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# A Competency-based Proficiency Framework for Ritsumeikan Secondary Schools

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A Competency-based Proficiency Framework for  
Ritsumeikan Secondary Schools  
Ann C. Flanagan

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of  
Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International Training,  
Brattleboro, Vermont.  
August 30, 2010

IPP Advisor: Kathleen Graves

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This project by Ann C. Flanagan is accepted in its present form.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper describes the research and development of a competency-based Proficiency Framework for Ritsumeikan Secondary Schools in Kyoto, Japan as part of curriculum renewal with the campus relocation. The author developed a six-year competency-based curriculum for the EFL classes. It is based on the Common European Framework of Reference. In addition to creating guiding principles and proficiency frameworks, the author has included suggested vocabulary and content, sample themes and topics, entry and exit profiles, and teacher competencies. Two programs, extensive reading and pen pals, have been integrated into the curriculum in order to offer more support for students' second language acquisition; they are proving to be quite successful and are described in this paper in detail. This paper is a culmination of a two-year summer research sabbatical from April 2007 until March 2009.

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**Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Descriptors**

Competency Based Education	Curriculum Development
Curriculum Reform	Cultural Education
Secondary Education	Language Proficiency
Vocabulary Development	Second Language Learning
	Reading Ability
	LIST OF TABLES



<i>Number</i>	<i>Page</i>
Table 1	The Junior High School English Courses in 2009.....10
Table 2	Eiken Grades.....11
Table 3	The Senior High School English Course.....12
Table 4	Beginner 2: Oxford Classic Tale Plays (100 headwords).....23
Table 5	Penguin Young Readers Level 2 (400 headwords) .....23
Table 6	Extensive Reading Results from the 1 <sup>st</sup> Year .....25
Table 7	Extensive Reading Across Three Years in Junior High School .....31
Table 8	Extensive Reading Across Three Years in Senior High School.....33
Table 9	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Pen Pal Project Exchange Schedule .....43
Table 10	CEFR Common Reference Levels: global scale .....57
Table 11	Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School Reference Levels.....58
Table 12	Foundation Level 1: Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....72
Table 13	Exit and Entry Profile for 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....74
Table 14	Foundation 2: Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....77
Table 15	Exit and Entry Profile for 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....78
Table 16	Fluency Skills Level 3: Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....81
Table 17	Fluency Skills Level 4: Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....83
Table 18	Exit and Entry Profile for 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....84
Table 19	A statistical analysis of the number of English words needed to meet at a given occurrence rates to 'learn' that number of words.....100
Table 20	Senior High School Culture Projects .....102
Table 21	Basic Competence Level 5: Suggested Structure and Content.....109
Table 22	Exit and Entry Level for 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....111
Table 23	Basic Competence Level 6: Suggested Structure and Content.....113
Table 24	Exit and Entry Profile for 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....115
Table 25	Social Competence Level 7: Suggested Structure and Content.....117
Table 26	Exit and Entry Profile for 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....119

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Number</i>		<i>Page</i>
Figure 1	2007 Results from 1000 and 2000 Bilingual Word Test.....	20
Figure 2	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009).....	28
Figure 3	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009).....	29
Figure 4	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009).....	29
Figure 5	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade 2000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009).....	30
Figure 6	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade 2000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009).....	30
Figure 7	Christmas Cards.....	45
Figure 8	An Example of a Culture Poster .....	46
Figure 9	Another Example of a Culture Poster .....	47

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
My Proposal .....	5
CHAPTER TWO: RITSUMEIKAN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....	7
A Scenic Journey.....	7
The Structure of Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School .....	7
The Junior High School English Program .....	10
The Regular Course.....	10
The Advanced Course.....	11
The Senior High School English Program.....	12
The Regular Course.....	13
The Medical Science Course (MSC).....	14
The Super Science High School (SSC) .....	14
A Typical Team Taught English Class .....	14
CHAPTER THREE: EXTENSIVE READING.....	16
The Book Trolley.....	16
Our Reading Program .....	16
A Vision in the Making .....	17
Extensive Reading Across One Grade From April 2007 until March 2008 .....	17

Some Hurdles to Overcome .....	17
Why Extensive Reading is Important .....	21
Continuing the Program .....	22
Extending the Program Across Two Grades from April 2008 to March 2009.....	25
Extending the Program Across Three Grades from April 2009 until March 2010.....	27
Future Steps and Challenges.....	32
Lessons Learned.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR: CULTURE PROJECTS.....	38
A Window to the World.....	38
How it began.....	38
Culture in Ritsumeikan Junior High School .....	40
Pen Pal Project in First Year September 2007 until April 2008 .....	41
Initiating the Pen Pal Project.....	41
Searching for Pen Pals .....	42
Pen Pal Project Exchange in Detail .....	43
Evaluation of the First Year .....	48
Pen Pal Project in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year from October 2008 until April 2009 .....	49
Pen Pal Exchange in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year from September 2009 until May 2010.....	49
Future Culture Projects .....	49
Benefits of the Pen Pal Project.....	51
CHAPTER FIVE: RITSUMEIKAN COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM FOR RITSUMEIKAN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL.....	53
The Inspiration .....	53

Building Blocks .....	54
What is the CERF?.....	56
Why a competency-based framework? .....	59
The Importance of Guiding Principles.....	59
Creating The Guiding Principles For Ritsumeikan Junior And Senior High School.....	60
The Guiding Principles.....	61
Language and Culture .....	61
English as a Foreign Language .....	61
A Link to the World.....	61
Communicative Competence .....	61
Learners and Learning.....	62
Critical and Creative Thinking Skills.....	62
Participatory Learners .....	62
Self and Other .....	62
Interpersonal and Intercultural Skills .....	62
Learning Process .....	63
Teachers and Teaching.....	63
Teacher .....	63
Supportive Learning Environment and Classroom Management .....	63
Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life .....	63
Intellectual, personal and Professional Growth .....	63
Experienced Gained .....	64
CHAPTER SIX: THE RITSUMEIKAN SIX YEAR COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM .....	66
How I came up with the levels.....	67
Thoughts driving the components .....	68

What are the components? .....	69
Achievement Objectives.....	69
Suggested Structure and Vocabulary.....	69
Communication Themes .....	70
Entry and Exit Profiles.....	70
Ritsumeikan English Proficiency Framework .....	71
Levels 1 and 2 Achievement Statement. ....	71
Foundation Level .....	71
Foundation Level 1.....	71
Achievement Objectives.....	71
Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....	72
Themes and Topics .....	73
Exit and Entry Profile for 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....	74
Foundation Level 2.....	76
Achievement Objectives.....	76
Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....	77
Themes and Topics .....	77
Exit and Entry Profile for 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....	78
Levels 3 and 4 Proficiency Statements .....	80
Fluency Skills Level.....	80
Fluency Skills Level 3.....	81
Achievement Objectives.....	81
Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....	81
Fluency Skills Level 4.....	82
Achievement Objectives.....	82

Suggested Structure and Vocabulary .....	83
Themes and Topics .....	83
Exit and Entry Profile for 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade .....	84
A Deeper Insight.....	86
CHAPTER SEVEN: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT .....	88
Possible Hurdles to Face .....	89
My Aspirations.....	91
REFERENCES.....	93
Appendix A 1000 Word Japanese Bilingual Test.....	96
Appendix B 2000 Word Japanese Bilingual Test.....	98
Appendix C A statistical analysis of the number of English words needed to Meet at a given occurrence rates to ‘learn’ that number of words .....	100
Appendix D Senior High School Culture Projects .....	102
Appendix E Teacher Competencies .....	103
Appendix F Senior High School Frameworks .....	108

## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

Life is not static and with it comes change. At times we hunger for change; other times we dread change and take paths to avoid it because of the discomfort involved. Change is inevitable. Everywhere we look change is taking place. Whether it is the old Japanese *machiya*<sup>1</sup> house being torn down, only to be replaced by a new modern three-storied house or as simple as how the seasons flow gracefully or violently from one to the other, change happens. Change can be forced upon us unwanted, or it can be planned, slowly unfolding as time creeps by. Change to some people can be seen as negative and fearful, but change can also become a positive journey—an opportunity to grow, awaken, and renew.

For me, change is something I see as an inevitable part of my life, both personally and professionally. In my personal life, change has taken me across the globe to Japan. Sparked by a desire to see the world and live abroad, it has led to a career as an educator and an international marriage. Somewhere deep inside me resides a yearning to continually improve upon oneself and the environment where I work—to find new ways for renewal. It was and is a burning desire to become a more passionate teacher especially to my students and colleagues, but most of all for myself. This paper documents significant change—change that has taken place in my own life and the changes that I have catalyzed at school as the result of my graduate studies while on research leave from my job at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School.

In this chapter, I will describe how I got the opportunity to study at SIT while

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<sup>1</sup> A *machiya* is a traditional wooden house found in Japan. It usually extends back quite a way from the street.



working at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. Through the courses taught at SIT such as Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers and Curriculum and Assessment, I was able to make changes in my teaching as well as changes in the school. These will be explained in later chapters. I will also describe the Ritsumeikan family of schools after first presenting the structure of this paper.

I started teaching at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School as a Full-Time Three Year Contract Native English Speaking Teacher in April 1998. Ritsumeikan resembles an educational conglomerate. It consists of three universities, four junior and senior high schools and one primary school. There are also affiliated courses at other senior high schools where students enter into the Ritsumeikan Course and upon graduation are able to matriculate into one of the three universities without having to take a university entrance exam. It has a longstanding history in the Kansai area and is a very well known, respected educational institution in Japan. It is seen as progressive and it continues to come up with innovative ideas to create a better environment for its learners to keep up with the changes happening in the world.

Upon the completion of the third year of my contract, I became a full-time tenured English teacher in the English Department. My current position in the scheme of things is Coordinator of Native English Teachers at the Fukakusa Campus. This position, in addition to my teaching responsibilities, has given me many opportunities to further develop leadership and organization skills as well as managerial skills.

Throughout my teaching experience at the Fukakusa Campus, there always has been a veil of change encompassing the junior and senior high school. This veil

comes in the form of curriculum renewal. In the past few years, threads of renewal have been delicately woven into the fabric of the veil by offering new curriculum tracks such as the Advanced Course<sup>2</sup> in the junior high school and the Medical Science Course<sup>3</sup> and Super Science Course<sup>4</sup> in the senior high school. Another thread of renewal that will have a tremendous impact on the curriculum at our school has been the opening of the primary school in April 2006. These threads of curriculum renewal are often discussed in English Department meetings and faculty meetings fueling work conversation and out of work discussion, but most of all it has given a handful of teachers the opportunity to do research to better the Ritsumeikan Academy and the teachers within. This thirst for further exploration, transformation, and reflection led me to embark on a journey to the School for International Training (SIT) in the summer of 2007. Since then, it has been at times challenging and perplexing, but most of all rewarding in numerous and incredible ways.

After participating in several courses in the SIT Teacher Training Institute in

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<sup>2</sup> Advanced Course (ADC): This junior high school course started in April 2008. Students studying in this course are studying at a higher level in the areas of Math, Science, and English compared to those students studying under the regular junior high school curriculum. They have more class hours including extended classroom hours during the summer, winter, and spring holidays. Enrollment is set at 70 students.

<sup>3</sup> Medical Science Course (MSC): This senior high school course started in April 2008. It is designed to support students who want to have a medical science or life science career in the future. Students studying under this curriculum will be preparing for 'juken benkyo' or rigorous entrance exams for National Universities. Like the Advanced Course, they have more class hours and extended classroom hours during the summer, winter, and spring holidays. Enrollment is set at 30 students.

<sup>4</sup> Super Science Course (SSC): Our senior high school was selected to be a Super Science High School by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in 2005. Students studying under this curriculum are able to attend university classes at the Biwako Kusatsu Campus. They are interested in careers in science and technology. Students participating in this course are able to attend many international science fairs as well as attend overseas programs. Enrollment is set between 25 to 30 students.

2005 and a Campus Tour in the summer of 2006, I approached Marshall Brewer, an admissions counselor at SIT, about the dilemma I was having about attending SIT. I was wondering how I could persuade my employer to let me study at SIT without having to terminate my job to do so. He recommended that I speak to Sean Conley. Sean agreed to write a letter to Mr. Sumio Shiozaki, the Principal of Ritsumeikan, describing the program and how several teachers from Japan have participated and graduated from it. Having put this plan into action, as soon as school resumed in September 2006 I approached Mr. Shiozaki about attending the School for International Training the following year. I had a plan of attack of how it could work if some teachers covered my hours in my absence and I even had their blessing. While he could not guarantee that the school would release me from my teaching responsibilities, he suggested I apply for a research grant that the Ritsumeikan Trust had just set up for its teachers in secondary education. The research grant was for two years and included a stipend that would cover my education costs including books and travel. In addition to this, I would have a reduced teaching schedule in order to do research. I thought I had died and gone to heaven! In all honesty, I was hesitant because I did not know how many teachers would apply for this fantastic opportunity. I was also skeptical if they would choose me, a foreign national. However, with his encouragement, I sat down and brainstormed ideas for a research project. Since many of the faculty meetings were about curriculum changes, I decided that my research project should focus on curriculum renewal in the English Department and so I wrote a proposal and submitted it. The waiting period was nerve-wracking. In December 2006, I received a phone call from the Division of Secondary Education Office at the Suzaku Campus

requesting me to attend an interview. I scheduled it for January and at the interview was told my proposal was accepted and my research grant would start in April 2007. I was on Cloud 9 but also extremely nervous about what I had written. Could I deliver all that I planned? Was I living in a dream world? Once the wheels were put into motion, I applied to the School for International Training. I was accepted to SIT's Summer Master of Arts in Teaching Program in April 2007 and started classes in June.

