# Needs Analysis for the Improvement of the English Curriculum for the School of Human Welfare Studies : A Preliminary Study

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## 1. Introduction

The School of Human Welfare Studies (SHWS) of Kwansei Gakuin University opened in April 2008 and consists of three academic departments: the Department of Holistic Human Sciences, the Department of Social Organization Development, and the Department of Social Welfare. The undergraduate program of the SHWS has only first-year students (n=315) because it is the first year the program has been open. English is taught as part of the general education to both the first- and the second-year students. The curriculum for general English education was prepared prior to the launch of the SHWS by a preparation committee, which did not involve the present English teaching staff. As any curriculum needs to be adjusted according to the incoming students' needs, further development is required. Among students who have different academic and personal interests and future plans upon graduation, there is a strong possibility that they have different necessities, interests, and motivations to study English. Hence, the curriculum of the SHWS should be one that will satisfy students' interests and needs, and will be designed to be learner-centered.

One of the most efficient and effective methods of curriculum development is to conduct a needs analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Needs analysis (hereafter NA) is broadly defined as "the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arrange the needs according to priorities" (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1993, pp. 242-243) in the field of language teaching. NA is regarded as an essential part of the curriculum design in several different approaches, including the learner-centered approach (Nunan, 1988; Strevens, 1980; Tudor, 1996) and the task-based approach (Long & Crookes, 1992; Long, 2005). NA has been conducted not only in courses where English is taught to target specific purposes, e.g., English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Hutchison & Waters, 1987), and English for Academic Purposes (ASP) (Jordan, 1997), but also in courses where English is taught without any specific focuses (e.g., Seedhouse, 1996), including English for general education at Japanese colleges and universities (e.g., Ibaraki University (Kuwahara, Nakanishi & Komai, 2005) and among others).
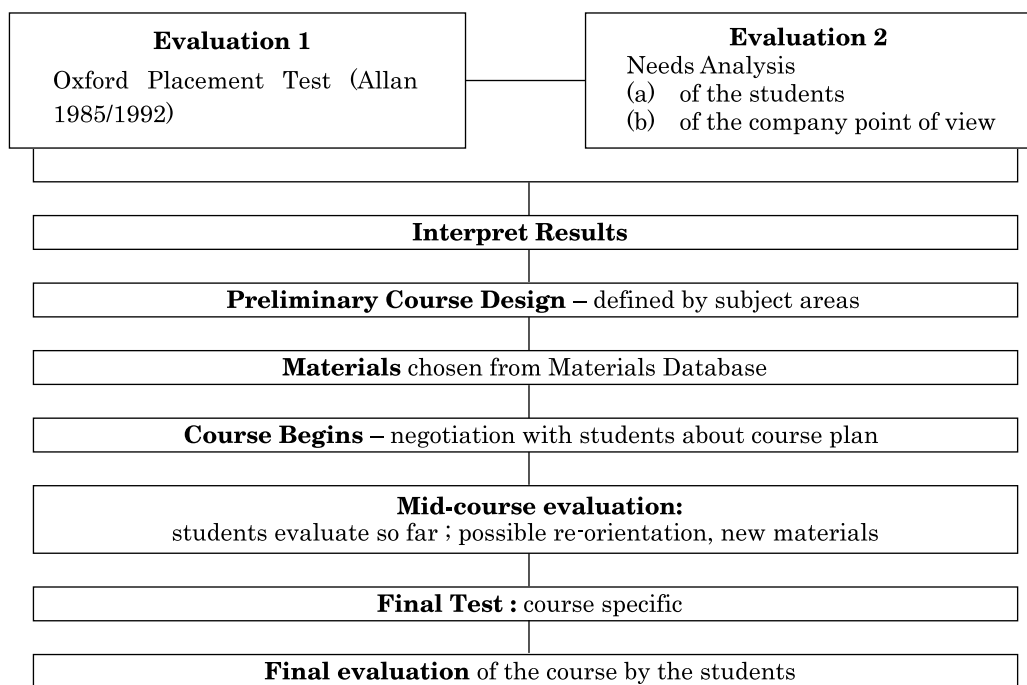
The NA results should be integrated in the curriculum design and development. Nelson (1992, 1994), for instance, proposed a model to link the results of NA with the results for placement tests with the curriculum design, as shown in Figure 1.

| **Evaluation 1** Oxford Placement Test (Allan 1985/1992) | **Evaluation 2** Needs Analysis (a) of the students (b) of the company point of view |
|---|---|

**Interpret Results**

**Preliminary Course Design –** defined by subject areas

**Materials** chosen from Materials Database

**Course Begins –** negotiation with students about course plan

**Mid-course evaluation:** students evaluate so far ; possible re-orientation, new materials

**Final Test :** course specific

**Final evaluation** of the course by the students

(West, 1994, p.14)

Figure 1: Nelson's Model for linking Needs Analysis to the Curriculum

Nelson's model is not readily applicable to the curriculum design for the SHWS with respect to two points. One is that the Oxford Placement test is comprised of only a grammar and a listening comprehension tests. Since language competence constitutes not only the ability to comprehend a language but also the ability to produce it and general knowledge, it cannot be measured only by grammar and comprehension tests. Furthermore, since the scoring for the Oxford Placement test needs to be manually conducted although mark sheets are readily available, it is not really feasible for a large number of students. The other point to consider is that the curriculum for the SHWS is not for ESP; hence, the NA of the company point of view in Evaluation 2 is not applicable to general English education. We therefore modified Nelson's model in the following ways outlined below.

The SHWS constructed a placement test comprised of listening and reading sections including grammar and vocabulary tests (Chronbach Alfa = 0.822) and scores could be ascertained within a relatively short period of time using a mark sheet reader. The source of information is not limited to students or to the institutions that students will work for in the future. More sources are available (Long, 2005; Richard et al., 1993; West, 1994). For example, Long (2005) listed several sources of information for NAs, e.g., published and unpublished studies, learners, applied linguists, and domain experts, and emphasized the value of triangulated sources[1]. Hence, more sources of information should be included
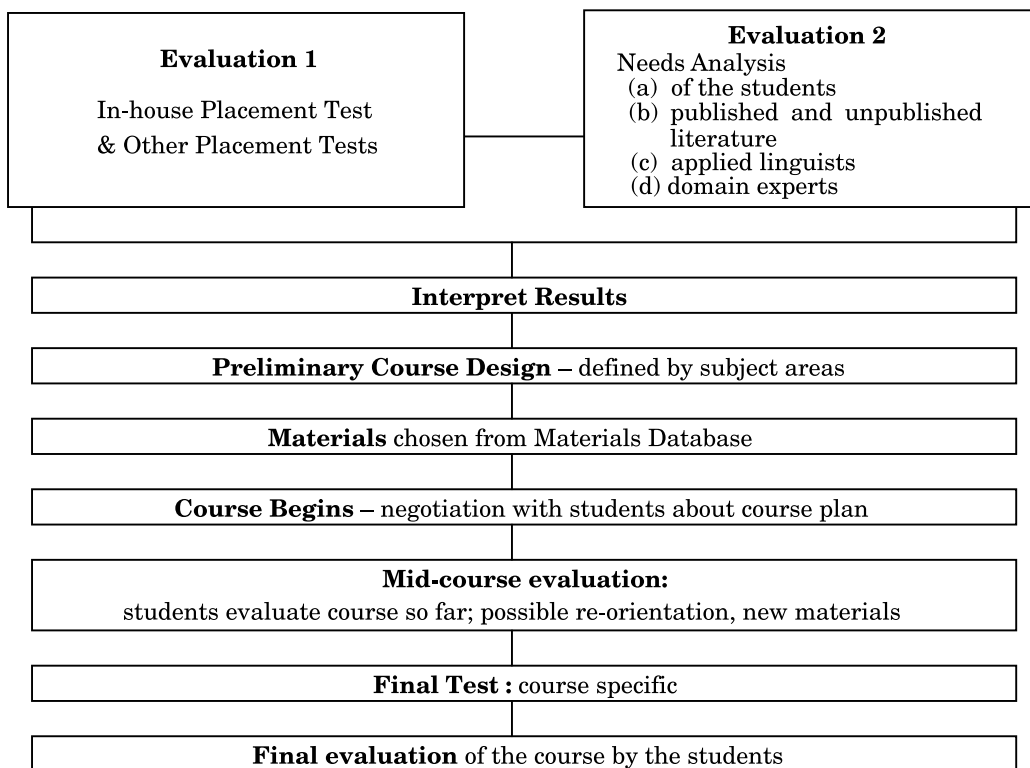
Figure 2: A Modified Model for linking Needs Analysis to the Curriculum

in Evaluation 2.

