Challenging Assumptions
Looking In, Looking Out

Speaking and listening skills through storytelling, talking journals, and active listening

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Teachers of large English communication classes at the university level face many challenges in developing classroom activities and designing course materials. Given that the primary focus of these classes is intended to be speaking and listening, teachers need to develop activities that help students build confidence in their speaking and listening ability. Activities such as storytelling, talking journals, and active listening can help students develop confidence in their speaking and listening. Because these activities bring student experiences to the forefront, they can increase student autonomy and help to improve motivation. This paper discusses an action research study conducted over three semesters in which these three student-centered activities were introduced into 1st- and 2nd-year English communication classes. In a survey conducted at the end of the study, students reported that each of the three components of the study were challenging and enjoyable, and helped them improve their English and have better conversations.

　大学レベルの大クラスでの英語コミュニケーション担当教師はいかにクラスでのアクティビティを展開させるか、教材を計画的に活用するかに直面している。これらのクラスの最も重要な点はスピーキングとリスニングであるから、教師は学生がこれらの能力に自信をつけることに焦点をあてたアクティビティ展開が必要である。ストーリーテリング、トーキングジャーナルやアクティブリスニングという学生中心のアクティビティは長文スピーチやリスニングだけでなく、英語思考のトレーニングにも役立つ。この学習法は生徒の体験談を中心にし、対話する機会を多く与えることで学生の自主性やや る気を引き出すことができる。この研究論文は長崎大学で3学期にわたり1、2年の英語コミュニケーションクラスで実際に用いた3つの学生中心のアクティビティを検討するものである。

Teachers of English communication at the university level need to give students practice in the full range of language skills necessary in communication. Particularly for those classes with a strong focus on oral communication, this means practice both in managing the give and take interaction typical of conversation and in producing and listening to longer stretches of speech with fewer interruptions.

A focus on developing speaking and listening skills through storytelling can give students practice both in producing and listening to longer speech and in managing turn-taking. This approach takes into account what McCarthy calls the interactive nature of fluency development, in which "fluent speakers contribute to each others' fluency; they scaffold each other's performance, to make the conversation flow" (McCarthy, 2005, p.27). A key component of this cooperative construction of meaning is active listening, a set of strategies the listener can use to show empathy, signal understanding, and take a co-equal role in the conversation.

This paper discusses an action research project conducted over three semesters at Nagasaki University. The aims of the project were to improve the curriculum in required English communication classes by placing a greater emphasis on helping students develop their speaking and listening skills and build habits of autonomous learning. The classes that were the focus of the study were 1st- and 2nd-year non-English majors from a variety of faculties. Classes met a total of 15 times, one semester only. Therefore, there was a completely new group of students in each semester of the study. Three new ideas introduced into the curriculum will be discussed: (a) *Storytelling and story-maps*: An English

homepage was developed with teacher's sample stories about specific story themes which students could access and listen to. Students were also encouraged to use a story form the authors developed mapping the five parts of the story in order to develop reflective skills and improve their own stories. (b) *Talking journals*: Students were required to keep an audio record of their speaking practice throughout the semester. (c) *Active listening*: A set of listening strategies were introduced that students could use to scaffold their partner's storytelling and contribute to the flow of the conversation.

Action research method

Burns (1999) identified the key features characteristic of action research. (a) It identifies and investigates problems within a specific situation. (b) It is evaluative and reflective as it aims to bring about change and improvement in practice. (c) Changes in practice are based on the collection of information or data which provides the impetus for change. In the current study, problems were identified and outcomes were assessed each semester on the basis of written student feedback, samples of student work, author observations of student behavior, and in the final semester of the study, a student survey.