### **My Proposal**

My curriculum renewal proposal had three threads that I was able to develop during my research term from April 2007 until March 2009. The threads were a) setting up and implementing a three-year Extensive Reading Program as well as b) weaving culture projects into the existing curriculum to bring more meaning to the learning of English in the classroom and c) developing a competency-based curriculum for the junior and senior high school. Although this has not been tested yet, it will give teachers a framework to work from to support the new programs being established at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School.

This paper, my Independent Professional Project (IPP), is about the research I did from April 2007 until March 2009. It also includes some recent data gathered after the research period ended. This IPP is a written document which not only meets a requirement for receiving my degree at SIT, but also serves as an official document that documents my research and can be used to implement the research at any of the secondary education institutions in the Ritsumeikan Network.

Its organization is as follows. In Chapter 2, I will give a description of the

surroundings and explain in more detail the structure of studying English at Ritsumeikan's Junior and Senior High School Fukakusa Campus.

In order to foster my students' language acquisition and better their four skills, I created an Extensive Reading (ER) program in the junior high school. In Chapter 3, I will explain the reasons why I set up this program, how I established the current three-year ER Program, the different ER projects undertaken, the problems I have encountered, and the progress our students have made with vocabulary acquisition since the program was initiated. I will also discuss how to extend the program in the senior high school.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss how weaving culture projects into the curriculum not only enhances it but also increases students' motivation and encourages them to actively use English. I will explain a pen pal project that has been established and developed over the past three years and will give an extended outlook of how culture projects can be woven throughout six years at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School.

In Chapter 5, I explain the guiding principles of our competency-based framework, which have been based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Then, in Chapter 6, I explain in detail how I created a competency-based framework for all six years at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. In Chapter 7, I describe possible hurdles that might be faced and my aspirations for the competency-based curriculum.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### RITSUMEIKAN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

In this chapter, I will give a detailed description of the surroundings and the set up of Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School including an explanation of its English Program and the various course options for its students.

#### **A Scenic Journey**

Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School is situated in Fukakusa, Kyoto which is about a 15-minute walk from Fushimi-Inari Shrine. Inari Shrine is well-known for its large red torii gate that greets visitors coming from JR Inari Shrine. There are smaller toriis donated from local businesses lining the pathway up the mountain because Inari is the god for good harvest and business. The aroma of *senbei* crackers and chestnuts roasting over a fire, fresh *anpan* bread in the bakery window swirl together along the path through Inari Shrine on your way to

Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. The school is located on a side road off a much busier road that at times can be a nail biting experience, especially in the rain with umbrellas. A serene bamboo forest that provides a great backdrop and a wonderful source for some scary ghost stories at night is situated across from the front entrance of the school. After entering the front gate, there are about 80 steps up to the students' entrance but there are another 15 steps to the teachers' entrance.

### **The Structure of Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School**

The Japanese school year begins in April and runs until March. Classes at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School are 50 minutes with a 10-minute break in between. Students attend classes from Monday until Saturday. The school day begins at 8:35 a.m. with morning reading for 10 minutes in junior high school. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) recommended that schools develop a morning reading program to foster a positive attitude for reading as well as acquire good reading habits (MEXT, 2003b). Senior High School begins at 8:40 a.m. Announcements and greetings are made in short homeroom (SHR) from 8:45 a.m. until 8:50 a.m. and classes begin from 8:55 a.m. with the last class finishing at 3:25 p.m. Another SHR is held from 3:30 p.m. until 3:40 p.m. where last minute announcements, closing greetings, and cleaning occurs. Students usually finish everything by 4:00 p.m. at which time they head to club activities, receive special tutoring from teachers, attend meetings or other school programs, or just hang out with friends. Students leave the premise by 5:30 p.m. in winter and 6:30 p.m. in summer unless they have special permission from the head of student activities.

Ritsumeikan Junior High School has a co-ed student population of 324 girls and 339 boys. The three years of junior high school are equivalent to the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the US education system. Students wanting to enter our school must pass a difficult entrance exam that usually takes place in mid January. There are six homerooms in each grade. In Japan, students usually stay in their homerooms for all classes except for music, physical education, and art unlike American schools where students rotate to and from different classrooms. Each homeroom has between 33 and 39 students. There are two distinct programs in the junior high school: the Regular Course and the ADC Course. Homerooms 5 and 6 in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are part of Advanced Course (ADC) that started in 2008. This curriculum is set at a higher pace and at a more difficult level of study when compared to the Regular Course. The ADC students are studying at higher levels of English, Math, and Science. As of 2010, the number of homerooms has increased from 6 to 8 to accommodate the entrance of extra students matriculating from the primary school. Students from the primary school do not have to take an entrance exam into the junior high school.

Almost all the students from the junior high school continue on to the senior high school. If they do not, it is usually because the students do not meet the academic requirements set by the institution, their parents are relocating, or they have chosen to attend a different school. About one-third of the population of Ritsumeikan Senior High School first year students are new and have taken an entrance exam to enter. This is held in February. These students have usually studied in cram schools to pass this rigorous exam. More often they are performing at an academic level higher than our junior high school graduates because of



attending cram schools.

In 2009, there were 453 girls and 558 boys who attended senior high school. There are nine homerooms in each grade in the high school. Each homeroom has approximately 30 to 43 students. There are three programs in the senior high school: the Regular Course, the Medical Science Course (MSC) and the Super Science Course (SSC). Homeroom 8 in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades follow the MSC curriculum that started in 2008. This course is for students who are interested in studying medicine in university. These students will take entrance exams to universities that offer medical degrees. Therefore, they have to study for university entrance exams throughout their high school career. The students in Homeroom 9 in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades study under the SSC. In 2002, MEXT designated Ritsumeikan High School as a Super Science School. The introduction of the Super Science High School was part of a "Science Literacy Enhancement Initiative" by MEXT. See its White Paper on Science and Technology. (2003a). Students entering this program have a strong background in math and science and want to pursue a career in science or math. The SSC students attend classes at Ritsumeikan High School Fukakusa Campus three or four times a week as well as attending Ritsumeikan Biwako Kusatsu Campus in Shiga the other two to three days a week. This gives students the opportunity of taking classes offered by university professors.

### **The Junior High School English Program**

As mentioned before, there are two distinct courses in the junior high school: the Regular Course and the Advanced Course (ADC). See Table 1 below. In the following paragraphs, I want to go into detail about the set up of the English

program in each of these courses.

*Table 1: The Junior High School English Courses in 2009*

Grade	Regular Course		Advanced Course	
7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup>	Japanese teacher teaches (4 hours) More emphasis placed on grammar and sentence structure.	Team Teaching (2 hours) Four Skills Course More emphasis placed on communicative tasks. This course is linked to the grammar structures in the Japanese teacher's course.	Japanese teacher teaches (5 hours) More emphasis placed on grammar and sentence structure.	Team Teaching (2 hours ) Four Skills Course More emphasis placed on communicative tasks. This course is linked to the grammar structures in the Japanese teacher's course.

### **The Regular Course**

Students study six hours of English a week. Of the six hours, four are solo taught by a Japanese Native Speaking English teacher (JNST). Two homerooms are combined and divided into three groups: Advanced, Intermediate, and Low. The benefit of this is student teacher ratio especially for the lower level students. The other two hours are team-taught (TT) with a JNST and a Native English Speaking Teacher (NEST). The main textbook is called New Horizon English Course 1, 2, and 3 (Kasajima, 2005). Grammar practice books are also used for drill work. The TT classes use the Longman Picture Dictionary, too. The two types of classes try to coordinate with each other as much as possible. The main focus of the TT classes is to use the four skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Students enrolled in this course must try to pass Level 3 of the Society for Testing English Proficiency

(STEP)<sup>5</sup> before they graduate from the junior high school. Their score applies to their recommendation into the senior high school.

### The Advanced Course

Students study 7 hours of English a week in junior high school. Of the 7 hours, 5 are solo taught by Japanese English teachers. Each homeroom is divided in half and taught by two Japanese English teachers. So one benefit of the Advanced Course is smaller class size. A Japanese English teacher and a Native English Speaking teacher teach the remaining two hours. These two types of classes try to coordinate with each other as much as possible. Some of the course work is project based. The ADC Course uses Treasure English Series Grade 1, 2, and 3 (2007) as well as a grammar practice book for drills. Like the Regular Course, we use the Longman Picture Dictionary. Students enrolled in this course must try to pass Level Pre-2 of

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<sup>5</sup> Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) is an English Proficiency Test given in Japan and other countries around the world. There are seven ability levels (Level 5 to Level 1). There are two stages: the 1<sup>st</sup> stage is a written examination testing listening, reading and writing ability and the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage is a one on one interview. The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage is not given to the beginning levels: Level 4 and Level 5. The following table compares Eiken with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which will be discussed later in this paper.

Table 2: Eiken Grades (<http://stepeiken.org/grades>)  
The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT)

Eiken Grade	CEFR Comparison	Example of recognition/use
1	C1	International admissions to graduate and undergraduate programs.
Pre-1	B2	
2	B1	MEXT benchmark for high school graduates
Pre-2	A2	
3	A1	MEXT benchmark for junior high school graduates
4		
5		

the Society for Testing Proficiency (STEP) before they graduate from junior high school. Their score applies to their recommendation into the senior high school. The Division of Primary and Secondary Education at Ritsumeikan Academy wants to raise the requirements from Level 3 to Level Pre-2 for all students graduating from the junior high school. According to internal reports, students at the primary school have already passed Step Level 3 as of 2008.

### **The Senior High School English Program**

As mentioned earlier, the senior high school has three courses: the Regular Course, the Medical Science Course and the Super Science Course. See Table below. In the following paragraphs, I want to go into detail about the set up of the English program in each of these courses.

*Table 3: The Senior High School English Courses*

Grade	Regular Course		Medical Science Course		Super Science Course	
	10 <sup>th</sup>	JNST (4)	NEST (2)	JNST (5)	TT (2)	JNST (4)
11 <sup>th</sup>	JNST (4)	JNST/NEST (2)	JNST (5)	TT (2)	JNST (4)	TT (2)
12 <sup>th</sup>	JNST (3)	JNST/NEST (2)	JNST (5)	JNST (2)	JNST (4)	NEST (2)

Note: JNST=Japanese English Teacher; NEST=Native English Teacher

### **The Regular Course**

There are seven homerooms that study under the regular course curriculum.

There are approximately 44 students in each homeroom. All 10<sup>th</sup> grade students have six hours of English a week. A Japanese English teacher teaches them for 4 hours a week. The course is a Basic English Grammar Course. Students take an Oral Communication Course by the Native English Speaking Teacher for 2 hours a week. One homeroom is divided into half, which reduces the class size to approximately 22 students.

In the second year of high school, students receive four hours of instruction by a Japanese English Teacher. The focus of the curriculum is to pass the TOEFL-ITP (Institutional Testing Programme) Test with a score of 400 or higher. The Educational Testing Service (ETS), makers of such tests like SAT, TOEIC, TOEFL, and GRE makes another test called the TOEFL-ITP Test. Sometimes referred to as an Institutional TOEFL it is available to schools to use in-house and the scores are not shared with other schools; this test is based on the paper-based TOEFL Test.

In addition to these four hours, students can choose to take several elective English courses offered twice a week: Current English, Global English or Conversation English. Except for the Conversation English Course, the other elective courses are taught by a JNST. From 2010, the elective English Conversation Course will not be offered to students. Each student will take an English Presentation Course taught by a JNST twice a week.

In the third year, students have 5 hours of English classes a week. This includes a writing course that is team-taught twice a week. The other three hours is a Reading based course. There is also a Remedial English Course for students who have not been able to score 400 or higher on the TOEFL ITP and an elective English Course that are for two hours a week.

## **The MSC Program**

In the first and second year of the MSC Program, there are 7 hours of English a week. Two of these hours are team-taught with a Japanese English Teacher and a Native English Speaking Teacher. This course is an Integrated 4 Skills Course. The other 5 hours are a grammar based English course. Because the homeroom class size is relatively small, the classes are not divided. In the third year, students are concentrating on passing Entrance Exams into other national universities. Therefore, emphasis is on test-taking strategies.

## **The SSC Program**

The SSC English Program is set up about the same as the MSC course except that students have more opportunities to travel overseas to participate in international science fairs and collaborate on science projects from all over the world.

For the first two years, they have four hours of English instruction a week by a Japanese English teacher. The other two hours are team taught by a Japanese English teacher and a Native English teacher. Emphasis is not only placed on learning grammar but also how to give presentations in English about science.

Like the regular course, students have six hours of English instruction a week. They are taught by a Japanese English teacher for four hours. The other two hours are for a writing course solely taught by the Native English Teacher.

## **A Typical Team Taught English Class**

The Japanese English Teacher and the Native English teacher both share

teaching responsibilities in the classroom. They alternate teaching different parts of the lesson plan or they do it together, for example, one person is speaking and the other person is outlining the information on the blackboard. Demonstrations of the activities such as pair work and other task-based activities are done as a unit.

In this chapter, I have explained how potential students can enter our academic institution, described the various curricula offered to its students, as well as summarized the English program for both the junior and senior high school. In the following two chapters, I want to describe two programs that I established; Extensive Reading and the Pen Pal exchange to give more support to our students English language study.

CHAPTER THREE:  
EXTENSIVE READING

**The Book Trolley**

When the bell rings, I grab my basket and the book trolley. The plastic wheels squeak as I push it across the cream linoleum floor to my next class. The trolley holds 80 CD players and over 200 thin well-thumbed extensive reading books. These books include stories from the Oxford Reading Tree Series, Scholastic Dora-Dora, and Penguin Young Readers. During my five-minute labor, I run a mental checklist hoping I have not forgotten anything. As I push the trolley in to the junior high school classrooms, my day is brightened when I hear shouts of glee, "Great! We have book reading today!"

