

English Practicum I: Using English to Learn English*

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A. Setting Up the English Practicum Course

1. English curriculum reform plan 1991-93

In 1991 the English Language Department of Doshisha University launched a comprehensive review of the language curriculum. That move was encouraged by the guidelines on restructuring university education proposed by the Ministry of Education. After reviewing the recommendations by the department's Curriculum Reform Committee, the English Language Department adopted a plan in July 1991 to add more diversity to its curriculum. The priority given to the curriculum reform was to promote instruction on (1) cultural understanding and (2) overall language proficiency [*Eigo Curriculum Kihon Koosoo* (Basic Design of English Curriculum), July 8, 1991].

Part of the new curriculum was implemented in April 1992 by introducing a partial elective system for the first-year students. In April 1993, specific recommendations in the reform plan were further realized in the curriculum. At the same time, the Institute for Language and Culture was organized to strengthen Doshisha's overall language education and cultural studies, and the English Language Department was absorbed into the

new institute as the second division. This administrative restructuring was a positive factor in the curriculum reform which was already under way at the time.

2. Introduction of English Practicum into the curriculum

Concrete ideas on new intensive language courses are expressed in the interim report of the English Curriculum Committee July 13, 1992. The report included basic outlines for (a) a set of intensive language courses designed for the first- and second-year students and (b) a series of language-and-culture courses targeting the third- and fourth-year students. Based on the recommendations in the report, the Curriculum Committee elaborated these blueprints, and the new intensive language courses, which were to be called English Practicum (EP for short) I and II, finally took shape in October, 1992. Then the faculty meeting of English Language Department endorsed the following: (1) the new intensive language courses designed to help students prepare for studying abroad¹ should be bi-weekly semester courses with strong emphasis on skills-oriented teaching plans; (2) they are elective courses to be taken in addition to the required English language courses; (3) EP II should be conducted at more advanced levels than EP I; (4) both first- and second-year students may apply if their English proficiency meets a certain minimum level set by the department. For 1993-94, the proficiency requirement for EP I was any of the following: a recent TOEFL or TOEIC score of 450 or more, or sub-first or first grade of the STEP. For EP II, the proficiency requirement was a TOEFL score of 500.²

The maximum number of students per class is 30, of which any number could be first- or second-year students. For 1993 three sections of EP I

were planned along with one EP II class. EP I is taught by native Japanese-speaking instructors, and EP II, by native English-speaking teachers. All EP classes are conducted exclusively in English.

B. Bringing the Plan to Fruition

1. Application and registration

All the EP courses are semester courses starting in September. However, students who wished to take EP courses in 1993 had to register for one of the sections during the registration period in April. They had to have met one of the screening criteria by the beginning of September and had an interview in English with their prospective instructor, who noted the students' motivation and proficiency level.

2. Selection procedure in 1993

The 1993 selection procedure began on March 30, when a session for second-year students was held to clarify the goals and class activities of the EP courses, and those who had already met one of the proficiency criteria were interviewed. On April 6, again a similar session and interviews were conducted for first-year students.

At this stage forty students were accepted in the three sections of EP I and sixteen students in EP II. Having considered the number of students who registered for both (134 for EP I out of the 171 applicants), a fourth section of EP I was added.

The second stage of the selection procedure in 1993 was the administration of a comprehensive English language test on June 26. Although the students were encouraged to take one of the other standard English tests to qualify for EP courses, it was foreseen that some test scores would not

arrive in time. For that reason the CELT (Comprehensive English Language Test) was administered in June as an alternative means of accrediting proficiency. The CELT was developed by a group of English language specialists who had worked on the TOEFL. The score, therefore, is roughly comparable to the TOEFL score. Of the 58 who took the CELT, 48 met the proficiency standards for EP: 42 students for EP I and 6 for EP II.