　In the present study, we will first conduct the NA of students. The students in the SHWS are all in their first year, and they have not yet found any specific reason to learn English, despite the fact that the English course is a part of the general education requirement. One of the reasons to conduct the NA of students is that it will help them identify their own aims and objectives in the language, which can be done by asking students to estimate the necessity and the priority of general objectives (Harding-Esch, 1982). The NAs of students will help students identify their objectives in studying English and will help teachers design and improve curriculums.

## ２．Needs Analysis of Students

### ２．1 Background – Diversity of students' learning experience

　Students who enroll in university have a wide range of experiences in studying English. For instance, some of them have visited or lived in English-speaking countries by the time they graduate from high school. In contrast, others have never been abroad, and have never taken any English classes taught by a native English teachers before entering university. In addition to this background diversity, there are several ways for students to gain admission to university: some are chosen on the basis of the regular entrance examination, others are chosen on a recommendation basis due to the applicants' excellent

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1　The procedure of triangulation involves a comparison of different sets of sources of data with one another to validate the interpretation.

achievements in sports or the arts, some are chosen because of excellence in their high school studies, and others are chosen on the basis of an entrance examination specialized for students returning from abroad.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education specified a new national curriculum for junior and senior high schools—the total number of hours for studying English was reduced to 3 hours per week in regular public junior high schools. However, there was an increase in the number of English classes provided in private high schools and Super English Language High Schools (SELHi)[2]. In some schools, classes are given by Japanese teachers, while in other schools, students attend classes conducted by native English speakers as well as by Japanese teachers. In addition to the mandatory education, some students go to preparatory schools and language schools for supplementary English classes in preparation for the university entrance examinations, as well as conversation classes outside of regular class hours.

There is a wealth of English examinations available to the average senior high school student. Some students devote hours of study to pass different levels of the English STEP (the Society for Testing English Proficiency) tests. Returnees, the students who have been abroad for more than a few years due to their parents' work commitment, are not rare in Japanese universities. Ishida (2007) pointed out that the English proficiency levels of individual students depend on their previous experience in studying English and the different methods and hours of exposure to English. In addition, the ways to be admitted to a university are diverse; therefore, teachers need to grasp new students' background of English, and construct an English curriculum that can accommodate this diversity. The results of the NA of students will be helpful for better understanding students and develop a curriculum in line with their needs.

## 2．2　Other reasons

When the current students graduate from the SHWS and start working, they will be able to provide us with information about the language proficiency required in their jobs. However, it will take several years for them to do so. Within the faculty of the SHWS, there are experts in various fields, such as general social work, welfare economics and politics, sports sciences and management, tanatology, and neurology and biomechanics. Since the students specialize by taking seminar courses in their chosen academic field when they are third-year students, it will be a few years before the faculty members can ascertain the skills and knowledge that the students tend to lack in order to work in that particular field.

As previously stated, although general English education in the SHWS is for both first-year and second-year students, the school has only first-year students at present. Therefore, in the future, there will have to be more informative learner NAs, which incorporate both the first-year and the second-

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2　"To promote the creation of schools which could serve a leading role in English education and the improvement of English teaching methods, upper secondary schools focusing on English education have been designated as "Super English Language High Schools SELHi" since 2002. These high schools are conducting practical research and development, curriculum development focusing on English education, teaching of certain subjects in English, and effective cooperation with universities and sister schools overseas." (Ministry of Education and Science).
(http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpac200201/hpac200201_2_015.html)

year students in the SHWS. In this case, we gave the NA questionnaires to students as a preliminary study for improving and developing the English curriculum. The report of this NA and its implications for the future in the English program of the SHWS will be discussed below.

## 3．Present Study
### 3．1 Participants
Out of 315 freshmen students studying at the SHWS, 264 returned the questionnaire. All of those who replied were native speakers of Japanese.

### 3．2 Types of instruments for needs analysis
Several different types of research instruments are available for NAs. West (1994) listed ten instruments:

1．Pre-course placement test
2．Entry test on arrival
3．Self-placement test
4．Observation of classes
5．Surveys based on questionnaires
6．Structured interviews
7．Learner diaries
8．Case studies
9．Final evaluation/feedback
10．Previous research

The most efficient and objective methods to elicit data from a large number of students are placement tests (1-3) and surveys based on questionnaires. A placement test had already been conducted; thus, it was our aim to conduct a survey based on a questionnaire.

### 3．3 Areas covered in the questionnaire
Although the areas to be covered in the NA will vary according to the purpose of the survey, West (1994) also suggests that most of the nine areas below should be covered.

A　General personal background
B　Occupational specialty or academic field
C　Language background
D　Attitudinal and motivational factors
E　Relevance of language to target use
F　Priority of basic language skills in target use
G　Functional registers and job tasks in target use
H　Course content and method of instruction
I　Reaction to project

The nine areas were interpreted in the context of the SHWS below. Question items that required

the students to describe their answers are indicated by # and all of the question items used in the questionnaire are available in the Appendix.

## A.　General background information

Almost all of the SHWS students who participated in the present study were between 19 and 20 years old and were native Japanese speakers. Some of these students had been abroad for more than a year before junior high school, but the number of such students was not recorded; therefore, questions pertaining to experiences abroad were given. Because learning strategies influence whether students will be able to achieve the objectives (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), additional questions were included to survey the preferred learning styles of the students.

Q 1．Have you ever been abroad?
Q 2．If the answer to Q1 is 'yes', how many times?
Q 3．How long were you there?
Q 4．When did you go there?
Q 5．Have you ever been to an English-speaking country?
Q 6．If the answer to Q5 is 'yes', which country did you go to?
Q 7．Did you attend an educational institution there?
Q 8．If the answer to Q7 is 'yes', what kind of institution did you attend?
#Q 9．If you plan to go abroad while you are studying at Kwansei Gakuin University, please describe the purpose of going abroad.
#Q10．How did you study English before you entered Kwansei Gakuin University?

## B. Occupational specialty or academic field

#Q11．Which academic field would you like to study at the SHWS?

## C. Language background

Since we had previously asked questions related to language background, this question was not given in the present study.

## D. Attitudinal and motivational factors

Q12．I would like to study English.
Q13．I need to study English.

## E. Relevance of language to target use

As it is difficult for first-year university students to have concrete target use, no relevant questions were given.

## F. Priority of basic language skills in target use

The NA questionnaire will function as a self-assessment tool for the achievement of objectives (Dickinson, 1987). Question items about four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and overall abilities in English) were included in this self-assessment. The students were asked to assess several abilities in English on a scale of one to seven (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat

disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree), when they did not know, they could choose the answer "I do not know."

Self-assessment

Q14. I am good at reading.

Q15. I am good at writing.

Q16. I am good at listening.

Q17. I am good at speaking.

Q18. I am good in English overall.

Q19. Which skill would you like to develop most: reading, listening, writing, or speaking?

Basic language skills

Q20. I would like to be able to make a presentation in English.

Q21. I would like to be able to discuss topics in English.

Q22. I would like to be able to debate in English.

Q23. I would like to be able to express my opinions in English.

Q24. I would like to be able to negotiate in business in English.

Q25. I would like to become capable of daily conversation without difficulties while living abroad.

Q26. I would like to become capable of daily conversation without difficulties while traveling abroad.

Q27. I would like to be able to introduce myself in English.

Q28. I would like to be able to read English texts written about general topics without using a dictionary.

Q29. I would like to be able to read English newspapers without using a dictionary.

Q30. I would like to be able to read long texts faster.

Q31. I would like teachers to review grammar in class.

Q32. I would like to increase vocabulary relevant to general knowledge.

Q33. I would like to increase vocabulary relevant to my academic interest.

Q34. I would like to be able to write letters in English to my friends.

Q35. I would like to be able to write letters in English to teachers or someone older than me using polite expressions.

Q36. I would like to be able to write business letters in English using polite expressions.

Q37. I would like to be able to write academic papers in English, which I will be able to submit as an assignment in graduate school.

Q38. I would like to obtain knowledge about cultures in English-speaking countries and cross-cultural communication.

**G. Functional registers and job tasks in target use**

Because it is difficult for first-year university students to imagine functional registers and job tasks, no related questions were given to the students. Instead, they were asked about the topic that they are currently most interested in.

#Q39. What have you been most interested in recently?

**H. Course content and method of instruction**

　　#Q40. Which areas would you like your textbooks to cover?

　　#Q41. What do you think of the current streaming system?

　　#Q42. Do you have any requests regarding English courses and classes?


**I. Reaction to project**

　An effective way to improve fluency is to give as much input as possible to the learners. Students, therefore, were required to read five graded readers published by Oxford University Press (Oxford Readers) in a semester and to answer the questions at the back of the readers. Then, they submitted the answers as a book report, a regular assignment common to all of the English in Reading classes. Fundamentally, graded readers are novels or plays adapted into simplified English with varying levels of difficulty. There were also more specific objectives: (i) to familiarize students with the vocabulary they have learned; (ii) to improve reading speed; (iii) to make it a habit to read English texts and to comprehend them in English, thereby helping the students become more fluent in English; and (iv) to enhance students' autonomous learning.