**Our Reading Program**

In the Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School overall reading program, many students struggle as they are forced to read short, difficult passages, translating words or phrases and analyzing grammar in English. It has nothing to do with reading as such and little to do with pleasure, either. All too often for students, reading in English merely means doing things they do not enjoy with texts they do not want to read. Clearly this has little to do to promote interest either in reading or English in general. Most Japanese students read by replacing all English words with Japanese words one by one. Not surprisingly, they feel lost if asked to read without looking up every single word in the dictionary.

In this chapter I will present the extensive reading program I have developed to address the problems I outlined above. I will describe the three-year program,



changes that were made to improve the program, and my hopes for continuing the program in the senior high school in the future.

### **A Vision in the Making**

In December 2005, a colleague of mine, Paul Soto asked Atsuko Takase, a lecturer at Kansai University and former teacher at Baika High School to speak to our English Department about extensive reading. She explained how she used an extensive reading program in her English classes and how the students began to enjoy reading all English books. After her presentation, I asked her for her business card and said I would email her later. During the winter vacation, I began to investigate on my own the benefits of Extensive Reading and started to reflect about how this kind of program could support our students in their English classes.

After attending several conferences and workshops and listening to experts in the field of extensive reading such as Richard Day, Paul Nation, Julian Banford, Atsuko Takase, Akio Furukawa, and Rob Waring, I was convinced that extensive reading could help our school and decided to investigate which secondary schools and/or tertiary institutions were using extensive reading in their English programs. Some questions I wanted to answer included: Does extensive reading develop reading skills as well as benefit other language skills? Does extensive reading boost confidence and motivation and improve overall attitudes toward learning English? How can we shift our reading paradigm to include extensive reading and strike a balance between extensive and intensive reading? But most of all, how can I fund such a project?

### **Extensive Reading Across One Grade from April 2007 until March 2008**

## **Some Hurdles to Overcome**

At the beginning of my research sabbatical, I emailed and met with Atsuko Takase to find out more about the program she had at Baika High School in Osaka. When we met, she told me more about the program she had initiated, the types of books she used and how she used it in her classroom. She also provided me with names of other people in the field to talk to as well as suggest that I join the online extensive reading group on yahoo. Additionally, I spoke to two of my friends, Blake Hayes and Salem Hicks, who worked at Kyoto Sangyo University. They put me in touch with Amanda Gillis-Furutaka, a full-time lecturer at the university who uses extensive reading in her English program. I emailed her and she kindly met with me to discuss the program at Sangyo University including taking me to the library as well as their media lab to see the online program that Tom Robb, a professor at the university, had designed to test students' reading comprehension after doing extensive reading. After speaking with other professionals in the field and learning more about extensive reading, I decided to embark on creating an Extensive Reading Program in our junior high school. But how?

In the latter part of April 2007, I approached Mr. Shiozaki, the principal, and Mr. Sumi, the Vice-Principal, about the process of getting money to start such a program. They suggested that I first approach the English Department with a preliminary budget and proposal. To do so, I had to talk to publishers and get samples of books and price quotes.

I approached several publishers but depended mainly upon Oxford University Press and Pearson Longman because I knew the area representatives and thus knew I could get information more quickly. I met with them and received some

sample books to present to the department. My first attempt was overzealous because I wanted to buy ¥250,000 worth of books (approximately US\$2750). Since the department was not sure if this program would work or not, they were unwilling to support me with this level of funding. So it was back to the drawing board. My ego was deflated because I thought I had done all my research. What was the magic number? What was too high or too low? How could I convince them that this was a good endeavor?

My main hurdle was to convince the English Department faculty to buy into and approve this program so I could get the program up and running before I left for my first summer of study in the States. There was not a whole lot of time and I was feeling a bit anxious about the whole effort. After doing some *nemawashi*, an informal process of gathering support behind the scenes, I presented a new budget of ¥130,000 (approximately US\$1470) and was able to secure the money for the books. I also managed to get a 20% discount from the book wholesaler, Nellies Books. This added to my sense of relief.

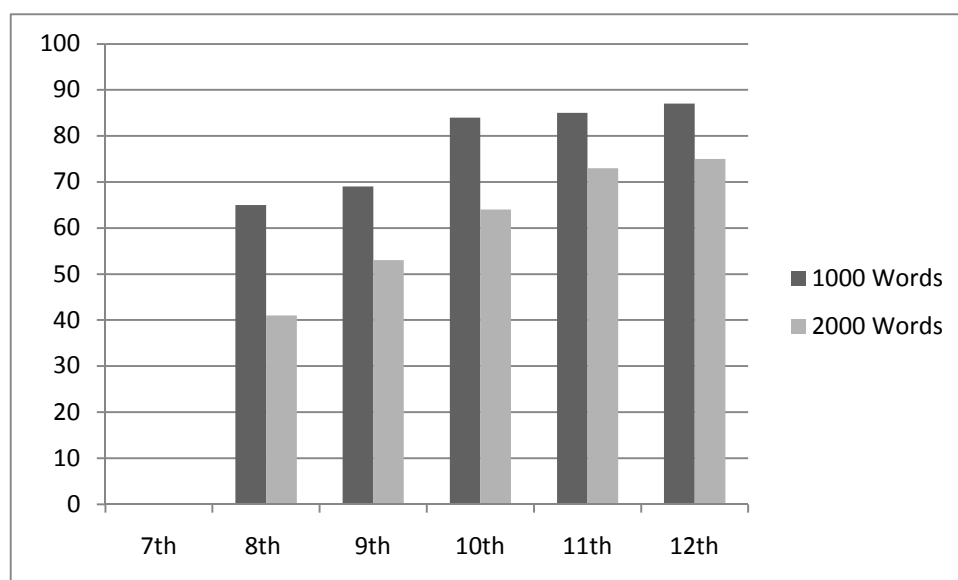
With the help of the library staff and several English teachers, I entered the books into the library system with their Yomiyasusa Level (YL), a reading level system designed for Japanese students. This system was designed in 2003 by Akio Furukawa of the SSS Group (Start with Simple Stories). There are 100 levels within Levels 0.0 to 9.0 (Furukawa, 2007).

Before I left for the U.S., my colleagues (Stephen Green, Aki Hamazoe, Mayumi Saiki, and Yukari Yuura) and I implemented the program by reading books from Oxford Reading Tree Stage 1 (ORT 1) with our students in class using an overhead projector. There were six books in each stage, so we chose four books to

introduce the Extensive Reading Program. Then for summer homework, students were supposed to read the books again and read six more books from Oxford Reading Tree Stage 1+ (ORT 1+). They were asked to keep a reading journal, too.

However, there still was another larger hurdle to overcome—convincing the English Department that this was a good investment. Therefore, with the permission of various English teachers, I arranged to have a bilingual vocabulary test from Paul Nation’s website given to assess the vocabulary level of our students at the 1000 and 2000 word level in June 2007 while I was away. (See Appendix A and B). Approximately 1,400 students took the tests and I processed the results when I returned to Japan in August. On the following page in Figure 1 are the results of the tests.

In the chart, you see a steady increase in vocabulary acquisition especially in the 1000 and 2000 word level in junior high school, but then they both start to plateau in senior high school. There were two interesting findings. One was that students had acquired 80% of the 1000 word level but were unable to increase their acquisition of the 2000 word level to higher than 73%. Second, there are no significant gains in vocabulary acquisition in years 11 and 12.



*Figure 1: 2007 Results from 1,000 and 2,000 Bilingual Word List Test*

I used the results of the tests along with basic research on vocabulary knowledge and its impact on proficiency to make the case that Extensive Reading was a good program for Ritsumeikan and should be expanded. The following section presents some of the research I shared.

### **Why Extensive Reading is Important**

Despite students focusing on learning a huge volume of vocabulary both in junior and senior high school, they still do not have the mastery of the 2000 word list by their third year of senior high school as you can see from the previous graph. Nation defines mastery as knowing 80% of the words at any level. I feel the main reason our students are unable to achieve this goal has to do with the methodology of how vocabulary is taught. Vocabulary tends to be taught as isolated units of language and there is no recycling or repetition of the words. Vocabulary is not manipulated in different ways to ensure student's retention of it.

Gains in vocabulary are among the most commonly cited benefits of extensive reading. According to Paul Nation, we know that in the English language a few extremely common words such as *the*, *of*, and *I* make up the bulk of the language we meet. In written texts, almost 80% of the words in a text are high frequency words. (Nation, 2001)

For students to become more proficient in the language, learning vocabulary is an important part of the equation. Just learning what the English word is in Japanese is not enough to ensure a high level of proficiency. If students do not use the language enough, it is soon forgotten. Besides learning a word, students must also remember common derivatives of it. If we take the word, *observe*, students need to remember inflections such as *observed*, *observing* as well as common derivatives such as *observation*, *observer*, *observant*, and *observable*. They also have to remember synonyms such as “to notice” or antonyms such as “ignore. In addition to this, observe has different meanings, for example, (1) to notice, (2) to watch, (3) to remark, (4) to comply with, and (5) to commemorate. (Waite, 2001, p. 594) In addition, students must learn collocations of words. Besides collocations of a word, students must also learn colligations. Colligation is the semantic and grammatical relationships between words, for example, we say “beautiful woman” not “beautiful man” (Waring, 2006).

Extensive reading not only develops sight vocabulary or word recognition, words and combinations of words but it also creates a context in which students meet the same words regularly so that they begin to recognize them automatically. Studies (Nation, 2001, Waring & Takagi, 2003) have shown that it usually takes about 15 meetings of a word receptively for the form (spelling or sound) of an average word to be connected to its meaning (Waring, 2006). A far greater number of meetings will be needed to deepen the knowledge of the word.

Waring has developed a chart that gives a statistical analysis of the number of times you need to meet a word (at given recurrence rates) to “learn” that number of words. The chart was given as a handout in one of his workshops. The chart can be

found in Appendix C.

### **Continuing the Program**

After calculating the test results from the 1000 and 2000 word vocabulary test and using the chart provided by Rob Waring, I approached the English Department again in early October. It was at the same time that we received the results from the Benessee Corporation standardized tests that stated we needed to include extensive reading in our curriculum. The Benessee Corporation specializes in making educational products including standardized tests. It is a well-known company among high schools in Japan. Our school uses the test results to compare our students' progress with other schools in the area as well as nationally. For me, this was more evidence that we needed to support our students more in their English language education. This also allowed me to continue expanding the Extensive Reading Library for 2008 Academic School year.

In 2007, I had students keep journals in English and Japanese. Everything except the summary was written in English. I noticed in October that the boys were having a difficult time staying interested in the books. I still had money left in the budget, so I ordered some non-fiction books from Scholastic in the US. These books included titles such as "Where do Insects Live?", "Make it Move", and "Rainforest" and were designed for students from kindergarten to second grade. The strategy worked and the students enjoyed reading them. In December, we chose Oxford Classic Tale Plays to read over the winter vacation. Each student had one book from the table below.

Table 4: Beginner 2: Oxford Classic Tale Plays (150 headwords)

The Fisherman and his Wife
The Gingerbread Man
Jack and the Beanstalk
Thumbelina
The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse
The Ugly Duckling

The students performed the plays in February. It was a lot of fun. For spring homework, each student read from the following selection of books from the Penguin Young Readers Level 2 Series.

Table 5: Penguin Young Readers Level 2 (400 headwords)

Cinderella
Eddie and the Magic Potion
Chicken Run
The Jungle Book
The Wizard of Oz

In addition, they had to memorize one of the chants on the back cover of the book they read. They would perform a chant, like the one below when they came back in April as 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Mrs. Tweedy counted eggs



One, two, three, four  
 She doesn't like chickens  
 They don't make money  
 Five, six, seven, eight

How could chickens make money?

Mrs. Tweedy started to smile

Now she had a plan!

Nine, ten, eleven, twelve

*(Chicken Run, Penguin Young Readers Level 2)*

Below are the number of books and the number of words read from June 2007 until the beginning of March 2008 according to each homeroom in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This information was gathered throughout the year from the students' reading journals with the cooperation of all the first year English teachers. The journals were collected in September, October, December, and at the beginning of March. From the journals, I calculated the number of words read and the number of books read.

*Table 6: Extensive Reading Results from the 1<sup>st</sup> Year*

Homeroom	Average # of books read	Average # of words read
1-1	50	4526
1-2	44	4403
1-3	62	5851

1-4	53	5623
1-5	58	5073
1-6	62	5345

Knowing that the new school year was going to start soon and there would be two grades doing extensive reading, I thought it would be valuable to sit down with the teachers involved and reassess the current extensive reading program. We discussed making changes to the journals to include percentages of reading comprehension, adding a listening component, including more support for students when filling out the ER Journals, and finding an online reading program that could be done during the long holiday breaks such as summer and winter.

#### **Extending the Program Across Two Grades from April 2008 to March 2009**

In 2008, I approached the English Department with another book proposal and budget to buy new books. In the proposal, I mentioned that the program would be continuing in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and we would need a higher level of books to maintain the program. I was given a budget and continued to update the program as needed. Unfortunately, I was not able to keep as detailed account of data as I did the previous year due to the sheer increase in the number of students participating in the program.

In April 2008, I had 228 students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 229 students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. During the spring of 2008, I found an online reading program called Raz-kids that offered reading, listening, and comprehension questions. Also, there was a teacher management program that helped teachers monitor work being completed online

which was quicker than individually looking at the paper based journals. At a touch of the fingers, teachers could log in and see the progress their students were making. Another deciding factor of doing online reading was the cost. If we bought one book per student to read during the summer, it would cost about ¥600 a book. But using Raz-kids would only cost the students about ¥200 for an unlimited number of books. At Ritsumeikan each student has an account that is allocated for book fees and other incidentals that teachers can deduct from with the OK from the grade head teacher. Since I would be using Raz-kids in two grades, I had to order 13 classrooms with 36 students in each one which worked out to be about ¥200 per person. This cost was very reasonable so we began using the program in the summer and winter months.