By September 10 each instructor interviewed remaining students and decided the final enrollment of each class. Regarding EP I, 107 out of 134 who registered in April fulfilled the requirements and were allowed to take the course; 31 chose EP I-1, 32, EP I-2, 18, EP I-3, and 26, EP I-4. Although, in the initial plan, the maximum number of students per class was to be 30, the instructors for EP I-1 and I-2 agreed to accept one or two extra student(s) in their respective sections (see Table 1).

Table 1 Admission Percentage for EP I and II courses in 1993-94

	Application No.	Final Enrollment No.	Admission Percentage
I	134	107	79.85%
II	37	26	70.27%
I + II	171	133	77.78%

Practicum I

Application No.: PEI-1 (50); I-2(61); I-3(23); I-4(0)

Final Enrollment No.: PEI-1 (31); I-2(32); I-3(18); I-4(26)

The selection procedure described above was complicated and laborious, and needs to be made more efficient. Nevertheless, the selection in 1993 was successful. Highly motivated students with a sound base of English skills were selected for both EP I and EP II courses in 1993-1994.

The rest of the present discussion will focus mainly on EP I.

C. Working with the Students

In the second semester of 1993, as mentioned earlier, four native Japanese-speaking instructors taught the four sections of English Practicum I. Based on the shared general goal of improving the students' language proficiency, the four instructors designed the teaching procedure of their respective sections independently from each other. The result is an interesting array of attempts at incorporating the individual instructors' fields of expertise with the teaching materials and methods adopted in the course design. What follows explains how the four sections were actually taught and how the students responded.

English Practicum I-1 (Higomoto)

The primary goal of this class is to help students improve their English proficiency well enough to obtain well-balanced skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. With the recent wave of restructuring of the language education curriculum, students now have a variety of language courses, such as reading, listening, conversation, writing, etc., to choose from. This is indeed a welcome trend, but it is true that there is a danger behind this new move in that a specific skill tends to be focused upon and as a result, the integration of the skills tends to be neglected. EP I-1 was designed to cope with this problem. Also, it is essential for students wishing to study abroad not only to obtain well-balanced English skills but to form a habit of thinking and discussing in English. This is precisely the reason why this kind of English class needs to be conducted in English.

Table 2 A Short Syllabus of English Practicum I-1, 1993-94

	September	October	November	December
Class A	Rapid Reading: Summarize Information	Reading & Note-taking: Analysis of Data	Quotations & Plagiarism: Effective Writing	Peorting & Presentation
	Technology & Economy	Crime & Punishment/ Energy Crisis	Environment & International Relations	Food Problems & Biotechnology
Class B	Listening & Speaking/ Basic Training	Listening & First Debate: Liberal Arts Ed.	Listening & Second Debate: Rice Problems	Discussion on NAFTA

Since there were two sessions a week, one on Wednesday and the other on Thursday, they were divided into two different types of classes: Class A and Class B (see Table 2). A particular emphasis was placed on rapid reading, summarizing articles and scholarly writing on Wednesday class (Class A). These activities aimed at helping students develop critical thinking and analytic mind. Various assignments were given every week, such as the summarizing of articles, the explaining of charts and graphs, and the writing of an essay on current issues. A few students had a hard time keeping up with the series of assignments, but most of them demonstrated serious effort and creativity. They learned basic study skills to cope with studying abroad.

Thursday class (Class B), on the other hand, emphasized oral communication skills. The first month was devoted to drilling students in listening and note-taking skills by using cassette tapes for dictation practices. Students were expected to creatively answer a series of questions on

magazine articles and other reading materials in their own English. In so doing, they gradually prepared themselves for the next step, debates.

Two debate sessions were held in this course. After the debate procedure was explained, a current topic that was relevant to all students was chosen: the pros and cons of liberal arts education at university. The topic proved to be controversial enough to make a successful debate. The next month the class proceeded to a more elaborate debate on up-to-date issues of Japan's rice problem, that is, as to whether Japan should open up her rice market or not. Since this was a timely issue, a series of heated debates ensued on both affirmative and negative sides. The students thus learned how to analyze other speakers' reasoning and to respond intelligently to different opinions, and at the same time, they were made aware of the boundaries of their own English-speaking ability.