Curriculum prior to study

The authors are responsible for teaching English Communication classes which emphasize speaking and listening skills. Because these classes are so large, they pose a classroom management challenge. Prior to this study, listening activities usually involved the teacher playing an

audio recording for the whole class centering on imaginary characters. For speaking activities, students were usually divided into pairs and small groups. Typical activities included: (a) lists of short answer questions on a given topic, for example, home, entertainment, and family where students took turns asking each other the questions and giving short answers, (b) issues and opinion surveys where students were given a list of questions concerning a contentious topic, such as smoking or gender roles and were instructed to write answers of a minimum length (at least 30 words) to later be read to their partners in class, and (c) listening to recordings of conversations between imaginary characters followed by role-playing speaking activities in which students substitute their own information.

There were limitations with each of these activities. The short-answer interviews produced very short one-turn exchanges, with students often answering only in single words. The opinion surveys with their word limits did require greater L2 production, but in written form. The speaking component was simply students reading their answers to their partners. The role-playing activities involved the actions of imaginary characters rather than the students' own experiences. Given these limitations, we began to search for ways to improve the English Communication curriculum. In classes of 40 to 50 students, how can we increase the amount of time students spend practicing speaking and listening? How can we push students' speaking practice to include production of extended speech? How can we design activities that allow for multiple-turn interactions in pair-conversations? How can we bring students own experiences into their speaking and listening practice?

First semester: Storytelling and story-sharing

To begin addressing these issues, it was decided a useful approach would be to give students a choice of story themes that encourage them to reflect on their own experiences and then let them share those experiences with a partner. Given that anecdotes and personal narratives are often found in daily human interaction (Jones, 2001), storytelling is a useful conversational skill for students to learn. McQuillan and Tse (1998) call this a "narrative approach" to language learning and argue that because we use narratives to organize past experiences and have a natural interest in them, storytelling can be an effective way for students to access target language input in an appealing context. In the first semester, students were introduced to a selection of 50 story themes and speaking topics through board games and an English homepage.

Selecting the topics

An important guideline in choosing the topics was that they involve themes that all students could relate to such as change, character-building, taking risks, and dealing with challenges or disappointment. Topics which encouraged students to recall funny or scary experiences were also added to the pool. Finally, it was important that topics selected be open-ended enough to allow students to add details, develop their speaking fluency, and talk for at least 2 minutes (see Appendix 1).

Story-sharing days

Three "story-sharing days" were held during the semester. For homework, students chose two story themes and wrote

about their own stories and then shared them with a partner in class. In class, students were encouraged to maintain eye-contact and talk about their stories with their partner, rather than reading them. Their partners were encouraged to ask questions.

First semester outcomes

At the end of the first semester, students were asked to write down in either English or Japanese what they thought were the positive and negative aspects of the story-sharing activities. Students stated they enjoyed story-sharing because it gave them a chance to get to know their partners better. Many students also commented that they found story-sharing motivating because the message their partner was struggling to communicate was personal. In addition to these positive outcomes, certain problems were seen.

Reading out loud

Students were writing down their stories and then reading them out loud to a partner. Driven by fear of making mistakes, students were focusing on communication as product rather than process. Instead of telling their stories in real-time, with all the pauses, false starts, back-channeling, and self-corrections, the students were editing out all of these and reading the finished product to their partner. A number of students commented that because of this they hesitated to interrupt their partner, and said very little.

Absence of evaluation devices

Labov (1972, as cited in Jones, 2001, p.157) argues that storytellers are always concerned about a "so what?" reaction from their audience. To avoid this, they include important details to signal the listener about the emotional tone of the story, about the connection between character traits and the story events, and about why the experience related in the story was important. In many student stories, these important details were missing.

Student practice limited to in-class

Student numbers and limited class time did not allow the teacher to listen to and monitor students' speaking individually. Instead, students' written responses were collected and checked. Because of this, it was not possible for the teacher to ensure that students were practicing speaking outside of class. Given that frequent practice in producing extended speech can stimulate active thinking in English (Ho, 2003), the authors began to search for a way to have students keep an audio record of their speaking practice to be submitted at the end of the semester as part of their grade. The aim was two-fold: to emphasize students' voices and the importance of regular speaking practice through the novelty of enabling them to record and listen to their English speaking, and to encourage them to manage their own learning. Finally, as an additional motivation, the authors sought a way to have an end-of-semester benchmark, some kind of speaking test, to encourage students to practice, to give them a goal to aim for, and to have a way to compare student speaking at the beginning and end of the semester. This would encourage students to practice and allow goals to be set for limiting reliance on notes, minimum time-length, and inclusion of evaluation devices.

