A Letter from the Editor

Friends and Colleagues,

I hope this issue of *On CUE* finds you well and enjoying a much-deserved summer vacation. This issue is a bit thicker than usual, reflecting increases in both the quantity and quality of submissions we have been receiving lately.

We start off with two feature articles dealing with student ratings of teachers and teaching. First, **Christine Winskowski** presents Part 1 of a two-part overview and critique of conventional student ratings instruments. In Part 2, which will appear in the next issue, she will propose alternative instruments for rating effective teachers and teaching. Next, **Peter Burden** looks at ratings from the students' perspective, considering how their attitudes toward the process may influence results. Rounding out the *Features* section is a contrastive study by **Kaoru Kobayashi** which traces the use of rhetorical patterns and structures in Japanese and English research articles.

In a lively *Opinion & Perspective* section, **Gregory Strong** responds to **John Burrell's** recent article on the job outlook for university educators in Japan by comparing the situation here with the reality for job seekers in various other countries. Next, **Michael Guest** takes issue with **David Peaty's** point of view on global education.

The *From the Chalkface* sections offers two projects for the university classroom.

First, **Juergen Bulach** presents his method for using learning contracts with students. Next, **Marlen Elliot Harrison** explains how to use Impressionist artwork to encourage creative self-expression.

Rounding out this issue are three short articles in the *Cyber Pipeline, Conference Reviews,* and *Book Reviews* sections respectively. First, **Brian Caspino** provides internet sources of *Beatles* materials for classroom use. Next, **Forrest Nelson** reviews the recent JALTCALL conference held at the Biwako campus of Ritsumeikan University. And finally, **Nevitt Reagan** reviews *Ideas & Issues, Pre-Intermediate* and *Intermediate* from Macmillan LanguageHouse.

And *On CUE* continues to evolve. In an effort to better serve our readers, this publication now includes Japanese summaries of feature articles. Please welcome translator **Yukihiro Kunisada** to the editorial staff.

More changes are coming. My tenure as editor is drawing to a close. The CUE executive board now seeks a new editor. I will stay on to help the new editor get started, and I will continue doing layout for *On CUE* and other CUE publications. If you are interested in taking on this demanding and rewarding duty, please contact me or Phil McCasland.

Mike Hood
On CUE *Editor*

Documenting Instructor-Effectiveness, Part 1: Vulnerabilities of Conventional Student Ratings Instruments

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本論は、慣習的に行なわれている学生による授業評価法（SRI）の基づく方法論が、推論への高い依存性や、学生の論理的思考・動機付けを紛らわす抽象的な質問に特徴付けられる典型的な例であり、その本質に於いて問題を抱えていることを議論するものである。更に、声に出して考察させる面接調査の結果は、学生の認識プロセスが質問の内容と無関係な要素によって影響を受けていることを示唆している。評価結果はまた、質問の順序、使われる評価尺度その他の要素によっても左右される可能性がある。更に、広く行われている非公認SRIの使用が問題を複雑にしている。かくして、慣習的SRIの手法は評価の手段としては不正確であり、教員や教育機関にはこれに替わる他の評価手法が必要とされている.

There are some 2,000 publications in English on student ratings of university courses and instructors (Felder, 1992; Wilson, 1998). Student ratings instruments (SRIs) were introduced in a few U. S. institutions in the mid-1920s, according to Seldin (1993), who also notes that the percentage of colleges and universities in the U. S. using student evaluations rose from 29% in 1973 to 86% in 1993. The figure is almost certainly higher today. Use of SRIs has spread to Canada, Australia, many countries of Europe, and Asia (Haskell, 1997; Wilson, 1998).

Japanese universities began using SRIs relatively recently, following a mandate by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in 1991 (A Vision, 1998; Ruthven-Stuart, 2004). The number of institutions using SRIs has grown steadily, from 334 in 1998 to 547 in 2003 (Ruthven-Stuart, 2004). This number will undoubtedly continue to rise in this era of shrinking student populations and tight budgets.

In examining the growth of SRI use and related literature, a few things become clear. First, the majority of mainstream research suggests that SRIs are reliable, at least moderately valid, and useful; see, for example, the representative arguments and literature summarized in Cashin (1995), Centra (1993), Kulik (2001) and Ory (2001). Second, despite widespread acceptance, controversy over SRI use—sometimes passionately expressed—persists. Criticism generally revolves around the troublesome notion of validity and how it is demonstrated; biases related to grades, workload, gender, race, and other variables; and the misuse of SRIs by administrators. Arguments expressed by Birnbaum (1999), Hake (2000b), Haskell (1997), Johnson (2002), Huemer (n.d.), Lewis (1998), and Trout (2000) are representative (summarized in Winskowski, 2005).

My argument is that by themselves, conventional SRIs are not sufficiently informative and may be misleading. A number of weaknesses of conventional SRIs hinge on the fact that they follow conventional survey methodology. Conventional SRIs often use high-inference items, in which students choose some degree of agreement or

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disagreement, evaluation, or frequency with statements that (presumably) describe effective teaching. Responding requires students to give opinions. They are not asked to document classroom events or instructor behavior and evaluate them according to any objective criteria. Often they are not asked to explain how they were engaged with the coursework, nor how they arrived at their opinions. We must infer the meaning of student responses, hence the *high-inference* label.

Abrami, d'Apollonia, and Cohen (1990) offer two definitions of the validity of student ratings: "the [accurate reflection of] students' opinions about the quality of instruction, regardless of whether ratings reflect what students learn" and "the [accurate reflection of] instructional effectiveness" (p. 219). That these two definitions may not reflect or inform one another goes unnoted by the authors. Use of students' opinions for evaluative purposes has not, however, escaped the notice of critics (see, for example, Huemer, n.d.; Trout, 1997, 2000; Hake, 2002b). Despite the fact that research on SRIs employs a sophisticated arsenal of methodological tools, in practice opinions about classroom events are often treated as evidence-based observations and evaluation.

We can certainly ask students to tell us what they thought of a course and its instructor, what happened in the course, how it was set up and organized, what the instructor did, and how well the students learned. But we will learn something more substantive and useful about their responses if conventional SRIs are supplemented with an instructor-designed student ratings instrument that a) is based on the course objectives as Rando (2001) advises, b) refers to specific events and processes of the course, and the students' engagement with it, and c) uses low-inference items to solicit information directly.

In Part 1 of this study, *Vulnerabilities of Conventional SRIs*, we will examine the weaknesses of conventional survey methodology in SRIs. First, we will address the way that variables are defined and how high-inference items may skew results. Next we will explore the troublesome issues of validity and bias in SRIs. In Part 2: *Moving from High-Inference to Low-Inference SRIs* we will discuss instructor-designed, low-inference alternatives to conventional SRIs.[1]

Conceptual definitions and operational definitions of variables

The distinction between variables that are conceptually-defined and operationally-defined has long been known in social science methodology. Bernard (2000) sets out this distinction:

> *Conceptual definitions* are abstractions, articulated in words, that facilitate understanding. They are the sort of definitions we see in dictionaries, and we use them in everyday conversation to tell people what we mean by some term or phrase. *Operational definitions* consist of a set of instructions on how to measure a variable that has been conceptually defined.
>
> Suppose I tell you that Alice and Fred just moved to a spacious house. Nice concept. You ask: What do you mean by spacious? and I say, You know, it has lots and lots of space; the rooms are big and the ceilings are high. If that isn't enough for you, we'll have to move from a conceptual definition of spacious to an operational one. We'll have to agree on what to measure: Do we count the screened-in porch and the garage or just the interior living space? Do we count the square footage or the cubic footage? (p. 36)

Note that terms 'lots of space,' 'big' and 'high,' require judgment, and people conceive matters differently. The inclusion of specifically named and measured spaces is

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less a matter of judgment than observation.

Bernard points out that conceptual definitions and operational definitions are not inimical; rather they complementary (2000). Complex variables are difficult to express conceptually, and certainly for measurement, must often be reduced to simpler terms. However, conventional SRI items more closely resemble Bernard's example of a conceptual definition of teacher effectiveness than an operational definition. This resemblance, I believe, reflects the high-inference style in which SRI items are often written. In the next section, a detailed description of conventional SRI content will illustrate this point.

Teacher effectiveness as characterized in conventional SRIs

Teacher effectiveness is a complex variable. In a series of studies dating back to the 1970s, Feldman identified dimensions of teaching effectiveness based on students' ideas of effectiveness and dimensions of effectiveness that had been examined in research. He illustrates 28 such dimensions (1989).

The measurement of 28 dimensions might be unwieldy for a single SRI. A more manageable 6 dimensions of teaching effectiveness that are frequently found in ratings forms have been identified by Cashin (1995, citing Braskamp & Ory, 1994).

A similar set of dimensions was derived by d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997), in an analysis of 458 items in 17 SRIs. Factor analysis indicated four sub-skills represented in these items: 1) The instructor's delivery of information, 2) instructor's facilitation of interaction with students, 3) instructor's evaluation of student learning, and 4) a collection of miscellaneous teacher behaviors. The first three skills were similar

to those found by other researchers, though the authors conservatively conclude that an equally viable interpretation of factor studies is that student rating forms measure a global component, "General Instructional Skill" (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997, p. 1201), i.e. that the sub-skills may be an artifact of the SRIs. Correspondences in all three dimension sets are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Dimensions of teaching effectiveness

Cashin's dimensions	Feldman's number	d'Apollonia & Abrami's number
1. Course organization & planning	5 & 50	–
2. Clarity, communication skills & planning	6, 9 & 50	1
3. Teacher-student interaction & rapport	16, 18, & 19	2
4. Course difficulty & workload	24 & 25	–
5. Grading & examinations	13 & 15	3
6. Student rating of their own learning	–	–

These two lists of teaching effectiveness dimensions or skills, plus Feldman's 28 dimensions, give a reasonable overview of key behaviors and events that are associated with teacher effectiveness seen in the literature. Indeed, commercially available SRIs all seem to contain items that reflect many of these dimensions.

Teacher effectiveness as operationalized in conventional SRIs.

The design of conventional student ratings are modeled on a standard questionnaire format. Positively- or negatively-worded items meant to measure teaching effectiveness comprising dimensions like those listed above are rated on a 5- or 6-point Likert-type scale indicating a continuum, from agreement to disagreement, high (excellent) to low (poor)

value, high to low frequency, or something similar. Centra (1993) provides helpful illustrations of well-known evaluation forms, including the Student Instructional Report II (SIR II) from Educational Testing Service, Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment (IDEA) from Kansas State University, the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ, developed by H. Marsh), and the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) from Michigan State University. Illustrations may also be found online (SAIS, 2003; Marsh, 1976).

These and similar instruments contain both global and specific items. Global items ask for overall impressions of the course (and/or the instructor, the lectures, the textbook, etc.). These items lend themselves to norming and to the comparison of a particular course against similar courses.

Specific items comprise the dimensions of teaching effectiveness described in the previous section. For example, items measuring instructor-student interaction, instructor's communication, course management, and presentation skills, the value of assignments and exams, fairness of grading, student's

learning, course difficulty and workload, anticipated grade, and student effort may appear (Cashin, 1995; Centra, 1993). Some SRIs can be tailored to the instructor's teaching objectives, such as Kansas State University's IDEA instrument. Others can be tailored to course type, such as University of Tennessee's Student Assessment of Instruction System (SAIS, 2003), which includes 11 versions (e.g. for small lecture/discussions, large lectures, seminar discussions, lab science classes, etc.), or University of Washington's Instructional Assessment System (IAS) which has 9 versions (Centra, 1993).

In Table 2, a sample of items from commercially available SRIs illustrates the overlap of content and provides an informal sampling of dimensions covered. To the degree possible from similarity of wording and common-sense interpretation, the corresponding instructional dimensions are shown from Feldman (1989), identified as F1-28 with an identifying phrase; Cashin (1995), identified as C1-C6; and d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997), identified as AA1-AA4.

Table 2. Comparison of items found in commercially available SRIs

Example 1. Using a rating of *Not Applicable/Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree*
- The instructor's objectives for the course have been made clear. (F9 Clarity of course objectives and requirements; C2; AA1)
- The instructor was well-prepared for class. (F5 Teacher preparation; Course organization; C1)
- In this class I felt free to ask questions or express my opinions. (F16 Teacher's encouragement of questions and discussion, and openness to opinions of others; C3; AA2)
- The instructor was readily available for consultation with students. (F19 Teacher's availability and helpfulness; C3; AA2)

(From SIR ETS, 1971, 1981, 1989, cited in Centra, 1993. In addition to 20 items on the instructor and the course, additional items ask about course variables [e.g. level of difficulty, pace, workload—F23 and 24], student variables [e.g. expected grade, reason for enrollment, GPA, class level], and overall ratings for the text, readings, exams, lectures, and value of the course.)

Example 2. Using a rating of *Hardly Ever/Occasionally/Sometimes/Frequently/Almost Always*
- Encouraged students to express themselves freely and openly. (F16—see above; C3)
- Clearly stated the objectives of the course. (F9—see above; C2; AA1)
- Made presentations which were dry and dull. (F1 Teacher's stimulation of interest in the course and its subject matter; C2; AA1)
- Made it clear how each topic fit into the course. (possibly F5—see above; C2; AA1)

(From IDEA, Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, 1988, cited in Centra, 1993. Additional items cover student progress and skills course variables, student variables, and overall ratings. C6)

Example 3. Using a rating of *Superior/Above Average/Average/Below Average/Inferior*
  • The instructor's enthusiasm when presenting course material. (F2 Teacher's enthusiasm [for subject or for teaching]; AA1)
  • The instructor's ability to relate the course concepts in a systematic manner. (F6 Clarity and understandableness [sic]; C2; AA1)
  • The course organization. (F5— see above; C1)
  • The instructor's stimulation of class discussion. (F16—see above; C2, C3; AA2)
(From SIRS, MSU Board of Trustees, 1982, cited in Centra, 1993. 21 items include some about learning [e.g. improvement in competence], and an additional 4 items cover course variables and student variables. C6)

Example 4. Using a rating of *Not Applicable/Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree*
  • Lecturer gave presentations that facilitated taking notes. (possibly F5 and 6—see above; C2; AA1)
  • Lecturer presented background or origin of ideas/concepts developed in class. (AA1)
  • Feedback on examinations/graded materials was valuable. (F15 Nature, quality, and frequency of feedback from the teachers to students; C5; AA3)
  • You found the class intellectually challenging and stimulating. (F17 Intellectual challenge and encouragement of independent thought [by the teacher and the course])
(From SEEQ, Marsh 1976. Items also examined background subject/class characteristics and overall ratings.)

Example 5. Using a rating of *Excellent/Very Good/Good/Fair/Poor/Very Poor*
  • Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations when needed was:
  • Contribution of assignments to understanding course content was:
  • Use of class time was: (possibly F25 Classroom management; C1)
  • Amount you learned in the course was: (C6)
(SAIS, University of Tennessee, 2003. An additional six items ask the student to compare the course to other courses with respect to the expected grade, intellectual challenge—F17 Intellectual challenge; compare the amount of effort given, number of hours spent on the course—F23 & 24 Difficulty of the course workload; and other student variables.)

