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From the Editor

Welcome to the fourth issue of Saitama Journal of Language Teaching. Three JALT Omiya Chapter members share results of their thinking, their research, or their experiences with you. **Masa Tsuneyasu** takes a look at the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory and suggests teaching with our students' learning preferences in mind. **Takeshi Ishikawa** reports on peer-writing activities in his writing class. **Asako Kato** investigates the current high school English curriculum in expectation of the 2013 MEXT curriculum.

I hope that you will find SJLT of practical use in your classroom, or of theoretical interest in your research. However, SJLT has another goal: For all of us involved in this journal, be it as authors, reviewers, or editors, SJLT is an opportunity to develop professional, personal, or social skills. Writing, reviewing, giving feedback to authors, receiving constructive criticism from reviewers and dealing with it, editing, mentoring authors at early stages of their teaching or research career, networking – all these activities give us a chance to learn by doing and to develop ourselves and each other. With SJLT, we hope to create a stronger sense of community at JALT Omiya Chapter and to stimulate good communication and lively interaction between members.

I would like to remind prospective authors that SJLT editors are not only interested in papers on research or activities, but in other text types as well. How about submitting a book review or an interview? If you are wondering whether that unusual and creative type of text you are planning would ever be accepted by SJLT, please don't hesitate to talk to us about it!

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Teaching with Multiple Intelligence theory in mind

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Lessons focusing on individual learning preferences can make learning more successful. The Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory can help teachers and learners find these preferences. Experiencing various activities, students may find their hidden strengths. An inventory sheet focused on MI theory makes it possible to grasp general learning tendencies of the classrooms. Based on the results, better lesson plans can be created. In this paper, the MI theory will be discussed. Then, practical suggestions how to use the MI theory will be offered.

Overview of MI theory

MI theory was first introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983. According to Gardner, there are at least eight different types of intelligence: logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and linguistic. See Table 1 for definitions and examples of each type of intelligence. Gardner (1999) claims that multiple intelligences would help teachers understand individual differences of students, which in turn would lead to successful instruction that meets the individual needs of students. Intelligence is not a monolithic notion, but rather consisting of various subcomponents other than linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences (Gardner, 1983). It would therefore be important to pay greater attention in schools to other intelligences, such as spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, and naturalist intelligences.

Table 1: Descriptions of eight types of intelligence in MI theory

Intelligence	Description
Linguistic Intelligence	Ability to think in words and to use language e.g.) I like to talk about books that I read.
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	Ability to calculate and consider hypotheses e.g.) I often do math in my head.
Spatial Intelligence	Ability to think in images and pictures e.g.) I like to draw, paint, and create artistic designs.
Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence	Ability to control one's body movements e.g.) It is fun for me to move around the classroom.

Musical Intelligence	Ability to produce rhythm, tone and melody e.g.) I know the tunes to many songs.
Interpersonal Intelligence	Ability to respond to desires of others e.g.) I am often chosen as a leader.
Intrapersonal Intelligence	Ability to construct an accurate perception of oneself e.g.) I can achieve personal goals.
Naturalist Intelligence	Ability to recognize and categorize objects in nature e.g.) I like houseplants.

(Gardner, 1999)

Gardner (1983) suggests that anyone has a potential of developing his or her intelligence to a reasonably high level, which in turn leads to a certain level of achievement in a given field. Armstrong (2000) adds that an educator's sensitivity to the differences of individual students becomes a key to optimizing students' learning.

Teaching with MI theory

Inventory sheet

An inventory sheet is an effective way to find out about students' learning preferences. For instance, focusing on certain intelligences where students are strong may well make students' learning more successful. Based on Christison (2006: 347-351), who has developed an inventory to identify the preferred intelligences of adult English language learners, we created the following inventory sheet:

Table 2: Inventory sheet for students' intelligences

Intelligences	#	Japanese	English	Yes	No
Linguistic Intelligence	1	よく本を読む方だ(漫画は除く)	I like to read some books.	6	5
	2	よくメモを取ったり手紙を書いたりする	I write notes and letters to my friends.	6	5
	3	人に冗談を言うのが好きな方だ	I like to tell jokes.	6	5
	4	たくさんの言葉を知っている方だ	I have a good vocabulary.	6	5
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	5	暗算が得意な方だ	I often do math in my head.	6	5
	6	将棋やチェス、オセロなどのゲームが得意だ	I am good at chess, checks, or number games.	6	5
	7	UNOなどの数合わせゲームが好きだ	I like to do crossword puzzles.	6	5
Spatial Intelligence	8	問題を解くのが好きな方だ	I am good at solving problems.	6	5
	9	ものを飾ったり部屋の飾りつけをするのが好きだ	I like to decorate.	6	5
	10	絵を描くのが上手だと思う	I like to draw.	6	5
	11	絵を見るのが好きだ	I like to look at pictures.	6	5
Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence	12	イラスト入りの本が好きだ	I love books with illustrations.	6	5
	13	体を動かすのが好きだ	It is hard for me to sit for a long time.	6	5
	14	スポーツが得意な方だ	I participate in sports.	6	5
Interpersonal Intelligence	15	手を使った作業が好きだ	I am good at sewing, woodworking, building, or mechanics.	6	5
	16	散歩やジョギングが好きだ	I enjoy running and walking.	6	5
Intrapersonal Intelligence	17	友人と勉強するほうが好きだ	I prefer to study with my friends.	6	5
	18	人間は好きな方だ	I enjoy talking to friends.	6	5
	19	友だちが多い	I have many friends.	6	5
	20	友だちと食事をしたりするのが好きだ	I enjoy parties with my friends.	6	5
Musical Intelligence	21	自分のことはよくわかっている方だ	I can identify and describe my talents.	6	5
	22	日記を付けている	I remember my dreams and like to talk about them.	6	5
	23	目標を決めて達成する方だ	I like to set goals and achieve them.	6	5
Naturalist Intelligence	24	失敗から学ぶことができる	I learn from my mistakes.	6	5
	25	いろいろな歌のメロディーをハミングできる	I know the tunes to many songs.	6	5
	26	歌がうまい方だ	I am a good singer.	6	5
	27	楽器の演奏ができる	I play a musical instrument or sing in a choir.	6	5
	28	音楽などを聴いていて音がはなれているとわかる	I can tell when music is off-key.	6	5
	29	植物が好きの方だ	I like houseplants.	6	5
	30	いろいろな花の名前を知っている	I know the names of many different flowers.	6	5
	31	いろいろな動物の名前を知っている	I know the names of many different animals.	6	5
	32	木や植物に関心がある	I notice the trees and plants in my neighborhood.	6	5

(Tsuneyasu, Suzuki, & Akutsu, 2010)

Lesson plans

Here, some suggestions for lessons with MI theory in mind are introduced: (1) a lesson plan with MI, and (2) lesson activities with different intelligences.

