

## Increasing Feedback for Students with Personalized Reports and Google Forms

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Giving quality feedback to students on a regular basis is something that many teachers aspire to, but often may feel unable to accomplish. A major reason for this is the demands on time, with correcting student papers often becoming an ongoing source of teacher stress. Although research into feedback form has often been contradictory, there is widespread agreement that feedback is an important part of teacher–student relationships. Consequently, procedures and techniques that cut back on the time involved in providing feedback are desirable. This paper outlines one way to deal with the feedback problem using Google Forms and Microsoft Office. By following the outline in tandem with the detailed handouts available in the Appendix, teachers will be able to easily create online quizzes and personalized reports for their students. Given the increasing demand for transparency in grades and out-of-classroom work, methods such as these may prove invaluable.

毎回学生にフィードバックを与えることを目標にしつつ、その目標が達成できずにいる教員が少なくないようである。その最大の理由はいうまでもなく、時間である。詳細なフィードバックを与えようとする結果として、終わりそうにない採点地獄に陥りやすい。フィードバックがどのような形で提供されればよいのかという疑問が多く残っているが、教員と学生のよい関係作りに不可欠であることは幅広く指摘されている。そのため、フィードバックの量を減らさずに、それにかかる時間を減らせる方法が求められている。そこで、本論ではGoogle FormsとMS Officeを用いたフィードバックの提供方法を概説する。本論で述べる方法とその詳細が書かれている付録資料を活用することで、誰にでも簡単にオンラインのテストと、学生に提供できるフィードバック付きのレポートが作成できる。成績評価と授業外学習における透明性が求められている今日、本論で概説するような方法が重要になるであろう。

There is a fundamental feedback dilemma in second language education. The role of feedback is sometimes problematized within SLA research, but there nevertheless seems to be good reason to believe that feedback can help students improve their L2 proficiency (Kurihara, 2014). Students often expect to receive feedback from their teachers (O’Flaherty, 2016), be it *corrective negative feedback*, telling them explicitly or implicitly of their errors, or *positive feedback*, giving them encouragement about having done a good job or “confirm[ing] a correct response from the learner” (Noor, Aman, Mustaffa, & Seong, 2010, p. 399). Likewise, many teachers see giving feedback as a vital part of their jobs (Evans, Hartshorn, & Tuioti, 2010). Both these points strongly suggest that giving feedback is an essential part of developing positive teacher–student relationships.

Although there are some who question the use of feedback (e.g., Truscott, 1996), there is value in providing students with regular feedback in order to strengthen teacher–student rapport. However, in the classroom, many things may interfere with teachers’ ability to provide feedback as regularly as desired. On the one hand, talking to students in the classroom one-on-one can be extremely time consuming. Giving feedback orally during learning activities may not always be feasible without obstructing lesson flow, and even with a small group, explaining points individually can take up a large portion of class time. Trying to individualize feedback can be particularly demanding in cases when similar errors occur across a group. On the other hand, time management can also be a problem outside of the classroom. Trying to provide feedback for assignments can result in time outside of the classroom being dominated by correcting papers, rather than spent on other important activities like lesson planning. These problems are particularly pertinent with tests and quizzes, as they usually require in-class time to conduct and review them and out-of-class time to correct them.

Teaching methods and procedures that can help to free up time while giving more feedback—especially personalized feedback—are desirable, and the advancement of technology has increased the number of options available to teachers. Utilizing online tests and quizzes, which often have automatic grading, is one effective option; however,