Second semester: Story map and talking journals

To get students away from reading their stories and give them a tool to develop the supporting details mentioned above, the authors developed a story form based on Eggins and Slade's (1997) five parts of the story. Examples from authors' data are shown in Appendix 2. The *abstract* tells the listener the theme of the story and why you want to tell them. The *orientation* answers the when, where, and who of the story. It also tells us what we should know about the principal players and thereby signals how events in the story will be character-driven. The *event* "consists of temporally ordered actions outlining a remarkable event, which the narrator wants to share his/her reaction to" (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p. 244). The *reaction* describes how the characters in the story reacted. It answers the questions, "How did you feel?" "How did they (in the story) feel?" "What did you/ they do (in response)?" The *coda* is an important section because much of the reflection that makes storytelling useful occurs here. This section answers the questions, "What did you learn from this experience?" "Why was this experience important for you?" "How have you or people in the story changed?"

The story map (see Figure 1) is based on Buzan and Buzan's (1993) Mind Map and the rules outlined therein. The basics of mind mapping were introduced to students with emphasis on (a) keywords only where the aim was to force students to grammatize the sentences in their heads, as they spoke to their partner (Nation, 2001) looking up instead of down, and (b) using as many adjectives, adverbs, and illustrations as they could to help them remember feelings and impressions of their story. Students were also encouraged to write their stories out in a variety of longer versions for homework, but during class time, only maps with keywords and illustrations were to be used.

To encourage students to practice telling their stories outside of class, and to give them a tool to manage their own learning, a talking journal requirement was also introduced. Equipment consisted of headphones with microphone, and a flash memory purchased by the students. Students downloaded free audio recording software so that they could record their storytelling and other speaking practice and save the sound files on their flash memories. Audio was selected rather than video as it was deemed less intrusive, more convenient, and equally as effective (Burns, 1999) for the purpose of the task. In deciding on evaluation criteria, there were several challenges: How to cope with the logistics of processing a semesters' worth of sound files from 250 students? How to keep the prospect of their speaking being evaluated from being too stressful for students while still recognizing those students who made a greater effort? It was decided that evaluation of the talking journal would be based on effort as measured by how much students practiced. In practice this meant the number of sound files of a minimum required length students recorded throughout the semester. The time length and recording date for each file could be displayed, so it was possible to enforce a minimum standard of time length and regularity of practice. Each student's set of practice sound files accumulated throughout the semester would be collected by the teacher in the final class. At the beginning of the semester, students were given a rubric explaining how many times a week they needed to record their speaking practice in order to receive

a certain score. Students were told to choose from the 50 themes and topics on the homepage and were encouraged to listen to accompanying teacher audio or video samples. For the final exam they would choose a set number of story themes they had recorded for speaking practice during the semester and record final versions in the computer room using only their story maps. Story-sharing days were held in the computer room three times during the semester and were an opportunity to come together and listen to each other's stories. Typically partners listened twice, the first time to the solo recording and the second live as their partner referred to their story maps. Students could also look at each other's story maps and ask questions to help develop each other's stories.

To get a sense of how using the story map helped students develop their stories, an initial recording was made at the beginning of the semester before the story map and five parts of the story had been introduced. The time requirement for this initial recording was 1 minute. The second benchmark was recorded as part of the final exam. Students were given 90 minutes to record a set number of stories individually using their story maps. The time requirement for each recording was 2 minutes, and there were strict limitations on the number of keywords allowed, although no limit was placed on the number of illustrations. For 2-minute stories, only 20 keywords were permitted. These time-length and keyword guidelines were decided as a way of encouraging students to decrease their reliance on notes while still allowing some support to minimize stress.