While at SIT for my second summer in June 2008, I set up our classes in Raz-kids. I inputted the students' names and gave them passwords and also created a handbook for the teachers in Japan to use to teach the students how to use the program before their summer vacation began in July. An added benefit was that although I was overseas, I could still monitor my students' progress from my computer; this was very handy.

The students enjoyed reading and listening to books online. Many students read more than they had to which was exciting to see. It appeared that students enjoyed listening to the books online because some students, especially the lower level students, were complaining that they did not understand certain words but after they heard the word, they realized that in fact they did know it. Listening is a fundamental part of language acquisition. To be successful in language acquisition,

it is important that the learner is receiving comprehensible input. According to Krashen,

If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input. (p. 2, 1985)

With the addition of the listening component, students became more motivated and their anxiety level was reduced. Therefore, I purchased 80 CD players with research money to add extensive listening to the program. Given that my colleagues represent several English speaking countries in addition to the United States, the program would be richer because it gave students the opportunity to listen to different pronunciations. Throughout the year, my colleagues helped me make CDs for the books. We read the books in our free time and dubbed them onto CDs. This was a tremendous bonus to the program because not only could students read the books, but they could also listen and shadow the books. When students are beginning to learn a language, shadowing is an important language learning technique. As an added component to the Extensive Reading program, students first listen to the book. Then, they listen and read the book silently. Finally, they attempt to say what is being said as quickly as they hear it.

### **Extending the Program Across Three Grades from April 2009 until March 2010**

In April 2009, I approached the English Department again for more funding and vowed to keep better records in order to keep this program alive. In addition to this, my colleagues and I wanted to manage the books better. Students lost some books, which became a problem and a common complaint from the Information

Technology Department. This department includes the library. Therefore, we put 5 books in an A4 or B5 clear plastic bag with a sign up sheet inside. It was kept inside the bag. Students had to write their names, student numbers, and circle how many books they read in an assigned time. This process was done in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the teachers agreed that the students would check out the books and bring them to class.

In June, I decided to give all the students, approximately 690 students in junior high school including the 7<sup>th</sup> grade the same word test I gave in 2007. I then gave it again in October 2009 but rearranged the words to lessen any test effect that there might be. I wanted to see if there were any increases in vocabulary knowledge and there were. The tables below list the gains in vocabulary acquisition from the period of June to October. The average number of books and words read per grade from June 2009 until October 2009 were as follows:

- (a) Each 7<sup>th</sup> grade student read 39 books for an average of 3,256 words.
- (b) Each 8<sup>th</sup> grade student read 44 books for an average of 30,686 words.
- (c) Each 9<sup>th</sup> grade student read 16 books for an average of 47,064 words.

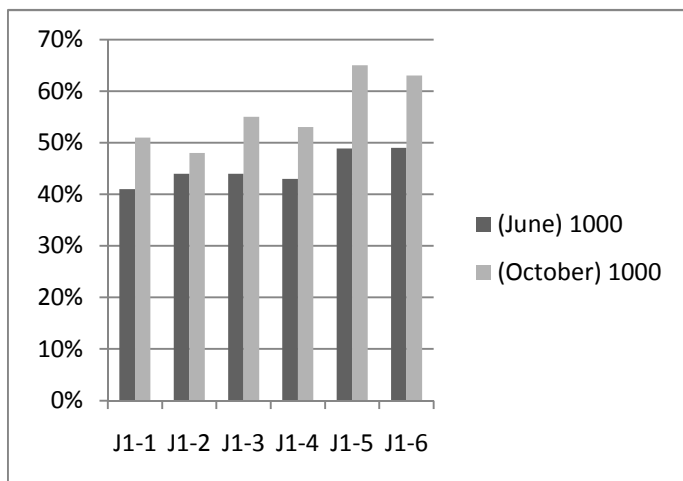


Figure 2: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009)

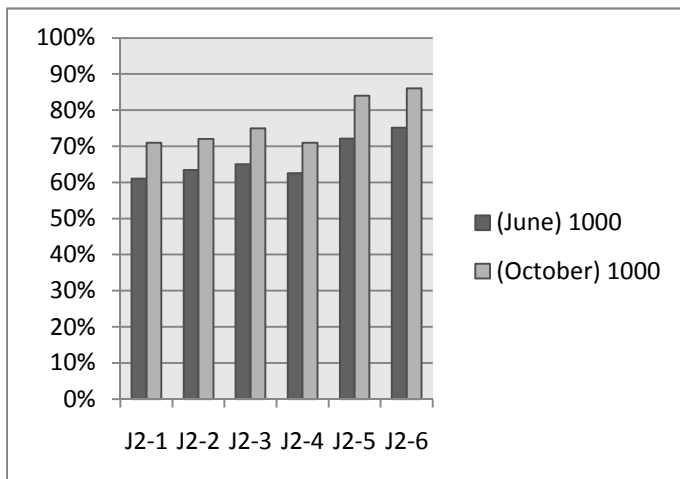


Figure 3: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009)

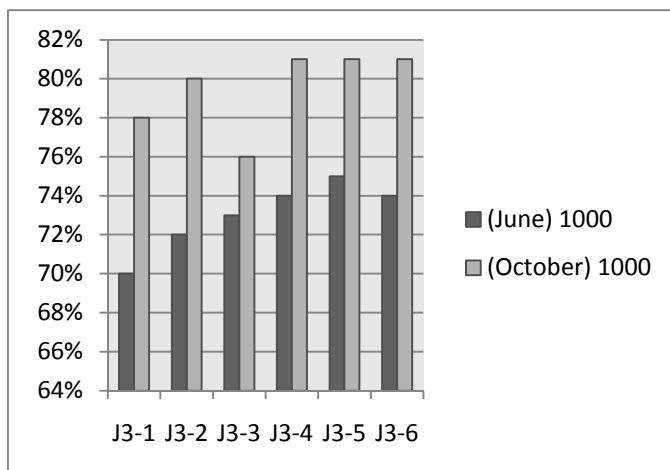


Figure 4: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade 1000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009)

During a four month period, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on average increased their 1000 Word Level test scores by 24%; 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on average increased their scores by 15%. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade students on average increased their scores by 10%. The reason the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students average is higher is because they started off with almost no English background.

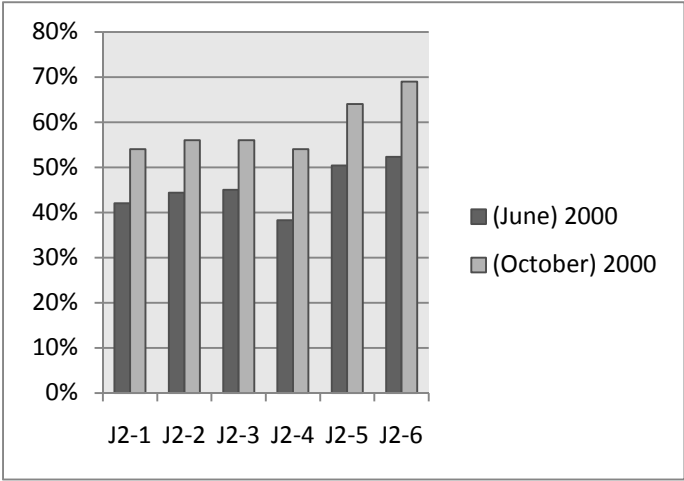


Figure 5: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade 2000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009)

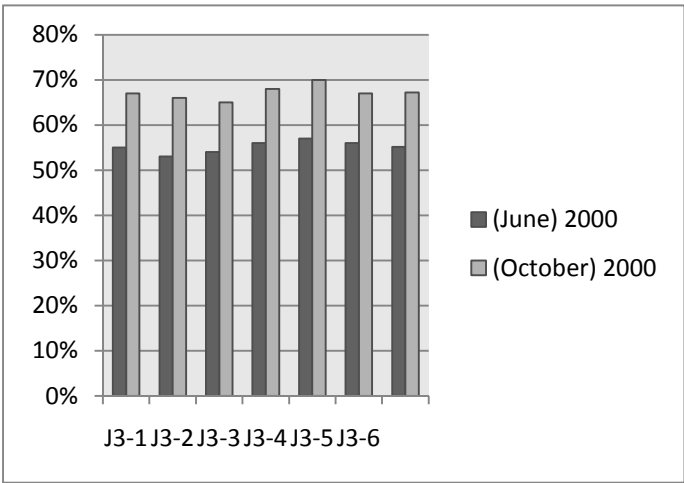


Figure 6: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade 2000 Word Level Test: June and October (2009)

During the 4<sup>th</sup> month period, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students increased their 2000 Word Level results by 30% and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students increased their results by 22%.

Compared to the data from 2007 on page 6 and the data collected in 2009 from pages 15 to 17, there are positive increases to both the 1000 and 2000 word recognition. I feel this supports my belief in using extensive reading to further increase the students vocabulary acquisition. If students continue extensive reading in the senior high school, based on existing research into Extensive Reading there is a strong likelihood of an even further increase in 2000 word recognition and academic word list.

Below is a chart that outlines the extensive reading program that has been established across the three years in junior high school. It outlines the target number of books to be read as well as the YL level.

Table 7: Extensive Reading Across Three Years in Junior High School

<u>Month</u>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
April		Penguin Young Readers Chant	Written and Oral Book Report
May		<i><u>Extensive Reading</u></i> Read 10 books From YL .05 -0.8	At least 1 Graded Reader a week (Level 1, 2) 10 to 15 books
June	Introduction to Extensive Reading in Team Teaching Classes  <b><u>Introduction</u></b> (Read and Listen YL 0.1~0.3)		
July	Introduction to Online Program	<b><u>Summer HW:</u></b> Online Reading Program (Raz-Kids) Read 20 books	<b><u>Summer HW</u></b> Read 1 Graded Reader or Online Reading Program
August	<b><u>Summer HW:</u></b> Online Reading Program (Raz-Kids) Read 20 books		
September	Read 10 to 15 books YL 0.2~0.4	<i><u>Extensive Reading</u></i> Read 10 books from YL .07-0.9	At least 1 reader a week (Level 1, 2, or 3) 10 books
October	<b><u>Autumn ER Program</u></b> YL 0.3~0.5 Read about 25 books	<i><u>Extensive Reading</u></i> Read 20 books from YL .07-.09	
November		<b><u>Winter HW:</u></b> Read 1 Graded Reader Penguin Readers/McMillan Readers Starters/ Level 1/Level 2	
December			Australia <b><u>Winter HW</u></b> Penguin Graded Reader Level 3
January	<b><u>Extensive Reading Marathon</u></b>	Written and Oral Book Report	Read 1 Graded



February	YL 0.3~-0.5 (about 20 books)  <b>Spring HW:</b>	Online Reading Program Read 10 to 15 books	Reader a week (Level 1, 2, or 3)  5 books
March	Read Penguin Young Reader Book	<b>Spring HW:</b> Read 1 Graded Reader from Penguin Readers/McMillan Readers Starters/ Level 1/Level 2	<b>Graduation</b>
Estimated Number of Books Read	82 ~ 87 books (They are reading books containing from 0 to 1000 words.)	70-80 books (They are reading books containing from 273 to 9,300 words)	30 ~ 40 books (They are reading books containing 700 to 21,000 words.)

### Future Steps and Challenges

I presented this information to the English Department (approximately 25 members) in December 2009 and the faculty members were surprised to see the average number of words read and the increase in vocabulary acquisition over a five-month period. During the discussion that followed several questions came up, two of which I address here: What did we give up to include Extensive Reading in our lessons? and Why not have the Japanese teachers try it in their regular classes? I do not think we gave up anything because our students were using the four skills in our class. If anything, they were getting more input on an individual basis with the implementation of extensive listening. Because it was done in a team teaching atmosphere, some teachers felt it used too much teacher resources. I believe the Japanese English teachers could do it in their classes if they could make time to do it. It just means using time more efficiently in the classes. Yet, some individual teachers might not feel they are able to do it in the classes because of the constraints of the curriculum. Teachers must finish New Horizon English Course 1 and half of Course 2 by 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Then, they have to finish the other half of Course 2 and a couple of chapters of New Horizon English Course 3 by 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Finally, New Horizon

English Course 3 must be covered by the first term of J3. Ideally, they would like New Horizon English Course 1 and 2 to be completed in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and New Horizon English Course 3 by 8<sup>th</sup> grade. With the addition of Extensive Reading in the classroom, teachers might feel overwhelmed trying to finish the textbooks in the given time frame. That is why it was done in the team teaching classes. With two teachers working on it, it was easier to implement and maintain over the course of the year.

As a result of this meeting and several afterwards, the Japanese teachers agreed to do Extensive Reading in their classes from April 2010. When the new school year started again, some teachers asked me to do Extensive Reading in the team teaching classes, which I was happy to do. But some teachers did not ask at all. Therefore, I was a bit skeptical if they would even do it and the program would gradually fade away. I approached the English Department Chairperson again to make an announcement to the English Department that if they were unable to do it in their classes, then it would be done in the team teaching classes. Much to my delight, extensive reading is being done in both team teaching and regular classes.

From the summer of 2010, the extensive reading program will extend across 4 years at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. Below is an extended outlook of the Extensive Reading Program I have envisioned in the senior high school.