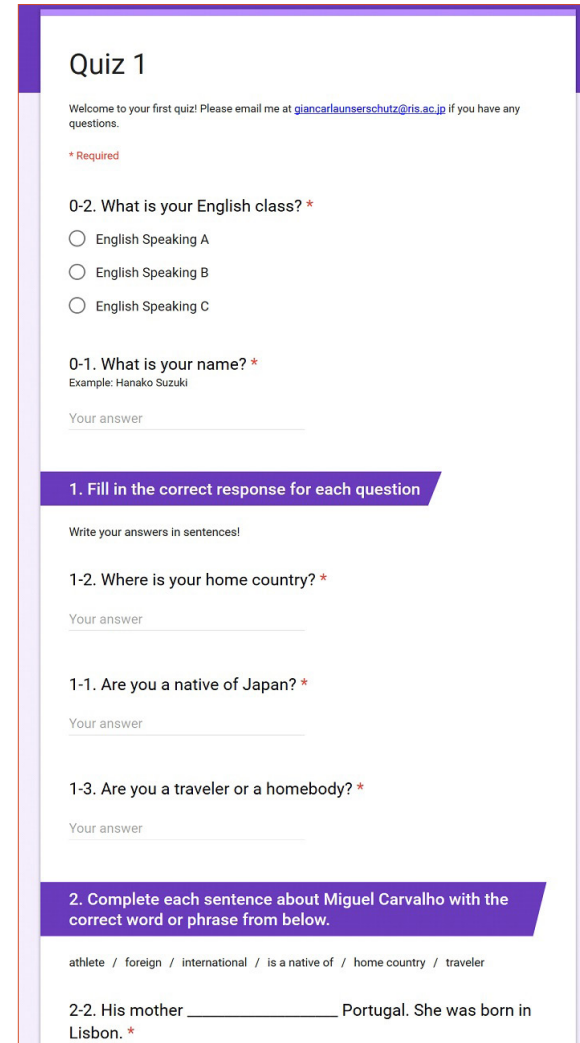
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many such systems either use costly proprietary software or have severe functionality limitations, for instance not allowing personalized feedback that students can keep about their performance. One way to deal with these issues is to adapt free tools such as Google Forms (“Forms” hereinafter), as well as software packages that, if not free, are commonly used by teachers for other purposes, such as Microsoft Office. This paper outlines one method that uses Forms to put quizzes and tests online and uses the data obtained (in combination with Microsoft Office’s Excel and Word programs and Office’s mail merge function) to automatically generate reports with semipersonalized feedback (see Appendix B). In my case, using this method led to classroom time being better spent on meaningful activities and reduced the time needed to respond to recurring issues in students’ work. Although the introductory example outlined here is a quiz, these basic techniques can be easily adapted for giving homework or online class lessons by adding videos and images, making it a versatile application worth becoming familiar with.

## Procedures for Creating and Using Google Forms

### Using Google Forms

Google Forms is part of the Google Drive suite that allows users to set up online surveys, such as in Figure 1. This application offers a variety of question types (see Table 1), and is highly adaptable to many types of questions language teachers may want to ask in an assignment or quiz. Teachers can easily share links with students or embed them into websites. Although not specifically designed for use with smartphones, most surveys on Forms also function well on them, meaning that students do not need to have a computer to access them. Forms also automatically generates statistics graphs for each question, making it easy to visualize trends; more importantly, Forms can also generate response data from surveys in spreadsheet form, which can be used in Google Drive or downloaded for use in Microsoft Excel. Forms is also 100% free, making it well worth investing the time to become familiar with it.



**Quiz 1**

Welcome to your first quiz! Please email me at [giancarlo.unserschutz@ris.ac.jp](mailto:giancarlo.unserschutz@ris.ac.jp) if you have any questions.

\* Required

0-2. What is your English class? \*

English Speaking A

English Speaking B

English Speaking C

0-1. What is your name? \*

Example: Hanako Suzuki

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Fill in the correct response for each question**

Write your answers in sentences!

1-2. Where is your home country? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

1-1. Are you a native of Japan? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

1-3. Are you a traveler or a homebody? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Complete each sentence about Miguel Carvalho with the correct word or phrase from below.**










athlete / foreign / international / is a native of / home country / traveler

2-2. His mother \_\_\_\_\_ Portugal. She was born in Lisbon. \*

Figure 1. Screenshot of quiz on Google Forms.

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**Table 1. Question Types on Google Forms With Relevant Icons**

Question type	Characteristics	Helpful uses
Short answer 	Students write short free-form responses	Responding in question or answer form; rewriting sentences in the correct order; fixing incorrect sentences
Paragraph 	Students write longer free-form responses	Responding to videos; giving comments on ease of use, etc. at the end of quiz or lesson
Multiple choice* 	Students select from several preset answers; allows free short answer option	Choosing correct vocabulary or verb form; selecting correct response to a prompt
Checkboxes* 	Students select from preset answers, multiple selections possible; allows free short answer option	Selecting all answers that apply to a vocabulary or grammar point
Dropdown* 	Students select from preset answers, which are not all displayed at first; allows free short answer option	Responding in question or answer form; rewriting sentences in correct order; fixing incorrect sentences
Linear scale 	Students order answers in rank, between 0 or 1 and any number from 2 to 10	Ranking responses; giving feedback to teachers on ease of lesson or quiz
Multiple choice grid 	Students match rows and columns on a grid	Matching correct definitions for vocabulary
Date 	Students write responses in Month/Day/Year form (MM/DD/YYYY)	Reporting on when a task was finished; responding to questions about time
Time 	Students write responses in Hour: Minute (AM/PM) form	Reporting on when a task was finished; responding to questions about time

Note. \* Can switch between these three options without changing the answers you have already typed.

