

*Teaching How to Think and Write: Realities and Suggestions on Writing
Instruction in English Education in Japan*

Madoka Kawano, Meiji University, Japan
Wakasa Nagakura, Teachers College, Columbia University, USA

The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2017
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The current Course of Study of Japan manifests that an objective of “English Expression” is to evaluate facts and opinions from multiple perspectives and to communicate with others through good reasoning (MEXT, 2009). In reality, a survey revealed that 82.1% of national and public high school seniors were at the A1 level of writing in the CEFR framework (MEXT, 2016), although 46.7% of their teachers answered that they taught writing based on what the students had listened to or read. These data show that teaching English writing for Japanese students poses a serious problem. Moreover, in the previous study which analyzed “English Expression I” textbooks, we found that they offer few activities which involve high-level thinking skills (Nagakura and Kawano, 2016). In this paper, we examined the writing tasks of high school textbooks from perspectives such as length, topics, and connection with reading in an attempt to probe the realities of English writing instruction in Japan. Furthermore, through a survey with university first-year students, we found that few participants had learned paragraph writing at their high schools, and half of them had difficulty in articulating an appropriate claim for an opinion. This leads to the necessity of teaching basic writing skills and of extending it to writing that expresses students’ thoughts through the process writing approach: organizing ideas, locating resources to advocate opinions, and making a strong conclusion. In this study, a writing curriculum that fits first-year university students is proposed.

Keywords: L2 writing instruction, paragraph writing, high school English textbook analysis

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

The Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) has initiated a restructuring of English language education in response to a criticism of ineffectiveness of teaching in the subject. The major objectives of the plan include establishment of Foreign Language as a non-graded subject at third grade, English as an official school subject at fifth grade, and the raising of curriculum standards for both the middle and high school. The new plan, which will be fully implemented by 2020, aims to develop students' English proficiency in the four language skill areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Moreover, the new standards aim to encourage acquisition of more advanced English production skills, including making arguments, debating and presenting.

In contrast to these goals, results of the National English Test for high school seniors in 2015 showed that most of the students' speaking and writing proficiencies were at A1 level of CEFR, with many students also reporting low motivation to learn English (MEXT, 2016). According to the survey results accompanying the performance test, 10.6 % of teachers taught students how to make discussion or debate in English classes, and 34.8 % taught them how to make a speech or presentation. As for writing, 46.7 % taught students to write about what they had read or listened to, and it is rare to find students who have experience in writing opinion essays in school. Overall, it is clear that teachers need to spend more time on teaching advanced skills of English production.

Enhancement of students' English production skills is also a challenge due to teachers' limited experiences in speaking and writing English themselves. Moreover, the shortage of instructional time and under-developed instructional resources make it difficult for teachers to improve. Improving education in writing may be the hardest task, since writing as an activity has received the least focus in English language instruction. It is also especially difficult to teach English writing in Japan because of the many differences in writing conventions and rhetoric between the two languages. As for teaching materials, we divulged that many of the certified English textbooks, which are major resources for teachers, are not well organized for teaching writing (Nagakura & Kawano, 2016).

With the current condition of teaching English production in Japan at a suboptimal level, what level of writing abilities and characteristics do current Japanese college students demonstrate? What method of classroom instruction is effective for them?

The purpose of this study was twofold: To conduct a detailed analysis of writing instruction in selected secondary school English textbooks, and to develop an effective and usable writing program for college students. Pilot testing with the developed program was conducted to evaluate its feasibility and to collect suggestions for improvement. In order to develop an effective writing module, a survey that explores college students' experiences with English writing and their attitudes towards learning English was administered. Also, an on-demand writing pretest was implemented to measure their level of writing. In this paper, the textbook analysis and the details of the developed writing module are discussed; then the results of the pre-teaching survey and pretests are reported.