*Table 8: Extensive Reading Across Three Years in Senior High School*

<b>Month</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>
April	Introduction to Extensive Reading Program	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week.	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week.
May	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week.	YL 3, 4, 5, 6 (approx. 10 to 15 books)	YL 4, 5, 6 (approx. 10 to 15 books)
June	YL 2, 3, 4, 5 (approx. 10 to 15 books)		

July	15 books)		
August	Summer HW: Read 2 books	Summer HW: Read 2 books	Summer HW: Read 2 books
September October November December	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week (approx. 10 to 20 books) Winter HW: Read 1 Reader	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week. (approx. 10 to 20 books) Winter HW: Read 1 Reader	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week (approx. 10 to 20 books) Winter HW: Read 1 Reader
January	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week (approx 10 to 15 books)		Read 5 books.
February	Read 1 to 2 Readers a week (approx 10 to 15 books)		Graduation
March			
Estimate total of number of books read	33 to 52 books	33 to 52 books	29 to 43 books

I have found that extensive reading with the addition of listening and shadowing the books as well as using different activities such as reading journal logs, reading marathons, and oral and written book reports has had a positive effect on listening, writing, motivation, and other areas of language competency.

From this year, I will continue to keep record of average number of words read as research and provide the English Department with up-to-date data on how much the students are reading and changes in students' proficiency level. In addition to this, I want to find other methods to test students' vocabulary acquisition and will look at an online program for the senior high school students to use to check reading comprehension. Another item that needs to be explored is the design and implementation of an in-house website for students to use to listen to the books they are reading. This would need authorization from publishers due to copyright issues and school administration due to programming resources that would need to be allocated to this project. Furthermore, consistent funding needs to be established. There are two ways to ensure that future funding is available to sustain this program

in the future: (a) charge students a flat fee upon entering the junior and senior high school to replace lost books and to buy new books at various reading levels, and (b) allocate funds from the library budget each year to go towards the purchase of Extensive Reading books.

### **Lessons Learned From Starting an ER Program**

There are five things that I have learned are key to the success of the program: the management of the program, funding and purchase of books, activities to keep students interest, teamwork from teachers participating in the program, and monitoring students' progress. The management of the program is vital to being successful. When starting an ER program, a teacher might be overwhelmed by how much work is involved and decide to think it is not worth it. Since there are several leveling systems such as YL and the EPER Level (Edinburgh Project of Extensive Reading) on the market, it is important to decide which is better suited for the institution. In addition to this, work with the library staff to input books into the library. See if the school will allocate a space on the shelves for English books. Moreover, for younger students, bringing the books to class and using them is important. Putting a selection of leveled books in a plastic bag and having a sign out sheet helped teachers monitor students progress as well as reduce the number of lost books. For older students, they can borrow them directly from the library.

Each institution has a different funding process. It is important to find the right path: who to talk to, how much is appropriate to ask for, and an outline of the program you want to establish. Moreover, be flexible. Start off small and work up to a larger library of books. Since I live in Japan, I have to work with a different

mindset. I have to be culturally aware of the process that is done in this country not my home country, which at times foreigners can forget. It is important to source out publishers and ask for sample copies of books so other department members can look at and read. Find a book wholesaler that gives discounts for buying a certain number of books. Have a clear outline of the program for up to three years, so teachers and administrative faculty can see how much the program will grow. Talk to other people who have set up a program and ask them how funds were distributed. Having a wide range of genres and levels is significant to the program, especially with younger learners. As I mentioned before, ask publishers for sample copies and ask students what they think of the books. It is important to talk to students about what they like to read. For my students after Oxford Reading Tree Level 4, a magic key was introduced and the students became more interested because they wanted to find it.

When I was first developing the ER program, I read two books: *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language* by Richard R. Day and Julian Bamford and *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* by Jack Richards. They provided many activities that I adapted in my classroom. The ER Marathon was a successful activity. Different levels of books equal a certain number of kilometers. Students read the books and color in the marathon chart. They are usually given a certain time period to try to achieve reading a whole marathon. This sometimes coincides with the school marathon in February. Another fun activity was the chants in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students enjoyed watching each other do the chant but they also enjoyed watching their own video and making suggestions how they could improve their speaking ability. In the ninth grade, students did "Show and Tell" with a selected

book. They were given a model book report with some guidance to help them to be successful in this task, especially the lower level students. Then students gave an oral book report in the class. The reading journal is a work in progress. Every year it is reevaluated and changes made to make it easier to understand for students as well as teachers to get data from.

Without the support of the English Department and Administration, the ER program would not be where it is today. By communicating with teachers and students about how to make the program more efficient and applying what they said reduced problems that might have come up during the year. Creating ER Manuals for students and teachers is important. This helps everyone understand the goals of the program and answers many questions that might be asked during the year.

Next, monitor students' progress. It is important to find a method that works for the teacher or institution. Either use a vocabulary test or another standardized test such as TOEIC to use as a pre and post test to gather data from. Collect journals or use an online reading program to monitor the number of books and words read by each student. Having hard data will help expand the ER program in the future as well as give support that it does work in the classroom.

In summary, I am very grateful for having the funding and support of the school to continue this program. I am hopeful that as the program continues to grow, more teachers become involved. All in all, it is a gift that we can give our students; one that will outlast their time at school and accompany them into adult life.

CHAPTER FOUR:  
CULTURE PROJECTS

**A Window to the World**

“Are you really sending these letters overseas?”, asked Momoe. “Yes I will send them tomorrow”. The following week Momoe and others asked, “Have our letters come yet?” I would reply, “Not, yet. It takes time to write replies to your letters. They’ll come in about a month.” Then one afternoon, I was called down to the office. There were several large packages waiting for me from overseas. I hung up the phone with a smile. They had arrived. I went down two flights of stairs to the office to pick up the packages from around the world. As I walked back up the stairs, some first year junior high school students saw that I had some packages. They asked, “Are those our letters.” “Yes, I said.” Suddenly, excitement erupted. I told them that they had to wait until our next class. Two days later, I went to class with the letters. Carefully crafted letters with stickers, glitter glue, ribbons from different places around the world. As I called the students’ names out, they were very eager to see what their pen pal wrote as well as looking at their friend’s letters. From that point, the Pen Pal Project became real and their eagerness to read what their pen pal's write is wonderful to see.

**How it began**

According to Hayes (1998, p. 5) “Getting to know each other requires a personal touch. It is not enough to have knowledge about one’s race, one’s ethnicity, ones country or region of the world. We must come to know each other person to person.” What is it to really know someone? When I get to know someone, I learn

about where they are from, their family, their values, beliefs, and what they do every day. I also believe that getting to know someone means to overcome doubts of each other. For this purpose, I embarked on bringing different cultures into the 7<sup>th</sup> grade classroom by an old tradition—letter writing.

Because my students do not have the opportunity to use English outside class on a daily basis, I decided to bring English and different cultures of the world to them. Since my students needed more practice writing English using a pencil, which is easier for correction and because they do not have a computer class in the first year of junior high school, I opted for a letter writing project to other EFL learners over creating e-pals or blogs. In addition, I thought it would give my students more opportunity to add personal touches to their letters as a form of self-expression.

There are several reasons why this project came about. First, my thoughts about doing this stemmed from one of the courses I took at SIT with Pat Moran called Intercultural Communication for Language Teachers. My class had to do a culture project during the interim break between summers. During the course, I was struck by something that Vygotsky wrote. It states “children learn more effectively through experiences that are meaningful and relevant to them. Through letter exchanges with others, children have an authentic opportunity to develop strategies for determining the meaning of written language and to construct written language in return that reflect their intended meaning (Vygotsky, 1934/1978,1981)” (Barksdale, Watson, & Park 2007, p. 58). With Vygotsky’s quote in mind and to meet culture project requirements, I implemented the pen pal project to help improve my students’ language skills. The students could learn about other cultures and



countries as well. In addition, they have the possibility of a developing friendship with someone from another country and perhaps they could meet in the future. Reading about someone else's life sparks curiosity and expands one's awareness of another's environment and daily routines. It may open up one's eyes to a parallel but completely different way of living.

Another reason for the pen-pal project was that I wanted to bring to my students an awareness of different cultures that use English as a medium of communication. I wanted my students to know that English is a language tool used worldwide, not just in countries that have English as their first language. Writing to pen pals encourages them to better understand their own culture in order to explain this to their pen pal. Then upon receiving a response it validates their own cultural position as well as exposing them to a different perspective and culture of their pen pal. This enables a comparison to be made and then leads to a broadening of one's own cultural position. I wanted them to have the chance to explain themselves to someone other than each other and me in English. I wanted them to be in a situation where they had to use English for a specific purpose-communication with another person the same age but from a different country and culture. The final reason was to fill a gap in the curriculum for culture projects. Unlike other grades, 7<sup>th</sup> grade did not have a culture project already established in its curriculum.

### **Culture in Ritsumeikan Junior High School**

More and more we are having our students travel overseas as part of their junior and senior high school trips or short-term/long-term exchanges either through organizations such as Japan Foundation for Intercultural Exchange, British

Council, Program of International Educational Exchange, AFS Intercultural Programs, and Youth for Understanding International Exchange; or reciprocal exchanges within sister schools. In the middle of the ninth grade, all the students go to Adelaide, Australia for 18 days as part of the overall school curriculum. Students and supervising teachers are individually placed in homestay families. During these three weeks, students study English, interact with host school students, and do short excursions. As a result, we see a large need for students to become more aware of their own Japanese culture as well as being open to the other cultures they are being exposed to.

Therefore it has become important to begin to incorporate a culture thread into the English curriculum in 7<sup>th</sup> grade because it is an effective way of supporting cross-cultural learning. They will become more comfortable using English across the four skill areas. Furthermore, I believe that having projects that involve the outside world are essential for any second language acquisition to take place. Not only do the projects enhance acquisition, but they also increase students' motivation and encourage them to actively use English.

### **First Year for Pen Pal Project from September 2007 until April 2008**

#### **Initiating the Pen Pal Project**

Because I was a member of the International Department, I approached Yuki Shirai, the International Department Head, after I returned from my first summer at SIT to see if I could do the pen pal project as well as get reimbursed for postage and supplies. She said there was no problem on her end, but I would need approval

from the other 7<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers, Mayumi Saiki and Aki Hamazoe, too. I approached them about the program and they were eager to try it because it sounded like fun and they could see how it might motivate the students. Then, after getting their approval, the fun really began for me! I had to find 229 pen pals to be matched with the entire 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Searching for Pen Pals**

As a result, I started searching for international pen pal organizations that sent snail mail rather than email. My reasoning for this is students in the first year of junior high school are at the beginning stages of learning and they are still weak in some areas such as penmanship, spelling, grammar and so on. One reason I feel strongly about letter writing is the act of putting pen to paper is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. There is also a special feeling you have when you receive a handwritten letter, which is not replicated when you click the mouse on your screen. During the process of writing and responding, handwriting gives you more time for reflection and reduces the probability of making a hasty mistake. Another reason for using snail mail is we are able to correspond with others in underdeveloped countries with limited or no access to computers.

Most of the organizations I researched required a starting fee which would have required me to charge ¥2,500 (approximately USA\$28.50) per student. This would have had to be approved the previous year from the International Department. However, I found an online pen friend site, called europa-pages that was free and I then placed a request on the teacher's specific link asking for snail

mail pen friends and received quite a few responses from various coordinators around the world. I replied to their emails and I sent them my idea for our pen pal project and some thought it was a good idea. In addition to the online website, two of my classmates, Ebru Bozburun and Oscar Cruz agreed to ask their place of employment to participate in the pen pal exchange. Ebru worked at an International School in Turkey and Oscar put me in touch with a friend who worked at a school in Mexico. I proposed the schedule written below as a framework for our project. Their response was enthusiastic and soon implemented.

*Table 9: 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Pen Pal Project Exchange Schedule*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Pen Pal Exchange</b>
September	Pen Pal Self-Introduction Letter
November	Christmas Cards
December	Winter HW-gather photos/magazine photos for culture poster.
January	New Year Postcard/Culture Poster
February/March	Pen Pal Speech/Final Postcard

My students corresponded with students from 10 countries over 7 months: Malaysia, Canada, Italy, Russia, Slovenia, Greece, Turkey, India, Mexico and Portugal. As you can see in Table 9, during the 7 months the students wrote a self-introduction letter, sent Christmas cards, made a culture poster, sent a New Year postcard, made a pen pal speech, and sent a final postcard. The individual activities are described in more detail in the next section.

## **Pen Pal Project Exchange in Detail**

The first activity was a self-introduction letter. Students gathered information about their own culture to write about their family, birthday, pets, food, likes and dislikes, hobbies, school, and club activities. They learned that other EFL learners around the world have similar likes and dislikes as them.

They wrote a self-introduction letter using grammar structures from their New Horizon English Course book. They learned how to formulate questions about topics such as family, pets, school, and so on in order to ask their pen pal about their lives. Additionally, they were able to respond to questions their pen pals asked of them.

In the beginning, students who had pen pals from India and Mexico had preconceived stereotypes about the people living there; for example, they were poor and dirty. Others were hesitant about communicating with another person from halfway around the world. It was not until responses from around the globe began coming in that the veil of uncertainty began to lift. Students slowly began to get excited about communicating with their pen pals and building a friendship with them. Because they were curious about the other person, it gave them freedom to think about a variety of questions to ask their pen pal to get more information.

The Christmas Card and/or Holiday Card was the next activity planned. There was an activity like this in their New Horizon English Course book. I decided to have students make a real card for their pen pal. The students had a lot of fun designing their own card with some of them turning out to be quite elaborate. Students learned different greetings from around the world for holiday cards.



