, the unanimity of opinion was surprising. Once again, incongruities clearly existed between behaviors learners felt secure displaying publicly and their internal beliefs. Despite my attempts, it should be noted that it was only when learners chose to address the issue themselves that any sustained change in behavior occurred. Although hard to quantify, there was a marked drop in the amount of Japanese used during the second semester, making further attempts to address the issue on my part unnecessary. As one learner noted:

The effect of the other students is very big for me. My attitude to the class is sometimes changed by the attitude of the other student... (Class B)

Indeed, on-going reflection and feedback can also be used to raise learner awareness of the effects peers have on their behavior. Given the general similarities in age, background and ethnicity, it should come as no surprise that the behavior of other learners could at times outweigh any influence I hoped to exert. Other learners, being “psychologically easier to emulate than the teacher or other more distant models” (Murphey, 2003, p. 4), can often serve as the most influential role models and a potentially powerful resource in any classroom.

Instrument Three: 3-D Assessment

Contrary to results for the other feedback instruments, there was a significant drop in the return rates for the 3-D Assessment forms. Return rates were 46 and 50 percent for Class A and B, respectively. As all feedback in this study was submitted voluntarily, however, no follow up attempts were made to collect the outstanding forms.

Although impossible to say for sure, the low return rates could be attributable to a variety of causes. Administering the forms the first class of the second semester was likely a factor. Attendance was somewhat below average and many learners had perhaps yet to fully accept that a new semester had begun.

Secondly, though I had hoped introducing the 3-D Assessment forms and Class Newsletters together would provide inspiration for further reflection, it may only have made the process seem redundant and unnecessary to some.

Finally, confronted with a sudden lack of choice in the feedback instrument and being asked to consider some

difficult questions, some learners may have felt alienated from the process altogether.

Low return rates aside, numerous responses indicate that the process was a valuable one for many.

When learners wrote what they had done to achieve their language-learning goals in the first semester, for example, comments such as the following were not uncommon:

Last semester I did nothing special just cope up with the class.

Nothing. (Class A)

In last semester I was unconscious about my goals. It was bad thing.

I had no goals. Last semester, I try to enjoy every lesson.

I did homework every time. But in class, I almost use Japanese. So, I hold out this semester. (Class B)

By contrast, when the learners commented on goals for the coming semester, many offered concrete examples as to what they intended to do differently:

I’m going to speak English more.

I will memorize more English words and listen to English tape. If I can I will do it everyday although its difficult to do and In the class I will use English with teacher and classmates. (Class A)

I’ll study more. And I’ll do homework. Then, I’ll take part in this course MORE.

I'm going to get English skills. Speaking, listening, Presentation skill etc. And I want to make more friends in this class. Because, this class is our last English course. (Class B)

Again, measuring any changes in behavior or beliefs resulting from this process would be difficult. It does seem, however, that the forms played an important awareness-raising role. Even in the case of learners who remained reluctant to invest time and effort towards improving their English skills in the short term, this awareness raising process may still enhance prospects for future change.

Discussion

As Usuki (1999) noted, “Japanese learners are typically described as passive learners, accepting teachers’ authority without question or challenge” (p. 6). I believe results thus far, however, further counter stereotypes of Japanese learners as passive consumers in the learning process. Given the opportunity and appropriate means, students can tell us a great deal not only about themselves as learners and people but about our teaching as well. That the process also sheds light on the gaps that can exist between the internal attitudes and external performance of learners may further help us, as Usuki (2003) maintained, to appreciate learner autonomy “from the learner’s internal functioning rather than from external evidence alone” (p. 15).

Regarding my role as instructor, this project did not require any fundamental changes in my lesson-planning responsibilities or that I strive to be seen less as a ‘teacher’ and more of a peer by the learners. If anything, learner

requests for greater severity on my part when dealing with Japanese use in the classroom was a reminder that learners did not wish for me to abdicate more traditional disciplinary roles. I believe the process also helped decrease any pedagogical mismatch (Richards & Lockhart, 1995; Nunan, 1995) that may have existed between my beliefs and agendas and those of the learners. As noted, an example of this occurred when a testing procedure that I favored, although pedagogically sound, was replaced at the learners’ request as it involved elements of translation. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges an undertaking of this nature may pose for teachers is to leave behind assumptions that we know what is best for our learners and instead have faith in their abilities to discern what good teaching means to them.