Second semester outcomes

A number of positive results were seen in this second cycle. First, there was an increase in student speaking practice. Requiring students to record their speaking practice and keep an audio record of these recordings made it possible for the first time to ascertain how much students were practicing. Table 1 shows how often the 235 students in the second semester study group recorded their speaking practice outside of class time.

Table 1. Student speaking practice outside class

More than two times a week	40	17%
One to two times a week	109	46%
Less than once a week	80	34%
No speaking practice outside class	6	3%

The voice recording format also allowed the teacher to enforce 1- to 2-minute minimum time requirements as a way to encourage greater story detail and to ensure students had practice in producing extended speech. The second positive outcome was a decrease in students reading their stories. On the first recording day, many students could be seen reading from prepared texts. This practice was discouraged for this first class, but for subsequent classes, it was more strictly prohibited. The results were that by the final exam, all students limited their notes to the allowed 20 keywords, with many using illustrations as a memory aid. The dependency on reading their written English to tell their stories was no longer a problem. Finally, the stories showed greater descriptive detail. The use of the story

map contributed to several differences between the first and final benchmark recording. The transcript in Appendix 3 shows the added descriptive details and the inclusion of a *coda* in the second recording of one student in the study group produced from the story map shown in Figure 1 on the topic "A time I did something to please someone."
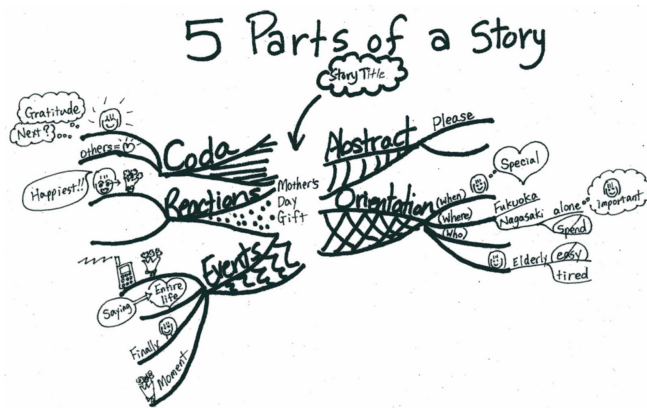

Figure 1. Student story map

When the authors listened to a sampling of student recordings at the end of this semester, several issues of concern were noted. First, there were clearly limitations to solo recording. Solo student storytelling resembled recitation or public speaking in that students could anticipate having no interruptions, and could focus all their attention on referring to their story maps, recalling the details of their story, and verbalizing them. As a result, there was little opportunity for students to practice managing the give and

take interaction important in conversation. Second, many students commented that they found the role of listener difficult because they didn't know what to say. Along with the need to add a pair recording component to the story days and talking journals, the authors recognized the need to give students "active listening" strategies, ways they could slow down the flow of conversation in order to respond and contribute to the what the speaker was saying.

Third semester: Pair recording with active listening strategies

Pair recording was intended as a way to complement the extended speech practice of solo recording with practice in managing conversational give-and-take. The speaker is forced to give part of her attention to understanding and responding to the listener's comments. The listener must demonstrate his understanding by responding appropriately. Rost (2002) argues that "collaborative listening, in which learners interact with each other, is established as a vital means of language development" (p. 143) because it forces learners to express their ideas in the target language and to come to understand language that at first they don't understand. Washburn and Christianson (1996) argued that pair-taping helped students achieve higher fluency and listening comprehension. Strategies identified by Rost included (a) responding - providing a personal, relevant response to information or ideas presented, and (b) inferencing - drawing inferences about incomplete information based on incomplete information. Washburn and Christianson stressed follow-up questions and comments, repeating words, and back-channel cues.

Active listening strategies

In the third semester of the study, active listening strategies and pair recording activities were introduced into the curriculum. The active listening strategies were divided into basic and advanced strategies and were introduced to students in the 2nd and 7th weeks of the 15 week semester.