(1) Lesson plan

It is useful to make a framework to incorporate into various lessons with small adjustments.

Table 3 is a sample for a lesson using DVDs.

Table 3: Lesson plan: watching DVDs

Steps	Students' Activities	Intelligences
Introduction	Guess the story after showing some pictures and the title of the DVD and share opinions. Learn useful expressions.	Spatial, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal
Main	Watch today's part of the DVD with English subtitles. Think about "What would you do if you were in that situation?" and share opinions. Guess what will happen next and share opinions. Listen to the parts and write down words and phrases you can catch. Do a role-play. Make a short skit and act it out. Watch the parts and find out some cultural differences. Talk about socio-cultural issues.	Linguistic Spatial, Linguistic Intrapersonal, Interpersonal Interpersonal Linguistic, Musical Interpersonal Interpersonal, Bodily-Kinesthetic
Wrap-up	Listen to the theme song and fill in the blanks. Learn useful expressions in the song. Sing the song. Write a summary report of the parts of the DVD as homework.	Spatial, Naturalist, Interpersonal Musical, Spatial Linguistic Musical Intrapersonal, Linguistic

(2) Lessons activities

In some lessons, the teacher can focus on particular intelligences depending on objectives, goals, and the results of the inventory sheet. In the following table, some activities categorized by intelligences are listed.

Table 4: Samples of MI activities

Intelligence	Activities
Linguistic	Pattern practice, Show & Tell, Shiritori, Making a poem, Word game, Cloze test, Recitation, Speech, Dictation
Logical-Mathematical	Mapping, Grammar practice, Puzzle, Quiz, Riddle, Cloze test, Information gap, Matching
Musical	Jazz chants, Rhythm, Shadowing, Tongue twister
Interpersonal	Pair work, Group work, Role play, Cooperating work, Chat, Discussion, Debate, Jigsaw reading
Intrapersonal	Self-expression, Diary, Think aloud, Setting a goal
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Body language, Gestures, Acting out, Tongue twister
Naturalist	Categorizing, Odd word out, Bingo
Spatial	Picture, Collage, Map, Video, Realia, Chart, Flash card

(Adopted from Honda, 2006 and Nagae, 2008)

Reflection

The following makes it easier for teachers to keep track of student performance, and to reflect on lessons. Table 5 may help to balance various intelligences per class.

Table 5: Frequency check sheet for teachers

Class / Date	Intelligences	How many times
	Language Logical-Mathematical Spatial Bodily-Kinesthetic Interpersonal Intrapersonal Musical Naturalist	

With the evaluation sheet in table 6, teachers can easily grasp each student’s intelligences and keep a record.

Table 6: Evaluation sheet for teachers

Date _____

	Name	Intelligences	Remarks
1		Language, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Music, Naturalist	
2		Language, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Music, Naturalist	
3		Language, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Music, Naturalist	

Note: Circle intelligences the student is good at.

Table 7 is a peer evaluation sheet which may be especially effective at certain times, for example at the end of the semester. Peer evaluation is a powerful tool to acknowledge other students’ performance. The following question items may be changed whenever appropriate.

Table 7: Peer Evaluation Sheet

Date _____	Your name _____
Mr./Ms. _____ is	
good at speaking,	
good at explaining something,	
good at drawing pictures,	
good at thinking logically,	
good at singing a song, and	
good at communicating with others.	
Comments	_____
Comments from teachers	_____

Note: Check in the box if your friend is good at this.

Discussion

When making lesson plans, it is impossible to consider every student’s intelligences in one class. However, with a little more consideration and effort, certain intelligences may be enhanced in different aspects of the lessons. Students may well feel more comfortable to learn English and may be able to find their hidden intelligences experiencing various types of activities. During a lesson that was run on the basis of the principles of MI theory, students were engaged in those types of activities which stimulated their interest and enhanced their

intelligences. Throughout the lesson, students' active participation was required which helped create a student-centered environment.

Results of the students' oral comments after the class indicated that the activities motivated students to learn. Students can show their academic strengths through various types of activities. However, not all the students responded positively to the lesson, probably because they were in favor of teacher-centered classes or passive learning, though reasons are yet to be explored in future research.

Conclusion

EFL lessons based on MI theory seem to help: (1) teachers to identify individual differences in learning styles among students, (2) students to be engaged in peer activities under a new stimulating class atmosphere, (3) students to participate in tasks with positive attitudes, and (4) to establish rapport with the teacher as well as among students. An inventory sheet, MI activities, and reflection are able to serve as productive pedagogy in the classroom.

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Peer writing to facilitate out-of-class writing and interchange among students

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Introduction

At the beginning of each semester, Japanese university freshmen in my English writing class seem worried about two things; 1. They are not confident about their productive skills in English, and 2. They are not sure whether they can adapt themselves to the new surroundings. Concerning the first problem, quite a few students find it painstakingly hard to just fill out self-introductory sheets on which 5 sentences with blanks are written (I _____), and it seems to result from their being obsessed with writing perfect English. In order to solve both problems at the same time, I started incorporating a peer-writing activity into my writing class. Brown proposes risk-taking as one of the important affective principles in teaching and learning, saying that “successful language learners...must be willing to become ‘gamblers’ in the game of language, to attempt to produce and interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty” (Brown, 2001, p. 63). Although output is necessary for acquisition, exclusively resorting to restricted lexicon and syntax does not lead to improvement in accuracy (Allen, Swain, Harley, & Cummins, 1990). In this peer writing, because students answer questions posed by their partners and occasionally change the subjects to suit their interests, they are made to go beyond their own restricted linguistic resources, which helps them restructure their English competence. Peer writing turned out to be an effective remedy for the two problems the students initially had; 1. The students found writing in English interesting, and 2. They were able to make a lot of friends, who they would not have talked to if it had not been for peer writing, which made them feel comfortable in the new class. The activity also helped them find out what their weaknesses (e.g. spelling or grammar) were and that English is not something to analyze, but a tool for communication.