Textbook Analyses

Curriculum and the Role of Textbooks

High school students in Japan study two English subjects, Communication English and English Expression. The latter attempts to develop students' productive skills such as speaking and writing, and one of the goals is that students should engage in activities such as "evaluating facts and opinions from multiple perspectives and communicating with others through good reasoning (2009)." English Expression I, which is usually taught to the first- or second-year high school students, has an objective that students will be able to write with due attention to phrases and sentences indicating the main points, connecting phrases, and reviewing one's own writing. In English Expression II, which is for second- or third-year high school students, the aim is for students to write with due attention to passage structure, references to charts and tables, and useful English expressions, while clarifying the points of an argument and its evidence, and reviewing and revising one's own writing. These descriptions are in line with the goals of the new plan discussed above; in other words, the Course of Guidelines manifests that students should learn how to write argumentative passages and also how to revise them. At the first part of this study, which is a textbook analysis, we aim to verify whether the textbook serves to achieve such goals. Textbooks play an essential role in English education in Japan where English is learned as a foreign language. Therefore, examining textbooks will indicate how and what students are actually learning in terms of writing tasks.

Previous Study on English Expression I

In the previous study, writing tasks in four major English Expression I textbooks were analyzed from the perspective of the cognitive levels of writing tasks (Nagakura & Kawano, 2016). In total, 255 tasks related to writing were categorized into the six levels of cognitive dimension of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001); Level 1 (Remember), Level 2 (Understand), Level 3 (Apply), Level 4 (Analysis), Level 5 (Evaluate) and Level 6 (Create). Most units/lessons of the textbooks had three components: rules of sentence structure were introduced first, and then the rules were applied in some examples and exercises, followed by some open-ended questions/activities at the end of the unit/lesson. Of all the tasks included in the textbooks, it was found that Level 2 tasks accounted for 33.7 % and that 34.5% of the tasks were at Level 3. There were few tasks of Levels 4 and 5, while 17% of them were at Level 6. It was notable that the textbooks had very limited writing activities at Levels 4 and 5, which would encourage critical thinking of the students. Also, it was found that the English Expression I textbooks emphasized mostly grammar rules and sentence structures, and included few tasks of paragraph writing. As such, it might be difficult for the students to learn to think and write in English, unless the teachers supply supplementary guidance and materials, which is not usually feasible with their busy schedules. To most high school students, writing seems to mean translation and grammar practices.

English Expression II Textbook Analysis

In the present study, we attempted to probe how writing is taught in two bestselling English Expression II textbooks, textbook A and textbook B; in particular we

analyzed the writing tasks included in these textbooks from the perspectives of 1)scope and sequence, 2)components of a lesson, and 3)themes and topics of the lessons. Two raters analyzed the tasks independently, discussed the ratings, and came to agreement in cases when discrepancies with ratings occurred.

Scope and sequence

Both textbooks had basically the same flow of instruction; with the first part, they showed how to construct English sentences, featuring the grammatical rules of each lesson. Textbook A contained 20 lessons in the first part, and textbook B had 12 lessons.

The second part dealt with how to write a paragraph; it covered the definition of a paragraph, organization of a paragraph such as the topic sentence and supporting details, and some patterns of organizations. Textbook A had 5 lessons, or 10 pages in this part of the entire textbook which had 143 pages in total, while textbook B had 8 lessons, or 16 pages of instruction on paragraph writing, and 4 lessons, or 8 pages on essay writing out of 163 total pages.

In the third part, oral presentation activities such as speech, presentation, and debate, were included. In other words, the textbook started with activities in which students write sentences, and as the lessons progress, instructions were given as to how to write a paragraph. Then they would study how to write speech scripts towards the end of the textbooks.

Components of a lesson

Both textbooks had the same pattern of a lesson flow; a lesson had three components; first, a model reading passage is presented. In textbook A, the average number of words of the reading passage of a lesson was 74.8 words. Every model passage was accompanied by a Japanese translation in textbook A. Textbook B had a model reading passage of approximately 110 words. The Japanese translation of the reading passage is given at the back of the textbook.

As the second component, both textbooks presented explanation, grammar points, and exercises for the model passage. Most exercises were closed exercises, grammar practice and translation, and these covered the largest number of textbook pages in both textbooks.