Basic Strategies

Five basic strategies were introduced the second class of the semester: *keep the conversation going*, *basic rejoinders*, *repeating*, *questions*, and *comments*. Descriptions and examples of each are shown in Figure 2. When these basic strategies were introduced, students were encouraged to use combinations to signal fuller engagement with the speaker's story.

Advanced strategies

Three additional strategies, which make greater cognitive demands on the listener, were introduced the seventh class of the semester: *personalizing*, *speculating*, and *generalizing*.

Change of focus

The story-sharing days and the final exam format were reworked to place a much greater emphasis on pair recording and active listening. For the story days, students still had a chance to ask questions to improve each others' stories. But when recording, the active listener had very much an equal role in contributing to the flow of the story. For the final exams, students were required to do nine recordings,

Strategy	Description	Examples
Keep the Conversation Going	Signals you are listening and understand what speaker is saying	**Oh yeah? / Oh really? /Uh-huh. / Right. / Oh I see**
Rejoinders	Signals empathy for positive or negative event	**(Oh) That's good. / Wow! / Oh no! / No way! / Oh that's too bad.**
Repeating	Repeating word or sentence to question or show surprise or other emotion.	**"10 times?" / "You lost it?!" / "Trout fishing?" / "Oh, Disneyland!"**
Question	Direct question to prompt the speaker to continue, or to reveal more	**Why? / How come? / (Oh)You did? / (So) how was it? / (So) how'd (it/that) go**
Comment	Short comment, usually "That's" + adjective	**That's funny! / That's sad. / That sounds fun. /That sounds dangerous!**

Figure 2. Basic active listening strategies

including five 2-minute solo stories, two pair recordings as storyteller and two as active listener. Student were told that their final speaking exam would be evaluated not only on story detail, but also on how well they used the active listening strategies, and were advised to include a number of pair recordings in their talking journals. Transcript for one pair recording is shown in Appendix 4.

Strategy	Description	Examples (A: I want to do a homestay in an English-speaking country.)
Personalizing	Connecting what the speaker has just said to your own personal opinion/experience	(1) I want to do one too. (2) I did a homestay in------.
Speculating	Making an inference about the speaker or speaker's situation based on what s/he has just said.	(1) I guess you can speak English a little. (2) You must/It sounds like you like to travel.
Generalizing	Showing an understanding or empathy for what speaker has just said by making an observation about what situations like speaker has described are generally like	(1) Many people do homestays in college. (2) Homestays are a great experience.

Figure 3. Advanced active listening strategies

Third semester outcomes: Student survey

At the end of the third semester, the authors conducted a student survey on the four key components of the study: (a) recording with a partner (speaking), (b) recording with a partner (active listening), (c) storytelling and story maps, and (d) talking journals (speaking practice outside class). Likert-scale questions, the most widely used scale in survey research (Brown, 2001), were used. In the survey, respondents were asked to specify the extent of their agreement to a series of statements concerning each of the four key areas. Students circled 1, 2, 3, or 4

with the descriptors *strongly agree*, *moderately agree*, *moderately disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. An even number of options was given to prevent students from choosing a "safe," neutral option. Convenience sampling procedures were adopted (see Dornyei, 2003). The 266 students in the third semester group were of similar age, ethnicity, and educational background and were all taught by the authors. The students were non-English majors, from pharmacy, education, engineering, economics, and fisheries departments. The full survey questions are shown in Appendix 5.
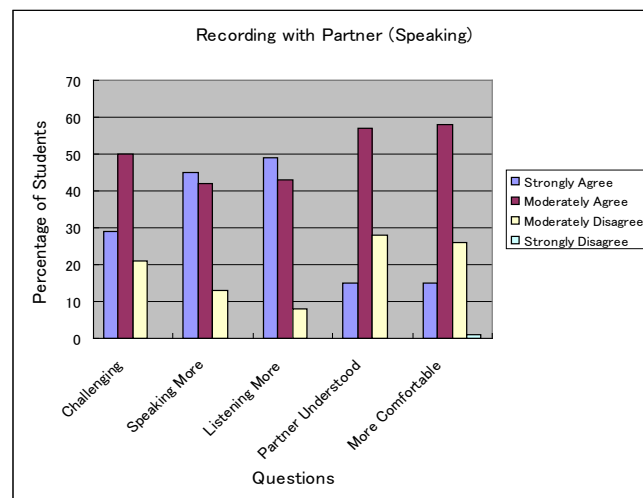