　Oxford Readers are divided into different levels (1 to 6). The students were instructed to purchase readers belonging to the levels specified below.

　　Elementary Level :　　Level 1 or above

　　Intermediate Level :　Level 2 or above

　　Upper Level :　　　　Level 3 or above


　　Q43. Which level of Oxford Readers did you read?

　　Q44. Do you think that the level of the Oxford Reader that you read was appropriate for you?

　　Q45. Would you like to read different levels of readers?

　　Q46. Do you think that your reading speed improved over the course of reading the five readers?

　　Q47. How many hours did it take to finish one Reader?

　#Q48. Do you have any comments on Oxford Readers?


　The number of multiple-choice question items was 40, and the number of questions that required students to describe their opinions was 8. The questions and answer choices were printed on A4-sized sheets of paper.


**3．4 Procedure**

　The individual class instructors distributed the questionnaire at the end of regular classes at the end of Spring Semester and written instructions on how to complete it were given in Japanese. All of the questions and answer choices were written in Japanese as well as English (See Apendix). The students were instructed to read the multiple-choice questions and to mark their answers correspondingly on the mark sheet. They were also encouraged to write their comments for the eight elicit-type questions. Some students completed the questionnaire as a homework assignment while others completed it in class. All questionnaires were submitted either to the administration office or handed to the class

instructor directly.

## 4．Scoring

A mark sheet reader was used to score the answers and then the data was saved in Microsoft Excel format. Each of the descriptive answers was copied as an Excel-formatted data item and was placed into a group of similar answers. All of the data were analyzed item by item, as indicated in the tables and figures in the next section.

## 5．Results

The numbers that follow the bars in the figures indicate percentages and the numbers in parentheses indicate the number of students.

### A. Experience of going abroad

Q1. Have you ever been abroad?
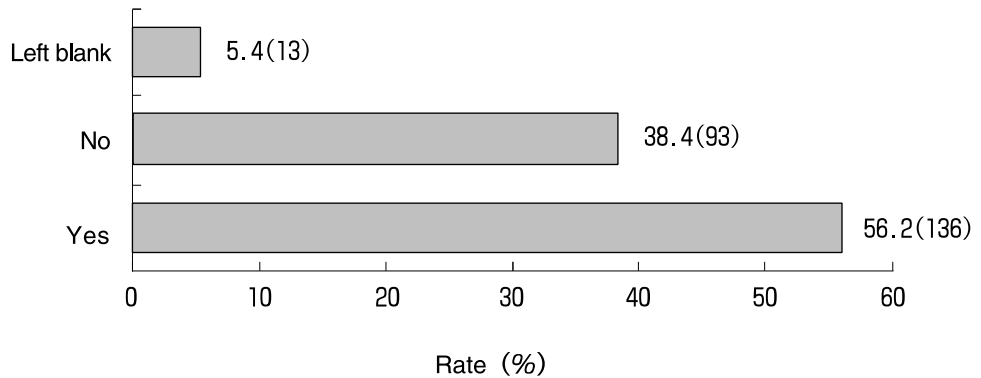


Q2. If the answer of Q1 is 'yes', how many times?
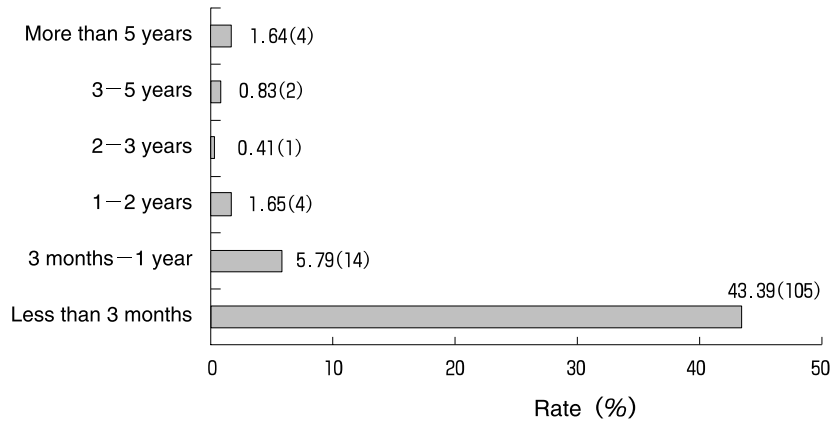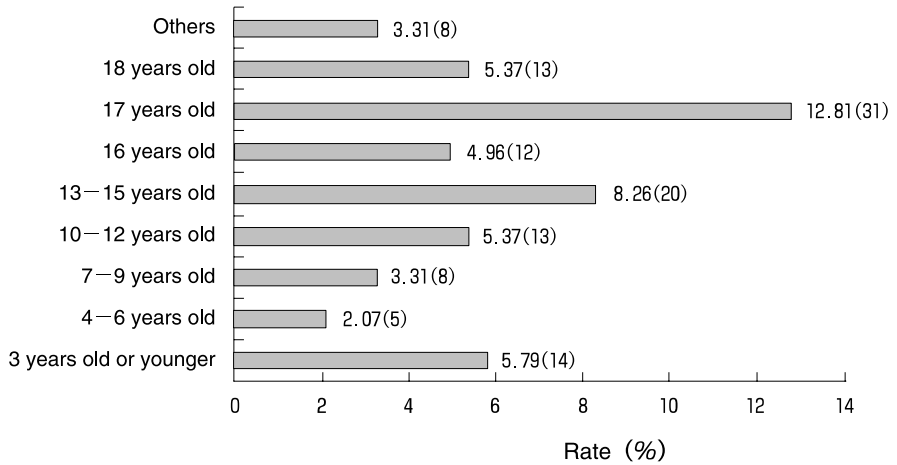
## Q3. How long were you there?

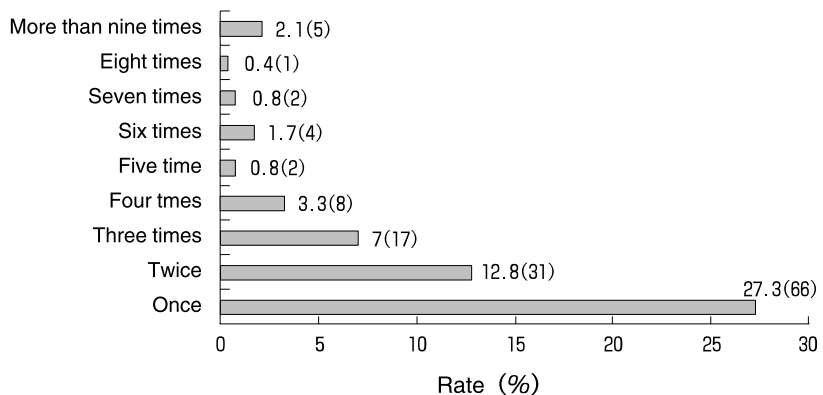| Category | Rate (%) (n) |
|---|---|
| More than 5 years | 1.64(4) |
| 3－5 years | 0.83(2) |
| 2－3 years | 0.41(1) |
| 1－2 years | 1.65(4) |
| 3 months－1 year | 5.79(14) |
| Less than 3 months | 43.39(105) |

Rate（%）

## Q4. When did you go there?

| Category | Rate (%) (n) |
|---|---|
| Others | 3.31(8) |
| 18 years old | 5.37(13) |
| 17 years old | 12.81(31) |
| 16 years old | 4.96(12) |
| 13－15 years old | 8.26(20) |
| 10－12 years old | 5.37(13) |
| 7－9 years old | 3.31(8) |
| 4－6 years old | 2.07(5) |
| 3 years old or younger | 5.79(14) |

Rate（%）

## Q5. Have you ever been to an English-speaking country?

| Category | Rate (%) (n) |
|---|---|
| No | 11.6(28) |
| Yes | 39.7(96) |

Rate（%）
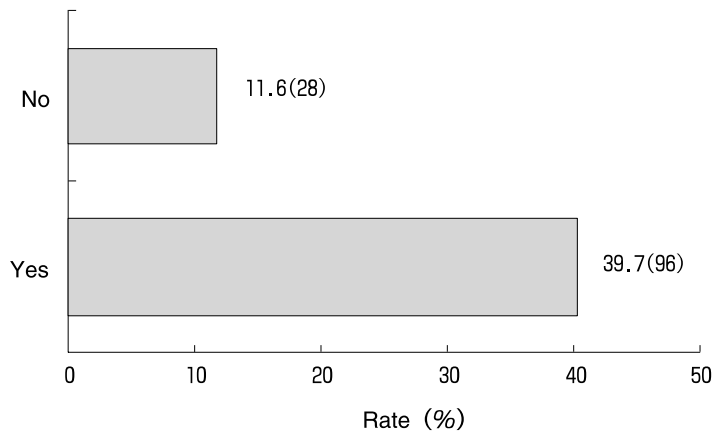
Q6. If the answer to Q5 is yes, which country did you go to?