All in all, the EP I-1 class put special emphasis on learning and thinking in English, not merely learning English itself. In spite of a demanding series of written assignments and oral reports, only 2 out of 31 students dropped out of this course. Most students showed sincere determination to keep up with the class. Hopefully this approach gives a good incentive to highly motivated students to further study subjects of their own interest abroad.

English Practicum I-2 (Nakamura)

1. A three-phase plan

One of the main goals of this class was to improve the English skills which the students had already acquired to the extent that they can utilize them more effectively.

In order to attain this goal, the fifteen weeks of the fall term were di-

vided into three five-week phases. Some specific training was set for each phase. For the first five weeks, the students were asked to learn to write one well-organized paragraph using some conventional writing techniques such as "definition," "space and/or time order," "facts and examples," "reasoning," "analogy," etc. At first, the students had difficulty defining even simple and familiar objects such as chopsticks or fans. A typical definition would be: "chop-sticks are two pieces of sticks used by three fingers." However, as soon as the ideas of *genus* and *differentia* were introduced, they could define them as follows: "Chopsticks are a tool for eating (*genus*) using two pieces of sticks (*diffeoentia*)." With proper examples,³ learning to write a paragraph seemed to have become easier and even enjoyable for the students. Throughout the term, the classroom activities were done by groups consisting of five or six students. Cooperative drills seemed to work much better than individual ones. More details on group work will follow below.

For the second phase of the semester, a very basic technique for writing an "expository" and a "non-expository" paragraph was focused upon. For reading, the students were provided with two news articles from *Newsweek* and two essays by Bob Greene.⁴ Also, two American TV commercials were shown. For either reading or viewing, the students were asked to make an analysis (expository writing) and then to comment (non-expository writing) on the given material.

Almost all the students later made the evaluation and stated that the analysis of one particular TV commercial⁵ was interesting. The task of writing imposed on the students after reading and viewing was by far more strenuous than the previous one, hence, five students out of thirty-two dropped out during this period.

For the final five weeks, the class was asked to view two full-length film works, and to select a topic which might be relevant to the major theme of the works and make an extensive analysis of the topic. Film works chosen for this were Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and Yasujiro Ozu's *Tokyo Story*. Even though the script for *Annie Hall* was provided, the film turned out to be much too difficult for the students to understand its cultural aspects. The students claimed that they enjoyed the work but the essays they submitted clearly showed that they missed the point. On the other hand, *Tokyo Story* was much closer home to the students and some made excellent observations which led them to write insightful essays with such titles as: "Use of fans in *Tokyo Story*" or "Effects of shooting the characters from behind."

2. Classroom activities

To facilitate classroom activities, the students were divided into groups, as mentioned earlier, of five or six students each. Groups were formed in each session for specific activities so that the membership was temporary. Almost every session began with up to 30 minutes of general instructions on the day's activities followed by 50-60 minutes of group work. When the students worked in groups, they felt at ease in exchanging thoughts and ideas among themselves. Through group activities, they got to know each other better than when they worked as a single group with the instructor. Besides, it was usually the case that well-motivated students exerted favorable influence on the others more easily in a small group than in an entire class; as a consequence, understanding of the nature and the purpose of activities was shared almost equally by all the members of the group. A sense of accomplishment thus reached together in a group led to

further motivation.

The teaching of paragraph writing was a typical example in which group activities were effective. At the first stage where the students were learning to write descriptive paragraphs, one student in each group was asked to bring to class a small object of some kind such as a charm or a personal seal for everyone in the group to describe. The students exchanged their descriptions in English. In a matter of a few weeks, students came to feel comfortable in expressing themselves in English, not only within each group but also between groups. Team work encouraged students' oral participation in discussion.