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There are two points to this lengthy illustration. First, while it is not a formal analysis, it shows that these items contain highly standardized wording, so much so that most of them echo examples illustrated in Feldman (1989), Cashin (1995), and d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997). While items and their dimensions describe actions and events that are desirable, it is important to note that they have not been derived from systematic, naturalistic observation of independently-judged effective teachers. Nor can we know that teachers who are judged effective by peers, students, etc., manifest their effectiveness inevitably in the same way, as described in these dimensions or conventional SRI items. McKeachie considers that "effective teachers come in many shapes and sizes" (1997, p. 1218). Using the standard dimensions offered on conventional SRIs may penalize unorthodox instructors, or those who are effective despite low SRI scores. Indeed, McKeachie suggests that negative scores on SRIs may weigh heavily even when there is other evidence of teaching effectiveness. In

fact, the ubiquitousness of SRIs could confirm and reinforce stereotypes of teaching effectiveness, and good instructors who fail to conform to those stereotypes would not be recognized.

The second point is that the items have an abstract quality: They might fit virtually any class, and most solicit the students' judgment about the instructor's behavior or the course; Excellent use of class time (from Example 5 above); agreement that feedback on examinations/graded materials was valuable (Example 4); judgments that the instructor occasionally encourages students to express themselves freely and openly (Example 2). Understanding responses to these items requires a high degree of inference, since we cannot know the events and observations motivating a student's choice. Yet, if a student claims that examinations and assignments had no value, for example, surely an instructor or administrator would want to know why the student felt so. If one student considers himself occasionally encouraged to express himself, and another does not,

surely an instructor or administrator would want to know what lies behind the difference. Unfortunately, there is no way to know unless students choose to elaborate. Such items are probably considered operational definitions of teacher effectiveness by advocates of conventional SRI use, but they really appear to more closely resemble Bernard's conceptual definitions in actual practice.

What hangs thereby? If conventional SRIs conform to standard survey methodology, and standard survey items are high-inference, requiring judgment on the part of the respondent, perhaps we should just make do. After all, taking surveys and reading the results is a common part of the academic experience, and most accept that surveys represent what people think. However, the implications of such acceptance become clearer when we consider whether SRIs are valid and look at the possibility of bias in students' responses.

Issues of validity and bias

It is desirable that an SRI be validated, that is, shown that it indeed measures what it claims to measure. The validation process involves administering a new ratings instrument to at least hundreds—preferably thousands—of students to see if the results form a normal curve. The results must be shown to correlate positively with some other objective measure of teaching effectiveness.

Students' grades are commonly considered the most direct measure of teaching effectiveness and are often correlated with SRI results. However, Cashin (1995) lists a number of other, less direct measures, such as ratings of instructors by themselves, by administrators, colleagues, alumni, trained observers, and written student comments. Furthermore, in the SRI validation process, each item of the new SRI must be analyzed to ensure that it discriminates between students who positively evaluate a course or instructor and those who do not. Items which fail to discriminate must be rewritten and the process repeated.

Validating a ratings form is a long, labor-intensive, and expensive process. Validation procedures are likely to be undertaken by research institutions or commercial testing companies; individual instructors or departments are unlikely to have the resources. Over the past 25-30 years, dozens of such studies with SRIs have been undertaken. Greenwald (1997) notes in his overview and introduction to a special issue of *American Psychologist* on student ratings that the majority of publications in the preceding 25 years support the argument that student ratings are valid measures of teaching effectiveness (p. 1182). Indeed, the general conclusion that SRIs are moderately valid is supported not only by many individual studies, but also by large meta-analytic studies, such as d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) Cohen (1981, cited in Kulik, 2001), and others.

Despite this general approval, there remain some issues of validity that are particularly relevant: non-validated SRIs, survey design and its influence on response, and the reasoning processes of students completing conventional SRIs.

Non-validated SRIs

Given the attention devoted in SRI literature to validity, it is surprising that many university student ratings forms have not been validated. Commercially available instruments like those whose items were illustrated above have certainly been extensively validated. Still, in a recent review of the SRI literature (Winskowski, 2005), no indication of how widely they are used could be found. Many institutions have developed their own

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student ratings forms, adapting the wording of items and rating scales from other instruments. Ory and Ryan (2001) note that:

> ...it is fair to say that many forms used today have been developed from previous forms without much thought to theory or to construct domains. We have some evidence that traces the origin of several campus forms (including our own) to an item pool originally developed at the University of Michigan. (p. 32)

In the meta-analysis by Abrami et al. (1990), 23 of the 43 validity studies analyzed used student ratings instruments that were of local or unknown origin. Trout (2000) also states that his institution does not use a validated form. In my own career, I have seen on at least three occasions the hallmarks of the inhouse-made SRI, i.e. photocopies of a word-processed or typed document with no identification of the source.

Given the similarity of items in various commercial SRIs, this may not seem like anything to get excited about. However, if concept validation is the goal, it cannot be dismissed. The following sections illustrate why this is so.

Influence of survey design

There is a substantial body of work demonstrating that the design of a survey and its items subtly shapes a survey-taker's response. Schwarz (1999) contends that self-reported attitudes and behaviors "are strongly influenced by features of the research instrument, including question wording, format, and context" (p. 93). A leading researcher in the field, Schwarz argues that when respondents interpret survey items, they tacitly rely on the ordinary conventions of conversation, such as those described by Grice (1975), i.e. to be informative, relevant, truthful, and clear. So when respondents are confronted with survey items that ask for self-reports, they rely on the design of the ratings scales to make sense of the item (Schwarz , 1999).

The order of items is an important design feature. Schwarz (1999, citing Schwarz, Strack, & Mai, 1991) discovered that when respondents are asked how satisfied they are with their life as a whole and then asked how satisfied they are with their marriages, the correlation between responses was $r = .32$. However, when the question about satisfaction with marriage was asked first, forming the standard against which general life satisfaction was measured, the correlation between responses was $r = .67$. Furthermore, if a person is asked *How is your wife?* and then asked *How is your family?* the second question would almost certainly be interpreted to mean *everyone else besides your wife.* However, if one is simply asked *How is your family?* it is taken to include the wife (Graesser, Bommareddy, Swamer, & Golding, 1996, citing Schwarz, 1994 and others). Thus one survey item is taken to form the context for the following item. It is reasonable to conclude that SRI items could have similar effects on each other. So we might ask, should global items asking for overall ratings of the course be placed at the beginning or end of an instrument, and what is the effect?

Madsen (2005) also points out that small changes in wording of a survey instrument can significantly effect self-report data. Careful wording of survey items involves four issues, according to Madsen. Will participants agree on the meaning of a term? Does the item make implicit assumptions about the participants? Does each item measure the concept of interest? And, can the data be accurately interpreted? She demonstrates that alternate wording of an item, and alternate

ratings scales yield quite different results. For example, she asked her students to respond to both of the following items (among others) on 7-point scale (1 = strongly agree; 7 = strongly disagree).

| I regularly perform routine maintenance on my car. | Mean=2.90 |
| Sometimes I don't change the oil in my car on time. | Mean=3.27 |

(Madsen, 2005, p. 41)

The mean ratings are higher for the second item. Possibly the specificity (routine maintenance vs. change the oil) and whether an item is cast in the positive or negative (I do vs. I don't) may make a difference in how people respond. Here is another illustration from Madsen in which the phrasing of the question is altered:

How often do you exercise?

1. infrequently	17%
2. occasionally	48%
3. often	35%

In the last six months, how often have you engaged in at least 20 min of aerobic activity?

1. almost never	17%
2. less than once a week	13%
3. once a week	12%
4. twice a week	15%
5. three times a week	15%
6. four times a week	15%
7. more than four times a week	13%

(p. 41)

In both items, the first choice receives 17% of the responses. Given all the choices in the second item, we must wonder how people interpret the choices in the first item: What is the distinction between *occasionally* and *often*?

Schwarz (1999) has also looked exten-

sively at frequency scales and has found, for example, that if people rate their daily TV consumption on a low-frequency scale (from up to half an hour to more than two and a half hours), they take the middle choice (one and a half hours) as the norm, and it receives the largest proportion of responses (26.5%). When a high-frequency scale is presented (from up to two and a half hours to more than four and a half hours), the largest proportion goes to the first choice (62.5%), as we might expect. However, in the low-frequency scale, only 16.2% of German respondents reported watching TV for *more* than two and a half hours a day whereas 37.5% reported doing so when the scales presented high-frequency response alternatives (Schwarz, 1999, p. 98, citing Schwarz, Hippler, Deutsch, & Strack, 1985). This suggests that the range of response alternatives defines a frame of reference; it is this frame of reference that respondents use to estimate the frequency of the event, i.e. a high-frequency set of alternatives suggests to respondents that the average TV watching time is higher.

It must be noted that Schwarz and his colleagues were working with individuals' reports of their own behavior; estimates of the frequency of instructor behavior or other classroom events may not follow these findings. Still, while only one of the conventional SRIs described in the earlier part of this article used frequency scales (IDEA), a concern must be raised that any of the survey response scales contain assumptions and implications that affect the respondent's reasoning. Ostrom and Gannon (1996) show that there are two patterns of cognitive activation with common types of rating scale formats that are prominent in social science literature. In the first pattern, the authors found that a concept and its opposite (e.g. honesty and dishonesty) were generated in

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people's cognition by rating formats like these (p. 305):

a) very dishonest/moderately dishonest/slightly dishonest/neither dishonest nor honest/slightly honest/moderately honest/very honest

b) strongly disagree the person is honest/moderately disagree/slightly disagree/neither disagree nor agree/slightly agree/moderately agree/strongly agree that the person is honest

However, the activation in people's thinking of a single concept (honest only) was found when they responded to the following types of rating formats (p. 305):

c) not at all honest/slightly honest/somewhat honest/moderately honest/fairly honest/very honest/completely honest

d) 0.0 completely improbable the person is honest/.17 (probability)/.34/.50/.66/.83/1.0 completely probable the person is honest

The authors indicate that the unipolar scale formats (c and d) provide better discrimination of the category than do the bipolar scale formats (a and b). Yet SRIs frequently use a bipolar rather than a unipolar scale.

Finally, in describing a model of human question answering, Graesser et al. (1996) point to some difficulties: The syntax of an item could be difficult to process; respondents may have trouble identifying the referents of technical or ambiguous nouns (see also the following section); and respondents may not accurately interpret the meanings of verbs (for example, cause, consume, hurt), adjectives (happy, wealthy, large), and adverbs (never, rarely, frequently).

These studies indicate ways in which the design of an SRI may influence respondents' cognitive processes. It is certainly possible that commercial SRIs may not have taken all these recent findings into account. And it is certainly conceivable that non-validated SRIs, adapted from other SRIs by instructors or administrators, may contain the same shortcomings. In view of these findings, it is reasonable to ask whether the design of SRIs are theoretically and empirically sound. We must also ask whether faculty and administrators would interpret SRI results with these findings in mind. And certainly, we must develop a more fundamental understanding of students' cognitive processes as they respond to SRIs.

Students' cognitive processes

Beyond knowing how survey design shapes response, the way students arrive at a choice may be surprising. Billings-Gagliardi, Barrett, and Mazor (2004) conducted thinkaloud interviews to find out what students were thinking as they completed a conventional course evaluation form for a science course. The SRI addressed three dimensions of the classroom: overall course design, educational materials and methods, and [how various instructors] helped the student learn. It used a four-point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Twenty-four students explained how they interpreted the items, formed judgments, and selected the responses as they completed a typical student rating form. The authors state that with this technique "the resulting data can reveal previously covert issues such as how students do actually interpret items or what may prevent them from responding honestly" (2004, p.1062).

As Graesser et al. anticipated, students often expressed uncertainty about the meaning of educational terms, such as 'independent learning,' 'feedback,' and 'integration.' They defined these terms differently from one another, sometimes in uncommon

ways. When rating teaching effectiveness, students sometimes made judgments on criteria unrelated to classroom teaching performance. For example, judgments were sometimes tempered by perceptions of the faculty member's caring or effort: "I didn't like the lecture she gave...I just couldn't stay awake. But I liked Dr. DD as a person, so I said 'agree'..." (p. 1066). Sometimes students compared instructors to each other, and sometimes they judged on an absolute criterion. Students sometimes selected an option for idiosyncratic reasons:

> I am not sufficiently sure that I am interpreting the question correctly to say I strongly agree, so I just put 'agree.' ...I never rate Integration below agree because I believe the onus is on me to integrate material.... A lot of independent learning means the course isn't providing needed material. So if I say a lot, it's a negative.... (p. 1066)

Additionally, students avoided the lower end of the scale and used the highest choice selectively (Billings-Gagliardi et al., 2004). This study strongly suggests that the student responses involve cognitive processes that do not correspond with what the instrument assumes, particularly regarding how students understand the forms and whether student ratings in fact measure teaching effectiveness (Billings-Gagliardi et al., 2004).

While thinkaloud methodology has limitations (it is difficult to work with large numbers of subjects, and responses are difficult to quantify, as the authors point out), the Billings-Gagliardi study presents powerful criticism of conventional SRI methodology. Proponents of conventional survey methods may claim that idiosyncratic reasoning and decision-making balances out across large groups of people, rendered insignificant by the totality of choices made. But this is

speculation. We simply do not know enough about what is obscured by SRI methodology and in what way it might be significant. Given the massive instructional investment in SRIs, we should know. After all, in applied linguistics, we know that descriptions of conversational conventions, however intuitively recognizable, remained speculative until ethnomethodology's first hand-observation and corpus linguistics' processing of language data documented actual speech patterns and frequencies. Until some corresponding observational approach is applied to SRIs, we can only speculate on what the results mean.

Our weak grasp of students' intentions, reasoning, and judgment are compounded by other issues that have been raised in the literature, such as biases. Biases are variables which are unrelated to teacher effectiveness but affect student ratings nonetheless (such as liking the instructor as a person). Potential biases include consideration of gender, politics, or race. Among studies reported by Cashin (1995) and Ory (2001) examining the gender of instructors, a very slight differences ($r = .02$) in favor of women was found in one review of 28 studies. In other studies, students rated same-gender instructors more highly then opposite-gender instructors. There is little research on the influence of race on student ratings, but what there is indicates that race is not a factor, according to Cashin (1995).

However, Sinclair and Kunda (2000) suggest the matter may be more complex. Looking both at university classrooms and an experimental laboratory, they found that male and female instructors were rated equally highly when students had received positive evaluation. However, students rated female instructors lower than male instructors when receiving negative evaluation.

Additionally, a separate study by Sinclair and Kunda (1999) showed that people praised by a black professional did not express negative stereotypes about them; those criticized by the black professional were more likely to express stereotypes. Together, these studies suggest that when people receive negative evaluation, they may employ stereotypes (e.g. that women are not as competent as men, or that blacks are less competent than whites) to counter negative evaluation and preserve their own self-image.