| Country | N |
|---|---|
| USA | 28 |
| UK | 12 |
| Canada | 8 |
| Australia | 22 |
| New Zealand | 8 |
| Hong Kong | 2 |
| Singapore | 8 |
| Malaysia | 2 |
| Others | 8 |

Q7. Did you attend any educational institution?

| Category | Rate (%) |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 2.31 (0) |
| No | 68.46 (89) |
| Yes | 29.23 (38) |

Rate（%）
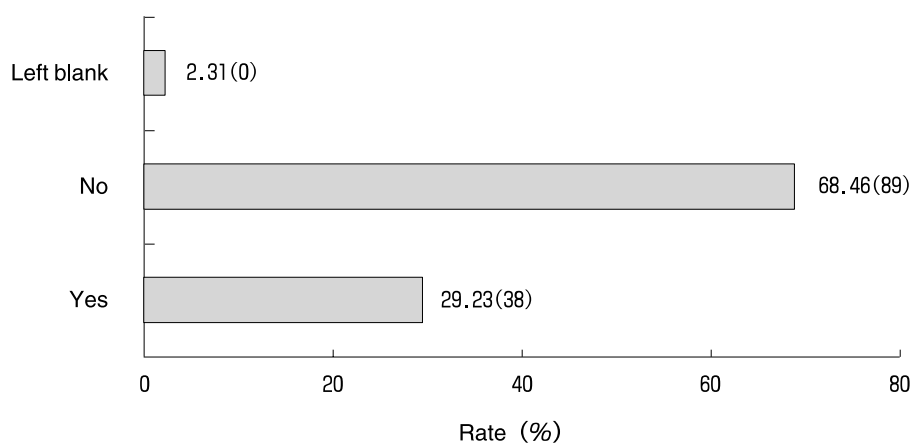
Q8. If the answer for Q6 is 'yes', what kind of institution did you attend?

| Types of Institution | N |
|---|---|
| Language Schools | 12 |
| Local Elementary Schools | 13 |
| Local Junior High Schools | 11 |
| Local Senior High Schools | 14 |
| Japanese Schools | 3 |
| Others | 8 |
| Left Blank | 1 |

#Q9. If you have plans to go abroad while you are studying at Kwansei Gakuin University, please describe the purpose of your intended travel.

| Purpose | N |
|---|---|
| Sightseeing | 71 |
| Language Study | 57 |
| Study Tours | 18 |
| Visiting Friends | 7 |
| Others | 14 |
| Total | 167 |

**The preferred strategy of learning**

#Q10. How did you study English before you entered Kwansei Gakuin University?

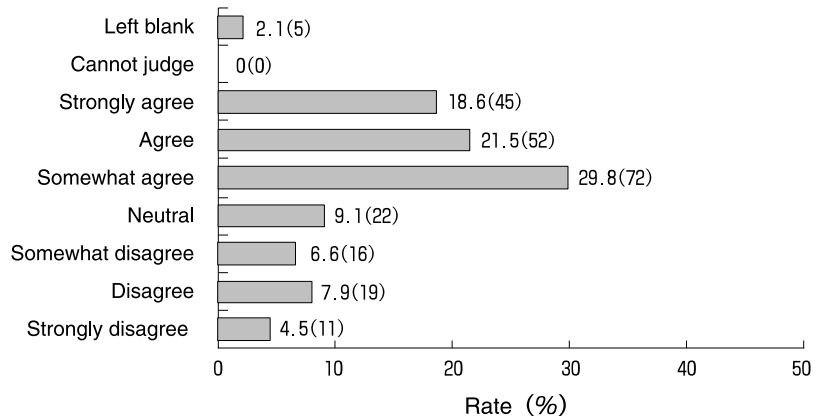| Answer | N |
|---|---|
| I studied English at high school. | 38 |
| I used textbooks and workbooks at my high school. | 24 |
| I attended oral communication classes at high school. | 2 |
| All of the subjects including English were taught in English. | 1 |
| The main objective was being able to debate and to make a presentation in English. | 3 |
| I attended a writing class in English. | 2 |
| I went to a preparatory school. | 23 |
| I went to a language school. | 7 |
| I watched English programs on TV and listened to English radio programs. | 3 |
| I studied English by myself. | 1 |
| I participated in a short home-stay program. | 8 |
| I attended a conference given in English. | 1 |
| I lived in America and went to a local high school there. | 2 |
| I traveled abroad. | 1 |
| My parents taught me a little English before entering junior high school | 1 |
| I talked with my father in English. | 1 |
| I was influenced by my sister. | 1 |
| I often talked in English with my friends and teachers. | 13 |
| I often tried to enjoy studying English for fun. | 5 |
| I often read English books for children. | 1 |
| I often watched English movies (with or without subtitles). | 7 |
| I often listened to English songs. | 5 |

## B. Occupational specialty or academic field

#Q11. Which academic field would you like to study at the SHWS?

| Item | N |
|---|---|
| Social Welfare | 46 |
| Sports Science | 45 |
| Child Welfare | 18 |
| Spirituality | 8 |
| Welfare for Persons with Disabilities | 9 |
| Welfare Economics | 6 |
| Aging | 5 |
| Social Enterprise | 5 |
| Psychology | 4 |
| Economics | 3 |
| Politics | 3 |
| Sport Management | 3 |
| Welfare for Children | 3 |
| Welfare for the Aged | 3 |
| Integration of Sports and Welfare | 2 |
| International Cooperation | 2 |
| Medical Welfare | 2 |
| Multicultural (Symbiotic) Society | 2 |
| Necessity of Welfare in Modern Society – How can we become happy? | 2 |
| Social Work of the World | 2 |
| Sports Biomechanics | 2 |
| Tanatology | 2 |
| Biomechanics | 1 |
| Brain Science Relevant to Sports | 1 |
| Child Development | 1 |
| Communication | 1 |
| Competition Power Improvement | 1 |
| Cross-Cultural Studies | 1 |
| Environmental Issues | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Haven't decided yet | 1 |
| Health Management in Sports | 1 |
| Hidetoshi Nakata | 1 |
| Human Life | 1 |
| International Issues | 1 |
| Management | 1 |
| Medical Related Fields | 1 |
| Medical Social Work | 1 |
| NPOs in Europe and America | 1 |
| Relationship between Sports and Societies | 1 |
| Social Education | 1 |
| Sociology | 1 |
| Sport Nutrition | 1 |
| Sport welfare | 1 |
| Sports for Persons with Disabilities | 1 |
| Care Work | 1 |
| Tourism | 1 |
| Trading | 1 |
| Welfare for Local Areas | 1 |
| Welfare for Those with Mental Disorders (e.g., depression, PTSD) | 1 |
| Welfare Politics | 1 |
| Women's Studies | 1 |
| Total | 206 |

## D. Attitudinal and motivational factors

### Q12. I would like to study English.

| | |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 2.1(5) |
| Cannot judge | 0(0) |
| Strongly agree | 18.6(45) |
| Agree | 21.5(52) |
| Somewhat agree | 29.8(72) |
| Neutral | 9.1(22) |
| Somewhat disagree | 6.6(16) |
| Disagree | 7.9(19) |
| Strongly disagree | 4.5(11) |

Rate（%）

### Q13. I need to study English.

| | |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 0.8(2) |
| Cannot judge | 0(0) |
| Strongly agree | 33.1(80) |
| Agree | 23.1(56) |
| Somewhat agree | 24.4(59) |
| Neutral | 8.3(20) |
| Somewhat disagree | 5.4(13) |
| Disagree | 4.5(11) |
| Strongly disagree | 0.4(1) |