How to introduce Peer Writing

1. Have the students buy themselves a B5 notebook.
2. Explain that the students will keep a diary and exchange it with a partner. The amount of writing should be half of the page (depending on the level of the class, you can reduce it to one-fourth of a page).
3. Students can write about anything from their favorite pastime, what they did that day, their dreams, their childhood memories, to their campus life. It is totally okay for them to decorate each page with photo stickers and drawings.
4. Student A writes a diary entry and questions, and hands it to Student B, and vice versa, which takes place sometime during a week as they see fit. They do the same thing again, and student A now has his / her own notebook back. I call this “one boomerang” as their books are returned to them like a boomerang. The minimum number of times they must exchange in one week is “one boomerang.” When explaining the rules, the most important thing, first and foremost, is to make sure that students understand they do not have to be afraid of making mistakes.

Procedures

1. At the second meeting (a week from the introductory talk), and once every two weeks onward, the teacher has students make new pairs by using playing cards. (The Ace of hearts is paired up with the Ace of diamonds, for example.) In case the number of those present is an odd number, the teacher picks out a card and is paired up with one of the students.
2. On the day of the lot drawing, if time permits after making pairs, have students sit next to the new partner, and play board game (sugoroku). The aim of this is for students to get familiar with the new partner and get some information about him / her that will be of great help in eliciting topics to write about for the “first boomerang.” The teacher distributes a sheet of a board game that consists of 10 to 20 boxes that looks like a beehive with adjacent boxes connected with each other. In one of the boxes the word “START” is written. Students prepare one game piece for a pair (e.g., an eraser) and put it in the START box. They play rock-paper-scissors and the winner advances the piece. He / she can move the piece to any adjacent box. If the student has won by using paper, they advance the piece 5 spaces; scissors, 2; and rock, 1. In each box a simple question is written such as “What do you like to do?” The winner is the person who advances the piece and starts the conversation. The pair

talks about the topic until they are satisfied. They play rock-scissors-paper again, and the talking continues. There is no GOAL box, since the aim of this is simply to facilitate a conversation.

3. After the board game, allow students one or two minutes to discuss when to exchange notebooks during the week.

4. At every class meeting, the students put their notebooks on the desk with the newest page open for the teacher to check. The teacher gives some positive comments about their writing (and pictures).

5. At the end of the course, the teacher hands out a Peer Writing Check Sheet with which students report on how many diary entries are written in the notebook (including the writings of their partners as well) and how they felt about this activity (see appendix).

Conclusion

In the first class meeting, most students who participated in peer writing did not want to take risks in writing and their pens came to a halt many times. However, after three months, they learned to write about themselves with more ease. Not only were many of them glad to increase their fluency, but they realized the importance of increasing accuracy, too. The desire to express themselves to their partner seemed to have prompted them to want to improve their grammar. So far, I have introduced Peer Writing in five writing classes for freshmen, and received a lot of positive feedback from them.

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Appendix: Feedback from the participants

1. About classmates

Student A: "Thanks to this activity, I made a lot of friends, and enjoyed attending the class."

Student B: "I was happy to find friends who share a common interest with me."

Student C: "It was a lovely surprise to know new aspects of my classmates."

Student D: "Not wanting to cause trouble for my partner, I kept writing. It was good to put a reasonable amount of responsibility on my shoulders."

2. About the pleasure of using English

Student E: "I was glad that I was able to communicate with such simple words."

Student F: "I gradually became able to write the same amount with much less time."

3. About finding weaknesses

Student G: "Having realized that my English has lots of room for improvement, I started reviewing basic vocabulary."

Student H: "I realized again the importance of grammar. It was an eye-opener."

4. About peer writing

Student I: "I wish other classes had this activity as well."

Student J: "I would like to continue keeping a diary in English."

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In expectation of the 2013 curriculum: High school teachers' and students' practices of the 2003 MEXT English curriculum

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This paper is based on a survey that was carried out prior to the Japan high school curriculum revision, which will take effect in 2013. The target feature of the revision is “teaching English in English”. Although 20 years have passed since the introduction of Oral Communication into the curriculum, students and teachers still feel uncomfortable with communicative English. This paper investigates teachers' and students' progress with English lessons as they are now, and it touches on teachers' and students' concerns with the new curriculum.

1989年のオーラルコミュニケーションの導入から20年、コミュニケーションな英語の授業が定着しているとはいえない現状で、「英語の授業は英語で行うものとする」を謳う2013年施行の新学習指導要領が発表された。現行のカリキュラムのもとで、生徒と教員は授業に何を思い、何に期待し、あるいは失望し、どんな授業を行っているのか、また、「英語の授業は英語で」をどう捉えているのか、埼玉県内4校の615人の生徒と24人の先生にアンケートを実施した結果を報告する。

In March 2008, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) released new high school teaching guidelines, which will take effect in 2013. The ongoing curriculum focuses on “oral communication” and was designed to “nurture an attitude of communicating actively in foreign languages” (MEXT, 2003). The overall objectives of the upcoming curriculum are “to deepen students' understanding of culture through language learning” and “to improve their communication skills” (MEXT, 2010). What especially draws attention is a statement that all English classes are expected to be taught in English. This is partly because Japanese English teachers are well aware that even after the implementation of “Oral Communication” in 1989, the emphasis on grammar and translation has not been changed. They also know that their future students will have been exposed to more spoken English and will be accustomed to oral communication activities because English lessons are going to be a mandatory subject in elementary schools from the year 2011 (Benesse, 2010).

Under such circumstances, a survey was conducted by the Saitama Board of Education curriculum committee in which the writer was involved as a member, with a view to accommodating high school teachers from the 2003 curriculum to that of 2013. The main focus of this survey is to research how the current curriculum is taking effect and how the new one can be implemented; to be specific, to explore students' and teachers' thoughts about English, tasks, topics, motivation, and goals. This will reveal what challenges the MEXT mandate presents to students and teachers.