Noting the apparent conflict with previous studies, Fich (2003) states that

> ...the problem is that there are many variables unrelated to the quality of teaching that may affect evaluations and that interact in complex ways. Furthermore, most of this work consists of statistical analyses, where factors that are significant for a small segment of the population, for example, women computer science professors, can be insignificant in the aggregate data. (p. 2)

Small but significant interactional effects have been found by Basrow (1995) for teacher gender, student gender, and division. Four years of SRI data from a private liberal arts institution suggested that male faculty were rated similarly by male and female students in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Female faculty, especially in humanities and social sciences, were rated highest with respect to appropriate speech by female students. Female faculty were also usually rated higher by female students on sensitivity, student comfort, and respect. Male students were more likely to rate female faculty lower than male faculty on fairness, thought stimulation, and overall effectiveness. The author agrees that these findings are small and that, while statistically signifi-cant, they may not be practically significant across large amounts of data. However, it appears that students may evaluate male faculty for teaching, and female faculty for teaching *and* for gender. That is, "whereas men need to be strong in such instrumental areas as organization, explanations, and dynamism to receive good student ratings, women need to be strong in those areas as well as the interpersonal ones" (p. 663). One cannot help recall the Billings-Gagliardi et al. illustration of a student altering his or her original rating because, "I liked Dr. DD as a person" (p.1066).

These findings reveal that vulnerabilities may emerge when SRIs hinge on students' assumption-informed judgments rather than on more objective reflection on classroom experience. In other words, if we accept the representations of teacher effectiveness as documented by conventional SRIs, we can expect bias.

Other biases

Other biases, well-known in social psychological research, must also be considered. First is the error of central tendency, which refers to people's inclination to avoid the extreme choices in a survey item. It may well be that this is what Billings-Gagliardi et al. observed when they noted that students tended to avoid using the lower end of the scale, and used the highest choice selectively, while using the second-highest choice indiscriminately (for a variety of reasons). It would be difficult to know the extent to which this distribution is a result of the error of central tendency or a measure of teaching effectiveness.

Second is the halo effect, in which one's judgment of a person on a given aspect influences judgment on a number of other aspects. Coren reports that at his institution, three

items were added to an SRI asking students whether the instructor had displayed any apparent cultural bias, racism, or sexism. Examining results of 248 SRIs, he found correlations (p < 0.001, with most *r's* ranging from 3.0 to 4.9) between ratings on 14 teacher effectiveness items and ratings on the three bias items. He concludes that students' judgments of the political and social attitudes of their instructors may influence their own attitudes toward the instructor (1995).

Third, the fundamental attribution error refers to the inclination to attribute behavior to internal causes (attitudes, personality, mental states) rather than external causes (situational constraints). This phenomenon is well-documented in the social psychology literature. Suppose an instructor presents an unpopular political view (e.g. of Fidel Castro, as in Jones & Harris, 1967, cited in Myers, 1993), or presents evidence that genes, as well as culture, could contribute to differences in intelligence across racial or other groups (Coren, 1995) or to differences between men and women (de Courten-Myers, 1999). It has been demonstrated that people will often attribute to the presenter attitudes and beliefs that are politically, racially, or sexually biased (i.e. attribution to internal causes) even when that person was simply presenting information. People may have difficulty separating the message and the messenger.

Of course, we assume students intend well when they complete SRIs. The difficulty is that, since we do not have the luxury of thinkaloud interviews for all our classes, we cannot know when such biases are at work.

Conclusion

Conventional SRIs offer standardized products which readily lend themselves to the kind of nomothetic research that permits correlation between student ratings and course variables (e.g. workload, required/elective status, and size), student variables (e.g. grades, motivation, and major) and instructor variables (e.g. gender and race). This kind of work is valuable to disambiguate complex classroom dynamics that may impact student ratings (see, for example, Greenwald, 1997; March & Roche, 2000.) Indeed, it is in this technical sense that SRIs are claimed to be valid, i.e. that SRIs are consistently correlated with grades, and that grades measure the effectiveness of teaching.

However, we have seen that conventional SRIs contain inherent vulnerabilities: Standardized forms may not discern effective teaching in individual cases. It is known that non-validated SRIs are widely used (though it is not know how widely). How respondents construe item meaning is impacted by the order of items. The rating scale may influence interpretation and response. Reasoning processes during choice selection can be affected by a number of irrelevant factors, including well-known, systematically observed biases. When examined from this perspective, the fundamental meaning of SRI validity (i.e. that they measure teaching effectiveness in a particular instance) is called into question. SRIs, as Fich (2003) has pointed out, have many "sources of error" and are "low precision instruments" (p. 3). At the very least, we must concede that interpretation of teaching effectiveness from SRIs should be qualified.

Nonetheless, there are alternatives. Instructors who are seriously interested in investigating and documenting the effectiveness of their courses need not settle for SRIs that reflect the realities of their classes and the experience of their students so imprecisely and problematically. Instructors can design their own complementary alternatives

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to the conventional SRI which fit specific instructional goals and course configurations. This will be addressed in Part 2.

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Notes

[1]Part 2 will appear in the next issue of *On CUE*.

Feature Article: Winskowski

Student ratings: Meaningful voices or meaningless ritual?

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Feature Article: Burden

学生による授業評価の手法は、その信頼性、有効性、有用性が教育関係者の間で疑問視されているにも拘わらず、日本の大学において定着してきた。本論は、大学で一学期を終えたばかりの学生に対して行われる制限応答形式のアンケート調査結果が、教師の将来をも左右しかねない決定を下すための適切なクライテリアとみなせるか否かを問うものである。203名の学生に対して聞き取り調査を実施し、評価アンケートへの回答が意味のある行為だと考えるか、評価の低かった教師はどう扱われるべきか、授業評価の目的は何だと考えるか、そして何を評価の対象とするべきかについて質問を行なった。その結果、一部の学生からは、アンケート調査が行われるタイミングのために授業期間中に評価結果のフィードバックが出来ないことへの不満が表明された。学生は授業の評価を意味のあるものと考えているが、その目的については十分に説明を受けておらず、そのことが授業評価の実効性に影響を与える可能性がある

Introduction

End of semester evaluation of English conversation classes is ubiquitous in Japanese tertiary education, and many teachers seem to accept the use of ratings unquestioningly. Evaluation or ratings forms usually ask students to rate specific teacher characteristics such as *teacher enthusiasm*, *knowledge of the subject*, *classes starting and finishing on time*, along with a final global characteristic of *instructor's overall effectiveness*. Ratings are typically recorded on a 1 (poor) to 5 (very good) scale.

Prestigious Keio University was one of the first institutions to introduce student evaluation in 1990. Kansai University established a similar system in 1994, asking students to respond to questions regarding arousal of interest, ease of understanding, teacher's speaking style, and appropriate use of blackboards or audio-visual equipment ("Grading," 1997). Recently in Japanese higher education, there has been a trend toward market-oriented principles of performance indicators and quality assurance (MEXT, 2001). A government shift toward decentralization, marked by economic-centered policies and sensitivity toward markets (Tsurata, 2003; Yamada, 2001), coupled with a belief in teacher accountability to the stakeholders in education has led to an era of retrenchment in Japan: The business model is being applied more readily to institutions of higher education.

Arguably, teacher assessment aimed at fostering learning has given way to greater emphasis on summative student evaluation. Implicit in such evaluation is the assumption that students complete the forms anonymously, honestly, and (importantly) willingly. However, there have been few attempts to ask students how conscientiously they respond to the questions, whether they take the whole process seriously, and what purposes they think are served by evaluations. As Spencer and Schmelkin (2002, p. 398) note, "since students are unsure whether their opinions matter, or to what purpose the ratings are put, they may not pay attention to them in contrast to stated desire to provide feedback." Are students mindful to complete

evaluations in a meaningful way, or are they "simply discharging a boring chore?" (McKeachie, 1997, p.1223). Dunegan and Hrivnak (2003) put it succinctly when they note: "When mindless...information processing is limited, attention to detail is reduced, and our cognitive representation of the context is simplified. When mindless, we respond like automatons, drawing on scripts and schema in the past to define the present" (p. 282).

This has potential implications in the light of MEXT requirements that there should be a "focus on abilities of teaching staff" (2001) with comments from students being a core component of evaluation. To ensure consequential validity in summative evaluation, students need to realize that their opinions do matter. In order for students to feel connected with their comments and feedback to faculty, there must be "tangible immediacy to the results" (Spencer & Schmelkin, 2002, p. 398). Yet many students are not taught in subsequent classes by the same teacher, cannot see any "improvement" and thus may feel that expressing their opinions is meaningless. Validity is further compromised through such learner indifference. Many students have a cynical attitude, which teachers themselves may "inadvertently promote through haphazard or scornful administration" (Smith & Carney 1990, p. 1), and as the use of results is often unclear to students, evaluation becomes a "perfunctory exercise of little impact" (p. 6), which further jeopardizes reliability. For many teachers and students, it is a consumer rating done after the fact (Braskamp & Ory, 1994); it does not offer opportunities for teachers to make changes while the students are still involved in the class. Teacher concern over fairness and usefulness of feedback has led to claims that only 23% of faculty in American universities made changes based on student evaluations (Senior, 1999). This is compounded by questionnaire fatigue—the insistence on the use of standardized ratings which requires that students fill out the same form on every instructor (Abbot et al., 1990). This can lead to a "coat-tails effect" (Block, 1998a, p. 418) where a respondent assigns the same number for all questionnaire items out of inertia or a lack of interest, which has potentially disastrous consequences if results are norm referenced.

Little is known about the actual processes students follow when responding to rating forms. Do students respond to items by comparing the instructor's performance to that of other instructors or to some ideal? What motivates learners to respond to the questions?

Research questions

How do learners themselves *rate* the end of semester rating process? If students question the purpose and see it as a meaningless ritual, resulting scores may be adversely effected. To gain insight on these questions in order to consider what teachers and institutions might want to do differently, the following issues demand closer scrutiny:

1) Do learners think evaluations are useful? Why or why not?
2) How should evaluations be subsequently used?
3) What should happen to teachers who receive a low evaluation?
4) Do learners think teachers care about evaluations?
5) What are the important characteristics of effective teachers?

Method

I administered an official student evaluation form in the 12th week of a 15-week semester in six classes of first-year students at a National University in western Japan.

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There were 40 students in each class, majoring in Medicine, Engineering, and Law. A week after the official administration, I gave a survey of 24 closed items (see Appendix A), and students were informed that I hoped to gain some knowledge about their views on "official" student evaluation forms. Students were asked to circle the most appropriate answer on a 7-point scale, with one representing the lowest level of agreement and seven representing the highest.

A total of 203 students completed the questionnaire; the quantitative data are shown as percentages in Tables 1 through 5. While the results reflect the views of students at only one university in Western Japan, it is hoped that the findings may be generalizable to similar contexts.

The procedure

Data from the closed item survey were analyzed using SPSS v.11.0 for descriptive statistics and an acceptable Alpha reliability score of .78 was obtained. For the purpose of analysis, the responses to 'Strongly agree' (7), 'Agree' (6), and 'Slightly agree' (5) are combined to create an overall score of agreement with the question. Similarly, the sum of responses to 'Strongly disagree' (1), 'Disagree' (2) and 'Slightly disagree' (3) were calculated to gain a measure of disagreement. These aggregated data are reported in the subsequent analysis of findings.

Results

General impressions

Table 1 reflects students' general impressions of the evaluation process. The data reveals that 78% of students feel that evaluation is a good thing to do, while 74% believe that the teachers do indeed use ratings and comments to improve the class. However, only 21% agree that students are clearly told how evaluations will be used, while 42% feel that the evaluation process could be better. Smith and Carney (1990) similarly found that while students were uncertain of how evaluation was used, they stated that they evaluated their teachers seriously. Perhaps this may help to dispel many teachers' fears that "students too often use the power of their pencils to get even with professors and rating systems may turn the evaluation of effective teaching into a personality contest" (Kulik, 2001, p. 10).

Students know that one purpose is course improvement, but they are uncertain whether ratings are used to determine salary, promotion, or teacher retention. Such information needs to be shared so they are aware of the impact of their ratings. This lack of clarity results from the haphazard way evaluation is often administered. Teachers may administer evaluations themselves unaware of, or perhaps not in a position to explain, the purpose or how they will be used. Evaluation becomes a "ritual that principals and teachers engage in because it is expected—not because they value it" (Good & Mulryan, 1990, p. 201), leading students to

Table 1. Students' General Impressions (n = 203, responses as a percentage)

Questions 1-4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
1. Evaluation of teachers is a good thing to do.	1	1	6	15	30	31	15	5.31	1.246
2. Teachers use students' evaluations to improve their classes	1	3	7	16	38	24	12	5.06	1.237
3. Students are clearly told how evaluations will be used.	15	18	20	26	12	5	4	3.36	1.618
4. The evaluation process could be better.	3	5	14	36	22	10	10	4.41	1.44

question why they use the same form in every subject and leaving them with a feeling of decreasing impact each time the evaluation "ritual" comes round. Thus, the use by some unknown administration for unknown purposes may bias the results as the literature suggests that students tend to be lenient if they think data will be used by someone other than the instructor (Centra, 1979) for non-diagnostic purposes.

Consequences of evaluation

What should happen to teachers who consistently receive poor evaluations? Table 2 reveals that 36% of students feel that they

Table 2. The Consequence of Poor Evaluations

Question 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
a. The teacher should lose his job.	12	10	18	23	13	14	9	3.95	1.8
b. The teacher should get a cut in salary.	17	8	13	18	12	17	14	4.06	2.027
c. The teacher should get "effective teacher" training.	3	2	3	12	20	20	39	5.56	1.549
d. The teacher should not be allowed to do the class.	7	3	15	15	19	23	17	4.72	1.746

should lose their job, while 43% feel that such teachers should get a reduction in salary. Seventy-nine percent agree that *effective teacher* training should be introduced. This has implications for definitions of what an *effective* teacher does and who sets the criteria. Brown and McIntyre (1993) note that different groups have different criteria by which they make their judgments about teachers, including personal achievements or characteristics, such as warmth, politeness, or sense of humor. Brown and McIntyre note that there is a "...plethora of criteria used to judge teaching and teachers. All are salient to some group's concerns for what, in their eyes constitutes 'good teaching'; but they are of virtually no help in our efforts to understand

teaching" (p. 23).

Instructional support is crucial in the face of negative ratings Without it, faculty who have prepared long and hard have to reconcile certain knowledge of effort expended against lack of success. If the situation persists over time, these faculty may develop negative attitudes towards students and student evaluations, leading to "professorial melancholia" (Theall & Franklin, 2001, p. 47), including hostility towards students and administrators, arrogance, alienation and grade abuse against students. So that evaluation is not punitive, resources for improvement and support of teaching and teachers must be part of a complete system and cannot be omitted. Support for teaching from administrators and senior teachers is required if the evaluation process is to be perceived as useful and non-threatening. Anything less results in polarized views about the purposes of evaluation, which leads to anxiety, resistance, and hostility.