Rate（%）
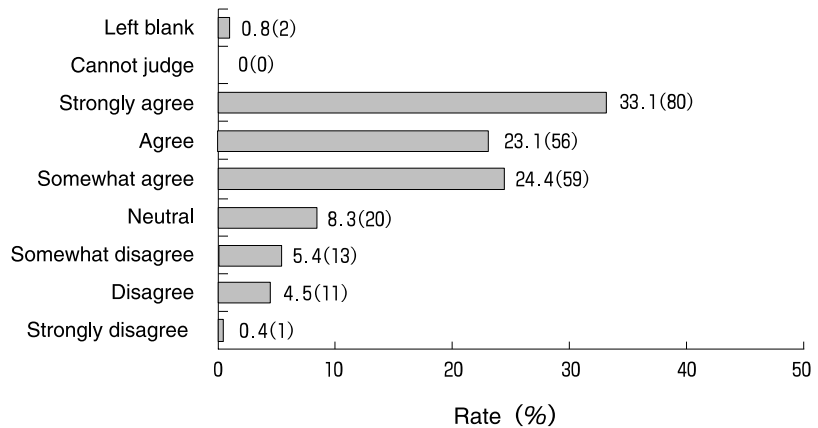
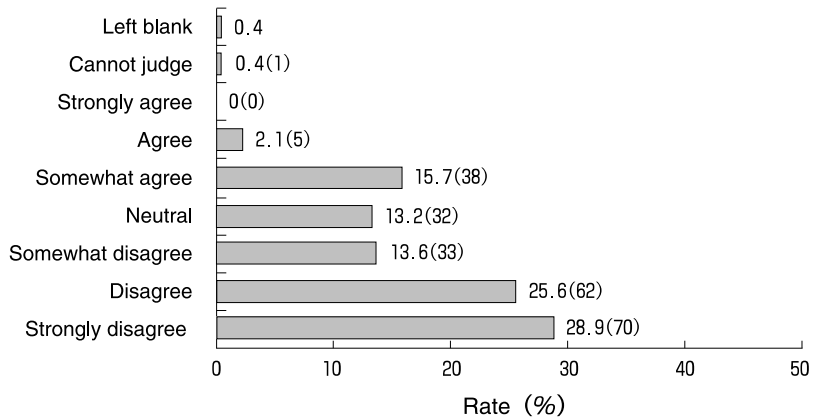## F. Priority of basic language skills in target use
Self-assessment

### Q14. I am good at reading

| | |
|---|---|
| Cannot judge | 0.4(1) |
| Strongly agree | 0(0) |
| Agree | 5.8(14) |
| Somewhat agree | 21.9(53) |
| Neutral | 15.7(38) |
| Somewhat disagree | 10.7(26) |
| Disagree | 19.8(48) |
| Strongly disagree | 25.6(62) |

Rate（%）

## Q15. I am good at writing.

| | Rate（%） |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 0.4 |
| Cannot judge | 0.4(1) |
| Strongly agree | 0(0) |
| Agree | 2.1(5) |
| Somewhat agree | 15.7(38) |
| Neutral | 13.2(32) |
| Somewhat disagree | 13.6(33) |
| Disagree | 25.6(62) |
| Strongly disagree | 28.9(70) |

## Q16. I am good at listening.

| | Rate（%） |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 0.8(2) |
| Cannot judge | 0(0) |
| Strongly agree | 1.2(3) |
| Agree | 2.5(6) |
| Somewhat agree | 17.4(42) |
| Neutral | 13.2(32) |
| Somewhat disagree | 9.1(22) |
| Disagree | 23.6(57) |
| Strongly disagree | 32.2(78) |

## Q17. I am good at speaking.

| | Rate（%） |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 0.8(2) |
| Cannot judge | 0(0) |
| Strongly agree | 1.7(2) |
| Agree | 2.1(5) |
| Somewhat agree | 9.1(14) |
| Neutral | 14.5(35) |
| Somewhat disagree | 13.2(32) |
| Disagree | 19.4(47) |
| Strongly disagree | 39.3(95) |

Q18. I am good in English overall.

| | Rate (%) |
|---|---|
| Left blank | 0.4(1) |
| Cannot judge | 0.4(1) |
| Strongly agree | 0.4(1) |
| Agree | 1.7(4) |
| Somewhat agree | 12.4(30) |
| Neutral | 19.4(47) |
| Somewhat disagree | 8.3(20) |
| Disagree | 21.5(52) |
| Strongly disagree | 35.5(86) |

Q19. Which skill would you like to develop most: reading, listening, writing, or speaking?

| | Rate (%) |
|---|---|
| Something else | 1.69(4) |
| Speaking | 59.49(141) |
| Writing | 13.5(32) |
| Listening | 14.77(35) |
| Reading | 10.55(26) |

## Basic language skills

The students were instructed to assess to what extent they agree with the statement on a scale of one to seven (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neutral, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, and 7=strongly agree). Then, the means for Questions 18 to 36 were calculated. The results are listed below.

(N=264)

| Item | Mean |
|---|---|
| Q20. I would like to be able to make a presentation in English. | 3.25 |
| Q21. I would like to be able to discuss topics in English. | 3.68 |
| Q22. I would like to be able to debate in English. | 3.48 |
| Q23. I would like to be able to express my opinions in English. | 4.34 |
| Q24. I would like to be able to negotiate in business in English. | 4.04 |
| Q25. I would like to become capable of daily conversation without difficulties while living abroad. | 4.83 |
| Q26. I would like to become capable of daily conversation without difficulties while traveling abroad. | 5.36 |
| Q27. I would like to be able to introduce myself in English. | 5.16 |
| Q28. I would like to be able to read English texts written about general topics without using a dictionary. | 4.92 |
| Q29. I would like to be able to read English newspapers without using a dictionary. | 4.61 |
| Q30. I would like to be able to read long texts faster. | 4.48 |
| Q31. I would like teachers to review grammar in class. | 4.48 |
| Q32. I would like to increase vocabulary relevant to general knowledge. | 5.1 |
| Q33. I would like to increase vocabulary relevant to my academic interest. | 3.89 |
| Q34. I would like to be able to write letters in English to my friends. | 4.21 |
| Q35. I would like to be able to write letters in English to teachers and someone older than me using polite expressions. | 4.08 |
| Q36. I would like to be able to write business letters in English using polite expressions. | 3.9 |
| Q37. I would like to be able to write academic papers in English, which I will be able to submit as an assignment in graduate school. | 3.69 |
| Q38. I would like to obtain knowledge about cultures in English-speaking countries and cross-cultural communication. | 4.55 |

## G. Functional registers and job tasks in target use

#Q39. What have you been most interested in recently?

| Item | N |
|---|---|
| Hobbies | 60 |
| Sports | 47 |
| Music | 31 |
| Social Work | 18 |
| Societies and Social Problems | 18 |
| Communication | 12 |
| Part-Time Jobs | 5 |
| Volunteer Activities | 5 |
| Human Relationships | 4 |
| Others | 51 |
| Total | 251 |

## H. Course content and method of instruction

#Q40. Which areas would you like your textbooks to cover?

| Item | N |
|---|---|
| Sports | 73 |
| Cultures | 30 |
| Welfare | 28 |
| Natural Sciences | 14 |
| Cross-cultural Communication | 13 |
| Literature | 11 |
| Economics | 5 |
| Sociology | 4 |
| Business | 2 |
| Speech | 1 |
| Space Engineering | 1 |
| Travel Abroad | 1 |
| Arts | 1 |
| Animals | 1 |
| Study Abroad | 1 |
| History | 1 |
| Total | 187 |

#Q41. What do you think of the current streaming system?

Answers written in bold indicate items relating to dissatisfaction about the current class levels.
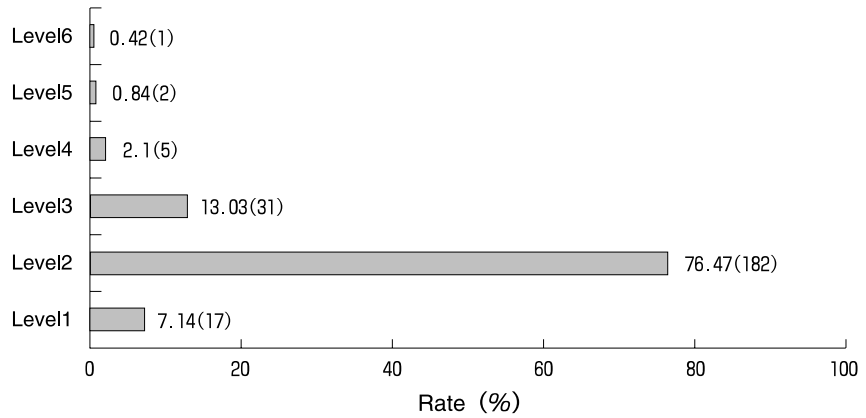
| Item | N |
|---|---|
| **There are considerable differences in proficiency levels between the members of the current class.** | 1 |
| **I would like to be streamed into a different level and the class size should be smaller.** | 1 |
| **There are considerable differences in proficiency levels between the members of the current class. Therefore, more classes with different levels should be made.** | 2 |
| **I would like to take the placement test again.** | 2 |
| **I want to have a better streaming system.** | 2 |
| **I would like to attend the lowest possible class.** | 3 |
| **Please place us into classes whose levels better match our levels.** | 5 |
| **I would like to be placed in a different level.** | 6 |
| **I would like to go to a lower class or make the level of the current class easier.** | 14 |
| I cannot catch up in the current class. | 1 |
| I would like to stay in the elementary class. | 1 |
| Placement tests should be given regularly and students should be streamed according to the results. | 1 |
| I would like to stay in the intermediate class. | 1 |
| I am not very happy about the same number of credits being given in different levels. | 1 |
| Place sports-recommended students and others into different classes. | 1 |
| I would like to be in a class where I can review grammar. | 1 |
| I would like (teachers) to help me improve my English and go to the next level. | 1 |
| If I cannot pass the intermediate course, I would like to go to the elementary class. | 2 |
| Total | 83 |