One potential drawback is that teachers must have a Google account to use Forms, and making one will be any non-Google user's first step. This can easily be done by accessing any Google-related site such as Google Mail (<http://mail.google.com>) or Google Drive (<http://drive.google.com>). However, students do not need to have an account, so there is little burden on their part. Although Forms does offer a quiz setting that can automatically give students their grades, the quiz form does not lead to personalized feedback; it only assigns points and shows whether students' answers were correct. It also does not generate a report for students to keep. If providing more feedback is the goal, it is often better to create quizzes in standard survey form and manipulate the data postcollection to create feedback reports. This form of postcollection data manipulation is discussed below.

**Creating Quizzes on Google Forms**

The first step is to draw up a quiz to put online. Most quizzes already prepared for class use will be adaptable, but in general, it is recommended that new Forms users try something short with fewer than 10 questions. Questions with fewer potential answers—and thus fewer feedback patterns—such as multiple-choice questions are also good first-time choices. One downside of using Forms is that it does not allow any formatting like bold or italic fonts. Because all formatting will be lost after data is copied into Forms, a simple list of the questions is sufficient. At first, the most important thing to decide is what type of questions to use (see Table 1), as this will affect what options are needed when setting the spreadsheet up to give feedback. In general, it is also important at this stage to keep in mind what kind of problems students might have when answering questions, and what kind of feedback would be beneficial.

After this, make a new document within Forms, which can be accessed at <http://forms.google.com>. Forms is very intuitive: After choosing a title in the top, add new questions with the circled “plus” sign, choose the question type, then type in the question, and if relevant, the answers (see Table 2). The best way to get used to Forms is to play with it and see how different question types end up looking. It is advisable to examine the questions by clicking the eye icon to see a preview. Once finished, open the preview and copy the URL. You can now share the quiz with your students using that URL. If the URL is to be shared in class, such as on the blackboard or on written handouts, consider using an abbreviator service like TinyURL.com, which gives shortened links that are easier to type in manually to minimize typos. Note that the forms and quizzes you make are automatically saved to Google Drive; there is no save button.

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Table 2. List of Important Function Icons

Icon	Meaning	Location
	Create new question	
	Add new title	
	Add image	Main right tab on questions page
	Add video	
	Create new page within form	
	Select add-ons	
	Change background colors/images	Top right of main page
	Preview of form in new window	
	Settings	
	Create spreadsheet	Top of responses page

**Preparing Data in a Spreadsheet**

Spreadsheets must be generated manually by going to responses and clicking the green icon (see Table 2). New spreadsheets are saved in Google Drive with the form title and “(Responses)” (e.g., “Quiz 1 (Responses)”), and new student response data are automat-

ically added. After all responses have been collected, the spreadsheet should either be downloaded as an Excel file or opened in Google Drive, where it can be copied and pasted into Excel manually. Before opening the data in Excel, it is good to get a feel for it by looking at the statistics Google prepares automatically on the responses page (Figure 2). The results for each question are listed as pie or bar charts and can be helpful for examining trends for individual questions. One advantage of using Forms is that it allows users to observe patterns not clear when just looking at individual responses, which may prove useful in future quiz and lesson design.