Another good example of group work had to do with TV commercials. The entire class watched a TV commercial, which had no spoken words used in it, and each group cooperated to write a narrative description of the visual image. Writing a narrative description helped students understand the meaning and mechanism of delivering the message involved. One group, for instance, requested to watch the commercial more than ten times and came up with an excellent verbal description. The narrative forms thus created were to be utilized in developing critical or analytical essays on the described material, which was the second stage of writing exercise, the final stage being the writing of commentary and personal views.

3. Student response

Although seven students out of thirty-two dropped out of the class, the remaining twenty-five who completed the assigned tasks said that they had learned (1) how to write paragraphs effectively, and (2) how to differentiate between expository and non-expository writing. Through writing, the

students also felt that they learned to read better. While some students explicitly complained about the “intensiveness” of the class, which they had not experienced in any other classes, a majority of the students felt that the efforts they made were worth while.

English Practicum I-3 (Ochi)

1. Teaching plans, class activities, and student response

To achieve the objectives set for EP I and to enable students to further their goals, three types of material were used: (1) a textbook consisting of essays, (2) excerpts from American TV broadcasts, and (3) excerpts from various printed materials, which provided information necessary to understand the first two types of material.

Of the two class sessions every week, the first (and sometimes part of the second) class session was used for discussing the content of the textbook, and the second class session was devoted to excerpts from U. S. news reports.

Textbook

The textbook is the Kiriara Shoten version of Joan Gregg's *Communication and Culture*, which has been used in advanced ESL (English as a Second Language) courses in U. S. colleges. It treats nine cross-cultural conceptions such as time, space, human intelligence, which underlie and shape human behavior and perception of reality. These themes are relevant to students, encouraging them to think about themselves and alerting them to cultural elements they must be attentive to and careful about when they seek to communicate with people from different cultures.

In class, students were asked questions to make sure that they under-

stood the main idea or ideas of the paragraphs and the chapter concerned. The number of pages read for one class session depended on the content. However, in general, one chapter (6 - 10 pages) was read and completed in each class session.

Some students felt at first that the text was too abstract and difficult. It required of them a lot of effort and patience to handle it, yet most of them showed competent performance in the examinations which consisted of listening and reading comprehension questions.

Excerpts from American TV Broadcasts

Two types of excerpts were used, though both types were on current issues. The first type dealt with environmental problems and the second type with socio-political problems that involved and thus illustrated the points the textbook discusses. The length of the first type of news report was less than one minute. They were about (1) the U. N. efforts to destroy Iraq's nuclear capability, and (2) the danger of damaging the food chain by radiation leakage. The second type of news reports were from five to ten minutes. They were about (1) the origins of the inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, (2) the roots of Somalia's tragedy, and (3) changes in traditional social patterns, which were being brought about by the developing and spreading of mass communication such as television, computers, and satellites.

Those excerpts were recorded on two sixty-minute cassette tapes, and copies were given to each student. One was handed out in early October and the other in November. On the basis of official transcripts, which were obtained from the LEXIS/NEXIS database, exercise material was made by blanking out certain phrases, clauses, or sentences. Once each week

students were assigned the task of listening to the tape and filling in the blanks in two — or three — page transcripts. In class, the transcript completed at home was checked and questions were asked on the content of the news report. To sum up what was discussed in class, short writing assignments were given.

These materials enabled students to get used to English spoken at natural speed and to follow native speakers interacting with each other. Moreover, observing native speakers' interactions in various situations help them learn how to express themselves in English with grammatical forms and words they have already learned in their previous English education. It also helped them realize that they could learn ideas and form opinions through discussions. In class discussions, the students' narrow interests sometimes prevented them from understanding the content of the news reports as well as from relating what they had learned in the textbook to the news reports. However, their performance in the final examination revealed that they had exerted great effort and made significant progress in understanding the material.