Finally, a free writing exercise was included, which was introduced in a sentence in Japanese; it had no further explanation or guidance to complete the task. An example was, "Write about your most memorable present you have ever received in 60 words." In textbook A, most lessons concluded with exercises which require 60-word compositions. Students were to write short paragraphs of five to six sentences at most. Textbook B had similar writing tasks with more scaffolding activities. An example from textbook B read, "recommend a place to visit, using the memo of Exercise C", which was a mapping tree exercise used for brainstorming. Textbook B did not specify how many words a paragraph should have, though most students would write a few sentences after being prompted. There were no tasks for students to write a

paragraph from scratch, starting from brainstorming and constructing an outline by themselves.

Themes and topics

The Course of Guidelines recommends including themes that are instructive and appropriate for high school students. In particular, it is recommended to present topics related to everyday life, science and technology, communication, career education, social issues, and culture. We tallied the topics of lessons, using these labels. As a result, it was found that the lessons to teach sentence structures were about everyday life, personal topics, the culture of Japan, foreign cultures, and career education. Lessons on paragraph writing were about everyday life, science and technology, and social issues. For oral presentations, topics were about social issues and science and technology. This tendency shows that, in order to encourage paragraph writing, essay writing, and discussion script, thought-provoking topics such as science and technology and social issues are necessary. Topics such as everyday life and career education are more difficult to employ to promote critical thinking.

Table 1.

Topics of lessons in two English Expression II textbooks

Text-book	Everyday Life	Science and Technology	Communication	Career Education	Social Issues	Culture of Japan	Foreign Culture	Others
A	4	6	1	3	3	4	4	1
B	5	8	0	1	2	0	2	2

Teaching Paragraph Writing to Japanese College Students

Designing a Teaching Writing Module

Responding to the urgent need to develop effective English writing lessons for Japanese college students, a handful of studies have investigated the characteristics and limitations of Japanese students' writing through classroom teaching in recent years (Kamimura, 2000; Kamimura & Oi, 2006; Sasaki, 2004; McKinly, 2006; Tanaka et al., 2007, Tsuji, 2016, among others).

Kamimura & Oi (2006) followed 38 Japanese college EFL students as they progressed through a year-long course in argument writing and their understandings of rhetorical and linguistic features that are necessary for formal academic writing, and concluded that the students were able to produce essays of better quality through explicit instruction over at least a year of teaching. This study was a continuation of the authors' writing intervention study (Kamimura & Oi, 1998), which suggested that Japanese EFL writers tend to be less skilled in constructing a sustained argument due in part to the Japanese writing tradition of encouraging authors to express personal feelings when recounting their memories or experiences.

Tanaka et al. (2007) studied 100 college freshmen to investigate changes in their motivation for writing after receiving interactive teaching practices in English writing classrooms. They hypothesized that when students more actively involved themselves in writing activities such as peer discussion work and frequent feedback sessions between an instructor and students, their own motivation to write English would increase. Using a survey to measure students' motivation, the study found a significant intervention effect from the classroom teaching. Thus, they argued that raising a student's motivation as a writer is also a critical component of writing education, in addition to providing explicit writing instruction.

Based on these findings from the literature, we hypothesized that both explicit linguistic and rhetorical content for instruction and motivational pedagogical approach are necessary to improve students' writing. This study incorporated a process instruction approach, which was guided by the cognitive theory of process writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). In this approach, writing is conceived of as a set of distinctive thinking and cognitive processes organized in a hierarchical, highly embedded structure. The module for this study is sequenced to follow the process writing approach through a cycle of planning and organizing, goal setting, translating ideas into language, and evaluating and revising writing and editing.

It may not be a coincidence that the results of past studies with Japanese university students are aligned with the findings and recommendations of the November 2016 report on best practices from the What Works Clearinghouse of the U.S. Department of Education (Graham, S., Bruch, J et al, 2016), which reviewed accumulated research on effective practices in writing in secondary education. The report makes three recommendations for effective writing instruction: 1. Explicitly teach appropriate writing strategies using a Model-Practice-Reflect instruction cycle; 2. Integrate the teaching of writing with the teaching of reading to emphasize key writing features; 3. Use systematic assessment of student writing to inform instruction and feedback.