Figure 4. Survey responses for recording as speaker

The first group of questions in the questionnaire dealt with recording with a partner as a speaker telling their own story. Figure 4 shows the distribution of student responses. Combining the respondents agreeing strongly and moderately, 79% found the activity of recording their speaking with a partner challenging and interesting, 87% said they were trying to speak English in class more than usual, and 92% said they were trying to listen to their partner's English more than usual. Seventy-two percent said they could make their partner understand their English, and 73% said the pair recording activity helped them feel more comfortable speaking English.
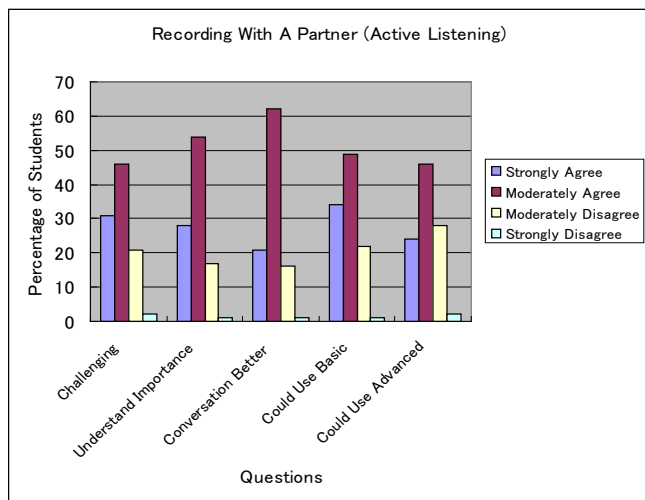
The second group of questions in the questionnaire dealt with using the active listening strategies. Seventy-seven percent of respondents found the activity of responding to their partner's story using the active listening skills challenging and interesting, 82% said they understood that active listening was a big part of communication, and 83% said that the active listening strategies helped them have a good conversation with their partner. Eighty-three percent said they were able to use the basic active listening strategies, while 70% said they could use the advanced strategies.
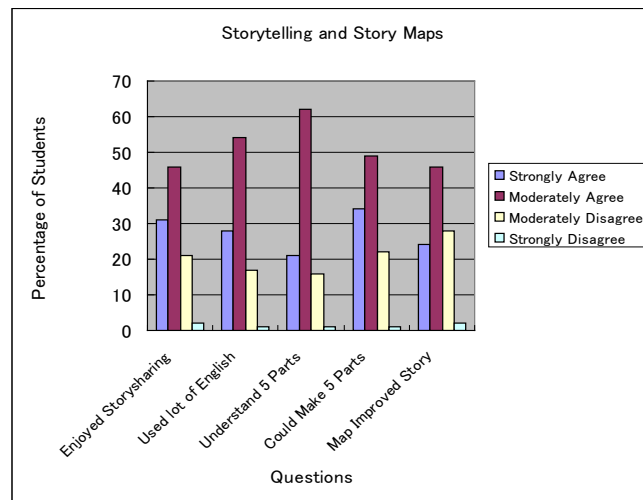

Figure 5. Survey responses for recording as listener

Figure 6. Survey responses for storytelling and story maps
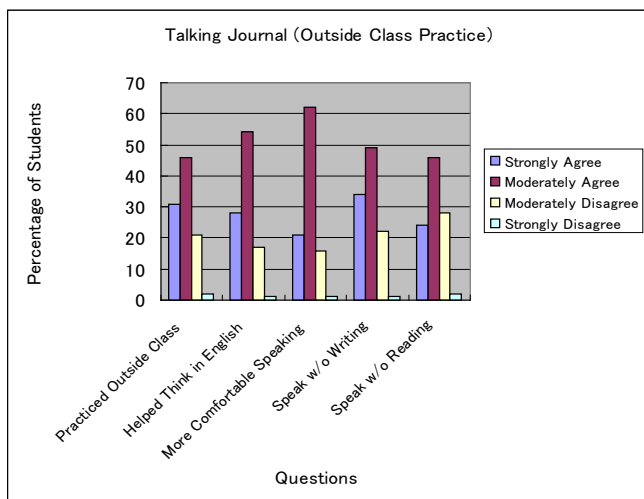
Talking Journal (Outside Class Practice)