Method

1. Data collection procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to both students and their English teachers at four schools in different regions in Saitama Prefecture through the members of the curriculum committee, or sent by mail. The questionnaires for students were handed to them during one of their regular English lessons by their English teachers. It took students approximately 20 minutes, but the time spent on the survey varied from school to school.

There were seven sections in the students' survey: 1. Awareness toward learning English, 2. Attitudes toward learning English, 3. Motivation toward learning English, 4. Understanding of English, 5. Methods and activities, and 6. Topics. The question items were discussed among the curriculum committee members based upon their daily teaching experiences, with a view to investigating students' beliefs about English. The answers were 4-point Likert scale answers — rated from 4 as “strongly agree”, 3 as “agree”, 2 as “disagree” and 1 as “strongly disagree”. In sections 5 and 6, students were allowed to choose as many activities and topics as they wanted from the listed items.

As for the survey for the teachers, the questionnaire items were divided into five sections; 1. What they value in everyday classes, 2. What they are actually teaching, 3. Activities/Tasks, 4. Topics, and 5. Language use. The question items were selected to look at the differences and similarities between students' and teachers' understanding of the classroom practice, and also to investigate the gap between teachers' ideals and the reality in their English classes. The questions in sections 1 to 4 were measured on a

Likert scale: i.e., “very important” to “unimportant”, 4 being “very important” and 1 being “unimportant”. Also, teachers stated whether items 1. to 4. actually existed in their classrooms, answering from 4 “often” to 1 “not at all”. The former shows the teachers' ideals and the latter reveals their reality.

The data were collected and sorted out in Excel spread sheets for analysis (See Appendix 1 and 2).

2. Participants

Participants were 1st and 2nd year students and their teachers. They were from four prefectural high schools in different regions in Saitama. The number of the students was 615, both males and females. The students of these high schools are not prone to enter competitive universities, but rather to go on to vocational schools and/or to start working after graduation. Accordingly, the necessity for them to study or use English is weak. Most of them have never taken English proficiency tests outside the school.

The number of teachers who participated in the survey was twenty-four all together. Their ages spread from their 20s to 50s; some were novices and others were experienced. Presumably, their teaching experience and beliefs vary.

3. Findings

3.1. Students' survey

3.1.1. Awareness toward learning English

72.5% of the students, i.e. those who chose either 3 or 4, thought “English is useful in business, hobbies, traveling, and daily life in the future if I can use English” (Question No.1). 77.2% of the students said that they would like to travel abroad without worrying about the language (No. 9), 69.5% said they would like to be able to understand English songs (No. 10), 63.1% said that they want to be able to speak in English (No. 5). 62.2% admitted the necessity of mastering survival English when living abroad (No.14). On the other hand, the negative responses “disagree” or “strongly disagree” were given to No. 13; that they will “use English at work” (76.8% don't expect to do this), No.11 “read English sites on the Internet” (71.2% don't want to do this), No.7 “exchange e-mail messages in English” (70.7% negative), and No.12 “make friends in other countries” (61.9% negative).

The data show that about 70% of the students admit the importance of English and wish that they could use it under certain circumstances, for example if they should live abroad. However, they are not necessarily interested in English itself, or in the culture, history, or society of foreign countries. 60% or more deny an interest in reading and writing in English or in communicating in English with people in other countries. They understand English as a knowledge-based subject, not as a tool for communication; they do not feel the need to improve communicative abilities in English. Furthermore, as they do not expect to use English at all once they graduate from high school, they see no reason to learn reading and writing seriously.

3.1.2. Attitudes toward learning English

75.4% of the students answered that they take English lessons seriously; 45.5 % work hard on homework, lesson preparation and post-lesson review. The reasons for this are 1) that they do not want to get poor marks (72.5%), 2) that they want to improve their English (55.1 %), and 3) that they are expected to do these things (57.9%). On the contrary, 78.8% denied a liking for English and 61% do not study English for admission to higher education.

The results indicate that students study English as a mandatory subject out of fear that they might fail. When asked whether or not they like English, about 80% say “No”, which contradicts their wish to become good at English. In other words, they think they have to study English and they want to be efficient in English. They try somewhat, but they don't feel successful and do not like English much. This leads us to the issue of motivation.

3.1.3. Motivation toward learning English

This section explores the students' willingness to study English. “No” outnumbered “yes” to questions such as “I would like to use English by taking the opportunity” (No.22), “I will do my best in answering difficult English questions by myself” (No.38), and “I think I feel like studying English more if I can pronounce English well” (No.44). However, 69.1% denied that they are *not* interested in society or other countries (No.30), and 64% somewhat feel they have to study English. This indicates that students feel the need of English not simply as a school subject but as a window to see the world, yet in reality, they dare not take a chance.

As for their learning style, it seems that they are not independent learners. 72.7% preferred to make presentations as a team (No.35), 66.9% were motivated if the learning atmosphere is relaxed and friendly

(No. 24), and 59.2% (No.40) said that they attend classes with no particular enthusiasm like everyone else. It is understandable that the test results and peer pressure affect their motivation (No. 32, 25) i.e., “I feel good when the test results are good” (72.2%), and “I feel I have to study when I see my peers are studying” (64.0%). Also, as the answers to No. 31 and 26 suggest, teachers should be careful in choosing the materials and the way of presenting them so as not to demotivate students, i.e., 70% says they are discouraged when they do not understand the written texts (No.31), and 63.1% says they do not know how to study (No. 26).

3.1.4. Understanding of English

The survey in this section suggests what factors students think might increase their understanding of their lessons and of the content of an English text. 84.9 % think vocabulary is a necessity (No.51), followed by the knowledge of grammar (82.6%). The content/topic of a text also seems to stimulate their understanding because 75.5% said they feel it is easier to understand English if the content is interesting (No. 53). In short, students think that if they have enough vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and interest in content, they will learn better. Incidentally, teachers too place emphasis on teaching vocabulary and grammar. The results also suggest that the content of a text is important in drawing the students' attention.