2. Assessment

Grading was based on classroom performance, assignments, and two examinations. Of 18 registered students, 13 passed, 4 dropped out, and 1, who did not satisfy the course requirements, failed. Differences in students' language proficiency examination scores were at first reflected in differences in classroom performance, especially in listening comprehension ability and in the amount of active and passive vocabulary. However, the result of the midterm and the final, which were made up of questions based on what was covered in the course, did not show as much difference

as the language proficiency examination scores had shown.

English Practicum I-4 (Okada)

1. Teaching plans and classroom activities

English Practicum I-4 had three objectives from the outset: (1) to improve the students' overall English language proficiency; (2) to expose students to as wide a variety as possible of learning activities so that students might discover learning strategies for themselves; (3) to create an environment for developing cultural sensitivity and awareness.

As for language proficiency, plans were made regarding each of the four skills. In the reading sphere, material of varying levels from quite easy to rather difficult was introduced and covered in class. Reading materials were chosen with the aim of enhancing the students' cultural awareness and perceptions.

Most of the reading material was paired with TV news reporting by BBC, ABC, PBS, or "Asia Now" by NHK, thus requiring the students to listen to the English spoken in news programs. To aid their listening tasks, listening exercises and comprehension questions were provided.

Speaking tasks were planned, again, for greatest possible variety both in topics and language levels. At the lowest language level, the students were given a series of 12 - 20 questions at a time on some familiar college topic with a list of relevant vocabulary items provided (e. g., where they went to high-school, where they live now, which courses they are taking with which professors, and the like); the students were asked to talk in groups of 4 or 5 each and get information about each other. At a higher language level, class discussion was led by the instructor on news topics covered in the reading material and/or TV news; alternatively, the stu-

dents were asked to exchange their views in groups of 4 or 5 and later report on their group discussion to the entire class, thus giving opportunities for more proficient students to perform to the benefit of the rest of the class.

Writing was central in EP I-4 because of the view that writing would encourage speaking activities and confirm listening and reading tasks. Therefore, from the very first session, the students were asked to write in class and were given a writing assignment. Virtually in or after every class session, there was some form of writing task assigned, usually 250 - 300 words at a time.⁶

Those writings that were potentially good speeches were noted as such by the instructor and the writers were encouraged to volunteer to make an oral presentation of their writing. While one student makes an oral presentation, the rest of the class including the instructor evaluate the speech on (1) loudness, (2) clarity, and (3) eye-contact on a scale of 5 adding a brief comment in English.⁷

2. Out-of-class activities

In addition to class activities and assignments, the students were required to undertake two tasks which were rigorously monitored by the instructor. One was the reading marathon and the other was the weekly vocabulary study.

The goal of the reading marathon was set at the minimum of 200 pages to be read before the end of the semester. Every student wrote six biweekly book reports during the semester by filling out a Book Report Form on such data as number of pages, amount of time spent, degree of gratification, level of language difficulty, and added a summary and comment. As

it turned out, no student failed to achieve the minimum: two students read more than 1,000 pages, six others, more than 500 pages, and only four read less than 300 pages.⁸

For the vocabulary study, the students were asked to choose five new vocabulary items a day (i. e., twenty-five a week) from whatever contact they had with the English language,⁹ make a list of the 25 items, memorize them with as frequent reviews as necessary, and submit the list every two weeks.¹⁰ Altogether, seven Word Study sheets (350 vocabulary items) were collected from each student before the end of the semester. As part of the mid-term and final exams, the students were tested on their individual lists of words.

3. Student response

Out of the 26 students who registered for EP I-4, one person quit attending just before the final examination, although she had virtually fulfilled all the course requirements up to that point. All the other students demonstrated outstanding achievements.

At the end of the semester, as part of the final examination, the students were asked to write a short comment in English on the semester's work in EP I-4. Judging from what the students wrote (See Appendix), it is clear that the three goals of the course were amply met: to help the students with (1) improving English language skills, (2) learning how to learn, and (3) developing international awareness.