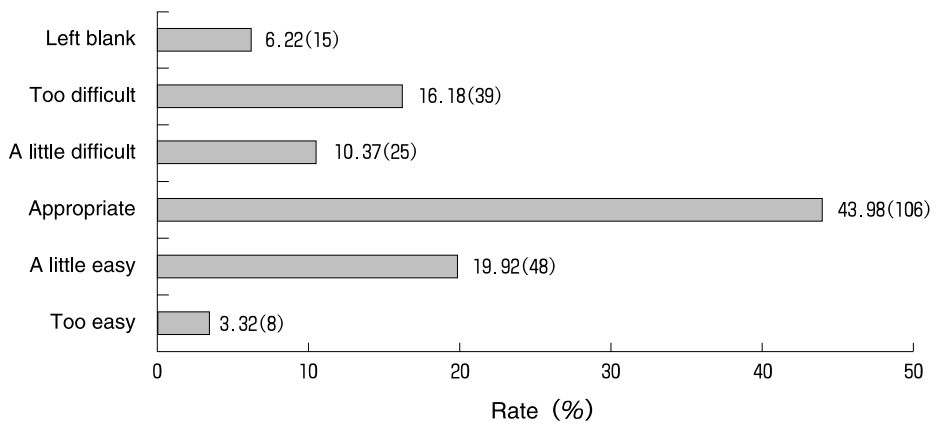#Q42. Do you have any requests about English courses and classes?

| Item | N |
|---|---|
| Please reduce the number of assignments. | 5 |
| I would like to review grammar. | 4 |
| I would like to have easier materials. | 4 |
| I would like teachers to speak more slowly. | 4 |
| I would like to study for the TOEIC test. | 3 |
| I would like teachers to explain important matters like about examinations in Japanese. | 3 |
| I would like to study something more difficult. | 3 |
| Please translate handouts into Japanese. | 2 |
| Native speakers of English are more helpful to learn practical English. | 2 |
| I would like to improve my speaking ability. | 2 |
| I would like teachers to explain things in Japanese more. | 2 |
| I prefer learning English in an enjoyable atmosphere. | 2 |
| Please teach at a slower pace. | 1 |
| Please explain things in Japanese too. | 1 |
| Please do not make the study content more difficult. | 1 |
| I would like to watch movies. | 1 |
| I would like to improve in my speaking ability. | 1 |
| I would like to improve my pronunciation. | 1 |
| I would like to have more dictation activities. | 1 |
| I would like to have more assignments. | 1 |
| I would like to communicate in English more. | 1 |
| I would like to attend a smaller sized class. | 1 |
| I sometimes cannot understand. | 1 |
| I could enjoy studying English. | 1 |
| Total | 52 |

## I. Reaction to project

### Q43. Which level of the Oxford Readers did you read?

| Level | Rate (%) |
|-------|----------|
| Level6 | 0.42(1) |
| Level5 | 0.84(2) |
| Level4 | 2.1(5) |
| Level3 | 13.03(31) |
| Level2 | 76.47(182) |
| Level1 | 7.14(17) |

Rate（%）

### Q44. Do you think that the level of the Oxford Reader you read was appropriate for you?

| | Rate (%) |
|--|----------|
| Left blank | 6.22(15) |
| Too difficult | 16.18(39) |
| A little difficult | 10.37(25) |
| Appropriate | 43.98(106) |
| A little easy | 19.92(48) |
| Too easy | 3.32(8) |

Rate（%）

### Q45. Would you like to read different levels of the Oxford Readers?
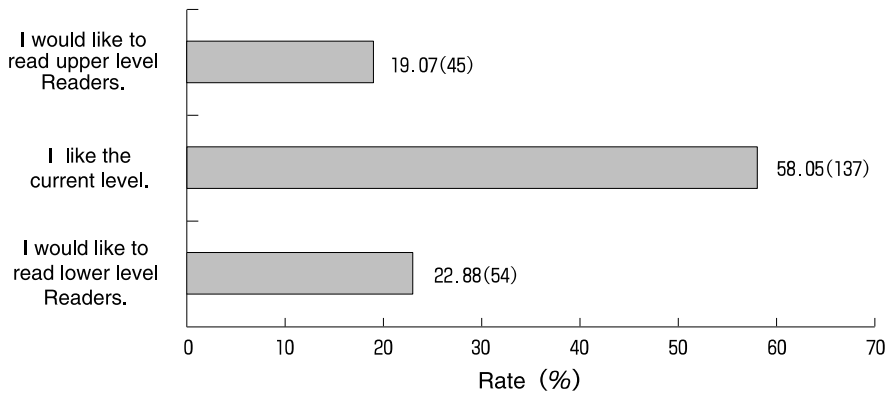
| | Rate (%) |
|--|----------|
| I would like to read upper level Readers. | 19.07(45) |
| I like the current level. | 58.05(137) |
| I would like to read lower level Readers. | 22.88(54) |

Rate（%）

Q46. Do you think that your reading speed improved over the course of reading the five Readers?

Became slower 4.33(10)
Did not change 63.2(146)
Became faster 32.47(75)

Rate（%）

Q47. How many hours did it take to finish one Reader?

More than 6 hours 8.9(21)
5－6 hours 0.42(1)
4－5 hours 9.75(23)
3－4 hours 11.44(27)
2－3 hours 30.08(71)
1－2 hours 33.9(80)
Less than one hour 5.51(13)

Rate（%）
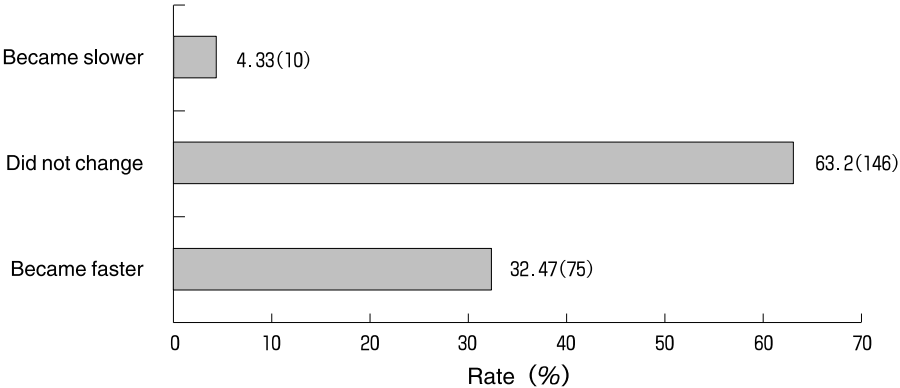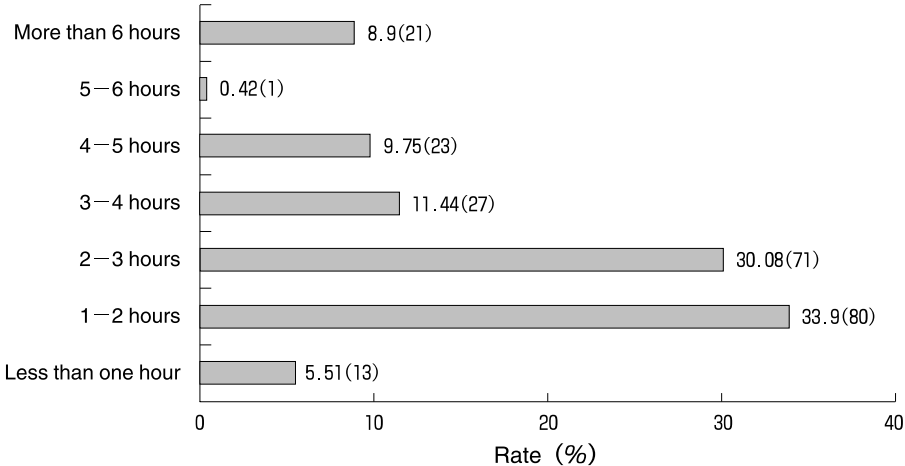
#Q48. Do you have any comments on Oxford Readers?