3.1.5. Methods and activities

In section 5, the students were supposed to choose activities they experienced, and to state their preferences and expectations concerning these activities. The activities prevalent in classes are chorus reading (90.4%), word quizzes (82.9%), shadowing (reading after the model) (68.6%), listening to English songs and completing the lyrics (65.5%), English conversation with peers (61.8%), making speeches (54.0%), and singing songs (51.2%). Obviously, students prefer fun lessons. About two-thirds (66.2%) appreciated audio-visually assisted lessons (No.57), followed by lessons team-taught by the JTE and ALT (62.2%) (No.55), and pair and group work (60.0%) (No.54). Although students are interested in learning English through audio-visual aids, the equipment at public high schools is poor and does not meet their expectations. ALTs too were expected and are being expected to promote English education, but their number is decreasing year by year because of budget cuts. The only way out for teachers is to include more interactive activities in lessons.

Interestingly enough, 51.7% of the students thought it natural that they be taught English in English (No. 58) because they are learning English. However, 79.2% expressed concerns about their understanding of the English lessons (No. 61), and 76.1% said they are *not* looking forward to such lessons. 51.4% said that they hate the idea of being taught English in English because they believed they would never understand such lessons (No. 63). Although the majority of the students accept the idea that teaching and learning in English is necessary, they dare not take such lessons.

3.1.6. Topics

The last item on the questionnaire for the students concerned ‘topics.’ The participants were allowed to choose as many topics as they liked from the list. The most popular topic was “sports, athletes, movies, celebrities, and music” (354/615). The second popular topic was “lifestyle” including part-time jobs, cell-phones, email, games, fashion, and food (332/615), and the third popular one was “something interesting” (snippets of knowledge and tidbits in English) (302/615). This proves that students tend to choose whatever they come across in their daily lives. It is crucial, yet sometimes tough, for teachers to update on high school students' lives, and use new information to motivate students to learn English.

3.2. Teachers' survey

3.2.1. What teachers value in everyday classes

The statements marked high, i.e. 3.0 or more on average, both in teachers' ideals and in their reality, were those related to “discipline”, for example statements No. 1 “Make students be seated when the bell rings” (ideal=3.8, reality=3.5), No.5 “Regulate cell phone use” (ideal=3.7, reality=3.4), and No. 3 “Clear the unnecessary items from students' desks” (ideal=3.7, reality=3.2). These instructions show the teachers' efforts to carry out the lessons smoothly. At the same time teachers do not forget to “Create the atmosphere in which students can participate in lessons” (ideal=3.8, reality=3.5), and “Teach students so that they become interested in English speaking and other countries” (ideal=3.6, reality=3.1).

On the other hand, the discrepancy between ideal and reality is apparent in No. 18 “to develop students' communication skills and deepen their international understanding through team-taught lessons with ALTs” (ideal=3.4, reality=3.1) and No. 15 “to engage students in communication in English” (ideal=3.4, reality=2.9). Although teachers consider it important to teach ‘communication’, they are not actually doing so. Other statements which show gaps are No. 19 “to improve students' English skills by making them use the language in various settings according to the level of students” (ideal=3.5, reality=3.2), and No. 20 “to use audio-visual aids, language laboratory, and computers” (ideal=3.1, reality=3.1). The reasons behind

these gaps lie in the obstacles teachers face, such as time constraints for preparation and students' motivational problems. Although teachers consider it ideal to include pair and group work (ideal=3.7 reality=3.6), and 60% of the students feel it is efficient to learn the language in pairs or groups, teachers cannot afford to offer these activities in class. Teachers are caught in a quandary as to whether they should be disciplinary or lenient and ready to accept disorders sometimes in order to motivate students.

3.2.2. What teachers are actually teaching

Which aspects do teachers actually put emphasis on when teaching? The most accepted practices are No. 21. “to teach students vocabulary items” (ideal=3.7, reality=3.6) and No. 22. “to teach pronunciation of new words and phrases” (ideal=3.7, reality=3.6), which matches the students' emphasis on vocabulary (3.1.4). On the other hand, No. 40 “to make students listen to English and understand the speaker's intention and key points and summarize in written and spoken Japanese (ideal=3.1, reality=1.9), No. 41. “to make students exchange ideas in English on what they hear or about what they think” (ideal=3.0, reality=1.5), and No. 43. “to make students discuss in English what they read and what they think (ideal=3.0, reality=1.5) are thought to be important yet not done much.

This shows that teachers value the knowledge of words and phrases, which influences the knowledge students will have, while tasks that require higher language skills and communicative activities, such as summarization and discussion, are not welcomed either by teachers or students. In short, teachers' and students' goals are set not on learning English for communicative purposes but on acquiring short-term realistic, measurable knowledge.

3.2.3. Activities/Tasks

In this section, activities, tasks, and instructions were listed and the teachers graded them from “unimportant” to “important” and from “not at all doing this” to “actually doing this” on a scale of 1 to 4. The most popular activity is “reading aloud”, including chorus reading, pair reading and “look-up-and-say”, which is rated 3.7 as an ideal activity and 3.7 as an actually practiced activity. Conversely, skill-required activities are regarded as ideal yet unpracticed; for example, “listening for a gist” (ideal=3.4, reality=2.1), “role playing” (ideal=3.1, reality=2.0), and “dialogue practice” (ideal=3.3, reality=2.3). Furthermore, “skit presentation” (ideal=2.8, reality=1.6), “retelling the written text” (ideal=2.8, reality=1.6), “making speeches” (ideal=2.9, reality=1.8), “discussion” (ideal=2.8, reality=1.6), “debating” (ideal=2.7, reality=1.5), “guided composition” (ideal=2.8, reality=1.9), “free composition” (ideal=2.9, reality=1.7) are not taught much. Ironically, small talk, skit presentation, retelling, making speeches, discussion, debating and writing for communication are the very activities that the new curriculum puts emphasis on.

3.2.4. Topics

In this section teachers read the list of topics and grade them from 4 “effective/interesting”, to 1 “ineffective/not interesting”, and from 4 “actually cover this” to 1 “do not cover this at all” in their actual classes. The topics teachers consider effective and also actually cover are No. 103 “environmental issues” (interest=3.5, reality=3.2) and No. 104 “cultures, history, and heritage” (interest=3.4, reality=3.2). Also, teachers think No. 96 “lifestyles including part-time jobs, cell phones, computer games, fashion and food, and No. 98 “sports, athletes, movies, celebrities, and music” are effective/interesting topics to deal with, which coincides with the students' topic choices. In order to attract students' attention, daily topics can certainly become great incentives.