Given these current understandings in the field in Japan and the U.S., the following four major approaches were used in developing an intervention module for this study:

- 1) By viewing writing as a process of thinking, guide students step by step.
- 2) Generate ideas through discussion and brainstorming with peers.
- 3) Provide feedback focusing on the forms and flow of arguments rather than grammatical suggestions.
- 4) Explicitly teach how to write an outline and how to elaborate arguments, providing effective support through reading materials.

Intervention Module

Building on previous findings and theories, seven content lessons were developed. English teaching time is typically 100 minutes long per lesson. For this study, a chunk of 40-45 minutes in each lesson was allocated for writing instruction, with the rest allocated for reading and other activities.

Table 2.
Content of lessons and its target strategy

Lesson	Instructional content	Targeted Approach
1	Review students' writing in the pretest. A main focus point is to teach the structure of a paragraph and the role of a topic sentence. A handout is created with examples of good paragraph writing and poor paragraph writing.	Explicit teaching and detailed feedback
2	Teach more on paragraph writing, focusing on providing reasons to support a claim and formulating an opinion logically connected to that claim. Develop and submit an outline for an opinion paragraph. Topic: The prevalence of SNS (Social Networking Service) is beneficial for education or the prevalence of SNS is harmful for education.	Peer collaboration and discussion
3	After providing comments on the submitted outlines, teacher offers and discusses examples of good outlines. Students rework their outlines through pair-work. The teacher also explains how to elaborate outlined reasons.	Provide detailed feedback, Peer collaboration and discussion
4	The students write a paragraph on Word Document at a PC room. The paragraphs are sent to the teacher via university network system. The teacher comments on the paragraphs and returns them to the students before the next class.	Write on Word at PC room (Skill) Provide detailed feedback
5	Students review the comments provided by the teacher with their peers. Teacher and students discuss what the biggest challenges are in making each paragraph more logical. A handout is created to teach students how to write logical arguments.	Peer collaboration and discussion.
6	Integrate reading materials into writing instruction. Learn how to elaborate further on reasons and make an opinion stronger by supplying objective information. Teacher also explains the rubric for evaluation.	Explicit teaching with provided reading materials.
7	Teach how to revise first drafts. Type up a final draft in class and send it to the teacher via university network system.	Write on Word at PC room (Skill)

Method

Participants

Participants were 61 students majoring in science at a large private university in Japan. Two groups of students were included from three separate classes: 27 students enrolled in a mandatory Freshman English class, and 36 students enrolled in two required academic presentation classes for third-year students.

In this paper, only data from the Freshman English class (n =27) are presented. This class was leveled as intermediate among three levels of Freshman English classes. Among the 27 students, there was one student whose native language is neither Japanese nor English. Three other students noted that they had a short experience of living abroad.

Study design

The study included a sequence of 7 lessons, with a session of orientation and pre-intervention data collection at the beginning and post-intervention data collection at the end. Data collection instruments were a writing task and an English learning survey that assessed students' English learning past experiences as well as their attitudes and beliefs toward English learning (Full survey: See Appendix).

The writing task was to write a paragraph (150-200 words) on a blank sheet of paper in 25 minutes. The direction was "Please write a paragraph of 150-200 words by stating a position of agreement or disagreement with the given statement. Prompt: Advancement of technology makes our lives better."

It should be noted that this paper aims to discuss the usability of a novel English writing module and to explore its feasibility as instructional material for Japanese college students who have had limited English writing instruction. The effectiveness of the module will be assessed when all of the lessons of the program have been taught and analyzed.

Results

Pre-teaching survey

With respect to previous experience in English education, all students responded that they had experiences of "Translating Japanese sentences to English sentences" and "Constructing English sentences with given words or expressions." However, more than half of the students did not have experience in "Writing a paragraph" (56%) or "Writing an essay with multiple paragraphs" (60%). The survey item "Expressing own thoughts and feelings in a chunk of 3-5 English sentences" received the most diversity of responses: students' writing experiences differed greatly in this area, ranging from "I never did this" to "I did this almost every week."

Regarding their experiences in terms of the process writing approach as described above, the survey data showed that at least 80% of the students had experience in brainstorming and planning when they wrote, and 74% of them had at least some

experience in revising what they wrote. However, two thirds of the students also reported that revising their own writing by themselves was difficult and that they appreciated sharing their writing with peers to get others' feedback. One noticeable finding was that 76% of the students had not used reading materials when writing a paragraph or an essay, yet more than two thirds reported that intensive reading of supplemental materials would be helpful for them in writing their own thoughts.