**Negative Answers**

| Answers | N |
|---|---|
| It was difficult to finish a Reader every other week. | 7 |
| The stories in the Readers were not interesting. | 2 |
| I could not read the Readers well. | 1 |
| I am not interested in the Readers. | 2 |
| It does not make sense to read the Readers. | 2 |
| I could not find time to read the Readers. | 2 |
| The level of the Reader was a little too high for me. | 39 |
| The level of the Reader was a little too low for me. | 5 |
| It took more time than I had expected. | 3 |
| The ease of comprehension of the Readers categorized in the same level differed. | 1 |
| The level of the Readers did not match my level. | 1 |
| Reading the Readers was time-consuming. | 9 |
| No photos were included in the Readers. | 1 |
| Answering questions about the contents was difficult. | 3 |
| Questions about the contents were very difficult. | 4 |

**Positive Effects**

| Answers | N |
|---|---|
| The Readers were interesting. | 16 |
| I enjoyed reading the Readers. | 14 |
| Reading the Readers was useful for me. | 13 |
| My reading ability improved. | 7 |
| My reading speed became faster. | 6 |
| The level of the Readers was suitable for me and I could enjoy them. | 6 |
| Reading the Readers was not as difficulty as I thought. | 5 |
| When I finished a Reader, I felt a sense of achievement. | 3 |
| I could familiarize myself with English. | 3 |
| I could read the Readers without using a dictionary, which was a surprise for me. | 3 |
| My vocabulary increased. | 3 |
| I would like to continue reading the Readers. | 2 |
| I enjoyed using English by reading the Readers. | 1 |
| I would like to challenge myself with the upper levels of Readers. | 1 |
| I would like to read the original novels of the Readers. | 1 |

**Other Answers**

| | |
|---|---|
| I read the Readers when I was a senior high school student. | 3 |
| I need to increase my vocabulary. | 1 |
| Even if the Readers are written in simple English, it still takes time to finish reading them. | 1 |

## 6．Discussion

The purpose of the present study is to conduct a needs analysis of students by using a questionnaire whose question items covered multiple areas. The results will be integrated in the curriculum so as to make it more learner-centered.

### 6．1 General background information

Experience of going abroad

More than 50% of the students went abroad prior to their admission to university and approximately 25% of the students went abroad twice or more when they were junior high or senior high school students for a relatively short period of time. Students who plan on going abroad in the future cited sightseeing as the most frequent purpose.

Preferred learning strategy

Many of the students had studied English in high school and had taken supplementary lessons at preparatory schools and attended language schools to prepare for the entrance examinations. Their typical method of studying English was based on rote learning, such as memorizing vocabulary, grammar rules, and sentence structure patterns. Many of the students tried to read and listen to English as much and as often as possible. These results indicate that the students tend towards a passive and non-participatory style of learning. One of the reasons why they adopted such a style could be due to Japanese culture (James, 1980), and the other possible reason could be due to the lack of opportunities to communicate in English. Japanese society is almost homogeneous with respect to language in daily use. Most students do not have any opportunities to use English outside of school.

Some students tried to enjoy studying English by watching English movies and listening to CDs and English songs and others tried to communicate with foreigners in English to create opportunities to use English.

### 6．2 Academic field of interest

The most popular academic fields that students showed interest in were social welfare, sports science, and child welfare, however their answers were still relatively vague. Since all of the students were in their first year, they have not yet attended courses related to specific academic fields. For this reason, it is likely that the students have not yet obtained sufficient knowledge to be interested in any specific academic field.

### 6．3 Attitudinal and motivational factors

The students seemed to realize the need to study English but they were not always willing to put in the time and effort to do so.

### 6．4 Priority of basic language skills

Self-assessment

Many of them felt that they are not good at speaking English and would like to improve their speaking abilities.

Basic language skills

The mean scores for the questions range from 3 to 5. This can be interpreted that the students felt the need to improve all of the basic skills to a certain extent. The question items whose mean scores were over 5 were the following.

> Q26. I would like to become capable of daily conversation without difficulties while traveling abroad.
> Q27. I would like to be able to introduce myself in English.
> Q32. I would like to increase vocabulary relevant to general knowledge.

The students would like to improve basic skills that are helpful in daily use such as daily conversation, self-introduction, and the increase of vocabulary relevant to general knowledge, rather than academic English skills and skills used in business.

### ６．５ Topics of interest to students: course content and method of instruction

The most popular topics cited by students were hobbies, sports, music, social work, and social issues. The most popular areas that they would like teachers to address were sports, culture (including cross-cultural communication), welfare, and natural science. The results indicate that the areas that teaching materials should cover are both academic fields (welfare and sports) as well as culture and natural science.

The streaming system

The results indicated that quite a few students would like to attend different level classes. The students were placed into three levels (one upper level class, nine intermediate level classes, and one elementary level class) according to the results of the placement test given in April 2008. Since only one class was offered at the upper and the elementary levels, not all of the students' proficiency levels matched the class levels, which caused several complaints.

Requests about English courses and classes

Requests will be carefully considered to improve the current curriculum.

### ６．６ Reaction to extensive reading assignments

The students were assigned to read five graded readers in a semester. The purpose of this assignment is to improve fluency through a large amount of input. More specific objectives were as follows: (i) to familiarize them with the vocabulary they have learned; (ii) to improve reading speed; (iii) to make it a habit to read English texts and to comprehend them in English, helping students become more fluent in English; and (iv) to enhance students' autonomous learning.

Nearly 70% of the students finished reading one Oxford Reader within a few hours. Many of the students found that reading graded Readers regularly provided them with chances to familiarize themselves more with English. Approximately one-third of the students felt that their reading speed became faster as they read more Readers. A few students found that they could finish reading the Readers without using a dictionary and enjoyed reading them. Although the number of students who

held this opinion was small, some said they would like to read more Readers and Readers of the upper levels.

## 6.7 Integration of the results for the NA of students into the curriculum
### Improvement of speaking skills

A considerable number of the students in the School of Human Welfare Studies would like to have more opportunities to improve their speaking skills, their basic skills, and increase their general vocabulary. Some of them are planning to study English abroad. They are also planning to go abroad for sightseeing in the near future, which means that they will need to be capable of daily conversation.

The English curriculum consists of eight compulsory English courses (Reading in English A, B, C, and D and Writing in English A, B, C, and D) and four elective English courses (English Communication I, II, III, and IV). The current course objectives for Reading in English claim focus on reading and listening, while those for Writing in English focus on writing and speaking. Specifically, the primary objective for Writing in English D is speaking. The maximum number of students in a class is 25: however reducing the number of students in a class may provide students with more opportunities to speak in class.

The focus of English Communication I and II is to develop communicative skills within a speaking framework that through the fundamentals of discussion, debate, presentation, and improvisation that will correspond to writing skills". An ongoing project for English Communication will provide students with more opportunities to communicate with people other than the teachers, through interacting with guest speakers and international students studying at Kwansei Gakuin University.

### Areas that teaching materials should include

The students would like teachers to teach not only areas relating to their academic interests, such as sports science and welfare, but also areas relating to culture and cross-cultural communication and natural science. They would like to study English with enjoyable activities in a relaxed atmosphere.

There is no commercialized textbook that covers the areas of study offered at the SHWS. Therefore, there is a project to construct a textbook for the SHWS launched in November 2008.

### Improvement of fluency by extensive reading assignments

Although the positive effects of the extensive reading assignments were noted, negative feedback was also given such as the graded readers used in class were too easy or too difficult to read. Since the number of readers was not adequate, students were not allowed to freely choose the titles and the levels of the readers.

More graded readers will be purchased for the next few years and they will be placed in the department library. Worksheets and tests for the graded readers can be downloaded from the websites of the readers' publishing companies. We also constructed a website for the graded readers for the use of the SHWS students (http://gradedreaders.webs.fc2.com/).

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) pointed out the limitation of NAs claiming the results may indicate

multiple course objectives. One of the solutions for this problem is to develop autonomous learning programs (Holec, 1985). As there are several self-learning software programs that are relatively easy to access, it is conceivable that utilizing such programs could facilitate the teaching of a diverse student body. Further research will be necessary to develop the curriculum.

## ７．Conclusion

The present study conducted a needs analysis of students to develop the English curriculum of a new faculty, the School of Human Welfare Studies, using a questionnaire. The results indicated that the curriculum will need to provide students with more opportunities to improve their speaking skills and several projects were proposed to develop the curriculum.

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**Appendix**

The following is the questionnaire used in the survey. The order of question items do not correspond to the order of question items in Section 3.2.