3.2.5. Language use

One of the noteworthy objectives of the upcoming curriculum is, as mentioned earlier, “teaching English in English”. Eight out of 24 participating teachers answered that they use English “less than 10%” of the class period, another eight answered “10% to 30%”, six chose “30% to 50%”, two said “50% to 70%”, and nobody chose “70% or more”. Asked when they use English in a lesson, twenty teachers answered when they give students model reading. On the other hand, asked about the amount of English students use in class, thirteen teachers answered “10 to 30%”, eight said “less than 10%”, and two “30 to 50%”. To sum up, two thirds of the teachers use English, and those who use it limit it to model reading.

What hinders the teachers' use of English in class? Seventeen participants pointed out students' lack of listening abilities, fifteen mentioned students' lack of speaking abilities, and sixteen pointed out students' lack of motivation. Almost half the participants pointed out a lack of teacher training opportunity (11/24).

It seems teachers are discouraged to use English because of their students' lack of language proficiency, and their own lack of training to help them accommodate themselves to an English-speaking environment. Given that training sessions are offered, however, it is doubtful that teachers can afford to spare time for their own learning opportunities. There are a number of other challenges the teachers have to face that take

priority over the “English in English” problem.

Discussion

The participants of this study consider English important and try to teach/learn English as a means of communication. At the same time, they know they have limitations, which have to do with the Japanese educational context. MEXT requires schools to include communicative language teaching and learning, but teachers cannot disregard the classroom conditions they are bound to be in. The problems of discipline, the knowledge-based evaluation, and the lecture-oriented lessons may be solved by making class size smaller and increasing the number of teachers. There is a need to find ways to fill the discrepancy between MEXT policy and the actual educational setting.

There are some limitations of this survey. First, the researchers should have given examinees more free time and space to state their opinions. Also, the time spent on the survey varied according to schools, which may have caused differences in results. In addition, because the questionnaires were given in the term-end English class in most of the schools, some students may have hesitated to express their opinions freely for fear that the answers should affect their grades. As for the teachers’ survey, the number of participants was 24, which is a small number to represent the teacher population. In future studies, teachers’ perceptions about their beliefs should be investigated using interviews.

Conclusion

We have found that many of the high school students in the survey are not interested in English language (and foreign culture) although they admit its importance. They learn English as one of the school subjects and simply want to get passing grades. However, they do find some enjoyable aspects in learning. Their favorite lessons are the ones with audio-visual aids, ALTs, and group/pair work. As opposed to the curriculum objective of learning English as a communication tool, they put an emphasis on memorization. Studying English means memorizing words, phrases, and grammar. Therefore, “English taught in English” lessons are beyond their reach, and something they dare not strive to experience.

Teachers, too, tend to place an emphasis on memory-driven classes. Besides, they have to tackle disciplinary problems before and during each lesson, which can be very disturbing and tiring. They believe “English in English” lessons are feasible only if their students are motivated and equipped with basic language skills.

Communication-centered classes while paying attention to accuracy and culture behind the language are an ideal picture. It seems that there are a lot of challenges ahead in implementing the new curriculum. We need to find concrete ways to help both students and teachers to overcome their concerns. In order to carry out the curriculum effectively, teachers can start with small steps, for example, including pair or group activity one at a time. Also, raising students’ motivation is the key to success in language teaching. Actually, it is every teacher’s dream. Hopefully, teachers can motivate students as individuals and the class as a group by giving them a sense of achievement and broadening their views as world citizens.

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Appendix 1: Student survey

1. Awareness toward learning English

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I think English is useful in business, hobbies, traveling and daily life in the future if I can use English.	6.8%	20.7%	42.7%	29.8%
2	I think learning an unknown language itself is interesting.	17.4%	38.9%	35.0%	8.6%
3	I am interested in foreign (not just English speaking) people, culture, history, and society.	16.4%	38.9%	35.0%	8.6%
4	It is fun if I learn new knowledge other than English in English classes.	14.4%	38.7%	35.9%	10.9%
5	I would like to be able to talk with people from other countries.	13.0%	23.9%	35.7%	27.4%
6	I would like to be able to read English books, magazines, and newspapers.	15.3%	37.2%	29.4%	18.1%
7	I would like to be able to exchange emails in English.	28.6%	42.1%	19.2%	10.1%
8	I would like to be able to watch TV programs and movies without subtitles.	19.3%	27.1%	32.8%	20.8%
9	I would like to make myself understood when I travel abroad.	7.6%	15.1%	43.4%	33.8%
10	I would like to listen to English songs and understand their meaning.	8.8%	21.6%	36.3%	33.2%
11	I would like to enjoy the English Internet sites.	24.4%	46.8%	20.0%	8.8%
12	I would like to make a lot of overseas friends.	23.3%	38.6%	25.9%	12.2%
13	I would like to be able to use English at work.	37.5%	39.3%	16.8%	6.4%
14	I would like to have English skills to survive when living overseas.	12.5%	25.2%	38.9%	23.3%

2. Attitudes toward learning English

15	I am doing earnestly during English lessons.	4.1%	20.6%	59.7%	15.7%
16	I am working earnestly on my homework, preparation and review of lessons.	10.9%	43.6%	36.2%	9.3%
17	I study English because I like English, including reading and listening to English.	23.4%	55.4%	16.4%	4.8%
18	I study English because I would like to be good at English.	13.7%	31.3%	43.4%	11.7%
19	I study English because I would like to enter a good school.	21.5%	39.5%	30.0%	9.0%
20	I study English because English is a mandatory subject.	11.5%	30.6%	45.4%	12.5%
21	I study English because I want to get good grades.	6.7%	20.8%	52.4%	20.1%

Write other reasons if any.