Table 3.

Percentage of students in terms of frequency of their English writing experiences

	Never	Once a year	Once a semester	Once a month	Almost every week
Translating Japanese sentences to English sentences	0	16	12	12	60
Constructing English sentences with given words or expressions	0	12	20	28	40
Expressing own thoughts and feeling in a chunk of 3-5 English sentences	8	16	32	28	16
Writing speech or draft for a presentation	40	36	16	8	0
Writing a paragraph	56	28	8	4	4
Writing an essay	60	32	0	0	8
Summarizing what you have read	36	24	20	8	12
Writing review or critics for reading in English	48	32	12	8	0
Brainstorming or planning what to write before writing	20	28	20	28	4
Reading materials in order to write paragraph or an essay	76	20	0	0	0
Revising what you wrote	36	24	12	12	16
Have had peer review or discussion on what you wrote	44	20	24	4	8

The survey also explored students' experiences and attitudes toward writing by assessing their level of agreement with a given statement at five levels: "Do not agree at all", "Do not agree", "I am not sure", "Agree" and "Strongly agree". Due to space constraints, reports here are limited to the responses that may inform the module planning for this study. The first two levels are combined as "Do not agree" and the last two levels are combined as "Agree."

These findings include: 58% of students indicated that they do not understand the basic structure of a paragraph; 76% expressed that it is difficult to write because they “do not have good vocabulary to use in writing English”; 76% of them agreed with the idea that intensive reading of supplemental materials is effective for better writing; 68% agreed that it is difficult to revise their writing by themselves; and at the same time, about half (52%) indicated that they have not received feedback on what they have written. It seemed that students like to receive detail feedback from teachers and peers.

Pre-test

Of the 27 students in the Freshman English class, 25 wrote a paragraph of 150-200 words by taking a position of agree or disagree with the following statement: Advancement of technology makes our lives better. Students wrote their responses within 25 minutes by hand on a piece of paper. As four out of 25 students submitted the task blank, a total of 21 writing samples were collected.

For analysis, the hand-written writing samples were typed up and rated by two independent raters. To assign holistic writing scores, an independent writing rating standard for TOEFL was used. The other six rating indicators were developed based on prior research (Kamimura & Oi, 2006). These indicators are: 1) Holistic score of a writing piece; 2) Logical consistency of the writing; 3) Level of organization including the presence of a clear claim and a conclusion; 4) Degree of elaboration on supportive arguments; 5) Type of elaboration; and 6) Total word count.

1) TOEFL Score

Based on the score guidelines of TOEFL Independent writing, six levels, with 5 as the highest, 21 writing samples were evaluated. All students received scores of 2 or below, with no student receiving a 3, 4 or 5. The distribution of the rating was score 0 (19%), 1 (48%) and 2 (33%). There were two students whose work was considered somewhere between 2 and 3, but did not quite reach a point of 3.

2) Logical consistency

The logical consistency score measured the directionality of an argument. A piece of writing was evaluated as to whether it was uni-directional or bi-directional, namely when two opposite stances are taken in one piece of writing. The data revealed that the majority of the students’ writing had unidirectional logic; there were two writing samples (10%) that showed bi-directional viewpoints.

3) Organization

The organization rating measured the students’ efforts to make a clear organizational structure in their writing, including a claim, a conclusion, and supportive sentences. Students’ writing was rated with one of three levels of clarity of organization: score 0- Ramble-on, 1- Some structure observed but not well organized, and 2-Well structured.

The data revealed that about 80% of students wrote a clear claim at the beginning of the paragraph, and 52% of them wrote a clear concluding statement. With respect to the overall structure of writing, 29% of students did not show any organization in writing, 57% showed some organizational structure, and 20% showed well-structured organization.

4) Degree of Support

This indicator measured the presence or absence of supporting sentences to back up an opinion. The data showed that the 29% of the students did not write any supporting sentences. 57% showed insufficient elaboration to support a claim; meaning that they did include some follow-up sentences, but did not provide enough support for their reasoning; and three (14%) among 21 pieces of writing showed at least one sufficient elaboration to support one claim.