D. Looking Toward the Future

As the four course reviews in the previous section indicate, EP I in 1993 was a general success. However, several factors remain to be solved.

First of all, the appropriate class size needs to be reviewed. The maximum number of students for each section is set for 30, which proved to be too large for this kind of interactive and intensive language class to be effective.

Despite general enthusiasm among students about learning English by using English, instructors might feel that EP I lacks concrete working goals stated in clear enough terms. Unlike EP II, which is designed explicitly for “preparing students for studies abroad,” notably in English-speaking countries, EP I simply aims at “improving the English language proficiency level” of the students. Translating this general aim into more concrete, achievable goals or standards might help sustain, in the years to come, teaching efforts by a group of instructors. As screening standards already exist, some general idea about an arrival point might be useful as well.

Furthermore, the current single-semester system is unfortunate for a number of Practicum students, who spend the entire semester working hard through what is widely known as “the silent period,” a kind of latency period in which a language learner builds up internal language capability by accumulating language “input” without being able to reach a stage of giving corresponding output (Krashen, 1982).¹¹ Although some students, for various reasons, manage to succeed in going beyond the silent period before the end of the semester, others need more time to prove to themselves that their efforts have in fact paid off.¹² A year-long course similar in design to EP might well deserve consideration.

At the end of one semester, many students are even more highly motivated to exert themselves than at the beginning of the semester to further develop their English ability. In the present system, however, the students

can only take ordinary English courses in the following semester, in which they often do not find adequate stimuli either from courses or classmates.

Before the English Practicum courses began in September 1993, there was a sense of apprehension among the native Japanese-speaking instructors about speaking only English in class. That sense of anxiety, however, was instantly dispelled at the first encounter with students, who simply welcomed Japanese teachers speaking English to them. One student bluntly stated that it was a "refreshing" experience. In retrospect, it is only natural for students to accept the situation, for they, too, are native Japanese-speakers wanting or trying to speak English as a foreign language, and having a role model in close regular contact can only be viewed as an encouragement.

Finally, considering the present situation of English language education that stresses the development of oral communication skills, English Practicum could be a model course in which native Japanese instructors teach comparative viewpoints of culture and society in English. Whether intensive or non-intensive, teaching English in English is an inevitable direction for the future of the English-teaching profession.

The Practicum experience has led the instructors to one unanimous conclusion: whoever teaches an English language course might well speak whatever amount of English manageable in class. There is no doubt that students will fully support it.

Notes

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courses, and thus deserve special mention. In addition, our gratitude goes to Professor Akira Nakai without whose assistance and encouragement the present report would not have materialized. The writers are also indebted to Professor Deborah Foreman-Takano, another colleague and friend, who read an earlier version of the present paper and offered a number of valuable suggestions and comments.

- 1 Doshisha University has three summer programs of study abroad, two of which are in English: Amherst Summer Program in Massachusetts, U. S. A. and York Summer Program in England. In addition, a year's study at 14 affiliated liberal arts colleges and the University of California in the U. S., University of Victoria in Canada, and Edinburgh University in Britain is arranged for 12 students each year. Besides these study-abroad programs, the Joint Seminar conducted in cooperation with the AKP (Associated Kyoto Program, a junior-year-abroad program on Doshisha campuses run by 15 liberal arts colleges in the U. S.) provides opportunities for students proficient enough to share academic experiences with American students in the course taught entirely in English.
- 2 These scores were only tentatively set for the first year of the program and subject to change in subsequent years. For 1994-95, for instance, the TOEIC score must be at least 550 for EP I.
- 3 Examples and models for paragraph writing were chosen from M. Hashimoto et. al., *A Guide to Paragraph Reading* (Tokyo: Asahi Press, 1989).
- 4 Bob Greene, *More Bob Greene*, eds., H. Yoshitomi and H. Noda (Tokyo: Nan'undo, 1993).
- 5 The 15-second commercial made by the New York Telephone Company (NYNEX) shows two differently colored marbles hit each other. Each one calls for help which eventually leads to a major confrontation of the two factions. Then two delegates from each side meet and reach an agreement successfully. The colored marbles intermingle to form the two American Continents and the world.
- 6 The student writing was hardly ever corrected in grammar or usage (generally known as counter-productive in a number of ESL research experiments), occasionally in vocabulary (vocabulary errors being more serious hindrances to communication), but usually commented on briefly by the instructor regard-