Figure 7. Survey responses for talking journal

The third group of questions in the questionnaire dealt with storytelling and use of the story map. Eighty-six percent of respondents said they enjoyed sharing stories with a partner, 85% said they had to use a lot of English to tell their stories, and 83% said that they understood about the five parts of a story. Eighty-five percent said they could make five parts to their stories, and 85% said that using the story map improved their stories.

The fourth group of questions dealt with the talking journal. Seventy-six percent of students said they practiced speaking outside of class time, 81% said that practicing their speaking outside of class helped them learn to think in English, and

74% said it helped them feel more comfortable speaking English. Fifty-eight percent said they could speak without writing it down first, and 74% said they could speak without reading.

Discussion: Extended speech and pair interaction

One of the challenges brought into focus by the study was in resolving the tension between the two very different speaking and listening skill sets targeted in the activities. Solo recording followed by a partner listening to the recording focused on giving students practice in producing and listening to extended speech, while pair recording and active listening tended to shift the focus away from extended speech toward managing turn-taking in conversation. Expanding the final exam to include both solo recording and pair recording with active listening was an effort to provide balance between these two skill sets. As mentioned earlier, the story day activities were also expanded to give the listener the opportunity to hear the full solo recording before doing a pair recording. And while storytelling could be seen as closer to recitation or speech making than actual conversation, adding the active listening component ensured that, as in conversation, the speaker had to expect spontaneous responses, and the listener had to process what they had heard and offer an appropriate response in real time.

Limitations and further research

There are a number of issues arising out of the current study which the authors plan to explore in future research.

Feedback

One important challenge for the teacher is finding ways to follow up after students have recorded their stories with a partner. How can students be encouraged to notice ways that they could have responded more actively, places where they could have given more details, and ways they could have modulated their voices to suit the emotional tenor of the story? One approach the authors have begun to explore is using peer evaluation and self-evaluation. The use of these may offer students opportunities to reflect on their own and other students' recordings in a way that avoids overreliance on teacher feedback.

Use of a script

The approach adopted in the current study is broadly speaking a top-down approach. The use of student-created scripts may give students opportunities to envision how their active listening partner will interact in their telling of their story. Additionally, the script may provide a more bottom-up approach to raising students' awareness of their responsibility as both speaker and active listener in contributing to the flow of conversation.

Mind maps as a recall aid

The use of mind maps as a tool for building fluency, pushing output, and aiding recall of story details and vocabulary has not been adequately addressed in the current study. In the future, the authors would like to further explore and document their findings of how story maps compare with other language-focused methods of recalling information such as West's (1960) read-and-look-up method and language chunking.

Conclusion

The aims of the current study were to identify ways the curriculum could be changed to strengthen the focus on speaking and listening skills and to encourage greater student autonomy. Outcomes discussed in the study suggest that the introduction of storytelling and story maps, talking journals, and active listening led to progress toward these two goals. Evaluation of students' talking journals showed that a majority of students were practicing from once to twice a week outside of class. Results of the student survey suggest that students found each of the key components of the study challenging, enjoyable, and useful in specific ways. Storytelling encouraged them to use a lot of English to tell their stories, to speak English more, and listen more to their partner's English. Story maps helped them improve their stories with details and elements of the five part story. The talking journal and pair recording helped them learn to think in English and also to feel more comfortable speaking English. Active listening helped improve their conversations. The result has been meaningful stories for all students to tell and participate in which is a potentially rich learning environment.