Fifty-nine percent of participants believe that a teacher receiving poor evaluations should no longer teach the class, presumably if he or she cannot change the teaching approach to suit the students. Therefore, to increase validity, student awareness of the importance of their input needs to be raised. Studies suggest that students wanted the results made public, believing that not only teachers but also students have the right to view them for future class selection (Spencer & Schmelkin, 2002).

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Table 3. Student Opinions

Questions 6-8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
6. Teachers don't care about students' evaluations of teaching.	9	14	18	24	24	10	2	3.74	1.51
7. I think that teachers get friendlier as evaluation day comes near.	41	20	19	11	5	3	2	2.33	1.491
8. When I'm evaluating, I'm worried the teacher will somehow recognize my handwriting.	55	13	11	9	7	3	2	2.14	1.567

Confidence in the evaluation process

Thirty six percent of students feel that teachers do not care about the results of the evaluations. There is a need for tangible immediacy in evaluation as in many cases students will not have that teacher again. Therefore, expressing opinions does not in the long run benefit that particular student anyway. Only 10% of students feel teachers get friendlier in the lessons approaching evaluation. This may mean that students feel teachers are indifferent to the evaluation process and that, again, the ritualistic meaningless belief is emphasized. Similarly, (only) 12 % feel that teachers will be able to recognize handwriting which may bias ratings that are collected often on the same day as summative, end of semester tests.

What are the evaluations used for?

Table 4 reveals that 71% of students feel that teachers use evaluations to improve teaching while only 12% feel that evaluations are used in determining salary; 20% believe they are used to make decisions about promotion. Similarly,

8% agree that evaluations are used in teacher retention. As noted earlier, if students know that evaluations are used in personnel decisions, they are likely to be more generous in their appraisals, which has obvious implications for consequential validity of the ratings. Students are not aware of the hidden agenda in that they lack information about a crucial purpose of evaluation. i.e., retention or non-retention of teachers. One impression gained from the learners' answers is that they lack knowledge about the administrative procedures; students seemingly believe forms are just collected from boxes around campus and simply handed to the teacher. Teachers are then presumably free to use or disregard as they see fit.

It is important to remember the cyclical nature of evaluation, and in order to "close the loop" (Harvey, 2003, p. 4) there is a need to provide feedback of outcomes to students via postings on noticeboards, e-mail or Intranet. As well as providing data on the purpose, how data will be used and disseminated, publication of feedback provides consultation to initiate action in response to students'

Table 4. Student Beliefs about Evaluation Use

Question 9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
a. I think they are used to make decisions about teachers' salary.	39	16	16	17	9	2	1	2.5	1.527
b. I think they are used to make decisions about promotion.	35	14	17	15	12	5	3	2.8	1.721
c. I think they are used to make course improvements.	3	3	5	15	28	22	23	5.18	1.532
d. I think they are used to improve teaching.	3	4	6	17	25	24	22	5.16	1.514
e. I think they are used to fire teachers.	48	14	14	16	4	1	3	2.27	1.545

concerns, and it shows to students that their comments are valued.

What should be evaluated?

While Simmons' (1996) claim that students may judge a teacher as not "aesthetically acceptable" and are "rendered less capable" of teaching based on the teacher's physical appearance have been rejected in this study, 39% of students do feel that evaluating the teacher according to how amusing they are is valid. In addition, 66% feel they should evaluate teachers by their friendliness. Fifty seven percent of students rated interest in the textbook as important. This may have huge implications for part-time teachers who often do not choose their own texts and may be stuck with materials not suited to their teaching approach. Using similar high inference items in end of semester evaluation will lead to an interpretation of competent teachers as only needing good communication skills. Teaching involves more than effective communication as it entails the application of principles of human cognitive development, understanding of human motivation, as well as pedagogical skills necessary to help students understand the curriculum.

However, 77% of students thought that teachers should be evaluated on subject knowledge, or as Richards (2001) calls it "content knowledge" (p. 209). This is just one knowledge base, teachers also needing practical knowledge, a repertoire of classroom techniques, and pedagogical knowledge including the "ability to restructure content knowledge for teaching purposes and to plan, adapt and improvise" (p.209). Arguably, there should be discussion beyond simplistic manifestations of knowledge, as to how different kinds of knowledge, the core components, can benefit the learning experience. It needs to be remembered that student evaluation is more a measure of students' transient satisfaction than of the teaching and learning. Student evaluation, while important, should never be overemphasized at the expense of many other aspects of the communicative English language program which must also be evaluated.

Table 5. How Students Think Teachers Should be Evaluated

Question 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
a. I think teachers should be evaluated by their personal appearance.	61	18	11	5	3	1	2	1.77	1.243
b. I think teachers should be evaluated by how much they use AV materials.	43	21	17	9	6	2	1	2.25	1.438
c. I think teachers should be evaluated by how amusing they are.	12	12	14	22	19	10	10	3.95	1.797
d. I think teachers should be evaluated by how much homework they give.	18	18	16	23	9	3	3	2.9	1.639
e. I think teachers should be evaluated by how interesting the textbook is.	8	7	9	19	23	21	13	4.59	1.737
f. I think teachers should be evaluated by how punctually they start and finish class.	11	10	17	22	18	12	9	4	1.753
g. I think teachers should be evaluated by how friendly they are.	3	3	5	17	27	27	13	4.85	1.634
h. I think teachers should be evaluated by how much they know about the subject.	3	1	3	7	21	31	35	5.73	1.392

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Implications for teaching

Teachers and learners both need to feel valued. Teaching is important and so more time should be spent analyzing and reflecting on it (Braskamp & Ory, 1994). One-shot end of semester ratings devalue the process and demean the student input. While 76% of students think that evaluating is useful, only 21% say they are clearly told how evaluations are used and 42% of students think the process could be better. Students appear to be going through a ritual while 36% think that teachers do not care about evaluation results. It is important in the teacher/student relationship that teachers are seen as a "real person" (p. 157) who makes errors, but who takes comments on board. Teacher scepticism needs to be alleviated through an evaluation which does not oversimplify the conditions required for language learning by reducing them to a set of discrete points because the "whole is more than the sum of the parts." Evaluation should be classroom based, bottom up and emic— based on the framework used by language learners to describe interpret and evaluate their language learning experiences (Block, 1998b). Teachers need to tell students of changes made due to constructive feedback, or carry feedback over from one semester to the next, announcing at the beginning of a new course that they are trying a new approach based on comments of previous students. Acknowledgment reinforces the importance of ratings and comments. Amongst English teachers, administrators and students, there needs to be a consensus about what is important in ELT, what will be evaluated, who will contribute, and what criteria will be are all important steps in good practice. The evaluation process often becomes a ritual that administrators and teachers engage in because it is expected—not because it is valued, and while it is difficult for teachers to be the sole agents of chance they can draw attention to viable assessment alternatives. Facilitating dialogue between instructor and students can explain products and processes including how learning will be achieved as well as outcomes and gives learners opportunities to treat their own teaching as topic of inquiry. As questionnaires actually prompt the kind of answers students can give as the questions are from a teacher's or administrator's point of view, Brown (1995) suggests using student representative meetings. These meetings enable administrators to find out what is on students' minds and to informally assess students' expectations of the teaching and learning processes.

Teachers should encourage students to take ownership of their own answers and comments through dialogue as, without this question, many students make unrealistic comments based on unrealistic perceptions. In general, students may complain about the quality of the lecture but rarely consider whether it was an appropriate method to use. Braskamp, Brandenburg and Ory (1984) suggest collecting student opinions through a mock letter of recommendation. In the form of a one-page letter, students comment about specific components of the course as well as the course as a whole. The letter should conclude with a recommendation for others to enroll or avoid the course.

Many universities write their own evaluations which are then administered across the subject range regardless of subject content, teaching approach, methods, and (often overlooked) class size. As each subject area teacher has his or her own conceptions of teaching which vary when fronting large lectures of three hundred students or during personalized seminars of just a few students, this means that comparatively evaluating stu-

dents according to some externally imposed norm is both complex and of dubious value if one considers all the different learning tasks that different subject-specialists use. If evaluations are to be rigorous and credible they must acknowledge the essential and substantive aspects of EFL teaching, rather than just the most common attributes of teaching and learning. Arguably, reliance on student ratings reinforces a conservative pedagogy whereby there is notion that an ideal teacher exists and that teachers can improve by changing their behavior to more closely match the students' ideal, which is often socio-historically determined based on previous learning experiences. If the use of ratings is seen to reinforce specific faculty teaching behaviors, their use may constrict teaching styles rather than encouraging a diversity of classroom strategies. Students would be more willing to rate carefully items on a long diagnostic form if they knew that long forms were used only when the instructor is working to improve the course. This may help alleviate incidental fears that their opinion counts for little.

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Appendix

This is a survey about the end of semester evaluations you complete. I would like to know your opinions on student evaluation. Please do not write your name. Please read the questions and tell me what you think about the teacher evaluation process at University. This information will be used as part of my Doctoral studies at Exeter University in Britain. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will remain completely confidential. Thank you!   Peter Burden.

Please read the questions and put a circle around one number:

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

A: Generally speaking:

1) The evaluation of teachers is a useful thing to do

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

2) Teachers use students' evaluations to improve their classes

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

3) Students are clearly told how the evaluations will be used

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

4) The evaluation process could be better

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

5) If the teacher consistently gets poor evaluations from students, the teacher should

a) lose his or her job

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

b) get a cut in salary

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

c) get effective teacher training

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

d) not be allowed to do the class

Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

6) teachers don't care about students' evaluations of teaching
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

B: About you:

  7) I think that teachers get friendlier as evaluation day comes near
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

  8) When I'm evaluating, I'm worried the teacher will somehow recognize my handwriting
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

  9) I think that the student evaluations are used to

     a) Make decisions about teachers salary
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

     b) Make decisions about promotion
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

     c) Make course improvements
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

     d) Improve teaching style
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

     e) Fire teachers
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

  10) I think teachers should be evaluated by

    a) Their personal appearance
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    b) How much they use AV materials
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    c) How funny they are
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    d) How much homework they give
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    e) How interesting the textbook is
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    f) How punctual they are starting and finishing class
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    g) How friendly they are
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

    h) How much they know about the subject
                    Strongly agree 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Strongly disagree

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The Structure of English and Japanese Research Articles: A Contrastive Study

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Feature Article: Kobayashi

これまでの日英比較言語学では英語と日本語の解説文（expository writing）および論説文（argumentative writing）において論旨の展開の比較対照研究が行われている（H. Kobayashi, 1984, Oi and Kamimura 1997, Kubota 1996, 1997, 1998）。しかしその対象を研究論文としたものは少ない。本稿では応用言語学分野における実験論文（日英各３０本）の総体的構成及び各部の構成をSwales（1990）のGenre Analysisをもとに比較した。その結果、全体的な構成は概ね同じと考えられるものの、各部のmoveを単位とした構成に違いがみられた。またそれぞれのmoveを示唆するlexical signalについてもその使用に違いがみられた。

Introduction

The role of contrastive rhetoric is significant in teaching second language writing because it identifies systematic differences in discourse between the two languages. The present study attempts to clarify the structural difference as well as the difference in writing styles between English and Japanese research articles in the field of applied linguistics. The study was carried out based on Swales' framework of moves analysis (1990, pp. 93-201). 'Move,' according to Nwogu (1991) is "…a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistic features (lexical meanings, prepositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) which give the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it" (p. 114). The studies of genre analysis have had a great influence on the teaching of academic writing.

Background

The structure of Japanese research articles in the social science field was imported from Western culture in the late 19th century. In Japan, social science studies, including applied linguistics, began by assimilating what had already been established in Western countries, for there were no such studies in Japan (Kamishima, 1975). When there is an unequal power relationship, there tends to be a significant influence of the stronger language on the weaker language, in this case, English on Japanese. It has been pointed out that the spread of English and Anglo-American culture has imposed Aristotelian logical development upon the languages of the subordinate culture (Kachru, B., 1983; Kachru, Y., 1999). The present study was carried out in order to see the generic influence of English research articles on Japanese research articles in the field of applied linguistics. The objective was to answer the following questions:

1. How does the structure differ between English and Japanese applied linguistics research articles as a whole?
2. How does the move structure of each section differ between the two sets of articles?
3. Are there any differences in the use of lexical signals?

Method

Data

A corpus of 60 applied linguistics experimental research articles (30 in English and 30 in Japanese) that closely conform to the conventional Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion (I-M-R-D) pattern was selected from journals in the field of language teaching and learning published from 1995 to 2000. The difficulty in selecting the data was that while some articles started with the *introduction* section, followed by the section on background information (hereafter *background* section following Holmes, 1997), such as previous studies or basic concepts, others started directly with the *background* section. For the data of the present study, both types were included as long as the article was written based on an experiment and contained the methods, results, and discussion sections. The same criteria were applied when selecting Japanese articles. Among the 30 English articles, 15 were obtained from *TESOL Quarterly* and the other 15 were obtained from *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. Among the 30 Japanese articles, 26 were obtained from *Nihongo Kyoiku* (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching) and the remaining 4 were obtained from *Nihongo Kyoiku Ronshu* (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching). The English titles of the Japanese journals are incidentally the same, but they are published by different organizations. *Nihongo Kyoiku* is published by the Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language. *Nihongo Kyoiku Ronshu* is published by the University of Tsukuba. These four journals were selected for their popularity among researchers in the respective fields. *TESOL Quarterly* and *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* are considered major in the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning. *Nihongo Kyoiku* is considered an equivalent of *TESOL Quarterly* in the field of Japanese language teaching. Although *Nihongo Kyoiku Ronshu* is a university bulletin, it is widely read, for the University of Tsukuba is considered a leading school in the field of education in Japan.

Procedure

For the first research question, the present research focused on the structure of the research article as a whole. The heading and contents of each section of the articles were studied to clarify the structure. For the second research question, moves analysis was performed on the various sections. In the present study, a move structure model that included all the moves found was then created for each section for the contrastive study on the predictable move patterns that followed. The predictable move patterns were detected using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. The number of predictable move patterns will show the structural fixedness in each set of articles. For the third research question, the number of articles that contained a particular lexical signal indicating a move was counted. In the present study, the signals that occurred in more than 50% of the articles that contained the move were singled out for a contrastive study.

Results

Structure of English & Japanese articles as a whole

As a result of studying the heading and contents of each section, the following sections were found to occur in both English and Japanese articles in applied linguistics: the *abstract*, *introduction*, *background*, *method*, *results and discussion*, and *conclusion* sec-

tions. The *abstract* was typographically conspicuous in the two sets of articles. The *introduction* was usually not preceded by any heading in either language. The contents of the section usually included one or more of the following: introduction of the context, the literature review, and the introduction of the research. The *background* section was usually preceded by a heading that indicated that the section provides the background information of the study. The heading was simply "Background" in English or "Haikei" (Background) in Japanese, or any other content specific heading, for example, "Previous Research," or "Basic Assumptions." The other sections were recognized based on their headings. Among the sections found, the *abstract*, *background*, *method*, *results and discussion* sections were present in all the articles, but the *introduction* section occurred in 23 (77%) English articles and 13 (43%) Japanese articles, and the *conclusion* section occurred in 26 (87%) English and 27 (90%) Japanese articles. It can be concluded that the *introduction* and *conclusion* sections are not obligatory in this genre. Another conclusion is that English writers assign more importance to the *introduction* section than do Japanese writers.