ing the content; during occasional "reading sessions" in class, the student writings were read and commented on by the classmates. Recurrent errors and difficulties in writing were brought out in class and discussed with the class as briefly as possible, which usually led to a virtual eradication of the particular types of errors, an impressively good record rarely observed in many other English classes.

- 7 The collective evaluation was calculated in percentile and reported to the speaker the following week with all the comments made by the class. This speech-making activity turned out to be extremely successful and there was never a shortage of volunteers for the following week. All the speeches were recorded on the cassette tape and the students received the recording of their own speech(es) at the end of the semester.
- 8 The students were first sent to the university library to choose one of some 800 ESL texts (English as a Second Language texts, often rewrites of well-known works but quite a number of originals in fiction and non-fiction). They were recommended to begin with a fairly easy book and find their own level of reading proficiency. As a result, better students quickly went on to higher levels of reading materials for greater sense of gratification and in the process quickly picked up the speed as well.
- 9 This includes all the in- or out-of-class reading and listening experiences.
- 10 The students were strongly urged NOT to use ready-made alphabetical lists of words compiled for memorization (such as those used in preparing for entrance exams or TOEFL), but to pick words out of some meaningful reading or listening experience. The Word Study Lists were inspected by the instructor to make sure the students were learning them "in context and along with context."
On each list, the students were expected to add a few lines of comments, on which remarks were made by the instructor to guide and encourage continued effort.
- 11 Stephen D. Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English, 1982), esp., pp. 26f. and 71f.
- 12 Empirically, in English F classes over the past five years, one of the present writers has witnessed a number of cases where students' hard work in the first semester suddenly "blossoms" in the second semester, when sustained exchanges of opinions on rather serious issues become possible among

students. Adult learners tend to be more demanding than young children about seeing tangible results of their efforts for themselves. It is also not just unfortunate but unfair to have to make judgment on student performance when performance is imminent but not quite ready to come out yet.

Appendix

Here are two sets of evidence presenting the students' view of EP I-4. The first is a result of a questionnaire and the second is excerpts from the students' course evaluation.

Table 3

Types of class activity	Student rating of usefulness
1. Watching video news	92.8%
2. Writing essays	85.5
3. Making speeches	84.1
4. Listening to speeches	79.7
5. Talking in groups	72.5
6. Meeting AKP students	92.8
7. Book reports	76.8
8. Word study lists	92.8

Table 3: Student rating of usefulness on eight types of class activities in percentage. (English Practicum I-4 1993-94)

Halfway through the semester, at the time of the mid-term examination, the students were asked to rate the usefulness of various activities on the scale of 3: not so useful, useful, and very useful. As shown in Table 3, the students rated all the activities more or less positively. At the time of this questionnaire, about half the students were still not quite confident in speaking English among themselves, and that was probably why "talking in groups" was not as highly rated as the others. Basically the same type of group discussion, however, had a radically higher rate of approval when American students were invited to visit the class and asked to join the groups (See the item, "meeting AKP students" in Table 3).

The second set of evidence is the course evaluation written by the students at

the time of the final examination. In reading the following excerpts, it must be kept in mind that the students were told that their comments were to be read by the students at the beginning of a comparable course the following year. That explains why some of the excerpts are addressed to fellow students.