3. Motivation toward learning English

22	I try to use English as much as possible if I have a chance.	16.1%	49.3%	28.5%	6.2%
23	I would like to have goals if I study English.	12.2%	38.7%	40.2%	8.9%
24	I feel like studying more when I like the atmosphere of the class.	8.8%	24.3%	45.9%	21.0%
25	I feel I have to study more when I see other people are studying.	10.4%	25.6%	45.9%	18.1%
26	I want to study English but I don't know how to study it.	8.3%	28.7%	39.3%	23.8%
27	Honestly speaking I do not want to study English.	14.5%	41.3%	27.3%	16.8%
28	I feel like studying English if I hear English is a must.	13.7%	44.8%	33.2%	8.2%

29	I feel like studying if the topics are directly related to my life.	12.7%	34.5%	41.5%	11.2%
30	I do not think things happening in society or other countries have nothing to do with me.	18.4%	50.7%	23.6%	7.4%
31	I lose my motivation when written or spoken English is beyond my understanding.	7.4%	22.7%	38.8%	31.2%
32	I am motivated when the test results are good.	7.2%	20.6%	41.8%	30.4%
33	I feel I have to study more when my friends' test results are better than mine.	12.9%	31.2%	36.4%	19.6%
34	I can learn better when I study with my friends.	18.8%	36.4%	29.2%	15.7%
35	I feel better when I make a presentation in English.	8.5%	18.8%	42.6%	30.1%
36	I feel happy when I beat my friends in the tests.	13.9%	28.2%	29.7%	28.2%
37	I would like to do better in English tasks or presentations.	14.5%	38.5%	33.3%	13.7%
38	I am trying hard to answer difficult English questions by myself.	14.9%	47.3%	30.9%	6.9%
39	I think I am able to solve somewhat difficult problems if I try hard.	12.9%	39.9%	36.8%	10.4%
40	I think I am doing well enough with others in class.	9.4%	31.4%	47.6%	11.6%
41	I do not speak up in class because I do not want to make mistakes in front of others.	15.4%	31.7%	38.7%	14.2%
42	I am not good at speaking in English with someone I do not know well.	13.9%	25.3%	34.5%	26.3%
43	I think speaking English in front of others in class is stimulative although I become a little nervous.	20.3%	37.3%	28.4%	14.1%
44	If only my English pronunciation is good, I would like to speak up more.	17.1%	39.2%	30.0%	13.7%
45	It is embarrassing to speak up in class either in Japanese or in English.	18.1%	34.9%	32.5%	14.5%

4. Understanding of English

46	I understand lessons.	9.1%	36.4%	47.3%	7.2%
47	I understand lessons but do not do well in tests.	9.2%	44.3%	36.9%	9.7%
48	I understand the content of the textbook.	8.0%	29.3%	53.4%	9.3%
49	I think it hard to read and understand the text.	6.4%	33.2%	43.8%	16.7%
50	I think it hard to listen to the teacher's English and understand.	8.0%	38.4%	37.9%	15.7%
51	I think it important to know the meaning of words in order to understand the lessons.	3.6%	11.5%	45.0%	39.9%
52	I think it important to know grammar in order to understand the lessons.	3.9%	13.4%	47.1%	35.5%
53	I feel I understand better if I am interested in the content of the textbook.	6.4%	18.1%	43.7%	31.8%

5. Methods and activities

● What methods or activities do you think are efficient?

54	Pair work, group activities	12.3%	27.7%	48.1%	11.9%
55	Team-taught lessons (JTE and ALT)	10.2%	27.6%	46.9%	15.3%
56	Situational activities	11.9%	30.1%	45.2%	12.7%
57	Media assisted lesson/activities (using CD, DVD, LL and/or computer)	8.4%	25.3%	47.0%	19.2%

● What do you think about "learning English in English"?

58	I think it natural since these are English lessons.	12.0%	36.3%	38.8%	12.9%
59	I am looking forward to learning English in English.	30.0%	46.0%	18.6%	5.3%
60	I feel concerned but excited at the same time.	26.0%	38.0%	28.9%	7.1%
61	I feel concerned about whether I can understand or not.	6.6%	14.2%	48.7%	30.5%
62	I feel concerned because that can hinder the preparation for the entrance exams.	14.7%	38.7%	29.3%	17.2%
63	I hate the idea because I know I do not understand at all.	14.5%	34.0%	27.1%	24.3%

● What do you think about "learning English in English"?

1	Reading out loud	556
2	Speech presentation	332
3	Skit presentation	93
4	Shadowing	422
5	Listening to songs and filling the blanks	408
6	Singing songs	315
7	Games (like BINGO)	403
8	Vocabulary quiz	510
9	Learning phonetic symbols	224
10	Practicing conversation	380
11	Recitation	242
12	Composition	282
13	Role playing	170
14	Debating	28

● What activities do you think is/was good, fun, efficient and that you want to do more?

1	Reading out loud	218
2	Speech presentation	70
3	Skit presentation	14
4	Shadowing	120
5	Listening to songs and filling the blanks	209
6	Singing songs	197
7	Games (like BINGO)	222
8	Vocabulary quiz	170
9	Learning phonetic symbols	45
10	Practicing conversation	116
11	Recitation	75
12	Composition	78
13	Role playing	53
14	Debating	18

6. Topics

What are the topics that you think you can involve yourself with when you study English?

1	Lifestyle (i.e., part time jobs, cell phones, email, games, fashion, food, something popular)	332
2	Boy/girlfriends	151
3	Sports, athletes, celebrities	354
4	Life, future, occupation	170
5	Something interesting	302
6	Science and technology	89
7	Politics, economics, social matters	68
8	Environmental problems	95
9	Other cultures, history, heritage	127
10	Animal, human, peace	155
11	International cooperation (i.e., JOCV, MFS, developing countries)	54
12	Current topics (i.e., H1N1)	94

Appendix 2: Teacher survey

Number of participants=24

Ideal: very important=4, important=3, not so important=2, unimportant=1

Reality: doing often=4, doing=3, rarely doing=2, not doing at all=1

1. What teachers value in everyday classes

	Ideal	Reality	
1	Make students settle and be seated when the bell rings	3.8	3.5
2	Make students wear school uniform properly and greet	3.5	3.2
3	Make students clear their desk	3.7	3.2
4	Make students have their textbooks, notebooks, and dictionaries ready	3.5	3.0
5	Warn students to refrain from cell phone use and walk around the classroom	3.7	3.4

● Teaching Goals

6	Teach English as knowledge rather than communication tool	3.0	2.7
7	Teach English as means to pass entrance exams	3.0	2.6
8	Teach English so that students can use when traveling or staying overseas	2.6	2.2
9	Teach English so that students can listen and respond to everyday topics	3.2	2.6
10	Teach English so that students can make some simple speeches, presentations, and discussion	2.7	2.3