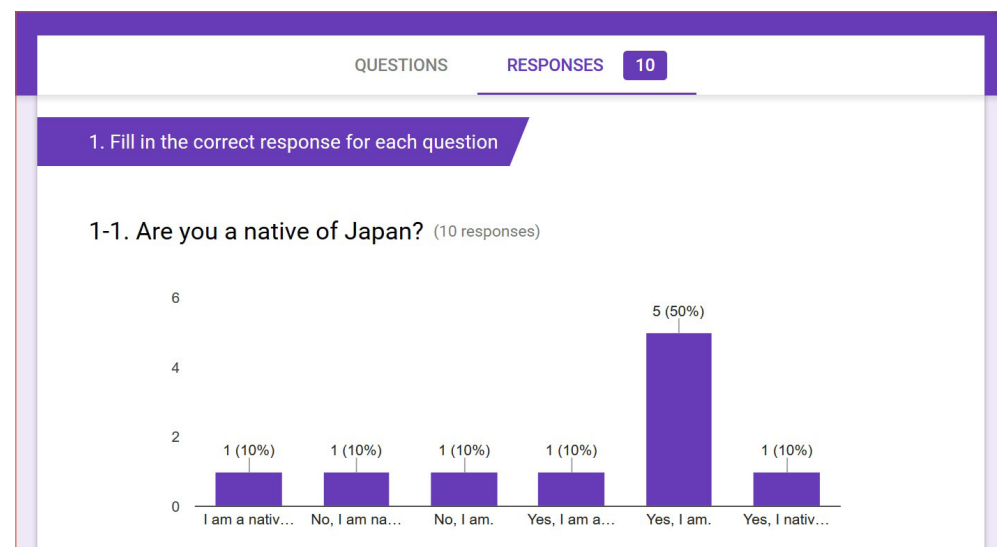


Figure 2. Screenshot of statistics from Google Forms. All data were created for this paper and are not actual personal data.

At this point, it is also important to consider what kind of feedback to give the student: How will points be assigned for each question? Should comments—encouraging or corrective—be given for each question? Should students get a comment about their overall grade, such as instructing them to seek advice if their grade is below a certain point? One Excel column will be necessary for each comment given. The easiest way to complete this is to insert that number of columns next to each question. Generally, this will mean columns for “feedback” and “points” for each question—two columns per question. When

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performing the mail merge BH(to import the Excel data into files), column headers will be used to choose where to put each data point, so each column should have a label that is short yet clearly recognizable, such as “1-1 Feedback” (“Feedback for Question 1-1”). To give total grades, add and label an additional column at the end of the sheet.

To add feedback for each question, there are two choices. The easier choice (recommended for the novice user) is to use the automatic filter, which will allow users to show only the columns fulfilling set conditions. They can be added from the data tab in the top ribbon. Afterwards, simply click on the filter, select only the correct answer, type in a comment in the feedback column (like “Correct! Good job!”), and copy this to the other rows. Repeat this process for each incorrect answer (e.g., “Sorry! You needed an adjective here.”). The second choice is to use conditional formulas, which assign given values based upon whether set conditions are fulfilled; thus, the formula (=if(B2=1,“Good!”;“Poor!”) means: If B2 equals 1, assign *Good* to the current cell, otherwise assign it *Poor*. This can be done recursively, meaning that the negative condition (“Poor” in this example) can include a conditional formula for additional outcomes. Conditional formulas can seem daunting, but with good planning, they allow for fully automatizing the assignment of feedback. Using recursive formulas in this way of course means limiting feedback to a smaller set of options, but it can be particularly useful if a large number of students are experiencing similar problems.

To add point values, go through the same process for feedback: Decide how to assign points for correct and incorrect answers, then use the filter (or conditional formulas) to add points for each question. Next, in the column created for the final grade, sum up all the point values using the sum formula (=sum(x:y)). Copy this to the other rows, and the basic data points needed for the report are finished. If you wish to add comments on students’ overall performance, this would also be a good time to do so.

### Creating a Report

Next you will need to design a document in which to put the data. This document will be the basis for the reports after the mail merge. In each report, there will be data that will be different (the name, the answers for each question, etc.) and data that will stay the same (the correct answers, the questions themselves) for each student. Any data that will change should correspond to an Excel column. For now, all data items that will change need to have a placeholder, which you will replace later during the mail merge; as such, they should be easily distinguishable from other text, like by using brackets as in Figure 3.