5) Nature of support

This indicator evaluated the nature of support in three types: 1-Objective account including the demonstration of objective data or statistics or citing of experts' quotations or ideas; 2-Personal anecdote/opinions; 3-Combination. The nature of students' elaboration was analyzed from the 15 writing samples that indicated some attempt to elaborate. Of these, 57% provided only personal opinions or anecdotes as support for their claims. Only 10% attempted to provide an objective account, while one student used both objective and personal anecdote/opinions.

6) Total word count

The number of words in the writings ranged from 38 to 151, with an average of 77.5 words.

Discussion

From the results of the textbook analysis above, it was revealed that most of the tasks in English Expression II textbooks focused on how to construct an English sentence or to translate Japanese into English. Less than a tenth of the textbook pages were on paragraph writing, and there was not a task of paragraph writing where students had to think what to write and how to express their ideas from scratch by themselves.

The findings from the pre-teaching survey and the pre-test suggest that the participants have not yet acquired the adequate skill and knowledge necessary to write a persuasive paragraph on a given topic. By examining the students' writing closely along with their past learning experience in English paragraph writing, this study also demonstrated that the students' learning experiences ranged from sentence-level writing to paragraph-level writing, as the data show widespread differences in response to the item "Express own thoughts and feelings in a chunk of three to five English sentences."

In order to write a sequence of sentences cohesively and logically, students first need to understand what an "English" paragraph is: a set of written ideas which expresses clearly the speaker's thoughts on a particular point. This definition, however, is

somewhat different from *Danraku*, which describes the function of a paragraph in Japanese writing. In this form, while a new paragraph starts with an indent, serving to focus the reader on a particular point of writing, the restriction of discussion in one paragraph is different. In English writing, the paragraph is limited to expressing one idea more strictly and requires a higher level of clarity and logical flow to make a point compared to Japanese's *Danraku*. In other words, English paragraph writing does not allow as much mixing of thoughts and ideas, a restriction that is therefore unfamiliar to many Japanese students.

As found during the pre-test, the majority of students in this study were able to write a topic sentence for a paragraph. However, the supporting sentences that followed these topic sentences did not effectively support the posited claim, and many of them did not express an idea with logical flow. This tendency can be ascribed to the way the students were taught English writing in their secondary schools. They likely learned paragraph writing by focusing on the construction of form, rather than constructing a logical sequence or expression of their own ideas.

Conclusions

The findings from the present study indicates that the current textbooks might need to be improved in order to meet the objectives of a Course of Study which emphasizes the importance of productive skills in English; high school textbooks should present writing tasks and perhaps more writing samples which would guide the students to learn how to organize their ideas and express them effectively and logically.

As Matsuda (2010) suggests, “the teacher’s role should shift to that of a coach who facilitates the development of productive literacy as students move toward achieving their rhetorical goals through the development of the text” (p.17). This study reports the very beginning of a pilot study concerning a writing curriculum for university students in Japan. It is hoped that the students develop not only in writing skills but also in their awareness of how to monitor their progress throughout the duration of intervention.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (No. 17K02901).

References

- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.), (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives, Complete edition*. New York: Longman.
- ETS (2004) iBT/Next Generation TOEFL Test Independent Writing Rubrics (Scoring Standards). Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/Writing_Rubrics.pdf
- Flower, L. & Hayes, J. (1981). A Cognitive Process theory of Writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (4), 365-387.
- Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., . . . Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from: <http://whatworks.ed.gov>
- Kamimura, T. (2000). Integration of Process and Product Orientation in EFL Writing Instruction. *RELC Journal*, 31(2), 1-28.
- Kamimura T., & Oi, K. (1998). Argumentative strategies in American and Japanese English. *World Englishes*, 17 (3), 307-323.
- Kamimura, T., & Oi, K. (2006). A Developmental Perspective on Academic Writing Instruction for Japanese EFL Students. *The Journal of ASIA TEFL*, 3 (1), 97-129.
- Matsuda P.K. (2010). English Writing in Japan: Toward Integration. *JACET Journal*, 50, 15-20.
- McKinley, J. (2006). Learning English Writing in a Japanese University: Developing Critical Argument and Establishing Writer Identity. *The Journal of ASIA TEFL*, 3 (2), 1-35.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. (2009). *Koto gakko gakushu shidoyoryo [Course of study for senior high school]*. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/kou/kou.pdf.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. (2016). Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2016/12/16/1375533
- Nagakura, W., & Kawano, M. (2016). Hihanteki shikoryoku (critical thinking) o sodateru paragraph writing no shidoan no kaihatsu. (Development of paragraph writing instruction to raise critical thinking.) *JASELE Saitama Proceedings*, 55-54
- Sasaki, M. (2004). A Multiple-Data Analysis of the 3.5-Year Development of EFL Student Writers. *Language Learning*, 54 (3), 525-582.