On variety of activities

In this class, you can study English from all aspects. You will read a lot of books, you will debate about various kinds of topics, such as gun control issue, environmental issue, mandatory helmet law issue. And also, you will hear TV programs of ABC World News. (D. U.)

This class deals with all-round English skill, reading, speaking, hearing and it is possible to improve all of them if you try your best. (C. N.)

Firstly, I got a chance to hear the native English. Secondly, I got a chance to speak English. And lastly, I got a chance to learn and to think about the world. To learn about the world is to know the international points. This is my best things in this class. (M. N.)

We read a whole book about once two weeks and wrote a report about it. And we learned five words every day, and wrote an essay about various topics twice a week. And we sometimes had guests in our class and talked with them, and sometimes watched a video. And everyone made a speech. I did a lot of things in this course, and all of them were very useful for me, and I made friends with my classmates. (R. K.)

On book reports

The book report is very useful. Actually it took me a lot of time to read at the beginning, but afterwards, I feel fun to read and relax. I hated the long sentences [*sic*. "passages"?] written in English at the beginning but now not so much. (S. S.)

I specially liked the book report at this class. I like to read literature, so I enjoyed my readings very much. At first, it was difficult to read long stories. However, I turned in the book report one by one, I wanted to read more and more. In readings, I could know many vocabularies. Though I don't know the

certain meaning, I can guess the meaning from phrase or paragraph. (Y. S.)

First of all I learned a lot of words, because I had to read a lot of books to send book reports. Thanks for this homework, I like to read books very much. (T. T.)

On Word Study Lists

I found that word study list was very useful. If I didn't write and understand the meaning of the word in the phrase, I forgot very soon. If I only look at the list, I also forgot. Only when I understand the word at the phrase. I can remember. You [i.e., the teacher] mentioned it to us, and that was my discovery. (Y. S.)

On guest students

The most useful experience I've got from the class was to have a chance to talk with native English speakers, especially with young students like us . . . (M. T.)

It was good that I could get opportunities to talk with AKP students and the seniors. Talking with seniors stimulated and encouraged me. (R. M.)

On listening

The most important thing is participating in this class. Even if you feel escaping from this class, you should enter this class. Once you enter it, you hardly feel difficulty. Time had gone rapidly because the class is conducted in English. I listened to what people say attentively and tried to understand it. (M. H.)

On making speeches

Especially to make a speech is good for us, and through making the speech we could learn many things, such as where to cut [pause] to speak English is very important. (R. Y.)

On speaking

At the beginning, you may have a hard time in class. There will be few friends and the students will seem very intelligent. You will have to speak only English with a stranger. However, this won't last for a month. Soon, you will be able to

make a lot of friends because everyone like speaking English. (M. N.)

We discussed many things about our lives with 4 or 5 persons. We could have the opportunity of using the oral English in this discussion. We could also know each other's life and character. (T. H.)

On writing

The writing was the most useful. I have not written the essay so often, so I didn't know the way of English writing very much. . . So the writing was especially the most useful. I could improve my English. (C. O.)

On current topics

The study of the conflict between Israel and Palestine was most useful for me because I couldn't understand the article about the conflict by myself. I learned historical background which was surprising. (R. M.)

On watching TV news

Before the next class, we are given some articles or prints. We must read them before the class. We watch videos about the same topic of the articles. Sometimes we fill the blanks in the print. After that we discuss our opinions about the topic with our classmates. After the class we write a short essay about the topic. (N. H.)

On learning strategies

Before this class started, . . . I wanted to read and speak English more. But I could not begin anything, I did not know how to study English by myself. . . . This EP class gave me good homeworks, so I could begin studying English and I enjoyed it. This class also gave me good friends who study English hard. This class no longer give me homeworks, by now I know how to study by myself. I am going to continue it. (T. K.)

In this class you can learn how to learn English. And you will have a passion in studying English. (M. I.)

Even if you are busy with other things . . . like me, you can get the good

information how to study English and also find good friends who study with you together. (K. A.)