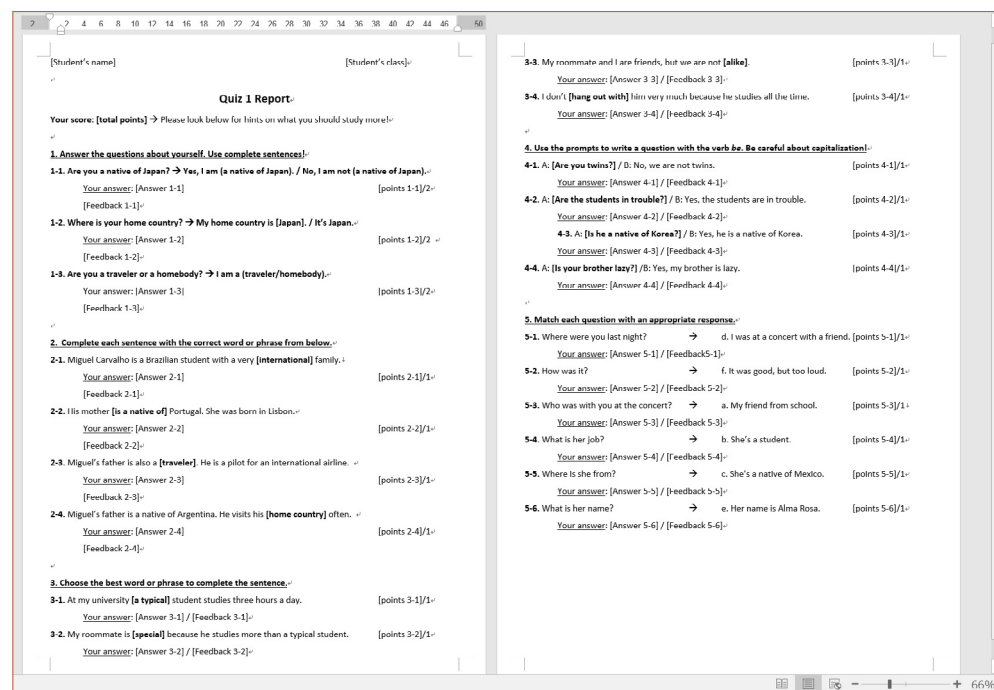


Figure 3. Screen shot of report layout.

Once this is finished, it can be used to set up the mail merge. Mail merge is a function in Microsoft Word that imports Excel data into files; each row of data will result in a different and unique letter, report, or label. The reports you make will follow the letter form. The easiest way is to use the Mail Merge Wizard in the mailings or tools tab in the top ribbon. Select the relevant Excel file and follow the screens. Detailed information about this can be found in the linked handout in Appendix A. When finished, go to the preview and save the reports as a PDF or as one large Word document. The reports can now be printed out for students.

## Other Uses and Issues

### Assessing Problems and Some Caveats

One of the biggest questions about the procedures described above is whether they will save the teacher time. The answer is that it will depend on each situation. Teachers with many students doing the same quiz or assignment will likely find that this is quicker than grading manually; having the data in spreadsheet form also makes it easier to use when calculating final grades. Courses that use similar quiz or homework styles repeatedly are also well suited to Forms, as they can be copied and edited, meaning that only the contents of the questions themselves need to be updated. On the other hand, it may not be worth it if the number of students responding is not sufficiently large.

Using Forms for quizzes can also free class time if they are assigned as homework. In this case, there are privacy and academic integrity issues that need to be considered and monitored. Having the quizzes online means that anyone can access them, and it is important to collect the data responsibly. Forms has an option to have answers viewable after submission in the *General* tab of *Settings* (Table 2), which should be deselected. There is also the possibility that students will do the quizzes together or share answers. One way to discourage the sharing of answers is to go to *Presentation* in *Settings*, and choose to have Google shuffle the order of questions. Questions in the same section will then show up in random order. It is also possible to stop accepting responses after a certain period through the *Responses* window. Setting a sufficiently short window of time for students to complete the quiz can help with these issues.

Some might ask why not create the online quizzes and personalized student reports all with Google Drive. There is, however, no mail merge function included in the Google Docs word processor. Although there are some add-on functions that will enable mail merge, the majority are not free or only free for a limited number of responses. With many computers coming prepackaged with Microsoft Office from the start, the procedures described here offer a cost-free option for teachers. Those who do not own Microsoft Office can get around this by using alternative office suites such as Open Office and Kingsoft Office, many of which allow mail merge using the same techniques described here.

### Advanced Activities and Quizzes

Aside from the basic quiz report described above, Forms is highly adaptable to other uses. It is possible to include visuals within both questions and (most) answers, meaning that users can set up matching questions with either text or video files and images (see

Table 2). Because Forms supports embedding videos into the form, students can also be questioned on video comprehension. Audio files are not supported independently, but it is possible to work around this by adding an audio track to a blank PowerPoint video. Teachers interested in using Forms and making reports but worried about the integrity issues noted above will find that these techniques can also be useful for a variety of homework assignments.