Figure 7: Christmas Cards

The third activity was a Culture Poster explaining the Japanese New Year. During the winter holiday, students had to find six photos, such as New Years Day at a shrine, the New Year's special meal, and different decorations used during the New Years Holiday. Also, students had to create a New Year's Day postcard. Some students had had a recent death in their family, and it is custom in Japan not to send out a New Years Day Postcard for that year when you have a death. So instead, those students wrote a short letter to their pen pal. After students came back from winter vacation, they made culture posters for their pen pals. See Figure 8 and 9. As you can see from the figure students were quite creative when making the posters. Not all the participating countries undertook the poster exchange due to limited resources. They made group posters rather than individual ones. During the poster

exchange, students explored the differences and similarities between themselves and their pen pals in regards to personal information. They explored different culture traditions in forms of recipes, religion, music and so on from around the world.



Figure 8: An Example of a Culture Poster

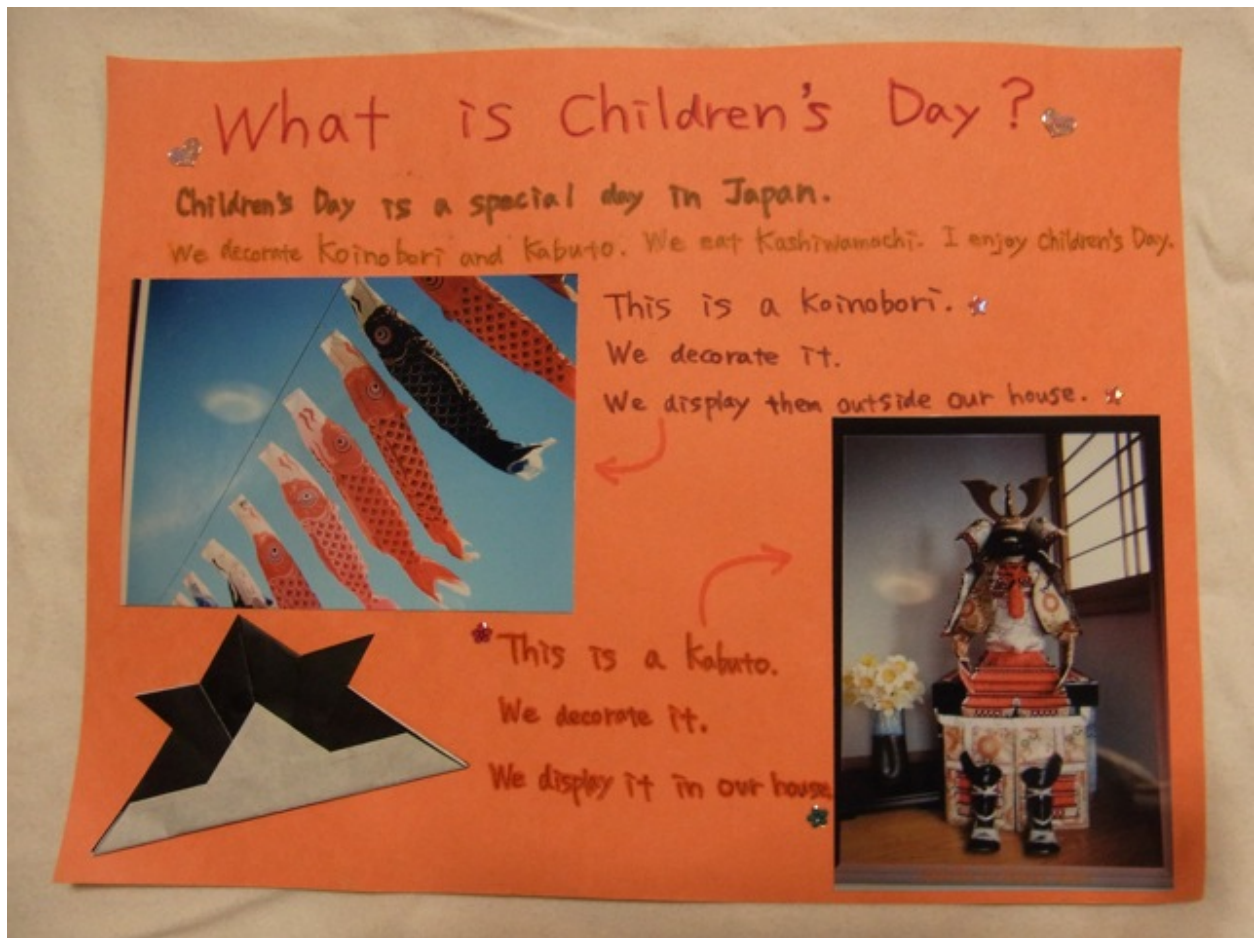


Figure 9: Another Example of a Culture Poster

The fourth activity was to send a final postcard from a famous place in Japan. Students brought their own postcard from a place of their own choosing. They wrote a brief note to their pen pal thanking them for participating in the pen pal letter exchange. Among the sites chosen by my students were the Golden Pavilion "Kinkakuji," Kiyomizu Temple, and the Big Buddha at Todaiji Temple in Nara. All of these places are national treasures and must see places for all tourists both local and foreign.

The final activity was to give a speech about their pen pal. Throughout the exchange students had to gather information on their pen pal; they were able to use



this information to write a simple speech. If they had photos from their pen pal, they used them during their speech. The speech was done in front of the class so everyone had a chance to talk about their pen pal. It was a fun activity with each student speaking about 2 minutes.

### **Evaluation of the First Year**

After the school year ended, I met with Mayumi Saiki and Aki Hamazoe to evaluate the program. Should we continue the program and if so what needed to be changed? There had been several problems that arose during the exchange. First, not all students received letters at the same time, which caused delays in the letter exchange between countries and made it hard to coordinate the program as a class project. Second, remote areas such as Myshkin, Russia had trouble sending letters in the winter months. Sometimes letters were delayed for 4 to 5 weeks and occasionally letters did not arrive at all. In the beginning, there were too many countries involved in the exchange. It was a difficult to manage and logistically quite cumbersome getting all the letters together and took some time at the post office because of bureaucratic formalities. Finally, some students had difficulty reading their pen pal letters. This was mainly due to the style in which students from other countries learn to write. Japanese students tend to print rather than write cursive whereas other countries prefer to use cursive writing. In our evaluation meeting we agreed that the pen pal letter exchange had had a positive effect on the students and thus we wanted to continue it, but at the same time we felt it might be better to reduce the number of countries involved.

### **Second Year for Pen Pal Project from October 2008 until April 2009**

We started the program later than anticipated. In October 2008, I had decided to continue the exchange with India, Portugal, and Turkey because those three partners collectively had enough students to meet our needs. There were 227 students involved in it this year. We followed the same schedule but due to the maternity leave of one of the teachers from Portugal, we ran into major delays. Some students did not get final pen pal letters in the end because other teachers other than the coordinator were involved. Due to constraints out of my control, such as weather and health issues, I decided to continue the pen pal exchange with only three countries again for the following year.

### **Third Year for Pen Pal Project from September 2009 until May 2010**

We started the pen pal exchange earlier than last year but ran into delays caused by the H1N1 virus. This led to various grades being closed for weeklong periods sporadically throughout the year. These interruptions also prevented us from presenting the pen pal speeches in March. Changes were made to the culture poster to include other Japanese holidays such as Sports Day, Coming of Age Day, and so on. This would give the pen pals a broader exposure to Japanese Culture.

### **Future Culture Projects**

From April 2010, there will be 236 students involved. Thus, I have decided to increase the number of countries involved in the letter exchange to spread the risk of non-return or delay to fewer students. We are still in the process of determining the countries that will participate in the project. The Pen Pal project continues into the 1<sup>st</sup> term of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Currently, there are different culture projects that are already a part of the established curriculum. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students make a Photo Journal to be given to their host families in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If the pen pal exchange were to be continued beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade, it would be interesting to continue it via e-pals. There would not be much delay in response time and students could correspond from home. That would also require their partner to have Internet access as well.

In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students get into pairs and choose a common Japanese cultural topic, such as Tea Ceremony, Ninjas, or the Japanese musical instrument, the shamisen, to give a presentation about while they are in Australia. While in Australia, they usually go to the Japanese classes or local elementary schools to talk about Japanese Culture. When students come back from Australia, they write a 150- to 200-word essay about their experience abroad. These essays are compiled in a book given to the students at graduation. An extension activity would be to have students also give a PowerPoint Presentation about their experience.

Currently in the senior high school, culture projects are not part of the established curriculum. Students can participate in short term or long term exchanges, belong to the International Committee which welcomes different visiting exchange groups, or be part of the Student Mentor Program where a selected group of students are matched with visiting exchange group students and participate in

different activities with them. A recent development is for all twelfth graders to work in a group and present a poster explaining Japanese culture during the annual five days Super Science Fair, which is hosted by the Ritsumeikan Super Science High School. It is held in autumn and many overseas schools participate in this event. But for the entire school body, there are limited chances for culture exchanges or projects to take place except in the classroom. In Appendix D, I have created a sample table of culture projects that could be used in senior high school. With careful planning, a culture project could be added to any of the English classes offered in senior high school.

### **Benefits of the Pen Pal Project**

There are four things that I have learned by doing this pen pal project: teamwork, management of the program, partner country logistics and developing new projects to hold students' interest.

I am very appreciative of the effort my and cooperation from my colleagues. Without their assistance this project would not have been successful at all. Just the sheer volume of letters and the amount of work checking assignments and making sure it was done on time took a lot of patience and communication on both sides.

At years end, all teachers involved evaluated the program and put forth suggestions, how to better implement the program in order for it to run more smoothly in the next year. All suggestions were considered and discussed. Everyone including the coordinators from sister schools had their say.

In the first year, there were ten countries participating in the exchange. It was a rich experience for everyone but at the same time from my side it was quite a lot to

manage and coordinate. That is why in the following year it was reduced to three countries. In hindsight, I had not foreseen the problems and delays that occurred due to health, weather, and partner country issues. I think it might be better to have between 4 to 6 countries participate in future pen pal exchanges.

Developing new projects to maintain student interest is key for the success in the program. Right now, the projects that we have established are good but further down the road, I would like to brainstorm about new projects with the sister schools. Also, helping students more with reading the letters and perhaps having a special pocket in their class file folder to keep the letters will prevent them from losing them. In addition, putting individual pen pal names on stickers and having the students put them in their file folder would be helpful for the students.

As for the students, they were able to extend their use of English for communication beyond the classroom. It was rewarding, heartwarming, and exciting to watch them create letters, Christmas cards, and culture posters for their pen pal because they were given the freedom to add their own personal touch to the task. As well it was incredible and amazing to watch how their eyes lit up when they received the letters and saw the return effort their pen pals put into the responses. For me, all the hard work on the teachers' side was worth it. Sadly some students were not able to receive as many letters as their classmates due to limited resources from countries such as Russia and Mexico. But they did get a project from the whole contingent like a cultural story or a group culture project. Hence they learned to be flexible, which is hard for young teenagers at times. All in all, the students enjoyed this project and when letters for pen pals from one or two years ago flow in, the flow of excitement continues.

CHAPTER FIVE:  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM FOR  
RITSUMEIKAN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Teacher 1: “Why don’t we have native English teachers and Japanese English teachers teach together in the same class?”

Teacher 2: “You mean team teaching?”

Teacher 1: “That would be interesting, wouldn’t it?”

Teacher 2: “How do you think the students would react?”

Teacher 1: “I think it would motivate them and maybe more English would be used in the classroom. And, they could see their Japanese English teachers interacting with the Native English teachers, which would make them even more of a role model than they already are.”

## The Inspiration

From April 1998 until March 2001, during my three-year contract position at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School the concept of writing a new curriculum was often discussed in the English Department. A committee was even created to brainstorm and come up with ideas of how to proceed with the new English curriculum. I remember working in groups collaborating on ideas and writing them on large sheets of white paper. Some of the ideas, such as team teaching and using more communicative language in the classroom were implemented, but the other ideas remained on two sheets of A-4 paper tucked in a curriculum file in my drawer waiting for the opportunity to pursue them. Over the years, I collected and added new ideas to the original two pieces of paper. Thus, by 2006 the file had become quite thick. In June, as I was searching for ideas in order to apply for the research grant, I opened my file drawer and took out the thick manila file folder labeled Curriculum Renewal. Since this topic had been continually discussed in department and faculty meetings, I had one of those Aha moments that this was to be the topic for my research grant–Curriculum Renewal.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, my research grant including the curriculum renewal portion was approved in January 2007. At that time, I had the following conversation with myself. “Hooray, my curriculum renewal proposal has been approved. I can now realize my long held dream of attending SIT. Finally, I can dust off the file folder and begin to put some of the items such as Extensive Reading into action. Wait a moment. This is going to be quite a challenge. . Hmmm, it is going to take a lot of work to do. Yes, but I know at SIT I will get the components and tools to make it happen. Well, as we say in Japan, *Gambarimasu!* or I will try my best.

In this chapter, I will address a number of areas related to the development of the curriculum framework. First, I will discuss the building blocks used to create the competency-based framework. Second, I will briefly explain the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and Common Reference Levels that are used in the CEFR. Following that, there will be a brief explanation on how I modeled the Ritsumeikan Framework after the CEFR. Next, I will explain why I chose a competency-based framework. Finally, I will discuss establishing guiding principles, their importance, and why they were created.

### **Building Blocks**

One of the reasons for attending SIT was to acquire more skills in language teaching that would support me in my quest to write a curriculum. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that all the courses I chose at SIT would help me define the threads of the curriculum I was going to design for Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. During the first summer orientation with Susan Barduhn, Academic Chair of the SMAT Program, I can remember going through the SIT Handbook where SIT's competency-based approach to teacher education was presented. That evening rereading the MAT competency checklists in my dorm room I began to wonder if a competency-based curriculum would work in my teaching context in Japan. During the first summer at SIT, I took Curriculum and Assessment with Anne Katz. The final assessment piece was a curriculum project that was due near the end of term. One component after another was added each week to support us while we worked towards the final curriculum project. These components were based on chapters from *Designing Language Courses: A guide for teachers* by Kathleen



Graves (2000). Thus by the end of the course, we had worked on the following components: 1: Defining the context, 2: Articulating beliefs about language, teaching, and learning, 3: Conceptualizing course content, 4: Formulating Goals and Objectives, 5: Assessment, 6: Assessing student needs, 7: Organizing language courses, 8: Adapting courses materials, and 9: Assessing language skills. Not only did this course provide me with tools to write a curriculum, it also provided me with resources to find out more about competency-based curricula.