## ニーズアナリシスのための予備調査

学生の皆さんの英語の学習状況・希望・海外渡航経験について調査を行うことを目的としています。調査結果は、カリキュラムを改善したり、教職員が皆さんにアドバイスを行ったりしていく上での参考にさせてもらいます。皆さんのご協力をお願いします。

### 注意事項

① 本調査の結果は、成績評価とは全く関係がありません。
② 問１から問45まではすべてマークシートに回答してください。
③ 記述式回答用紙にも記入してください。
④ 質問用紙とマークシートの両方に、氏名と学生番号を書き入れてください。
⑤ マークシートの左端の「学籍番号」と書いてある欄に、学生番号を書き入れてください。
⑥ 左の0000と書き、そのあとに四桁の学生番号を書き入れてください。
⑦ 鉛筆でマークしてください。

| 学 籍 番 号 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | |

質問用紙に名前を書いてください。

| 学生番号 | 氏 名 |
|---|---|
| | |

**問1から問5までの項目について自己診断をしてください。**

**問1　英語のリーディングが良くできる。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問2　英語のライティングが良くできる。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問3　英語のリスニングが良くできるか。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問4　英語のスピーキングが良くできる。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問5　総合的に英語が良くできる。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問6　英語を学習したいと思う。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問7　英語の学習をすることは自分にとって必要である。**
1　全くそう思わない。
2　あまりそう思わない。
3　どちらかというとそう思わない。
4　どちらとも言えない。
5　どちらかというとそう思う。
6　かなりそう思う。
7　非常にそう思う。
8　判断できない。

**問8　あなたは、リーディング、リスニング、ライティング、スピーキングのうち、どれを一番入れて学習したいですか。**
1　リーディング
2　リスニング
3　ライティング
4　スピーキング
5　リーディング、リスニング、ライティング、スピーキング以外でもっと特に学習したいことがある。

**大学の英語の授業で伸ばしたいと考えている能力は何ですか。問9－問27について希望の強さを1～7で表してください。**
**1「全く希望していない」、2「あまり希望していない」、3「やや希望していない」、4「どちらとも言えない」、5「やや希望している」、6「かなり希望している」、7「非常に希望している」**

問9　英語でのプレゼンテーション

問10　英語でディスカッションができる。

問11　英語でディベートができる。

問12　自分の知っている事柄について自分の意見を述べる。

問13　英語で仕事の交渉ができる。

問14　日常英会話ができ、海外で生活できる。

問15　日常英会話ができ、旅行に行った時に困らない。

問16　英語で自己紹介ができる。

問17　専門的な知識がなくても読むことができるような内容の文章をある程度辞書を引かないで読むことができる。

問18　英語の新聞をある程度辞書を引かないで読むことができる。

問19　英語を速く大量に読むことができる。

問20　授業で文法を復習して欲しい。

問21　一般的知識についての語彙を増やす。

問22　専門的知識についての語彙を増やす。

問23　友人や親しい知人に宛てて英語の手紙を書くことができる。

問24　目上の人や先生に宛てて丁寧な表現を用いて英語の手紙を書くことができる。

問25　ビジネスで用いることができるような丁寧な表現を用いて英語の手紙を書くことができる。

問26　大学院の課題として提出できるような論文を英語で書くことができる。

問27　英語圏の文化や異文化間コミュニケーションについての知識を得る。

問28　「英語講読」の Oxford Readers はどのレベルを読みましたか。

  1　Level 1

  2　Level 2

  3　Level 3

  4　Level 4

  5　Level 5

  6　Level 6

問29「英語講読」の Oxford Readers のレベルは自分に合っていると思いますか。

  1　Readers のレベルは自分の英語のレベルに比べて低すぎる。

  2　Readers のレベルは自分の英語のレベルに比べて少し低い。

  3　Readers のレベルは自分の英語のレベルにちょうど合っている。

  4　Readers のレベルは自分の英語のレベルより少し高い。

  5　Readers のレベルは自分の英語のレベルには高すぎる。

問30「英語講読」の Oxford Readers の違うレベルの本を読みたいですか。

  1　もっと低いレベルの Readers を読みたい。

  2　今のレベルのままでよい。

  3　もっと高いレベルの Readers を読みたい。

**問31** 「英語講読」の Oxford Readers を読む時間は、1冊目から5冊目を読むまでにだんだん速くなりましたか。
1 速くなった
2 変わらない
3 遅くなった

**問32** 「英語講読」の Oxford Readers を読む時間は、1冊に付きおよそ何時間くらいかかりますか。
1 1時間以内
2 1時間－2時間
3 2時間－3時間
4 4時間－5時間
5 5時間－6時間
7 6時間以上

**問33** 関西学院大学に入学する前に、海外に行ったことはありますか？
1 はい　　2 いいえ

**問34** 問33で「はい」と答えた人、渡航回数を教えてください。回数に該当する数字をマークしてください。9回以上の渡航経験がある人は、9をマークしてください。

　　　#　問33で「はい」と答えた人は、問36～問41に答えて下さい。
　　　　「いいえ」と答えた人は、問42に進んでください。

**問35** 渡航先は英語圏ですか。
1 はい　　2 いいえ

**問36** 問35で「はい」と答えた人は下記の国名のうち該当するものの番号をマークして下さい。
1 米国　　2 英国　　3 カナダ　　4 オーストラリア　　5 ニュージーランド　6 香港
7 シンガポール　　8 マレーシア　　9 上記以外の英語圏

**問37** 渡航した時期を教えて下さい。
1 3歳以下　　2 4－6歳　　3 小学校低学年　　4 小学校高学年
5 中学生のとき　　6 高校1年生　　7 高校2年生　　8 高校3年生
9 その他

**問38** 渡航期間を教えて下さい。
1 3か月未満　　2 3か月以上－1年未満　　3 1年以上－2年未満
4 2年以上－3年未満　　5 3年以上－4年未満　　6 4年以上－5年未満
7 5年以上－6年未満　　8 6年以上－7年未満　　9 7年以上

**問39** 渡航先で何か教育機関に通いましたか。
1 はい　　2 いいえ

**問40　問39で「はい」と答えた人は、どのような教育機関に通ったのか教えて下さい。**

1　語学教育の機関（大学付属の語学プログラム、語学学校など）

2　現地の小学校　　　3　現地の中学校　　　4　現地の高等学校

5　現地の日本人学校　　　6　その他

**問41　もし、在学中に更に渡航の予定があるなら、できれば渡航目的を教えて下さい。**

1　観光　　　2　語学の向上　　　3　スタディーツアー　　　4　家族・知人訪問

5　その他

**ご協力どうも有難うございました。**

<div align="center">**記述式回答用紙（名前を書く必要はありません）**</div>

**問1**　あなたが最近、興味や関心を持っていることは何ですか。自由に書いてください。

**問2**　あなたが英語の教材を自由に選べるとしたら、どのような分野を扱った教材を選びますか。
　　　1　自然科学
　　　2　文学
　　　3　文化
　　　4　スポーツ
　　　5　ビジネス
　　　6　経済
　　　7　行政
　　　8　福祉
　　　9　社会学
　　10　異文化間コミュニケーション
　　11　その他（何でも自由に書いてください。）

**問3**　あなたは、大学入学前までどのような方法で英語を学んできましたか。何でも思いつくことを自由に書いてください。

**問4**　あなたは、専門（社会福祉、スポーツ科学、福祉経済・行政など）に関して将来どのようなテーマを勉強したいですか。

**問5**　英語のクラス分けについて何か要望があれば、書いてください。

**問6**　英語の授業について何か要望があれば、自由に書いてください。

**問7**　Oxford Readers を読む課題をやってみてどうでしたか。感じたことを自由に書いてください。

# Needs Analysis for the Improvement of the English Curriculum for the School of Human Welfare Studies: A Preliminary Study

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## Abstract

This research pertains to a preliminary needs analysis (NA) for the purpose of improving the English curriculum for a new faculty, the School of Human Welfare Studies, at Kwansei Gakuin University. It also provided an opportunity to survey learners' interests and necessities as well as to integrate the results into the new curriculum. A questionnaire was chosen as the primary instrument of research and 48 questions were constructed. The questions covered the following areas: general background information (experience of going abroad and preferred learning strategies), the academic fields of interest to the students, attitudinal and motivational factors, priority of basic language skills (self-assessment and basic language skills), Other topics that students are interested in, course content and method of instruction, and reaction to extensive reading assignments using graded readers. The questionnaire was given to all the students (n=315) at the end of the first semester, and 264 questionnaires were returned.

The results indicated that over 50% of the students went abroad prior to their admission to the university and the skill that they would like to improve most was speaking. Most of them realized the necessity of studying English. The areas of study that aroused the most interest could not yet been narrowed down; rather, most students listed the general areas of the department in which they wanted to study. Most students did not yet have specific reasons to study English nor could they identify the language skills they would require in the future. It seemed that they would like to be able to communicate in English about general topics. In addition, they stressed that the content of teaching materials and methods should make the lessons enjoyable. The previous study strategy used by the majority of students was based on rote learning, particularly memorizing vocabulary, grammar rules, and solutions for past university entrance examinations. They had studied English alone in a passive way rather than as a vehicle for communication, and they had not practiced English with partners in a productive way. Thirty-two percent of the students answered that throughout the course of the first semester, their reading speed became faster.

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