Tanaka, H., Hiromori, T., Yamanishi, H., & Hirose, K. (2007). *Kyoiku genba ni nezasita Eigo raityinngu kennkyuu o mezashite: Eisakubun no Shidou to Hyouka*. *JACET-CSCRB* 4, 55-72

Tsuji, K. (2016). Teaching Argumentative Writing through a Process-focused Instruction: The Effects of the Prewriting Activity on Student Perceived Learning. *Kyoto Daigaku Koutou Kyouiku Kenkyu*, 22, 77-85.

Appendix

Questionnaire for English Learning and English Writing

1. We would like to know how frequently you have practiced each English learning or English writing activity. Please mark a cell that best matches your choice.

		Never	Once a year	Once a semester	Once a month	Almost every week
1	Translating Japanese sentences into English					
2	Constructing English sentences using given words, phrases or expressions					
3	Writing informational English sentences to introduce something					
4	Expressing your own thoughts or opinions in a chunk of 3-5 English sentences					
5	Writing a speech or draft for a presentation					
6	Writing a paragraph					
7	Writing an essay (Here, an essay is defined as a component of multiple paragraphs to express one's thoughts)					
8	Summarizing what you have read					
9	Writing a review or a critique of what you have read					
10	Writing a journal in English					
11	Writing an e-mail in English					
12	Writing a letter in English					
13	Brainstorming or planning what to write before writing					
14	Reading materials in order to help you write paragraphs or an essay					
15	Revising what you have written					
16	Have had peer review or discussion on what you have written					

2. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement

		Do not agree at all	Do not agree	I am not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	It is difficult to come up with a good topic for writing.					
2	When I write English, I write a draft in Japanese first.					
3	I understand what a topic sentence is.					
4	I understand the basic structure of a paragraph.					
5	I understand how to write an essay.					
6	It is difficult to write English using correct grammar.					
7	Compared to Japanese, writing in English is an easier tool to express your ideas and thoughts.					
8	Writing is enjoyable. (Regardless of what language I use)					
9	I find it difficult to write English because I do not have good vocabulary to use in writing English.					
10	It is difficult to construct my opinion. (Regardless of what language I use)					
11	Reading magazines or books in English is an enjoyable activity.					
12	Writing English can be an important communication tool.					
13	I find it difficult to write because of a lack of information about the topic.					
14	I try to collect information written outside of classes by means of the Internet or reading materials.					
15	I use a paper dictionary when I run into a word I do not know.					
16	Writing English takes a lot of time.					

17	Reading supplemental materials is effective for better writing.					
18	Giving myself time to read related materials helps me to write something.					
19	Discussing the topic with someone helps me organize what to write.					
20	Discussing the topic in class gives me a better understanding of what to write.					
21	It is difficult to revise and arrange what I have written by myself.					
22	Sharing what we have written in class develops my intellect. My thinking becomes deeper when we share writing in class.					
23	I want to be good at writing e-mails in English.					
24	I study English writing because of the necessity to take tests such as TOEFL and EIKEN.					
25	I have had scarcely any experience of writing about what I think. Mostly I have had translating experiences.					
26	I have received feedback on what I have written.					
27	I have my own strategy for putting my thoughts together (regardless of language).					
28	Being able to write an essay in English will be beneficial for the future.					
29	I can provide strong arguments for supporting my claim.					