Amongst the learners as well, publicly sharing their views served to “encourage them to start thinking about how they as a group can reconcile what may be conflicting aims and interests” (Hadfield, 1992, p. 32). Only then, as Edmundson and Fitzpatrick (2000) and Murphey (2003) argued, can a classroom culture of mutual respect and tolerance for dissenting views begin to be developed.

The approach I took to involving learners in the decision-making process was undeniably a gradual one. Two potential challenges Hadfield (1992) cites when drawing learners into such a process are that learners “have not really defined these expectations to themselves; another problem may be that they have never really questioned received attitudes to language learning.” (p. 32)

Ideally, allowing learners the freedom to respond as they wished and for themes to emerge organically made the process less intimidating to those unaccustomed to

being surveyed about their views. Particularly with regards to issues such as self-evaluation and goal setting, asking learners to do too much too soon may be counterproductive. I continue to wonder, for example, whether low return rates for the 3-D Assessment forms were partly due to the more challenging nature of the questions posed, while at the same time reminding myself that others had freely volunteered much the same information without being asked.

Richards and Lockhart (1995) noted that “despite a teacher’s best intentions, teachers sometimes interact with some students in the class more frequently than others” (p. 139). Ideally the procedures described in this project help guarantee all members of a class the opportunity to make their voices heard. Likewise, learners’ right to change their minds was respected throughout. As Nunan (1988) and Edmundson and Fitzpatrick (2000) stressed, decisions and procedures should be seen as neither fixed nor binding when involving learners in the creation of a more learner-centered curriculum.

Finally, in the case of action research projects such as this one, the process of curriculum change undoubtedly serves to contribute to the process of teacher development as well. The relationship between fostering increased learned autonomy and teacher development has been explored by Stewart (2003) as well as Richards and Lockhart (1995), and as Usuki (2003) argued:

Instead of training learners to satisfy teacher expectations, or simply giving students unbounded freedom to make decisions, learner development should be more concerned with the nature of both students’ and teachers’ learning as a path towards self-growth. (p. 11)

Personally speaking, this project has affected me most in terms of perspective. I have benefited from increased insight into how others view my class, the successes and failures of specific activities, and my particular strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. In addition, the resulting dialogue has served as a constant reminder of the respect my learners deserve. One of the most telling responses to these procedures came not over the course of this project but in a previous year when one learner stated the following, “you’re the last person to look down on student. . . . (you do not) treat us like a mere child”. This process of asking for feedback and engaging with our learners can, I believe, provide great insight into an intelligence and complexity on the part of our learners that might otherwise risk passing unnoticed.

Limitations and future research

As I am still collecting data as of this writing a full picture of this project is yet to appear. Despite attempts to be systematic in my data collection, changes in the autonomous behavior of learners or their sense of ownership as it relates to the classes remain hard to quantify. In order to gain insight into how the process was viewed from the learners’ perspectives, however, third party interviews are being considered. Although I attempted to allow data to emerge with little interference on my part, the possibility remains that at times learners adjusted feedback to match perceptions of my expectations. Finally, although these learners were eager to participate in this process, how results might differ for other groups, or even learners of dissimilar proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, or language learning histories, remains unclear.

Conclusion

However exploratory, this study may offer some insight into the types of input learners can provide given the opportunity. The aim here is not to demean institutionally administered SETs or *anketo* and the value they provide. Nor is it to dismiss following our instincts based on the information we are continuously processing when in the classroom, although it may be wise to caution that “What you see is not necessarily what’s happening” (Szesztay, 2004, p.132). The purpose, rather, is to suggest that exploring alternatives is advisable if securing feedback for formative ends is the goal. Instead of operating according to an assumed appreciation of the subjective needs of our learners, making the effort to express an interest in their beliefs and preferences can provide a much richer portrait of how what transpires in the classroom actually meets those needs. In pursuing supplementary forms of feedback such as this status report describes, it is hoped that learners will not only gain an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns as they relate to the lesson planning process, but also gain a greater appreciation of how the choices they make can help influence and direct their language learning success.

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Appendix 1

Sample Feedback Slips

I like "food" brain storming .

I don't like ... nothing!!

I want to do Group Presentation practice

I enjoyed the VOCABULARY GAMES!

Maybe we should do it again sometimes

Appendix 2

Sample Letters to the Teacher

LETTER TO THE TEACHER

Here is my opinion has been written below:

1. This class is specially on speaking and listening, so I want more practice in the class room.
2. In a short time in the class is sometimes difficult to give explanation on a theme. If we get a specific topic as a assignment, we the student can present well.
3. I want 100% English class. I don't like Japanese-English vocabulary homework.
4. Besides ^{interesting} videos I want to see English news video.
5. There may be a short conversation between student and teacher, it will make our speaking power — that I believe.
6. Out of book I like something interesting topic and discuss it.
7. I would like to exchange conversation with the classmates on more interesting questions.
8. I would like to see video on musical concert.
9. I like to do more quiz in the class.
10. I enjoy this class very very much.