The *background* and *conclusion* sections, neither of which is specified in the term 'I-M-R-D pattern,' appear to be particular to this genre. Holmes (1997) also found the *background* section in political science and sociology articles and explained that this is because there is not 'an agreed theoretical framework' in social science studies.

Move structure of each section

Figures 1 to 6 show the moves found in each section. Moves labelled with a number occurred numerically according to its label and those labelled with a letter occurred be-

fore or after another move. Since the models contain all the moves that occurred in both English and Japanese articles, not all the moves in the following figures were found in every article.

Figure 1. *Abstract* Section

Move 1	Introducing the study
Move 2	Describing the methodology
Move 3	Presenting the findings
Move 4	Concluding the abstract

Figure 2. *Introduction* Section

Move 1	Specifying the topic
Move 2	Commenting on previous research
Move 3	Introducing the present research

Figure 3. *Background* Section

Move 1	Introducing the field
Move 2	Introducing the general topic
Move 3	Introducing the key notion
Move 4	Introducing the particular topic
Move 5	Reviewing previous research on the particular topic
Move 6	Commenting on previous research
Move 7	Describing the present research
Move 8	Limitation of the present research
Move 9	Significance of the present research
Move 10	Research design
Move 11	Specifying methodology

Figure 4. *Method* Section

Move 1	Defining the Subjects
Move 2	Clarifying the focus of the study
Move 3	Describing materials/instruments
Move 4	Describing data collection procedure, including task and/or treatment
Move 5	Describing the data analysis
Move 6	Presenting the results
Move A	Introducing research question/hypothesis/ purpose
Move B	Describing the research design
Move C	Presenting the key notion
Move D	Defining the data collection period

Figure 5. *Results and Discussion* **Section**

Move 1	Describing the research design
Move 2	Reviewing the objectives
Move 3	Announcing the topic of a result
Move 4	Restating hypothesis or research question
Move 5	Announcing the result with a pointer
Move 6	Describing the procedure for a particular analysis
Move 7	Restating the results
Move 8	Highlighting the findings related to one issue
Move 9	Presenting an unexpected outcome
Move 10	Presenting an incidental finding
Move 11	Evaluating the hypothesis
Move 12	Presenting positive support
Move 13	Presenting negative support
Move 14	Presenting a deduction
Move 15	Presenting an explanation
Move 16	Extending the findings
Move 17	Evaluating the research positively
Move 18	Presenting a possible counterclaim
Move 19	Evaluating the methodology
Move 20	Presenting a counter argument
Move 21	Presenting a pedagogical implication
Move 22	Presenting a theoretical implication
Move A	Providing background information
Move B	Describing the structure of the section
Move C	Reviewing previous research
Move D	Summarizing the earlier text
Move E	Pointing to limitations or caveats
Move F	Summarizing the results to be discussed
Move G	Presenting an implication for further research

Figure 6. *Conclusion* **Section**

Move 1	Summarizing the research activity/findings
Move 2	Evaluating the research
Move 3	Evaluating the method
Move 4	Presenting a pedagogical implication
Move 5	Presenting a theoretical implication
Move 6	Presenting an implication for further research
Move 7	Presenting the writer's subjective reflection on the research
Move 8	Providing background information

The model of the *abstract* section closely conforms to the one presented by Bhatia (1993, p. 78) as typical which is comprised by Move 1: *Introducing Purpose*, Move 2: *Describing Methodology*, Move 3: *Summarizing Results*, and Move 4: *Presenting Conclusion*.

The moves found in the *introduction* section are in accordance with those in Swales' CARS model comprised by Move 1: *Establishing a Territory*, Move 2: *Establishing a Niche,* and Move 3: *Occupying the Niche* (1990, p. 141).

Some of the moves in the *background* section (Moves 2, 6, and 7) also occurred in the *introduction* section. The fact that the skipping of the *introduction* section is acceptable suggests that both the writers and readers acknowledge that the contents of these two sections are similar or that they overlap.

The model of the *method* section is quite different from Nwogu's (1997) model of this section of medical research papers. Nwogu's model comprises three moves: *Describing Data-Collection Procedures*, *Describing Experimental Procedures* and *Describing Data-Analysis Procedures*. The difference could be due to the difference of the two academic fields, medicine and applied linguistics.

The number of moves found in the *results and discussion* section in the present study was significantly larger than those found in previous studies on other fields (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Brett, 1994; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Holmes, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999; Peacock, 2003). This could be because while the previous studies analyzed only the *discussion* section, the present study analyzed the *results and discussion* section. Another possible reason is that the information contained in the *results and discussion* section in the applied linguistics research articles is more varied.

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The moves found in the *conclusion* section are similar to those found in the *results and discussion* section except for Move 7. It has been shown that this section was found in 26 (87%) of the English and 27 (90%) of the Japanese articles. This suggests that the majority of both English and Japanese writers feel the necessity of placing the moves that could occur in the *results and discussion* section in the *conclusion* section.

Move patterns found in each section

Table 1 shows the patterns of moves that were detected in more than 20% of each set of articles.

The study on each section reveals that the English article sections are more established than the Japanese article sections, with a larger number of predictable move patterns.

There are two deductions that can be drawn from the above results on move patterns: (i) the move structures of the article sections are similar with common patterns

Table 1. Move Patterns

	Move Patterns	Number of Articles	
		English	Japanese
Abstract	Move 1→ Move 2	25 (83%)	21 (70%)
	Move 2→ Move 3	28 (93%)	20 (67%)
	Move 3→ Move 4	16 (53%)	7 (23%)
	Move 1→ Move 2→ Move 3	25 (83%)	20 (67%)
	Move 2→ Move 3→ Move 4	15 (50%)	—
	Move 1→ Move 2→ Move 3→ Move 4	13 (43%)	—
Introduction	Move 1→ Move 2	16 (70%)	7 (54%)
	Move 1→ Move 3	—	6 (46%)
	Move 1→ Move 2→ Move 3	15 (65%)	7 (54%)
Background	Move 4→ Move 7	—	11 (37%)
	Move 5→ Move 6	17 (57%)	11 (37%)
	Move 4→ Move 5→ Move 6	10 (33%)	—
	Move 5→ Move 6→ Move 7	15 (50%)	7 (23%)
	Move 4→ Move 5→ Move 6→ Move 7	10 (33%)	—
Method	Move 1→ Move 4→ Move 5	17 (57%)	14 (47%)
	Move 1→ Move 3→ Move 4→ Move 5	6 (20%)	6 (20%)
Results and Discussion	Move 5→ Move 7	14 (47%)	16 (53%)
	Move 5→ Move 8	20 (67%)	16 (53%)
	Move 6→ Move 7	15 (50%)	14 (47%)
	Move 7(8)→ Move 14	11 (37%)	7 (23%)
	Move 7(8)→ Move 15	6 (20%)	7 (23%)
	Move 9→ Move 15	14 (47%)	—
	Move 5→ Move 8→ Move 7	—	7 (23%)
	Move 6→ Move 7→ Move 8	14 (47%)	—
Conclusion	Move 1→ Move 4	6 (23%)	7 (26%)
	Move 1→ Move 6	10 (38%)	6 (22%)
	Move 4→ Move 6	6 (23%)	—

Note 1: The denominator of percentage is the number of articles that contained the section. The introduction was found in 23 English and 13 Japanese articles. The conclusion section was found in 26 English and 27 Japanese articles.

Note 2: — indicates that the percentage was less than 20.

in the occurrence of moves in the two sets of data; (ii) the move structures of English article sections are more established, with more patterns of move occurrence than the Japanese articles.

found that the move structure of the English research article sections is more established, with more predictable move patterns. The extensive use of lexical signals found in the Japanese articles may suggest that Japanese

Table 2. English and Japanese Lexical Signals in Research Article Sections

	Move	Lexical Signal	Number of Articles
Abstract	E Move 1 (27)	this study/the present study/this empirical study	16 (59%)
	E Move 3 (29)	results	17 (63%)
	J Move 3 (28)	*kekka/chousakekka* (result/research result)	25 (89%)
Introduction	J Move 3 (28)	*honkou* (the present article)/ *honkenkyuu* (the present research)	7 (53%)
Background	J Move 6	*Shikashi/Tokoroga* (However/but)	5 (50%)
Results and Discussion	E Move 5 (19)	shows	12 (63%)
	E Move 11 (15)	support (Noun, Verb)	9 (50%9
	E Move G (18)	further research	9 (50%)
		future	9 (50%)
		further	12 (67%)
	J Move 5 (28)	*shimesu* (Verb) (to show)	15 (54%)
	J Move 15 (20)	*kangaerareru* (can be assumed)	13 (65%)
Conclusion	J Move 6 (17)	*kongo* (future)	5 (64%)

E: English   J: Japanese
( ): the number of articles that contained the move
(%): percentage of articles that contained the signal in the articles that contained the move

Lexical signals

Table 2 shows the result of the study on lexical signals observed in more than 50% of the articles that contained the move.

The results show that the Japanese articles made use of lexical signals in all the sections except for the method section while the use of lexical signals in the English articles was observed only in the abstract and the results and discussion sections. However, more extensive use of lexical signals was observed in the English articles in these two sections.

Discussion

Despite the structural similarities found in the English and Japanese articles, it was

writers prefer to resort to the use of lexical signals to orient the readers through logical development. Two reasons can be put forward to explain the less established structure of the Japanese articles. One is that the English structure based on Aristotelian logic is exogenous to the Japanese language; the other is that in Japanese education, writing is less emphasized than in the Western world. Although Aristotelian logic seems to have been accepted in today's Japanese culture and language, this may not mean that it has penetrated into the Japanese language so deeply as to exclude the Japanese writing tradition in which systematic categorization of logical development does not exist. Secondly, the teaching of writing in Japan

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tends to receive less emphasis than it does in English-speaking countries. Actually, the textbooks used in Japanese language education in Japanese elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools focused on reading until 1999. A pedagogical implication is that when teaching English academic writing to Japanese speaking students, successful outcomes can be expected if lexical signals are presented together with explicit instruction on appropriate usage.

One limitation of this study might be the fact that the audience of the Japanese articles is limited to Japan, whereas the English articles are written for an international audience.

Corpus

A total of 60 research articles were analyzed, 30 from each language. These articles were taken from the following journals published between 1995 and 2000:

English articles

TESOL Quarterly
Studies in Second Language Acquisition

Japanese articles

Nihongo Kyoiku (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching)
Nihongo Kyoiku Ronshu (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching)

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Opinion & Perspective
Workaday Worlds: Teaching EFL and ESOL

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In an opinion piece in *On CUE* earlier this year John Burrell (2005) stated the case against working in Japan, citing limited-term contracts and declining opportunities due to changing demographics. In this article I argue that the large numbers of part-time college and university EFL positions in Japan and the higher rates of pay continue to compare favourably with English language teaching in English-speaking countries. To support this view, a number of teachers who had spent some time in Japan were interviewed by e-mail about their experiences of returning to work in their countries of origin. Some of their comments are included here. I also offer some ideas for ways of improving the situation for teachers in Japan.

First, I would like to say that the relatively positive conditions in Japan by no means excuse the discrimination regarding the different contracts given to Japanese nationals and foreign teachers at the same institutions. Arudou (2003) has documented many universities on his website that openly practise this abuse. Both full-time and part-time teachers need to become well-informed about this issue, about their rights, and need to be aware about the possibility of seeking union protection. Teachers also need to raise the issue with their foreign and Japanese colleagues. The teachers' union, *Tokyo Komu Kokyo Ippan Roko Kumiai* has been very active in aiding teachers who have been harassed or

unfairly dismissed from their positions. For example, on April 21st of this year, the *Kyodo News* service reported a teachers' union in the Hyogo prefecture filing an appeal against the Amagasaki city government for cutting the wages of 11 foreign teaching assistants by 15 per cent while later raising those of other civic employees by 1 per cent.

However, the inequitable two-tier employment system in Japan, in which full-time teachers have bonuses, medical and pension benefits, and the part-time teachers have none, is not unusual. A TESOL position paper (2003) cited the National Center for Education Statistics in tracking the shift from full-time positions to part-time, adjunct, and contingent faculty in American universities and colleges. The proportion of part-time workers rose from 33 per cent in 1987 to almost 47 per cent in 1997. The increase was particularly evident in community colleges (p.1).

Not only are part-time positions on the rise elsewhere, but also there are few post-secondary institutions in which an EFL/ESOL specialist like myself can teach. The prospects are most often limited to teaching remedial classes and adjunct or sheltered courses for foreign students. These are growing in number but are mostly delivered through language institutes affiliated with universities, often on the same campus, but with much poorer employment conditions.

Teachers are hired one semester at a time, often with cancellation clauses in their contracts if too few students enroll in a particular course. Eskey (1997) describes these institutes as the "cash cows" of the university system, drawing in new operating capital, but discriminating against their personnel who receive less pay, prestige and power than those in the traditionally recognized academic disciplines (p.24).

Six teachers contacted by e-mail about their experiences of returning to work in their countries of origin or moving to another English-speaking country confirmed the above situation. One teacher who taught in Japan for some 13 years, four of them full time, left Japan two years ago and moved to Brisbane, Australia, where she teaches part time in a university education department. She reported that:

> Most TESOL jobs in Australia are at institutes, some of which belong to universities, and their focus is on making money. In most cases, an MA is needed for a full-time job at a university institution. Other qualifications like a CELTA instructors' certificate or an IELTS examiner qualification also help.

The same teacher also commented on the overall employment picture:

> There are more people than jobs in TESOL in Australia. It is therefore easier to get work in Japan if you are a native speaker of English.

This teacher, like the other teachers contacted, found it harder to find part-time work once she left Japan. A qualified teacher can move to Japan and within a relatively short period of time, obtain part-time university work. For example, in the case of the English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University, we have an annual turn-over of 20 to 25 per cent of our 48 part-time faculty members as people leave Japan, take other work, or move from Tokyo. And every February and March, no matter how carefully university departments like ours prepare their teaching schedules, there are numerous last-minute job vacancies.

The high rate of job turn-over and the total number of English teaching positions available here continue to attract foreign teachers. Jannuzi and Mulvey (2005) contrast the 89 universities and 69 colleges of education in the UK with the 1,200 accredited colleges and universities in Japan. Furthermore, in Japan part-time teachers are often paid over a twelve-month period though the teaching year may consist of only 24 weeks.

Teachers who have spent much of their career here in Japan are often surprised by the relative lack of opportunities in post-secondary education in their countries of origin. Many teachers rely on getting teaching positions on the basis of a second graduate degree or they move into the public school system.