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Appendix 1

Story themes (sample)

1. A Change in my Life
2. A Memory or Experience That Meant A Lot To Me
3. Something I Pushed Myself To Do
4. A Time You Were Scared To Death
5. You had a good time, but you got carried away

Appendix 2

Examples of story parts

Abstract

This is about a time I did something I'd always wanted to do. Thanks to this experience, I was able to overcome my fear.

Orientation

I had always wanted to ski, but I was afraid to try.

Event

My friends invited me to ski during summer vacation.

Reaction

I was afraid to go. But my friends said, "Come on! Let's have fun!"

Coda

I learned that I can try something even if it seems scary. If I can do it with a friend, it's easier and I'm not so afraid.

Appendix 3

Second recording transcript

I want to tell you about a time I did something to please someone. It's a story about last mother's day. **That day I thought, "I want to make this day special" because** this spring I moved to Nagasaki from Fukuoka and I couldn't spend much time with my mother. **Living alone, I realized how important she was for me**. So I decided I wanted to show my feelings to her. **Later that day I called the flower shop** and ordered a beautiful flower arrangement. **Of course she didn't know it**. And I also wrote a letter to her **saying thank you for everything you've done for my entire life for 18 years**. **Finally** my mother arrived home from work and, **at that very moment**, the flower arrangement arrived. **Seeing the flower arrangement** she got so happy **and said, "Thank you! It is my happiest day in my life!"** <u>I was so glad to see her smiling face. It made me realize how good I feel when I do something for other people. I'm thinking, "What will I do next year?" Next year I will also show my feeling to her, my gratitude.</u>

Notes:

[1] First benchmark consisted only of non-bold portions.

[2] Coda is underlined.

Appendix 4

Transcript of pair-recording

A: This story is a time I did something to pleasure my mother. When I was an elementary school student I planned a party to celebrate my mother's birthday.

B: Oh you did? That's nice.

A: Yeah. But the preparation for the party was hard for me so I asked my sister to help me with the preparation.

B: Uh-huh. Did your sister help you?

A: Of course she did! I and she went to shopping and choosed the present.

B: Present? What did you buy?

A: An apron and my mother's favorite sweets.

B: Wow, it sounds nice.

A: After the shopping, we decorated the room. Of course, it was secret for my mother and we held the party.

B: How did your mother react? Was she pleasured?

A: Yes, she was surprised and looked pleasured, and she told us, "Thank you for such a good party."

B: Really? You and your sister did good thing.

A: Yes, it became a good memory for us.

Appendix 5

Student survey questions

1. How about recording with a partner? Speaking in English

a)   Recording my speaking with a partner is challenging and interesting.

b)   Are you trying to speak English more than usual[1]?

c)   Are you trying to listen to your partner's English more than usual[1]?

d)   Could you make your partner understand what you wanted to say in English[2]?

e)   Recording practice helped me feel more comfortable[3] speaking in English.

2. How about recording with a partner? Active listening in English

a)   Active Listening is challenging and interesting.

b)   Now I understand that Active Listening is a BIG part of communication.

c)   Thanks to active listening, my partner and I had a good[4] conversation.

d)   I was able to use the basic active listening.

e)   I was able to use the advanced active listening.

3. Story telling and story maps in English

a)   I enjoyed sharing stories with my _____.

b)   I had to use a lot of English to tell my story.

c)   I understand about the 5 parts of the story.

d)   I can make 5 parts to my stories.

e)   Using the story map helped me improve my story.

4. Self-study speaking practice

a)   I was able to practice speaking outside of class.

b)   Practicing speaking helped me learn to "think in English."

c)   Practicing speaking outside of class helped me feel more comfortable[3] speaking English.

d)   I feel like I can speak English without writing it down first.

e)   I feel like I can speak English without reading.

Notes: Explanations given to the students for clarification and consistency

[1] more than in previous English classes you've taken

[2] based on individual intuition on the appropriateness of the partner's response

[3] in comparison with the beginning of the course

[4] listener stayed engaged giving responses and contributing through active listening and both partners enjoyed the conversation