During the course, I was given a brief overview of various TESOL standards and frameworks for course content. For example, we looked at task-based learning, content-based learning, the US K-12 standards, the CEFR, and other frameworks. I thought the CEFR would best fit my teaching context because it provided a clear vision of how language is used and learned. But I needed to learn more about it. Therefore, I obtained a book on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) when I returned to Japan and started to read and take notes about the CEFR. I also often referred back to my class notes from the Curriculum and Assessment course. And I began to wonder whether I could connect the SIT competencies: Language and Culture, Learners and Learning, Teachers and Teaching, Self and Other, and Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life to the curriculum I was beginning to work on. I also began to see how several threads from my Ritsumeikan Curriculum Renewal folder, for example, the Pen Pal Project and the Extensive Reading Project, could be incorporated.

In addition, there was an online portion of the course that we participated in during the interim teaching portion of the program. During this online portion, we

worked in groups based on location and explored how the curriculum components could be applied to our teaching context. We were given coursework as assignments. Once submitted, we would offer our student peers feedback on each other’s material. Through this feedback, I was better able to collate my ideas and start creating an outline for the curriculum.

During my second summer at SIT, more “building blocks” were added from courses such as Teaching the Four Skills, English Applied Linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition. In these courses, I was able to gain more insight into the direction I wanted our curriculum to go in. In the back of my mind, I knew that after I returned to Japan I had more research to do especially weaving in the final thread—the appropriate competencies that would work in a school system in Japan.

**What is the CEFR?**

The Common European Framework of Reference of Languages (CEFR) is a set of guidelines used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe. The six reference levels are becoming widely accepted as the European standard for assessing an individual’s language proficiency. The illustrative descriptors express what the learners are able to do instead of what they are unable to do. Below are the proficiency frameworks seen in the Common European Framework of References for Languages. (2001, p. 24)

*Table 10: CEFR common reference levels: Global scale*

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
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	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provide the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The Common Reference Levels are already having an impact outside Europe. I have adapted the aforementioned CEFR Common Reference Levels to meet proficiency goals set by the Administration and English Department at Fukakusa Campus for

the future. I have excluded the Common Reference Level Independent User (B2) and Proficient User from the curriculum at this stage. It can be added at a later date, once the curriculum has been evaluated and adjusted and the competencies stated have been surpassed. These levels are beyond the level one can expect Japanese Junior and Senior High school students to be able to achieve currently. A1~A2 are competencies marked for the junior high school and first year of senior high school. The B1 competency is marked for the senior high school curriculum as seen in the table below.

*Table 11: Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School Reference Levels*

<b>Common Reference Levels (Council of Europe)</b>		<b>English Proficiency Levels at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School</b>	
The Basic User	A1: Breakthrough Level	Foundation Level 1	7 <sup>th</sup>
		Foundation Level 2	8 <sup>th</sup>
	A2: Waystage level	Fluency Skills Level 3	9 <sup>th</sup>
		Fluency Skills Level 4	9 <sup>th</sup>
Basic Competence Level 5		10 <sup>th</sup>	
The Independent User	B1: Threshold Level	Social Competence Level 7	12 <sup>th</sup>
	B2: Vantage Level		
The Proficient User	C1: Effective Proficiency Level		
	C2: Mastery Level		

### **Why a competency based framework?**

My intention is for each student to become more competent rather than just

more knowledgeable. Students must be able to implement their language knowledge in a practical manner. This intention is the foundation for the curriculum renewal project. Unfortunately, despite having six years of English education, and having knowledge about English, many are not proficient in using English, due to a weak base. Each component in the new curriculum is intended to build upon previous ones, reinforce what they have learned while building a stronger foundation.

For this foundation I see that there are three areas that need to be addressed. The first area calls for a clearer definition of the proficiency goals to be attained by learners. The second area requires the creation and implementation of a proficiency framework. The third area is the development of an assessment function to monitor overall improvement in the learnt material. When the learner knows what is to be attained then their attention can be more easily focused in order to achieve their goal. The competency-based framework for Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School will be explained in more detail in Chapter 6.

### **The Importance of Guiding Principles**

One important part of curriculum design is articulating your beliefs about language, teaching, and learning. In *Curriculum and Assessment*, there was an excerpt from a chapter by Anne Burns and Helen De Silva Joyce called *Challenging Requirements: How Teachers Navigate to Make Changes Within Required Curricula* (2007). In the article there were several sentences that struck a chord in me. One sentence referred to “a desire to sustain a viable and effective curriculum that reflected their

values, beliefs, and ideals as language teaching professionals.” This is an area that had not been articulated in the English Department Meetings. On an institutional level it is defined, but not on a departmental or individual level. Keeping with the theme of change, another sentence is “The impetus for the types of change comes from dissatisfaction with the constraints of curriculum or teachers’ motivation to improve their students’ learning experiences.” Over the years, I have been frustrated many times with the English program at our school, but there has always been a much stronger desire to improve the status quo, which is why this sentence rang true for me. A third sentence also found in this article was from our course textbook. It says, “Effecting change requires both recognizing what can be changed and accepting what cannot” (Graves, p. 35). Having lived and worked in Japan for 17 years, this is a truth I have worked with and often faced. I have to look at the opportunities and constraints operating in my teaching context. This will affect the way I make the curriculum. With this in mind, I created guiding principles.

### **Creating the Guiding Principles for Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School**

When I started to brainstorm about the guiding principles, I realized I needed to really learn how English was being taught in my context at Ritsumeikan. Therefore, I approached each of my English teacher colleagues, both native speakers and Japanese English speakers and got their approval to observe and videotape their lessons. I also did pre- and post-interviews with each of them where we talked about their classes. It was very insightful for me to see the different ways English was being taught in the junior and senior high school. After further reflection, I realized another item that needed to be explored was the area of teacher

competencies (See Appendix E). The classroom is a shared environment, between learners and teachers. It has been my belief throughout my teaching experience at Ritsumeikan that teachers need to be accountable for what is being taught and how it is being taught in their classroom.

Using what I observed in the classrooms, applying what I had learned at SIT, and keeping true to the goal of students being able to use English better, I developed the following twelve guiding principles organized around the categories of Language and Culture, Learners and Learning, Self and Other, Teachers and Teaching, and Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life. These are drawn from the competencies in the MAT Program at SIT.

## **The Guiding Principles**

### **Language and Culture**

#### *English as a Foreign Language*

Learning a foreign language is a window to opportunity. With another language there is a wider ability to communicate and henceforth learn more about other people and their culture. It increases our awareness and understanding of how other peoples live and think.

#### *A link to the world*

English is a tool for learning and communicating as well as a bridge that links students to a wider world. It enables learners to communicate with peers and others from different countries. Giving them a chance to express and share who they are, where they come from, and their dreams and ideas for the future is essential.

### *Communicative Competence*

The ultimate goal for learners is communicative competence. This requires an understanding and use of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. There should be the ability to use language appropriately within various settings and relationships with fluency and coherence. Finally, there should be an awareness of language use itself and the possibility of cultural misunderstanding and knowledge of strategies to recognize and repair miscommunication.

### **Learners and Learning**

#### *Critical and Creative Thinking Skills*

Learners need to learn to think reflectively, critically, and creatively. They need to use language as an instrument of thought. They need to be able to generate and evaluate ideas, processes, and products. They must be able to listen, read, and view analytically and critically. They are able to pose questions and seek clarification.

#### *Participatory Learners*

Learners will take an active role in their learning. When authentic material is used in the classroom, students' four skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing improve markedly. Using topics based on their daily lives and amusement increases motivation.

### **Self and Other**

#### *Interpersonal and Intercultural skills*



Learners learn to interact, co-operate and collaborate. Students will be able to recognize stereotypical views that can lead to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices. Students are able to respect cultural perspectives that differ from their own.

### *Learning Process*

Language learning is a process. While applying our learned knowledge to communicate, as a non-native speaker, mistakes are made. An awareness of this can be used in the learning process. A continual evaluation of skills can influence the effectiveness of student learning. It sets clear expectations and provides opportunities for students to self-monitor, practice, and receive feedback. It is a powerful tool for teachers, too because it gives them useful information to how a student is doing and how to guide them into effective approaches to study.

## **Teachers and Teaching**

### *Teacher*

Teachers facilitate the processes of language acquisition and learning in the classroom. By creating and scaffolding activities based on the learners' needs, it helps learners to become more autonomous. Together, learners and teachers have a partnership in learning.

### *Supportive Learning Environment and Classroom Management*

It is important for teachers to create a supportive, relaxed and engaging classroom suitable to learning. Teachers can have a positive or negative impact on learner's learning. They have the power to encourage learning. Teachers need to develop effective interpersonal skills, support and challenge students to broaden their comfort zone of learning.

### **Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life**

#### *Intellectual, Personal and Professional Growth*

Teachers should have the desire to be more than providers of information. Effective teaching requires continuing efforts to learn and improve. Teachers need to increase their knowledge about EFL and pedagogy, learn from their students and colleagues and engage in professional development and self-reflection. Collaborating with others—pairing an experienced teacher with a new teacher (mentoring) or forming a Teacher Roundtable—to observe, analyze, and discuss teaching and students' feedback a powerful, yet neglected form of professional development. Teachers need ample opportunities to engage in this kind of continual learning. The working lives of teachers must be structured to allow and support different models of professional development that benefit them and their students.

### **Experienced Gained**

There are three things that I gained from creating the guidelines. First, being able to go into my colleagues' classes and see how and what is being taught in the classroom will forever be with me. Rarely are we given the chance to meet with teachers before or after an open class to reflect on teaching. Usually, they are just a

review of what happened with little or no dialogue between teachers. For me it was a chance to use the techniques I learned in Peer Mentoring and other Teacher Training Courses at SIT. I was able to listen to what teachers had to say about their classes. As teachers, we do not have the opportunity to sit down with someone for an extended period of time without interruption and tell what worked, what did not work and what we can do to improve our classes. Second, writing the guidelines reinforced in me the fact that the courses I took at SIT had truly provided me with the tools needed to articulate principles dear to me. The notes, the readings, and conversations and constant feedback to dig a bit deeper from my peers and teachers sparked the flame to write the guidelines. Finally, writing the guidelines helped me organize my thinking and see that the guidelines fit into different categories: Language and Culture, Learners and Learning, Teachers and Teaching, Self and Other, and Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life. By doing this, it helped me to better understand and articulate my beliefs. Using the guidelines, I was able to formulate a new curriculum, which will be described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### THE RITSUMEIKAN SIX YEAR COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

Our Curriculum

dated, incomplete

frustrating, uninteresting, lagging

courses, programs, goals, competencies

engaging, challenging, inspiring

new, clear

Renewal

The above is a type of poem known as a diamante; and it is a fun activity that I do with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. It captures some of what I feel as I look back at our curriculum and how we got to where we are now.

As students progress through the six years of Secondary English education at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School, they become more familiar with a broader vocabulary and increasingly complex language structures that become progressively more challenging for language use. The scope and difficulty of the objectives increase from year to year. When we look at the proficiency framework, we must also look beyond test results and consider whether or not students have demonstrated the following factors:

- an understanding and accurate functioning and the ability to accurately use of the types of English vocabulary applicable for their level

- a functioning understanding and capability with typical constructions applicable for their level with no loss of accuracy
- the capability to comprehend and construct texts appropriate for their suggested level
- the capability to manage assigned learning tasks for the suggested level
- an ongoing desire and ability to continue learning irrespective of outside influence

In this chapter, I will present and explain the Proficiency Framework for Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. There are four levels. The levels described in this proficiency framework coincide with the traditional year levels. The names of the levels are as follows:

- Foundation Level (Level 1: 7<sup>th</sup> grade/Level 2: 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Fluency Skills Level (Level 3 and 4: 9<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Basic Competence Level (Level 5: 10<sup>th</sup> grade/Level 6: 11<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Social Independence Level (Level 7: 12<sup>th</sup> grade)

Each level as you can see above is linked to a grade year.

Each level has the following four components: a) Achievement Objectives, b) Suggested Structures and Vocabulary, c) Themes, and d) Entry and Exit Profiles. Some of the components such as themes, objectives, and suggested structure and vocabulary have been slowly implemented into the junior high school curriculum. Entry and Exit Profiles have never been discussed in their entirety other than as scores on proficiency exams. The items in the senior high school frameworks have yet to be tried, though it is hoped they will be implemented over the next few years (See Appendix F).

## **How I came up with the levels**

When I first read Chapter 3 from the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, I became fascinated by how they organized language learning into levels. In the previous chapter, I briefly explained the Common Reference Levels listed in the CEFR and how the levels would look in a competency-based curriculum at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. During my research, I studied other school's curricula looking for ideas and approaches to proficiency development. While reading the Common Reference Levels and comparing them to the ability of my students, I noticed that the time frame of our school year and the amount of exposure to English instruction were not sufficient to obtain a similar proficiency as that stated in the CEFR. I decided that we needed a proficiency goal to be reached by the end of each school year. That is how the 7 levels were developed. The 9th grade students participate in a three-week overseas exchange program midway through the year so I decided that with the amount of study and preparation they put in to the program they could do one level before they went abroad and another level after they returned. The names of the levels are labels for a collection of achievement objectives. They also are reflections of the levels of proficiency I would like my students to attain.