● Teaching Style

16	Try to get students involve in pair work and group work	3.7	3.6
17	Use tasks that are friendly to students	3.7	3.6
18	Try to advance students' communicative skills and to deepen international understanding by including team-teaching with ALT	3.4	3.1
19	Try to stabilize students' knowledge by making them experience various situations in which the language is used	3.5	3.2
20	Use audio-visual materials, computers, information technology and/or language laboratory	3.1	3.1

2. What teachers are actually teaching

21	Guide students to understand the meaning of new words and phrases	3.7	3.6
22	Guide students for the correct pronunciation	3.7	3.6
23	Guide students to spell correctly	3.4	3.1
24	Make students practice pronunciation paying attention to rhythm and intonation	3.5	3.2
25	Explain in Japanese about the content of the reading material	3.1	3.1
26	Explain in English about the content of the reading material	3.0	2.2
27	Translate English sentences into Japanese	3.0	3.0
28	Explain words, phrases, sentence patterns and grammar	3.3	3.1
29	Make students practice reading until they become natural	3.4	3.2
30	Dictate words, phrases and sentences that students have learned	3.2	2.3
31	Make students read aloud suggesting paying attention to intonation and chunks	3.3	2.6
32	Make students read texts suggesting paying attention to key words, phrases, paragraph structures and developments of the story	3.5	3.0
33	Make students read texts suggesting guessing unknown words and utilizing their grammar knowledge and background information	3.4	2.5
34	Take up students' familiar topics in home life and school life so as to generate their interests	3.5	3.0
35	Take up topics and/or do activities related to the texts	3.4	2.7
36	Give instructions in English	3.1	2.6
37	Speak English in classroom interaction such as praising students	3.0	2.4
38	Make students do basic sentence patterns and grammar practices with the intension of developing them into communication activities	3.5	2.5
39	Make students create skits or do role playing based on the texts	2.7	1.7
40	Make students listen to English, grasp the speaker's idea and key points and write/speak in Japanese	3.1	1.9
41	Make students exchange opinions in English about what they have hear or about their opinions	3.0	1.5
42	Make students read English, grasp the writer's idea and key points and write/speak in Japanese	3.2	2.0
43	Make students exchange opinions in English about what they have read or about their opinions	3.0	1.5

3. Activities/Tasks

44	Teaching phonetic symbols	3.0	2.1
45	Teaching phonemes	2.9	2.0
46	Teaching linking, assimilation, slipping, weakening of the sounds	3.1	2.5
47	Teaching vocabulary	3.5	3.5
48	Teaching stressed syllables, words, and phrases	3.3	3.1
49	Teaching rhythms	3.1	2.5
51	Teaching intonations	3.5	2.9
52	Teaching places to pause	3.5	3.3
53	Teaching alphabet	3.5	2.5
54	Teaching phonics	3.0	2.3
55	Teaching the difference between phonemes and sounds	3.0	2.4
56	Dictation	3.1	2.3
57	Listening for the outline of the text	3.4	2.1
58	Oral introduction	3.0	2.1
59	Small Talk	3.0	1.9
60	Listening to the text	3.4	3.3
61	Working on the end of chapter listening quiz	3.5	3.2
62	Practice listening for certifying examinations	3.0	1.8
63	Listening to songs	2.7	1.9
64	Reading aloud	3.7	3.7
65	Shadowing	3.3	2.1
66	Practice dialogues	3.3	2.3
67	Role playing	3.1	2.0
68	Skit presentation	2.8	1.6

69	Retelling	2.8	1.6
70	Recitation	3.1	2.0
71	Making speeches	2.9	1.8
72	Doing discussions	2.8	1.6
73	Doing debates	2.7	1.5
74	Slash reading	3.3	2.9
75	Phrase reading	3.3	3.0
76	Paragraph reading	3.0	2.0
77	Pre-reading	2.8	2.0
78	In-reading	2.8	2.3
79	Post-reading	3.1	2.4
80	Reading aloud	3.7	3.4
81	Rapid reading	3.0	1.8
82	Practice spelling	3.4	3.0
83	Copy the text	3.2	3.1
84	Write substitution drills	3.0	2.2
85	Translate English sentences into Japanese	3.0	2.8
86	Translate Japanese sentences into English	3.1	2.1
87	Summarizing	3.0	1.9
88	Guided composition	2.8	1.9
89	Free composition	2.9	1.7
90	Pronunciation practice	3.4	3.3
91	Vocabulary practice	3.5	3.1
92	Flash cards use	2.8	1.8
93	Vocabulary test	3.3	2.9
94	Grammar explanation	3.5	3.3
95	Substitution drills	3.3	2.4
96	Working on grammar questions	3.4	3.0

4. Topics

97	Lifestyle(i.e., part time jobs, cell phones, email, games, fashion, food, something popular)	3.5	2.8
98	Boy/girlfriends	3.1	2.3
99	Sports, athletes, celebrities	3.5	2.9
100	Life, future, occupation	3.4	2.9
101	Something interesting	3.3	2.8
102	Science and technology	3.2	2.5
103	Politics, economics, social matters	3.3	2.5
104	Environmental problems	3.5	3.2
105	Other culture, history, heritage	3.4	3.2
106	Animal, human, peace	3.5	2.8
107	International cooperation (e.g., JOCV, MFS, developing countries)	3.4	2.8
108	Current topics (e.g., H1N1)	3.4	2.7

5. Language Use

● Teacher's language use in class

			No. of mentions
109	1	less than 10 %	8
	2	10-30 %	8
	3	30-50 %	6
	4	50-70 %	2
	5	70-90 %	0
	6	more than 90%	0

● Student's English use in class

110	1	less than 10 %	8
	2	10-30 %	13
	3	30-50 %	2
	4	50-70 %	0
	5	70-90 %	0
	6	more than 90%	0

● Hindrances to English use in class

111	1	less than 10 %	17
	2	10-30 %	15
	3	30-50 %	16
	4	50-70 %	8
	5	70-90 %	11
	6	more than 90%	1

Asako Kato is a full-time English teacher in Saitama. She has been teaching English in 5 Saitama prefectural high schools for more than 20 years. She has been a member of the Saitama Board of Education Curriculum Reform Committee, and has been working on research for the new curriculum launch. She is also working on a high school textbook, which is to be issued at the time of the curriculum implementation in 2013. Her research interest includes learning strategies and global issues in language education.