For example, one of the teachers interviewed benefited from having two MA degrees. He left Japan two years ago, planning to relocate to the US. He had 22 years of teaching experience in Japan, was a frequent contributor to textbooks, and had an MA in English Linguistics as well as one in Spanish:

> I sent out hundreds of resumes, from the East coast to Hawaii, from Boston all the way to Puerto Rico – I'm qualified to teach Spanish and I would have liked to have lived there – and I got very few responses. People just didn't bother to answer. One response I got back from Greensboro, the University of North Carolina, was from an autonomous language school on campus offering a position at $28,000 per year, with very,

very little offered in the way of health benefits.

He found that another difference between Japan and America is the much higher cost of health care in the US. He learned that basic coverage for himself and his wife would cost them about $900 per month. Finally, he was contacted by one of his former professors at his hometown university. Because he had a second degree in Spanish, he obtained a contract position planning, implementing, and managing the Spanish language lab at Fayetteville University for $45,000 per annum.

The situation encountered by one educator and writer who spent 15 years in Japan and who also has two MAs proved even worse. Five years after moving to Ottawa in 2000, this author of a well-received book about teaching English in Japan is still trying to break into regular part-time college teaching:

> Basically, in Japan, there are lots of universities and so lots of jobs. Even though the jobs in Japan are part-time, you can build up enough hours to make a living. In Ottawa, for example, there are only two universities and one college, so that yields a total of 30-40 jobs. Jobs are hard to find and once someone gets in, they stay there forever.

According to a fourth teacher, the part-time teaching situation improves in bigger cities. In addition to similar qualifications to the third teacher, he was an IELTS examiner and a past program director with 11 years experience in Japan as a full-time teacher on several term contracts. He returned to London two years ago, and found plenty of part-time work, especially with summer and pre-sessional courses though again through a second graduate degree, in history. He observed that:

> Work in universities is not badly paid, in London at any rate, $60 to $70 per hour. Benefits are few in part-time work; usual with full-time. Of course, we do have the National Health Service which removes a lot of pressure compared with the U.S.

Another teacher who returned to England, in this case, after nearly three years on a full-time contract in Japan, also found an entry to university teaching through summer session courses. At the time, she had an MA, more than 20 years of teaching as well as experience in teacher-training, and materials development and testing in Sweden, Canada, China, and Japan. She noted that:

> When I returned, I upgraded by doing a distance Diploma TESOL with Trinity College, London as I needed a more recent UK qualification to prepare for the search. I got the job via summer teaching as there are often one or two positions that follow if you stay nearby and keep in touch and watch for the adverts. Full-time jobs are few and far between and they certainly don't pay as well as in Japan!...Some universities have overseas campuses which can offer job opportunities such as the University of Nottingham's campus in Ningbo, China. There are many two-and-two-years-in-the-UK degree programs in China.

A sixth and final example: after teaching in Japan for 11 years, six years of that under a full-time term contract, a teacher returning to California earlier this year unsuccessfully applied for a number of college positions. She is now considering the public school system:

> You need a California teaching credential. It takes about a year of full-time study, or two, part-time. I think it opens

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up a lot of opportunities because there are many new schools opening.

Qualified public school teachers in the U.S. and elsewhere enjoy job security, good health and pension benefits. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2004), median salaries in the U.S. ranged from $39,810 to $44,340. The variations reflect different school districts, pay increments given for graduate degrees and for teaching experience, and the local cost of living. However, when a teacher accepts a position in one district, prior teaching experience from another district or any teaching experience abroad is usually not counted. An experienced EFL teacher would get credit for a graduate degree, but might have to start near the bottom of the salary scale. A further trade-off is that with a 40-hour week and a ten-month school year, a public school teacher works many more hours than do teachers at a Japanese college or university.

These teachers' experiences illustrate some of the obstacles that educators face when resuming a career in the country they left. They also suggest the need for each of us to engage in strategic career planning. That means becoming active in teacher associations such as JALT or JACET, making presentations and publishing in the field. In terms of advanced degrees, distance education makes it possible for teachers to undertake a second degree or to upgrade their qualifications to a PhD while continuing to work in Japan. Each of us needs to constantly re-assess our working life and our career and personal goals and whether or not living here is a suitable place to pursue them.

Japan can be an excellent place to gain tertiary teaching experience in a cross-cultural setting but for most EFL/ESOL teachers, as elsewhere, it will not provide the security of a permanent position. On the other hand,

that elusive full-time job, which may not be that secure in any case, is not essential to a career in teaching that can be rewarding financially and on other levels. If a teacher wishes to pursue part-time textbook writing, editing work, journalism, acting, or to follow other interests, then the ample holiday and vacation time are attractive.

The same TESOL position paper described earlier called for increased institutional support for part-time teachers through access to materials, and opportunities for professional development. In Japan, full-time teachers should take more initiative in this area. First of all, there should be more openness and responsibility in dealing with teachers seeking part-time work. One of the teachers interviewed said, "In Japan, it's often a matter of 'Who you know' in the school that gets you hired." Others commented on the openness of job competitions back home.

An additional area for improvement is that the full-time teachers, both Japanese and foreign, who are responsible for scheduling the part-time teachers in their departments should provide some employment security by recognizing seniority when offering additional classes or cutting them from a teacher's schedule. As well, before part-time teachers are hired, they should be informed of the criteria for teacher evaluation and renewal of a contract.

In terms of professional assistance and development for part-time teachers, full-time teachers should provide new part-time faculty with a campus and program orientations. They should try to establish study areas and a teacher resource area with educational texts, journals, and audio-visual materials for classroom use, and ensure that their department provides locker space, mailboxes, e-mail accounts, library access, and the opportunity to publish in the department or

school journal. These measures would not require much expense. In addition, full-time faculty should work with part-time teachers in developing curriculum and teacher guidelines for courses. Taken together, these actions would go a long way to supporting the efforts of part-time teachers and to improving their working environment and the quality of English teaching in Japanese colleges and universities.

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Notes:

a. The author wishes to thank the teachers quoted in this article.

b. To contact the Tokyo Komu Kokyo Ippan Roko Kumiai, write or call the chairman, Noboru Shida, 605 Takasago Samariya-mantion, Oiwakecho 8-10, Hachiojishi, Tokyo, 192-0056/Ph: 03-5395-5255 Fax: 03-5395-5139.

c. The teachers interviewed for this article mentioned several useful internet sites for job seekers:
1) Academic and research jobs in England: *http://www.jobs.ac.uk*
2) The Education sector of the Jobs Site at the Guardian Newspaper: *http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/browse/education/index.jsp*
3) A site that offers information about teaching jobs in the U.S. and links to related ones: *http://www.cccregistry.com*

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

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Opinion & Perspective

The Teacher as Missionary; Is This Really Global Education?

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In a recent issue of The Language Teacher, Michael Guest (2005) responded to an earlier article by David Peaty on global education (2004). In this opinion piece for On CUE he expands upon some of his arguments.

<div style="font-weight:bold; writing-mode: vertical;">Opinion & Perspective</div>

As a supporter of both content-based learning and global education, I read David Peaty's (2004) article in *The Language Teacher—Global issues in EFL: Education or indoctrination?* with interest. In this article Peaty argued that advocacy in the classroom was not only permissible, but morally desirable. Unfortunately though, the article served to confuse me as it did not address an advocacy of Global Education as an academic issue per se but rather a much narrower focus, promoting so-called 'progressive' positions on certain global issues which Peaty appears to erroneously conflate with global education. It seems that for some, advocating global education means subscribing to a narrow set of 'progressive' socio-political values. In a recent response to that article (Guest, 2005), I addressed some of the contradictions in his article as well as critiquing the 'teacher as missionary' role that he advocates. In this particular response for *On CUE* I would like to focus upon some further implications of Peaty's arguments in favour of classroom advocacy.

Peaty argues that teaching with a bias is acceptable if "society accepts and respects the principles, values and goals being ad-vocated" (p. 16) which he glosses from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But this declaration focuses upon generally-held *values* such as respect and dignity of human life, *not on* the narrower confines of partisan *political* positions. For Peaty though, it seems to be a given that *his* values automatically equal "teaching for a better world" (p. 16). The argument thus runs along the following lines:

> The Declaration of Human Rights seeks to defend human dignity; my political views also aim to defend human liberty; therefore if I teach my political views, I am doing precisely what the U.N. declaration on human rights, with its mandate from society, is doing; so how can that be indoctrination?

This is seriously flawed logic. Advocates of all stripes believe that what they do is aimed at maintaining and preserving human rights and dignity in some form. Nevertheless, Peaty goes on to characterize his views as non-mainstream, alternative, even radical. But if this is true, how is it possible that he can then claim that society accepts these principles and goals? He seems to be talking out of both sides of his mouth here. Peaty also tries to hijack the Crick report (1998) as support when in fact the report notes that teaching only one side of an issue is actually *illegal* in Britain (p. 59)!

Peaty further justifies his use of the class-

room as a podium for espousing this type of personal dogma, primarily because he seeks 'balance' by bringing in his 'marginal' or 'radical' perspectives. All of these, interestingly, correspond to a single 'progressive' agenda, which do not reflect 'mainstream' views. Such mainstream views are 'unfair' because they are the products of a mass media which, in quoting Anderson (1996), he conflates with the 'positions' of government and commerce. However, this notion of a singular, united, monolithic media and its liaisons with the realms of government and commerce is altogether too simple and highly reductionistic.

Moreover, this notion simply ignores the actual plurality of the world around us in favour of using a pre-constructed image that allows Peaty to engage in this dubious dialectic. For example, one can easily find a variety of viewpoints, including all of those advocated by Peaty, within 'mainstream' media. For example, I have in front of me as I write, today's *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper, which tends to follow a rather right-wing position and is by any standard, 'mainstream.' And yet, in this issue, there is an article (originally printed in another 'mainstream' newspaper, the *Chicago Tribune*) which states that U.S. agricultural subsidies to Africa have had the effect of keeping African farmers poor by undercutting the competition from the developing world. Moreover, the following day's issue had an article reprinted from the *L.A. Times* about multinational oil corporations threatening a whale habitat in the Russian Far East. And if one doesn't like the alleged right-wing slant of the *Yomiuri*, one can easily find and read the more left-oriented *Asahi Shimbun*. Yet Peaty would have us believe that such 'progressive' views are not at all typical of such newspapers.

As I mentioned in my earlier response to Peaty (Guest, 2005), many beliefs and issues—such as the effects of consumerism on the environment and the selfish antics of big business—are hardly "marginal" or unknown themes in the mass media. In fact, so media-saturated are many of these issues and positions that they have become fodder for parody in many hip comedy TV shows. These allegedly progressive, marginalized, radical views have in many ways become rather antiquated, standard, default positions readily and widely dispersed throughout our society. Ironically, it seems that Peaty and many of his supporting sources are simply regurgitating these already media-drenched perspectives. It is therefore quite arguable that it is Peaty and like-minded advocates who are dispersing 'myths' regarding the nature of the media. In fact, if Peaty really wants the voices of radical or marginalized groups to be heard, he should realize that this would not include so-called "progressive" views alone but also those of Aryan supremacists, religious fanatics, conspiracy theorists, unrepentant Stalinists and the like.

In my previous response to Peaty's article I also outlined how Peaty's approach very much resembled the missionary attitude towards education—that of enlightened outsiders saving the deceived masses by offering them the wisdom of great 'truths.' Interestingly, in many of the world's most repressive regimes this approach is known as re-education, and using education to persuade learners to healthy beliefs has long been a euphemism for attempts at indoctrination. Making this scenario even more malodorous is the reality that for most of Peaty's readers, such a classroom setting will involve Western teachers 'illuminating' large groups of Japanese. Since many Western language teachers cannot or do not read or listen to the Japanese media, why is there the assumption

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that their Japanese students haven't heard these views before and therefore need to be 'balanced' by them now?

The implicit assumption seems to be that the learners are basically dupes who have been brainwashed by the government, commerce and media, and that the classroom is the place where they can be re-programmed. The treatment of learners as if they haven't already been thinking independently on issues or hold well-founded opinions (although the enlightened and knowledgeable teacher apparently has) I find to be a rather frightening abuse of the teacher's role. Unfortunately, Peaty's endorsement of Strain's (1991) questionable assumption that "All education is constructed for the realization of social values" (p. 16), indicates a predisposition to politicizing one's classroom. After all, if the classroom is inherently a political football it behooves the teacher to be on the political offensive. And furthermore, if one views students as ideological *tabula rasas* heretofore stained by the imprint of the 'unfair myths' of the enemy, the temptation to overwrite such brainwashing with one's own advocacy must certainly be tempting.

Yet this advocacy is not about getting people to think for themselves but rather to accept a certain fundamental worldview. For example, Peaty's advocacy is based upon his belief that our "present way of life is unsustainable" and that "the future of the planet is at stake" (p.16). These fundamental claims are simply stated, not supported. A similar resort to 'given truths' can be found in Peaty's advocacy of using the language classroom for "challenging *myths"* (p. 17– my italics) where, as an example, readers are informed that they can show students that the 'real' cause of hunger is *not* because not enough food is grown. This alleged myth (although it seems like a straw man myth

to me) regarding the cause of hunger is not challenged—it is merely contradicted. The proposition is simply *not* so; the truth has been pre-determined.

Pedagogically, all this has the force of putting the teacher at the center of the classroom as the conveyor of truths to be imparted to impressionable learners, a pedagogy that most 'progressive' teachers eschewed long ago. Although Peaty makes reference to both Stradling (1989) and Higgins (1990) in order to pay lip service to nurturing the skills of critical thinking, and quotes McLeod (1991) and McIntyre (1996) on avoiding bias, it is evident that he wishes to use his classroom in order to lead the learners to the 'correct' answers. For example, "Critical thinking" is advanced solely as a means to "subvert" the "dominant or mainstream perspective" (p. 16) because this perspective is "*clearly* unsustainable in the long run" (p. 16–my italics). So much for any notion of using critical thinking for impartial inquiry. Here we are moving from the area of legitimate educational inquiry into the realms of knee-jerk anti-authoritarianism. On top of this, the assumption that such a critical approach to the 'mainstream' would lead inevitably to accepting certain 'progressive' perspectives is rhetorical hubris of the highest order. Peaty though does not want to characterize all of this approach as indoctrination, apparently because, again, for him 'truths' are apparently self-evident.

One of Peaty critiques in this regard is aimed at Sargent (2004). Sargent's call for balance against turning academic global education into global advocacy is misrepresented by Peaty saying that "teachers are required to present all sides of an issue" (p. 17) and, because this is unwieldy, claiming that the logical corollary of Sargent's concerns is that "[teachers] should avoid issues

entirely" (p. 17). But this argument is in fact a red herring. 'Balance' does not necessarily imply 'every and all.' A balanced meal does not require *all* foods to be on the table. A balanced survey does not imply that *all* people on the globe be polled.