THANKYOU FOR READING MY OPINION

See you.

Date No.

Dear Hayes ☀

The first term went like a flash. I get two impressions. First, Hayes always adopts our opinion for class. For example it is the way listening homework. Second, communication practice class beginning every time. I like it very much. Because I can practice communication and more friendly with everyone.

At the second term, I prefer to more practice communication rather than to use textbook. I want to study by movies and musics like occasionally the first term.

I always have spoken Japanese. I work hard to speak English at the second term.

Appendix 3

Sample Class Newsletter

Summer Suggestions Presentation Class 6 – Period 4

Hello everyone!

I hope you all had a great summer vacation. I went back to Canada for three weeks and it was great to relax and see my friends and family. When I was younger I always liked staying out late and going to parties but when I went home this time I enjoyed relaxing with my family the best. Maybe I am getting old! Anyways, I hope you all enjoyed your summer vacations and had a chance to relax, too. I hope we can create some good energy in the classroom and have an exciting second term together!

Before the exam in July people gave me many great suggestions for this class. Here are some samples of what people said:

"Your class is kind of easy. And sometimes that makes me bored. I like talking English, but on speaking English in the class is getting into a rut."

"I think vocabulary test is important."

"You write in Roman letters for us to understand how to pronounce. (For example, "How's it going?" ~ "Howzit going?") It's very helpful. I can understand easily how to pronounce a sentence."

"You were so friendly that we could easily join this class. When you couldn't speak anything, the class was silent only. We are ashamed of making mistakes but I think we want to brush up our English in our minds."

"I enjoyed every Wednesday but sometimes I can't understand what I should do. I don't have English ability. So please don't overestimate my ability. Every class I'm afraid of putting you a lot of trouble. If I'm bad student, please scold me without reserve. I'm appreciate your gentle spirit."

JAPANESE OR ENGLISH?

"My opinion is that I want to speak more people in English! ...So if (we) can, speaking time is up in next class."

"I think it is good that we make percentage of speaking English in every class."

"I regret not having spoken English too much in this class. I decide to speak English more from next lecture."

"Although we knew that we have to speak in English in our class, we usually spoke in Japanese. It's difficult to speak in English, but I try to speak."

"Your lessons are very nice. Because I felt that you tries hard each lessons. For example, you draw funny pictures on the blackboard, you guide that students become friendly and so on. Besides you are smiley and interesting every time, so students have regard for you and we can be received your lesson with relax I think. But sometimes, it helps a few students to be lazy. So I think better if you behaved a little strict and offered us a little difficult questions in lesson."

"In this class, I enjoyed very much. But, we students are always using Japanese. I think we should use English only. Because we have no time to speak English except in class. Individually, I want to study conversation. So, greeting we do at first every class is nice! And, you had better increase homework or give us homework which is more difficult. I think, although those homework are very hard for us, it is instructive."

"(My next) point is private talk. It is very noisy and deadens our enthusiasm. You must be more angry, and stop the private talk."

CLASS GREETINGS?

"I have two things I want you to change. First, we had conversation in a circle every class. But conversation in each time is almost same and easy. So, for me, it was very boring. Next is your voice. Before, you lost your voice. You cannot help catching cold or losing voice. But if your condition is bad, you should (have) canceled a lecture."

Appendix 4

Sample 3-D Assessment form

Secret Nickname: KIKKU Class: 6

What are your goals for this course?	What did you do last semester to achieve those goals?	How are these helping or stopping you from achieving your goals?		
		Materials	Teacher	Other students
<p>I want to remember English because I forgot. And I want to level up my English ability.</p>	<p>I did homework every time. But in class, I almost use Japanese.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>So, I hold out this semester.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>English conversation helps me remember English.</p>	<p>It's important for me that teacher speaks real English. It helps me level up my English ability.</p>	
<p>What are you going to do this semester to achieve your goals?</p> <p>I study English at home. For example, homework, review lessons and preparation. And I try to use English in class.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>What would you like to change about this course?</p> <p>I would like to change the situation people speak Japanese. This class is English class. But I think this class is not English class. I know you don't want to force speaking English. But if you don't force, students always speak Japanese.</p>		