Forms can also be employed in making lessons and can be useful to set up a flipped classroom. By including explanations in the titles or embedding topical video files, teachers can have students learn about a topic and then use questions to check their comprehension. Because Forms allows users to select what page will show up next depending on the answer selected, it is also possible to use recursively, for example, to have incorrect answers lead to a “Sorry!” screen that then back to the original question to be answered again. In my classes, I have begun to switch many grammar and listening lessons to Forms, using PowerPoint videos to discuss the topics and then recursive questions to check students’ understanding (and to make sure they have watched the videos). This has allowed me to shift valuable class time to practicing pronunciation skills and doing group activities.

Additionally, setting up reports on the activities in the way described here allows teachers to digitally keep track of students’ work, and it offers the important opportunity to be analytical with the data accrued. The most obvious usage is to automatize the assignment of grades: Because the data is in spreadsheet form, homework, classroom, and test grades can all be added and summed. By categorizing questions by what skills or issues they address, students’ results can also be tracked, which can help teachers adjust their lesson plans to meet students’ needs as well as personalize their support. One way in which I have done this is by using Forms to create placement tests and personalized performance reports, which was made possible by using Excel to analyze how well students did on each test item.

Finally, Forms is also open to collaboration between colleagues. Surveys, quizzes, and lessons can be shared with colleagues by setting them as collaborators, after which they can copy the files into their own drives. It is important to be careful, however; if individuals are allowed editing rights, they can also alter the material. For this reason, in some cases it may be better to create a dummy Google account that can be shared freely with colleagues. This can be utilized positively to allow instructors to work together to plan and create better materials for all.

## Student Responses to Google Forms and Future Possibilities

In general, student responses to their reports have been positive, with the majority impressed to get individualized feedback and enjoying the hints and explanations about the question items. On a practical level, I have also received fewer complaints about issues such as handwriting and return times. However, an important issue is how to get students to respond to this feedback for as the title of Gooblar's (2015) article suggested, a major problem with giving feedback is "getting them to read our comments." Although students may be impressed by reports, giving feedback in this way will only be truly useful for students if they are required to do something with it.

One possibility is to individualize assignments by tracking students' strengths and weaknesses through their results. This could be easily incorporated into the reports themselves. For example, students who did poorly on a particular test item could be instructed via feedback to review that concept in the course materials. Students can also be encouraged to read and compare their results to engage them with their reports; this can be assisted by having students keep a reflection log, where they could respond to their performances and review their study goals. Practitioners interested in examining what kinds of feedback may be effective can find useful hints in Biber, Nekrasova, and Horn (2011); Bitchener, Young, and Cameron (2005); and McCord (2012), all of which can be helpful starting points when determining how to plan and improve giving feedback.

Making feedback more effective will always be a problem within second language education, but there are many reasons to anticipate that there will be increasing pressure on teachers to provide it more regularly—at least from an administrative point of view. Demands for greater transparency, particularly in grades, will likely result in calls for more feedback. At my institution, a description of how feedback is given will soon be a required item on syllabi. In Japan, the push to increase out-of-classroom study also feeds into this, as it creates more student work requiring feedback. This means that not only will teachers need to be more vigilant about giving students feedback, but they may well feel pressured to give it in clear, formularized ways—such as test reports. Effective use of the tools available for automatizing such processes will prove key to dealing with these issues. It is hoped that the methods described here, although not definitive, will prove a good starting point.

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## Bio Data

**Giancarla Unser-Schutz** is an assistant professor at Risho University. She is currently interested in how to improve motivation and interest amongst students in non-EFL-specialist faculties. She also conducts research outside of EFL on the linguistic characteristics of *manga* as well as Japanese naming practices. Her publications may be found at <http://rissho.academia.edu/GiancarlaUnserSchutz/>. <giancarlaunserchutz@ris.ac.jp>

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**Appendix A**

For more information about how to utilize the procedures described here, the quizzes, data, and more detailed information can be found at the links below.