But I would like to ask a further question. Why is it that 'issues' have to be 'presented' in the language-learning classroom at all? Is a presentation-practice-production module the *only* classroom paradigm for dealing with issues? Moreover, while we may be educators, we are *language* educators first and foremost. Our primary responsibility should be to help learners understand and express themselves in English. Therefore, our focus should be upon aiding learners in using the *language* of rhetoric and argument, and on the forms and structure of a cohesive argument, rather than on the nature of its content. Surely, the content of an argument is an area that should belong to the language learner. One should allow the learner to research what is being said (and how) on certain issues and then develop the language skills that help him or her to formulate in English a cohesive opinion based on this research.

As an example of this, a teacher can easily set up a research project or debate on an issue by simply announcing a topic (as opposed to *presenting* it—and particularly as opposed to presenting a 'marginalized' view that the teacher personally believes will teach learners truth about the 'myths' they have supposedly been spoon-fed thus far). For example, the teacher might simply introduce the topic without any expression regarding their own beliefs or attitudes, thus maintaining a genuine sense of neutrality. Here is a topic:

Japan resuming commercial whaling - for or against? Research and justify your arguments. I, as a teacher, will help you understand or use the language you need to research and express yourself on this topic, but I myself will not and need not express any opinion on this topic.

In fact, the list Peaty provides of Higgins' (1990) critical thinking skills would serve well here, that is if they were divested of their pre-determined political agenda of subverting the 'mainstream.' *This* focus upon empowering the receptive and productive language skills of learners should be the role of the teacher who is truly interested in global *education* and open-minded enquiry. Unfortunately, just about everything that Peaty advocates in his article contradicts this spirit and instead unwittingly endorses unfairness, imbalance (or 'a lack of debate'), and even those 'mainstream' values he seeks to redress.

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ANNOUNCING:

The CUE Forum: Professional Development: Writing in Academia

at JALT/2005

Saturday October 8th, 16:20-17:20.
Room 910

Philip McCasland (Tokai University)
&
Martha Robertson (Aichi University)

"I don't like writing, but I like having written," writes one modern author. Many of us can identify with this sentiment. Whether writing is experienced as drudgery or as an opportunity for professional growth depends upon one's attitude and approach, as well as one's familiarity with the process. This forum welcomes both the novice and the veteran to share their perspectives as authors and collaborators, while we navigate the road from a worthwhile idea to a polished published work.

The CUE AGM immediately follows the forum.
All CUE members are encouraged to attend.

From the Chalkface
Sign Your Name Right Here

Juergen J. Bulach
Jissen Women's University

Introduction

Learning contracts provide instructors with a flexible device that can complement any class. They are written commitments in which students state their specific objectives over a limited period (McGarrell, 1996). A typical learning contract can contain up to four basic elements: learning objectives, resources and strategies, the evidence that the objectives have been met, and the criteria used to assess the evidence (Knowles, 1986). Proponents of learning contracts argue that the clear goals and directions contained in contracts help to prevent disagreements or misinterpretations that can occur in project work (Anderson et al., 1996). In this paper, I outline the development of learning contracts in a project work setting that took place in an elective listening and writing course at a private women's university.

The students

The students were 36 second, third and fourth-year English literature majors who ranged from low-intermediate to advanced in English ability. In an earlier group project, many of the same students exhibited some reluctance in cooperating with one another. Although the project demanded that they work together, they usually did this in pairs or individually. As a result, there was little communication. In addition, I observed that many of them relied on one or two members in their respective groups to actually do most of the work. Not surprisingly, throughout the course of the project I heard many complaints from students about group members not doing their share of the work. Thus, my aim was to use learning contracts as a tool to motivate them to cooperate more.

The project

I informed the students that the project would require them to work together in groups of four or five members over the duration of six weeks. They then formed their groups. I explained that the project would engage each group in the production of a Tokyo survival handbook for international exchange students at their university. The completed handbooks were to be placed in the International Center where the international students could read them at their convenience. The project involved the following steps:

1. Research culture shock
2. Interview foreigners living in Tokyo
3. Visit and collect information on things and places useful for international students to know
4. Write articles on their findings (the length of each article was from 500 to 700 words)
5. Compile their articles in a handbook

The groups were responsible for editing their members' articles for accuracy, length

From the Chalkface

and content. They received two separate grades for their work on the project. One grade was for the quality of their work which I assessed. The students themselves were responsible for the second grade which corresponded to the quantity of their work (number of articles). It was the second grade that was addressed in their contracts. My explanation of the project lasted 10 minutes.

Procedures

The development of the contracts entailed a total of six procedures: explaining learning contracts, deciding on the contract option, discussing the contract, negotiating the contract, writing the contract and renegotiating the contract. Following my explanation of the project, the students completed the first five procedures on the first day of the project. I allowed them to renegotiate their contracts up to two weeks before the end of the project. They also referred to their contracts throughout the entire six-week duration of the project. The stages outlined in *Learning Contracts* (Anderson et al., 1996) formed the basis for my procedures.

Explaining learning contracts

As this was the first time for my students to write and use learning contracts, it was necessary to acquaint them with the concept and process of contract learning. I informed them that, unlike the previous project, the new project required that they first write a learning contract. I then distributed a handout that included a short definition of learning contracts, descriptions of the roles of students and teachers in developing learning contracts, and an explanation on their usefulness. I went over the handout with the students and made sure that they understood its contents. In addition to the handout, I also provided my students with a sample

learning contract and briefly discussed its parts in detail.

Deciding on the contract option

After finishing my explanation on learning contracts, I distributed a contract form to every student which included the same learning objective. This learning objective was for students to learn more about how foreigners adjust to living in Tokyo. The form also contained three different options each corresponding to a specific amount of work and a resulting grade. The C grade option required the least amount of work, and the A grade option the most. I advised the groups to carefully decide the option they would undertake. Students consulted each other about their schedules. Out of the eight groups, five of the groups selected the A grade option, while three chose the B grade option. No group selected the C grade option.

Discussing the contract

I included a question in the contract form under the heading of *Learning Objective*. The purpose of this question was to get students to list things or places that would be helpful or interesting for international students. It also served as a discussion prompt for the groups. In their subsequent discussions, I observed no shortage of answers to the question. The groups discussed such diverse topics as transportation, restaurants, stores, hospitals, entertainment areas, post offices, libraries, foreign-language support services, etc.

Negotiating the contract

The students then negotiated which of their discussion answers they wanted to include in their contracts. The negotiations were divided into two stages. In the first stage, group members proposed and

negotiated the topics related to the learning objective, and the related resources and strategies among themselves. For this stage, I stipulated that all members should be in complete agreement on the final proposals. In the second stage, I had to approve their proposals. In determining the suitability of a proposal, I judged whether or not it involved a task that was unreasonable in anyway, or if it was simply not helpful to international students. After approving a proposal, I wrote my initials on it. A group could proceed to the next stage only after I had initialled all their proposals**.**

Writing the contract

The groups were finally ready to write their contracts. Each group used one contract form and filled in the sections under the headings of *Learning Objective* and *Resources and/or Strategies*. After the contracts were completed they were given to me. Before the next class, I made copies for myself and for each student, and signed and dated all the copies. In the next class, I returned them to the groups for the students to sign and date. I retained one copy of each student's contract.

Renegotiating the Contract

I permitted the groups to renegotiate specific parts of their contracts up to two weeks before the end of the project. The areas open to renegotiation were the type of contract option, the topics related to the learning objective, and the resources and strategies. At the beginning of every class meeting, I reminded the groups that they could renegotiate their contracts if there was mutual agreement among the members to do so. The deadline was not negotiable. Renegotiations occurred a total of eight times. In four cases, two different groups renegotiated for higher grades, while two other groups renegotiated for lower grades. One of these four groups decided to renegotiate their grade in the third week, while the three other groups chose to renegotiate in the last week of renegotiations. In the four other renegotiation cases, the groups chose to change their topics and related resources and strategies. These latter changes occurred at different times throughout the first four weeks of the project.

Variations

A great advantage of learning contracts is that instructors can have students tailor their contracts by choosing to enhance or restrict any of the four elements mentioned earlier. For example, students may be allowed to make their own learning objectives with very little input from their instructor. Conversely, the instructor may exercise more control over the direction of the contract by pre-specifying the objectives. In my class, I specified the general learning objective beforehand. However, I allowed them to select their own topics connected to the learning objective. The basis for my decision was to avoid introducing too many changes in a class that was already experiencing problems in adjusting to project work learning. Every class has special needs and learning contracts can be easily modified to meet those needs.

Conclusion

The impact of learning contracts on my students was substantial. Prior to the introduction of the contracts, many of my students lacked focus, were not communicative and did not cooperate well. This changed immediately after they started working on their contracts and these changes remained constant throughout the course of the project. They no longer complained about their group members. In the end, everyone finished

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their handbooks on time and fulfilled their contractual obligations. Learning contracts motivated my students simply because they provided them with some needed structure that had been previously absent. Most importantly, the learning contracts did this without impacting the integrity of project work and its emphasis on independence and responsibility.

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Appendix

Learning Objective To learn how international students must adjust to life in Tokyo	**Resources and/or Strategies**
Option #1 for a grade of C (must complete 6 articles) What do you think would be helpful for international students to know about Tokyo? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Option #2 for a grade of B (must complete 12 articles) What do you think would be helpful for international students to know about Tokyo? 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ 10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Option #3 for a grade of A (must complete 18 articles) What do you think would be helpful for international students to know about Tokyo? 13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____ 16. _____ 17. _____ 18. _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

If at any time you wish to renegotiate this contract for a higher or lower grade, you have the option to do so up to two weeks before the end of the project (Nov. 4).

Signed _____   Signed _____
        (Student)   (Teacher)

Date   _____   Date   _____

Group Name _____

Monet, Renoir and Tomoko too: Using Impressionist artwork to aid self-expression

Marlen Elliot Harrison
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Summary

This lesson introduces target structures for creative self-expression via discussion of famous images (picture speculation and reflection) by impressionist artists. The goal of the lesson is for students to learn basic sentence structures and vocabulary that will allow them to report their thoughts and feelings as well as elicit them from others. Additionally, it is a starting point for creative expression and experimentation with autonomous verbal expression.

Students

Students should have experience with basic self-expression and sentence structure; High beginners and up.

Materials

Images of impressionist paintings such as Seurat's famous "A Sunday on La Grand Jatte" or Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" (many images may be downloaded from the internet; one of my favorite sites is the Smithsonian Institute: http://www.si.edu).

Time required

30-45 minutes.

Rationale

"Impression" may be defined as a cognitive or emotional response to exposure to a stimulus. Introducing the imaginative and famous images of impressionist painters can help students understand how their own creativity may be applied to the English language to express their own impressions. How many times have we asked students questions only to be met with responses that could be more complex and personalized? Perhaps part of the reason for this is students lack the language tools required for such self-expression. If the great impressionists used color, brushstroke, and paint as tools to express their thoughts and feelings about the world around them, then it seems that students of foreign languages are performing quite a similar task with words, sounds, and body language as their tools.

Procedure

Introduction

Begin with an explanation of the lesson, "Today we will practice talking about our ideas and feelings and look at famous paintings," and a timed warm-up (approx. 5 minutes) asking students to find out who each other's favorite artists are and why. A sample conversation that may be pre-taught could include:

A: Who is your favorite artist?
B: I like _(painter's name)_, how about

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you?

  A: Ummm, I like ___(painter's name)___.
    Or

  A: Ummm, I can't think of the painter's
    name.

It is helpful to also spend about 5 minutes eliciting ideas about the words "impression" and "impressionists." At least one student is usually familiar with the genre of impressionist painting and can name one or two artists. Students can also build their vocabulary by reviewing such phrases as "first impression," "bad impression," etc. Appendix 1 contains a list of words that students can use for a dictionary/translation exercise (one of my favorite dictionary exercises is a contest where students see who can find the Japanese word the fastest) to help build their vocabulary for later stages of this activity.

Next, ask students, "Why would a lesson about impressionist painters be good for an English conversation lesson?" as a timed (5-minute) brainstorming task, students should work together in a small group and think of at least three possibilities. After students share their ideas, which typically include responses like "vocabulary," "many colors," and "fun thing for talking," explain that foreign language students are impressionist speakers who, like the impressionist painters, must use a set of tools to create an image that expresses how they feel. Finally, provide a number of sample sentences that can be used when discussing not only art but most any topic. For example:

  1. Q: What does this make you think of?

    A: It makes me think of….

  2. Q: How does this make you feel?

    A: This makes me feel….

  3. Q: What does this remind you of?

    A: This reminds me of….

  4. Q: Do you like it?

    A: I like/ dislike it because….

Picture speculation exercise

Show images (one at a time) of impressionist paintings such as Seurat are famous "A Sunday on La Grand Jatte" or Van Gogh's "The Starry Night." Model the conversation procedure by having a student ask the above sample questions and providing appropriate responses. I ask students to "use their imagination" to think of creative responses that reflect their own impressions using the sample sentences from above. The remainder of the activity may be spent encouraging student interaction though a brief restatement of lesson goals and a summary of lesson activities by the instructor are recommended.

It is important for the instructor to remember to provide concrete examples of language targeted, apply these kinds of tasks only when appropriate to the students' needs and skill levels, and choose images that are appropriate to the professional classroom environment. Additionally, the instructor's primary role is to help the students determine the direction of the lesson, depending upon their particular language abilities and needs, and provide concrete examples. Regardless of the outcome, students have a chance to converse, build vocabulary, practice sentence structure, and most importantly, increase their abilities as impressionist speakers.

Assessment

The lesson is most successful when the instructor limits correction of vocabulary or grammar and encourages creative experimentation with language. There are many possibilities for assessment at the instructor's discretion such as a follow-up conversation task or quiz.

Reflection

This lesson has a variety of outcomes: Students may create sentences or stories similar

to poetry; students may issue opinions about the artists' intentions or abilities; and often students will express their dislike or approval of the images. Using the model question and answer formats, students frequently have entered into brief conversations that have resulted in surprising and imaginative speculations. In response to Van Gogh's "Starry Night" one first-year non-English major responded:

> *This reminds me of winter-time in Hokkaido…my grandmother's place. Sometimes star is bright and shiny. Cold feelings can be happy.*

Another student offered the following upon viewing Cassat's "The Boating Party":

> *On a beautiful afternoon a family sails far from their trouble. This painting makes me feel love and I wish to have this experience too.*

Additionally, students should be encouraged to keep a list of all new words learned during the exercise and to practice using them during their conversations. This format has many possibilities and is a great way to encourage students (with only a little help from the instructor) to practice newly learned vocabulary or grammatical structures.

Variations

There are many possible approaches to using artwork in a language lesson. Photographs, drawings, or paintings of any genre may offer students a chance to enter into conversation and express themselves. Many forms of language may be emphasized, for example:

- metaphors or similes: Q: "How does she look?" A: "She looks as happy as a bride."
- vocabulary: "Name as many adjectives/adverbs/verbs for this image as you can think of."
- action speculation: "What happened before this point in time?" or "What will happen next?"
- title speculation: "What would be a good title for this image?"