Appendix 5

Key word analysis summary

Total number of distinct items: 642

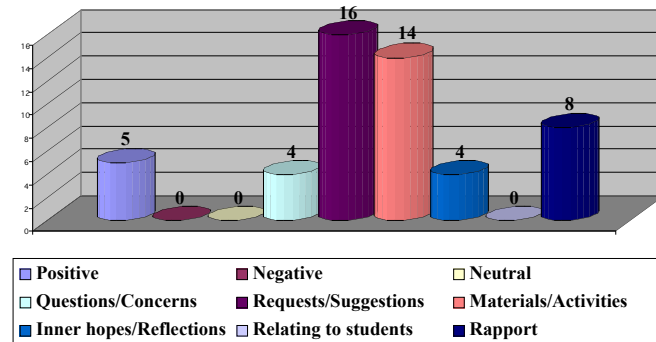
Order of frequency	Item	Times occurring
1	I	429
17	Want	85
18	Good	82
22	You	65
23	Listening	64
34	More	47
40	English	41
41	Think	41
55	Interesting	28
60	Hope	24
78	Homework	17
87	Difficult	14
115	Nothing	9
198	Boring	3

Note: *AntConc3.0 – A Freeware Concordance Program for Windows*, developed by Laurence Anthony, was used in compiling the above data. More information can be found at <http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/>

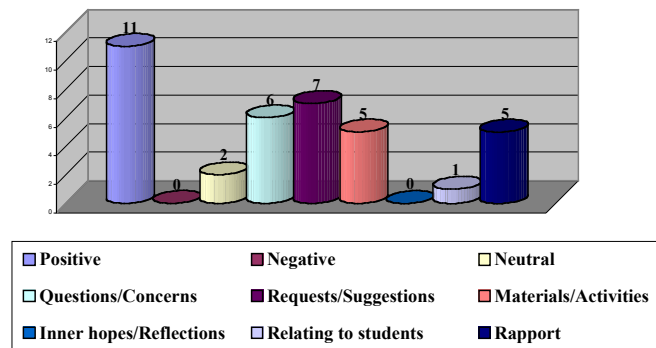
Appendix 6

Sample weekly feedback summaries according to category

Class A (26/05/04)



Class A (27/10/04)



Appendix 7

Feedback samples by coding category

Positive	Traveling talk is very funny. Because everyone has many ideas.	
	I did a lot of conversation today. It's cool! I like conversation.	
	No problem!! Thank you Fun! Fun! Fun! Family Mart	Class B (27/10/04)
Negative	I feel today's class is long. But listening was good.	Class B(13/10/04)
	Listening the tape is a little boring. But listening is important, I think.	
	Today, is not good atmosphere in the classroom.	Class B (06/10/04)
Neutral	It's all right, I think.	Class B (06/10/04)
	Nothing to say especially.	
	Nothing.	Class B (27/10/04)
Questions and concerns	I can't understand about homework well. English is difficult to listen...	
	What's the meaning of "What's up?"	Class A (19/05/04)
	I need time to plan about our island...	Class B (27/10/04)
Requests and suggestions	Please teach more greeting. I want to listen more music.	
	I want to listening and games more. It is good that your voice recover!!	
	I think Listening H.W. is not need. If we must do it (listening) we should it in class I think.	Class A (26/05/04)
Materials and activities	I want to do some listening by watch video and listening to tape. I think this very good for us to improve our listening.	Class A (19/05/04)
	Liar's Poker is very enjoy!!! Liar's Poker can speak English much.	Class A (13/10/04)
	PRONUNCIATION is difficult. But, I think, It is important for me!	Class B (13/10/04)
Inner hopes and reflections	I think I'm poor at English so much. Sorry Daragh. But, I like English.	Class A (28/04/04)
	It's difficult for me to do dictation, but It's very interesting and enjoyable!!!	Class B (26/05/04)
	I think I have to study harder than now, so I want to speak English in this class as I can do.	Class B (06/06/04)
Relating to others	group work is fun. Because we can exchange our opinion. I like to speak English each other.	Class B (06/10/04)
	Today's there are many talking with partners. It was interesting and Ok.	Class B (09/06/04)
	A study using video is interesting for me, but why many people didn't ask the question? I'm sad!	Class B (16/05/04)
Rapport	I'm sorry I can't cooperate with you very much. I was surprised you read this and think about it. Thank you.	Class B (19/05/04)
	Takashi Fujii!!	Class B (19/05/04)
	Do you like curry?	Class A (13/10/04)

(note: Due to space restrictions, this table contains only three feedback samples per coding category, followed by information concerning the class and date.)