- Quiz: <http://tinyurl.com/zndd6uw>
- Detailed walk-through handout on how to create reports: <http://tinyurl.com/ycd228qx>
- Excel data set: <http://tinyurl.com/y8ddjd8l>
- Report outline: <http://tinyurl.com/yawmd9zn>
- Example report: <http://tinyurl.com/jpdovtq>

**Appendix B**  
**Report Examples**

Tetsuro Nakamura	English Speaking A		
<b>Quiz 1 Report</b>			
<b>Your score: 24</b>	<b>Comment from your professor: Great!</b>		
→ Please look below for hints on what you should study more!			
<b>1. Answer the questions about yourself. Use complete sentences!</b>			
1-1. Are you a native of Japan? → Yes, I am (a native of Japan). / No, I am not (a native of Japan).	2/2		
<b>1-2. Where is your home country? → My home country is [Japan]. / It's Japan.</b>			
<b>1-3. Are you a traveler or a homebody? → I am a (traveler/homebody).</b>			
<b>2. Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase from below.</b>			
<b>2-1. Miguel Carvalho is a Brazilian student with a very [international] family.</b>			
<b>2-2. His mother [is a native of] Portugal. She was born in Lisbon.</b>			
<b>2-3. Miguel's father is also a [traveler]. He is a pilot for an international airline.</b>			
<b>2-4. Miguel's father is a native of Argentina. He visits his [home country] often.</b>			
<b>3. Choose the best word or phrase to complete the sentence.</b>			
<b>3-1. At my university [a typical] student studies three hours a day.</b>			
<b>3-2. My roommate is [special] because he studies more than a typical student.</b>			
<b>3-3. My roommate and I are friends, but we are not [alike].</b>			
<b>3-4. I don't [hang out with] him very much because he studies all the time.</b>			
<b>4. Use the prompts to write a question with the verb be. Be careful about capitalization!</b>			
<b>4-1. A: [Are you twins?] / B: No, we are not twins.</b>			
<b>4-2. A: [Are the students in trouble?] / B: Yes, the students are in trouble.</b>			
<b>4-3. A: [Is he a native of Korea?] / B: Yes, he is a native of Korea.</b>			
<b>4-4. A: [Is your brother lazy?] / B: Yes, my brother is lazy.</b>			
<b>5. Match each question with an appropriate response.</b>			
<b>5-1. Where were you last night? → d. I was at a concert with a friend.</b>			
<b>5-2. How was it? → f. It was good, but too loud.</b>			
<b>5-3. Who was with you at the concert? → a. My friend from school.</b>			
<b>5-4. What is her job? → b. She's a student.</b>			
<b>5-5. Where is she from? → c. She's a native of Mexico.</b>			
<b>5-6. What is her name? → e. Her name is Alma Rosa.</b>			

Figure B1. Example report (good grade).

Jiro Suzuki	English Speaking C		
<b>Quiz 1 Report</b>			
<b>Your score: 8</b>	<b>Comment from your professor: Needs help</b>		
→ Please look below for hints on what you should study more!			
<b>1. Answer the questions about yourself. Use complete sentences!</b>			
1-1. Are you a native of Japan? → Yes, I am (a native of Japan). / No, I am not (a native of Japan).	1/2		
<b>1-2. Where is your home country? → My home country is [Japan]. / It's Japan.</b>			
<b>1-3. Are you a traveler or a homebody? → I am a (traveler/homebody).</b>			
<b>2. Complete each sentence with the correct word or phrase from below.</b>			
<b>2-1. Miguel Carvalho is a Brazilian student with a very [international] family.</b>			
<b>2-2. His mother [is a native of] Portugal. She was born in Lisbon.</b>			
<b>2-3. Miguel's father is also a [traveler]. He is a pilot for an international airline.</b>			
<b>2-4. Miguel's father is a native of Argentina. He visits his [home country] often.</b>			
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<b>4-1. A: [Are you twins?] / B: No, we are not twins.</b>			
<b>4-2. A: [Are the students in trouble?] / B: Yes, the students are in trouble.</b>			
<b>4-3. A: [Is he a native of Korea?] / B: Yes, he is a native of Korea.</b>			
<b>4-4. A: [Is your brother lazy?] / B: Yes, my brother is lazy.</b>			
<b>5. Match each question with an appropriate response.</b>			
<b>5-1. Where were you last night? → d. I was at a concert with a friend.</b>			
<b>5-2. How was it? → f. It was good, but too loud.</b>			
<b>5-3. Who was with you at the concert? → a. My friend from school.</b>			
<b>5-4. What is her job? → b. She's a student.</b>			
<b>5-5. Where is she from? → c. She's a native of Mexico.</b>			
<b>5-6. What is her name? → e. Her name is Alma Rosa.</b>			

Figure B2. Example report (poor grade).