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Appendix

Vocabulary for impressionist exercise

an impression	an image	favorite
a painter	to feel (an emotion)	a speaker
an idea	to create	art
Impressionist	tools	a painting
to remind one of	feelings	an artist
a brushstroke	creative	imagination

Cyber Pipeline
I am the Internet: Using Beatles Materials on the Web

Brian Caspino
Himeji Dokkyo University

Cyber Pipeline

Recently I brought a karaoke machine into a conversation class to use during a class party. Students were shy at first. I did a horrible rendition of a Patsy Cline song and a Michael Jackson song to lighten the mood and offer encouragement. A few minutes later, a student stepped up to the mic and sang some Beatles. One by one students crowded around, bobbing their heads, clapping and singing along with her. She paved the way for other students to try. Beatles songs are very popular with students. During the party, students sang a total of eight songs—one each by John Lenin and John Denver, and six Beatles songs. The singers seemed to know nearly all of the words to the songs, and others sang along while attentively watching the singer or the words on the screen.

My experience in karaoke boxes and bars in Japan had already led me to believe that all Japanese people old enough to frequent these places were familiar with the Beatles, could sing some Beatles songs, were familiar with their music, or were interested in the Beatles. I realized that the Beatles might be a hot topic for my younger students down the road.

After the party, I went online to make the most of this situation. I searched *Beatles, karaoke, trivia* and *lyrics* and retrieved some useful and entertaining sites. You may find the following sites helpful.

Beatles Lyrics

http://welcome.to/beatleslyrics allows you to view all the Beatles' albums. Click one for lyrics to the songs on that album. There are links to John Lennon and Ringo Starr sites.

Beatles Karaoke

http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/ Club/8815/music2.html provides free online karaoke versions of the Beatles' songs.

Beatles Trivia

http://www.geocities.com/Sunset-Strip/8703/trivia.html and *http://members. aol.com/Razmatazzz/beatriv1.html* offer advanced-level Beatles trivia that might be used for an a homework assignment or project.

Beatles Info

http://www.beatlesagain.com is full of trivia, rumors, history, facts, and humor.

http://members.tripod.com/~taz4158/ beatles.html offers video, audio, interviews and articles, including an introduction to the 'Paul is Dead' controversy.

These sites supply material to structure a lesson, a unit, or a semester. If these sites don't suit you, a Google search for *Beatles* retrieves 7,860,000 sites. If only to give students a taste of the Beatles, a 15-20 minute trip to the computer lab can provide a wealth of useful and fun resources.

Conference Review
Glocalization through CALL: Bringing People Together

Forrest Nelson
Tokai University

Glocalization through CALL was the chosen title for the recent JALTCALL conference at the Biwako campus of Ritsumeikan University held June 3rd to June 5th. Be careful not to misread the title. If you read it as "Globalization," you are forgiven. Wikipedia Encyclopedia online states that Glocalization is "the creation of products or services intended for the global market but customized to suit the local culture" (Wikipedia, 2005). A general example of glocalization is the web site, *www.meetup.com*, which allows users to create local meeting groups based on personal interests and then bridges them with other groups of similar interest around the world. In other words, a local meetup.com group of chess players in "lil ole" Soso, Mississippi would now have connections with other chess player groups around the world. As for JALTCALL, "Glocalization" refers to ESL/EFL learning websites, according to the plenary speaker Uschi Felix in her opening presentation.

Saturday morning I woke up to a beautiful view of Lake Biwako, knowing it would be a great day to be outdoors fishing on one of the many boats dotting the lake. Instead, I headed for the Ritsumeikan Biwako campus which should not be confused with the Kyoto campus as several people had done. The previous night, I had prepared by looking over all the presentations and writing down my personal *want list*. I was looking for presentations that would answer my question, "How can I make *Moodle* track whether students have seen and heard my video and audio files?"

I started the morning off with a coffee and the opening presentation by Uschi Felix. She related that the use of "asynchronous" and "synchronous" chat communities can provide anonymous communication which in turn has been shown to reduce the speaker's fear of making mistakes. In turn, the student opens up to more authentic communicative activity (Uschi, 2005). Ms. Felix provided the following sites as examples that support anonymous communicative activities:

- Wimba-voiced bulletin boards at *http://horizonwimba.com*
- Traveler-voiced chat communities at *http://www.digitalspace.com/traveler/*
- Lyceum-audiographics at *http://kmi.open.ac.uk/projects/lyceum/*

My next stop was Kevin Ryan's "Digitally Editing Sound." This presentation was both informative and helpful, providing me with new ideas on how to edit audio files and how to serve them over the Internet. Ryan also introduced a powerful open source audio tool called *Audacity*, which can be downloaded at *http://audacity.sourceforge.net/*. This software allows users to cut and paste and add sound effects. Finally, after editing, *Audacity* can export audio files to many formats, including MP3. One of its

best features, however, is its multi-track recorder which lets the user add background sounds such as music, or people talking in a crowd. For example, if you wanted to take a recording of a conversation at a park, you could add another audio track of birds chirping, children laughing, and wind blowing through the trees. For my purposes, I want to upload MP3s to my *Moodle* online class management site for students to practice listening. Mr. Ryan's presentation will help me to complete this task. However, tracking student activity online still eluded me. My quest was still incomplete.

With a new tool for handling audio files, I wanted to see what others were doing with video, so I went to see Robert Chartrand's presentation on editing videos. He instructed participants on the use of Movie Maker starting from importing video clips to importing narration and finally creating the finished product. One month later, I am sitting at my desk writing this paper and while taking a break from typing, I decided to try and make a quick movie using my PC, my chat camera and Robert's presentation instructions. Within 20 minutes, I had recorded 2 video clips, added a title frame and credits, audio and background music. It is just that simple! Movie Maker is a powerful tool that teachers can use to create videos for their classes.

Another video presentation I saw was given by Simon Hunter and Richard Hawking, both of Obirin University. Although they discussed different videos, both presented on their method of delivering video via the Internet. Their focus was on the use of *Flash* as a video delivery system adding that the *Flash* cyber-community contains hundreds of pre-designed templates. This is particularly helpful because *Flash* is still not the easiest software to use. It would be easier just to link a video file in an HTML page, but *Flash*

can add a lot more functionality than HTML can. Having hundreds of templates to choose from makes *Flash* so much easier to use and many of the templates look professionally designed. Simon Hunter presented an online interview of various professors about the books they had read and why reading is so important. To do such a homepage in HTML, the average instructor would only be able to link text to various audio or video files. The design would be very simple and not very pleasing to the eye. On the other hand, using *Flash* allowed Simon to link video interviews to animated text, as well as add feedback messages to the user showing how much of the video had been played and how much was left. Next, Richard Hawking went on to show how *Flash* can be used to set up a basic speech feedback site. His idea was to provide a place where students could upload their own presentation video files that could be checked and graded by an instructor on the Internet. Again, to do this would require either *Flash* or PHP/MYSQL. Generally, PHP/MYSQL requires a server that can handle a database and the scripting for storing video and data in MYSQL requires a high technical skill in programming. However, Richard showed how *Flash* could do the same thing without using web database server technology. It is still difficult to do what was presented, but at least there are many *Flash* templates in cyberspace.

After their presentation, I began to think that *Flash* was the technology that might meet my goal of tracking audio/video viewing activity in *Moodle*. How to connect *Flash* to *Moodle* was still a difficulty. However, just down the hall was a presentation by Paul Daniels on adding data fields to *Moodle's* MYSQL database and enabling *Flash* to be tracked within *Moodle*. What Paul did in this presentation was show how teachers with some

programming skills can tell *Flash* to pass a value such as a flash quiz score to a variable that can be sent and stored in a MYSQL database table. When the teacher logs on to his/her *Moodle* web page, the teacher will be able to see that the student viewed the *Flash* file containing the video or audio. If the flash file contained any questions that were scored, then they would also be able to see student scores in the grades section of *Moodle*. Finally, let me mention that at the time of the conference, Paul's solution to connect *Flash* to *Moodle* was only temporary. He went on to say that a *Flash* module for *Moodle* was under development and should come out at the beginning of 2006.

At last, all my questions had been answered. Starting this fall semester, I will be tracking video and audio viewing activity of my students—thanks to the cumulative technical information provided at this conference. JALTCALL proved this year to be a great help in my desire to increase my techni-cal skills. In previous years when attending JALTCALL, I went there with no clear goal in mind—this may be indicative of first-time attendees. However, my advice is to go to this type of conference with obtainable goals such as technical problems to solve. A personal want list will definitely focus your attention, increase your understanding, encourage your participation, and improve your overall experience.

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Book Review

Ideas & Issues: Pre-Intermediate

Geraldine Sweeney. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2000. pp. 96. Textbook. ¥2,000. ISBN: 4-89585-318-7. Teacher's Guide. 318. Audio Cassettes.

Ideas & Issues: Intermediate

Olivia Johnston & Mark Farrell. Tokyo: Macmillan LanguageHouse, 2000. pp. 102. Textbook. ¥2,000. ISBN: 4-89585-319-5. Teacher's Guide. 319. Audio Cassettes.

Reviewed by Nevitt Reagan
Kansai Gaidai University

These two textbooks (part of the five-volume *Ideas & Issues* series) are great looking and clearly designed. Originally published by Chancerel International Publishers Ltd., the Macmillan LanguageHouse editions contain English-Japanese glossaries in the student books as well as Japanese translations in the teacher's guides of listening passages. Although they purport to teach four skills, they are perhaps most useful for listening/speaking courses.

Each unit is organized as a tightly packed four-page spread. After an initial reading or listening passage, the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation points are presented and practiced briefly. These are followed by open-ended communicative pair- and group-work activities. "Language Practice" exercises at the back of the *Pre-Intermediate* book supply additional work on vocabulary and grammar items. Each book claims to provide about 32 hours of material (22 90-minute periods).

The teacher's guides include an introduction to the teaching approach, lesson plans for Lessons 1 & 2, notes for the remaining lessons, tapescripts, answer keys, and Japanese translations of the listening passages. There are also two class cassettes (or CDs) for each book: one contains the listening passages and pronunciation exercises; the other has the reading passages.

Both books feature high-interest, contemporary issues, such as girl power, fashion design, mobile phones, green issues, and sexism. The listening passages present natural delivery and include a range of (mostly) British accents. The short reading passages in *Pre-Intermediate* are graded; the slightly longer, more complex readings in *Intermediate* are excerpted from popular British and American newspapers and magazines. Overall, the two books portray "Cool Britannia" – a young, hip, multicultural Britain.

The books are visually stimulating, each page loaded with a great variety of eye-catching color photographs and artwork. *Intermediate*, however, includes rather unusual photos (for a textbook). For example, the first three units have images of naked women, a dead sheep, and a bloody gunshot wound on a human head.

There are a couple of minor organizational problems. First, the recordings of the listening and the reading passages are on two different tapes, causing the inconvenience of having
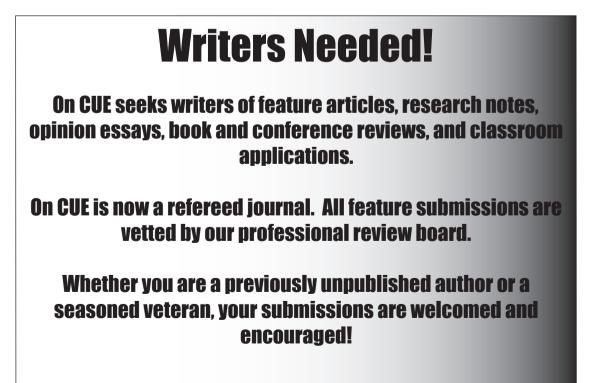
to switch media frequently in mid-lesson. Second, the "Language Practice" exercises (*Pre-Intermediate* only), not much different from those in the units themselves, are placed at the back of the book. There seems to be no reason for this, except perhaps to maintain the four-page unit format.

The design and instructions for the exercises are simple and clear. However, with eight to twelve activities, along with large graphics, crammed into each four-page spread, the slightly larger than B5-size pages seem overcrowded. In addition, the exercises are very short, providing rather limited practice, with tiny spaces for student written responses.

The brief writing tasks provide very little support. For example, the *Pre-Intermediate* "Sport and Money" unit merely asks students to "Find out about a famous sports personality and write a paragraph about him/her" (p. 39). and gives a short list of prompts, such as "Name, Nationality, Sport," etc. This supplies only a bit of written consolidation of the material rather than actually teaching or practicing any new writing skills.

The *Ideas & Issues* series certainly has several strengths. The artwork is truly engaging and the topics will appeal to teens and young adult learners. The simple exercise formats make classwork go quickly and smoothly. Bilingual glossaries prevent constant in-class dictionary searches. Grammar and pronunciation points are sequenced well. Finally, the extensive Japanese language support could make these textbooks good choices for teachers who want to deal with young adult-level issues without spending too much class time on grammar or vocabulary.

In sum, the *Ideas & Issues* series contains motivating topics in a format which serves up attractively arranged samples of contemporary English—a series of light, tasty snacks but not really a meal.

Book Review

JALT's Asian Scholar Program

JALT's Asian Scholar Program continues this year with another representative from Southeast Asia. Mr. Chamroeun Koun will make a presentation on Sunday morning at the national JALT conference on a topic many of us will find relevant to the teaching situation here in Japan: "Students' Beliefs About Causes of Their Failure." Please consider making time at Granship to attend this special presentation which will be cosponsored by the CUE SIG and the Omiya Chapter.

Students' Beliefs About Causes of Their Failure
Mr. Chamroeun Koun

Abstract

Failure in English language learning is universal and it seems to be a serious issue for students of English and in English education as a whole. However, little attention has been paid to investigating the real causes of their failure.

This presentation will report on the findings of a small-scale research study conducted with adult students aged 18 to 25 about their perceived causes (attributions) of their failure in studying English at a private language school in Cambodia. The instrument used for collecting the data was a "semi-structured interview." The data analysis was based on the interpretive method paradigm and the common categories of attributions: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Weiner, 1979). The results indicated that those students ascribed both external and internal dimensions of attributions to their failure. For the external dimension, the common attributions were task difficulty, teaching, and school administration/management, while ability and effort were the most commonly reported for the internal dimension. Learning environment/pressure, family, motivation, and anxiety were found in the study. The findings suggest that these attributions are believed to have a very strong relationship with the students' expectations, motivation, and affective domains for their future success in learning English. The results also suggest implications for teachers to cope with the students' attributions to enhance their motivation and expectancies for future success.

About the Presenter

Chamroeun Koun has a Bachelor's Degree in TEFL from the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL), Royal University of Phnom Penh, and a Masters in Applied Linguistics from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), Thailand. He has several years of experience in teaching EFL students in Cambodia and Thailand, plus some experience as a teacher trainer for the TEFL1 Training Program at Spencer International, Chichester College, based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Bangkok, Thailand. He gave presentations at CamTESOL workshop 2004 and CamTESOL conference 2005 on "Practical Issues in Teaching." Also, he has attended a series of ThaiTESOL conferences, and other workshops on English language teaching in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam, and he has recently co-presented at ThaiTESOL colloquium. Currently, he is working as the Professional Development Manager and teacher of English at the Australian Centre for Education, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.