## **Thoughts Driving the Components**

In the Curriculum and Assessment Course that I took in the first summer in 2007, we had to do an activity called "Conceptualizing Content" which was based on chapter 4 in our textbook, *Designing Language Courses: A Guide For Teachers*.

Graves (2000) states “Conceptualizing content, then, is a matter of articulating what you will explicitly teach or explicitly focus on in the course and knowing why you have made those choices.” The activity had to be a visual representation of our words, such as a mind map, grid or flowchart. The role of this activity was to consider what I felt was most important for my students to learn based on their needs and context. Though this activity was for one course I was teaching, I soon began to jot down new notes as well as draw upon old notes from the trusted file folder for each course that was taught at Ritsumeikan.

### **What are the components?**

#### *Achievement Objectives*

Another part of conceptualizing the content of the course is developing goals and objectives. This was not new for me, because at Ritsumeikan, teachers have to write objectives for each course. However, there seems to be no other overall objective except for achievement on proficiency tests. Therefore, I wrote achievement objectives for each level. The achievement objective describes the level of language proficiency that students are expected to achieve during that grade year.

#### *Suggested Structures and Vocabulary*

The next component explained is Suggested Structures and Vocabulary, which falls under linguistic skills for conceptualizing content. Linguistic skills focus on the ways language is structured: grammar, pronunciation, and lexicon (Graves, 2000). In Chapter 5, I mentioned a curriculum file folder where I kept several large sheets of paper that listed ideas for curriculum renewal. It also listed ideas of what

to teach in the different grades. Combining these ideas with the goals of the administration as well as drawing from the different projects such as Extensive Reading and Pen Pals, I created a list of suggested structure and vocabulary for each level. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade, the heading “Suggested Structures and Vocabulary” changes to “Suggested Structures and Content.” At this level, I wanted to introduce content-based courses such as history or science in English.

### *Communication Themes*

The next component is Communication Themes. Currently, we use textbooks such as New Horizon and Treasure and supplement the units with communicative activities. In the new curriculum frameworks, I have inserted themes or topics that can be used to explain the target structure and vocabulary. As you will see in Foundation Level 1, I introduce personal introductions, nationalities, and daily activities. The reason I did so is so students could use language to talk about themselves. Instead of introducing language by “Today we will study the verb *be*,” language could be introduced by topics or themes.

### *Entry and Exit Profiles*

Assessment and evaluation are important products in any course. Junior high school is compulsory in Japan. Students are promoted to the next grade regardless of their ability to complete a course. But in senior high school, students are accountable for their course work and test results. Proficiency is really not considered even though some tests are labeled proficiency tests. This labeling leads



to the thinking that if students can pass a test, then they must be proficient. Unfortunately, this is a false logic because most English proficiency tests used do not test whether or not a student can communicate or not. Therefore, I wrote entry and exit profiles of what our students can do before they start the level and what they can do with the language at the end of each level. The entry and exit profiles are divided into six parts: a) interaction competency, b) listening competency, c) reading competency, d) speaking competency, e) writing competency, and f) linguistic competency. Interaction competency is how well the student interacts by speaking and listening in pairs and small or large group work. These can be in the form of conversations, discussions, and debates. Listening competency is how well students receive and process spoken information by one or more speakers. This can be listening to the teacher or classmates, radio, movies, or public lectures. Reading competency is how well students receive and process information that is written by one or more writers. An example of this would be reading for specific information, pleasure or comprehension. Speaking competency is how well the student can use the language in speaking tasks. Writing competency is how well students use the language in writing activities such as letters, filling in forms, or essay writing. Linguistic competency is how well students use grammar and vocabulary in communication.

### **Ritsumeikan English Proficiency Framework**

#### **Levels 1 and 2 Achievement Statement:**

##### *Foundation Level*

On completion of Level 2, learners can interact orally to ask and answer questions in very short predictable exchanges. The language contains simple sentences and memorized sentence patterns and familiar vocabulary. They can read and write personal information, for example, describing likes, dislikes, family, and hobbies.

## **Foundation Level 1**

### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to

- greet, say farewell, and thank people and respond to greetings and thanks
- introduce themselves and others and respond to instructions
- communicate using days of the week, months, and dates
- communicate about time, weather and season
- communicate likes and dislikes
- communicate about personal information, such as name, age, nationality, home, family, school, food and hobbies
- communicate about location
- understand and use a range of politeness conventions (for example, ways of thanking people, apologizing, excusing themselves, complimenting people)
- read and understand very simple descriptive texts comprised of familiar vocabulary and basic grammar structures
- read up to Yomiyasusa Level 0.4 ~0.5 for Extensive Reading
- use and respond to simple classroom language (including asking for the word to express something in English)
- write simple questions about themselves or others and answer them appropriately

- write a postcard, a poster, and a short letter to an overseas pen pal using simple grammar structures and familiar vocabulary

Table 12: Foundation Level: Suggested Structures and Vocabulary

Suggested Structures	Suggested Vocabulary
Subject Pronouns	I, you, she, he, it, we, you, they
Object Pronouns	me, you, her, him, it, us, you, them
Possessive Pronouns	my, our, your, her, his, its, their mine, yours, ours, theirs, hers, his
Recognize, express and enquire about personal ownership	Whose pen is this? It's mine. / It's Masahiro's.
Be Verb	is, am
Action Verbs	read, listen, walk, clean, stop, speak, eat, go, sit, stand, make
Tense	Present/Present Continuous/Modal (can)/Past
Interrogatives	when, where, who, whose, what, how, and which
Negation/contractions	He was not happy. / He wasn't happy.
Sentence Structure	S+V+O She is a student.
Time	What time is it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is one fifteen.</li> <li>• It is two o'clock.</li> </ul>
Greetings and Farewells	Good morning, hi, hello, goodbye, see you, Good afternoon, Good evening.
Colors	Red, yellow, green, blue
Capital and lower case letters	A a
Alphabet	A ~ Z
Numbers	Ordinal and Cardinal Numbers
Weather expressions	It's cloudy. / It's snowy.
Classroom Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open your books to page four.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at this picture.</li> <li>• Listen to the CD.</li> <li>• Repeat after me.</li> </ul>
Punctuation	period, explanation point, comma, question mark
Conjunctions	and, or, but
Prepositions	before, between, across, after, on, under

## Themes and Topics

### People

- Personal Introductions
- Names (First Name and Family Name)
- Immediate Family
- Gender
- Age
- City/Town
- Nationalities/Countries/Languages
- Birthday

### School/Work

- Subjects
- Classroom Objects
- Prepositions of Place
- Possessions
- Numbers
- Calendar
- Seasons

### Abilities

- Daily Activities
- Hobbies
- Likes/Dislikes
- Can you.....?
- How often.....?

### Food and Health

- Food names
- Countable/Uncountable Nouns
- Restaurant Ordering
- Currency/Price

### Places

- Rooms in a house/apartment/school

- Preposition of place (location of objects)

### Experiences

- What did you do today?
- What did you do yesterday?/on the weekend?

### Stories

- Jazz Chants
- Children's Stories
- Songs

Table 13: Exit and Entry Profile for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Entry Profile	Exit Profile
<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has little or no knowledge of English. It depends on if his/her elementary school has had English Classes.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can use simple sentences using present, present continuous and simple past tense</li> <li>✓ Can use Classroom English</li> <li>✓ Can talk, ask and answer questions about everyday personal topics (self, family, school, club activities, weekend activities, likes/dislikes)</li> <li>✓ Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand a little or has had no experience listening to English.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand every day expressions dealing with simple and concrete everyday needs in a clear, slow and repeated speech</li> <li>✓ Can follow short and simple directions</li> <li>✓ Can manage and understand simple, routine exchanges without too much effort</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can read a little such as the alphabet or has had no experience reading in English.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand the general idea of simple informational texts and short simple descriptions, especially if they contain pictures that help to explain the</li> </ul>

	<p>text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can follow short, simple written instructions, especially if they contain pictures.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple messages, e.g on postcards and simple letters</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can speak a little or has had no experience speaking English.</li> <li>✓ It depends on the education he or she received in primary school.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</li> <li>✓ Can communicate using simple sentences about self, family, school, or club.</li> <li>✓ Can give a speech about his or her pen pal.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write romaji (Romanized Japanese)</li> <li>✓ Can write their full name with little or no difficulty.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write a simple postcard</li> <li>✓ Can write short letters and messages with the help of a dictionary.</li> <li>✓ Can explain what they like or dislike about something.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple notes to friends.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple summaries about books.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has limited or no linguistic competency.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, requests for information.</li> <li>✓ Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorized phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about self, family, school, and everyday activities.</li> </ul>

## Foundation Level 2

### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to

- communicate about their wants and hopes for the future using simple forms
- write simple descriptive paragraphs (roughly 5 to 10 sentences) (e.g. family, home, school, hobbies)
- communicate about daily activities and future plans
- express desires
- communicate about likes and dislikes, giving reasons where appropriate;
- communicate about physical characteristics, personality, and feelings.
- compare and contrast people, places, or things
- ask for and respond to simple directions
- read from Yomiyasusa Level 0.5 to 1.0 for Extensive Reading
- do a short memorized presentation about a famous place in Kyoto
- do a short show and tell about a favorite item
- do a memorized chant about a book
- give a short book report about an English book they read
- read and answer short comprehension questions about reading passages
- listen, understand and use classroom English
- express and respond to how they feel
- understand, ask about and express events or facts in the past
- write short passages describing themselves, family, school, hobbies, future dreams, Japanese holidays, favorite season, winter vacation, and best friend
- write a short summary of about 3 to 5 sentences about a book

Table 14: Foundation Level 2: Suggested Structures and Vocabulary

Suggested Structures	Suggested Vocabulary
Comparative Adjectives	richer, faster, slower, easier more difficult
Superlative Adjectives	Richest, fastest, slowest, easiest, most difficult
Tense	Past Tense (Regular and Irregular Verbs) Future Tense: will/going to Have+infinitive/Past Continuous
Imperatives	must, should
Polite Expressions	May I go to my locker? Could you read me this letter?
Conjugation	Regular and Irregular Verbs
Adverbs of Frequency	usually, always, sometimes, never
Job Vocabulary	astronaut, doctor, teacher,
Hobbies Vocabulary	Listen to music, play soccer
Family	aunt, uncle, nephew
Tag questions	This is your pen, isn't it?
Currency	dollar, yen, \$24.00/24.50/¥1,000/ ¥10,000
How much..?	How much is that pen? It's ¥170.
Time	Quarter to two/half past three/five before two
Temperature	13°C/80°F
Expressing height/width	2,038 meters high/194 kilometers long
Body Parts	Arm/leg/stomach/neck
Health	What's the matter?/What's wrong? I have a headache.
Directions	east, west, north, south
Asking for directions	Excuse me. Could you tell me where the post office is? How can I get to the library?
Prepositions of place	across from, next to, behind, in front of
Directions	straight, turn left, turn right,
There: Subject Verb Agreement	There is a book on the table. There are two books on the table.



## Themes and Topics

### People

- Extended Family (Family Trees)
- Clothing
- Physical Description
- Emotions

### School/Work

- Time Table
- Making Plans
- Favorite/nonfavorite
- Jobs

### Abilities/Interests

- Hobbies
- Sports/Clubs
- Famous People

### Food and Health

- Doctor's Visit
- Parts of the Body
- Describing sickness
- Give simple advice

### Places

- Street Names
- Town/City Building Names
- Prepositions of Place
- Giving simple directions on foot

### Experiences

- Japanese Holidays
- Seasons

### Stories

- Children's Stories
- Folk Songs
- Jazz Chants

Table 15: Exit and Entry Profile for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

<b>Entry Profile</b>	<b>Exit Profile</b>
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<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can use simple sentences using present, present continuous and simple past tense</li> <li>✓ Can use Classroom English</li> <li>✓ Can talk, ask and answer questions about everyday personal topics (self, family, school, club activities, weekend activities, likes/dislikes)</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can handle and understand very short exchanges but has some difficulty keeping the conversation going of his/her own accord.</li> <li>✓ Can work in pairs and small groups.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand every day expressions dealing with simple and concrete everyday needs in a clear, slow and repeated speech</li> <li>✓ Can follow short and simple directions</li> <li>✓ Can manage and understand simple, routine exchanges without too much effort</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can generally understand the topic of discussion around him/her which is conducted slowly and clearly.</li> <li>✓ Can understand the essential information from short recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are spoken slowly and clearly.</li> <li>✓ Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters, although in a real life situation he or she might have to ask for repetition or reformulation.</li> <li>✓ Can understand directions relating how to get from x to y by foot or public transport.</li> <li>✓ Can catch the point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand the general idea of simple informational texts and short simple descriptions, especially if they contain pictures that help to explain the text.</li> <li>✓ Can follow short, simple written instructions, especially if they contain pictures.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple messages, e.g on postcards and simple letters</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple texts containing the most common words, including some shared international words.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple texts written in common everyday language</li> <li>✓ Can read between 300 to 600 headwords for Graded Readers.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short personal letters</li> <li>✓ Can understand everyday signs</li> </ul>

	and notices in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations and in school.
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</li> <li>✓ Can communicate using simple sentences about self, family, school, or club.</li> <li>✓ Can give a speech about his or her pen pal.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.</li> <li>✓ Can manage simple exchanges on familiar and routine matters.</li> <li>✓ Can give a short descriptive summary about cultural sites in Kyoto.</li> <li>✓ Can give a short oral book report about a book.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write a simple postcard</li> <li>✓ Can write short letters and messages with the help of a dictionary.</li> <li>✓ Can explain what they like or dislike about something.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple notes to friends.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple summaries about books.</li> <li>✓ Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write descriptive short paragraphs for a photo journal for their host family. The short paragraphs are about self, family, city/town, club activities, hobby, favorite season, winter holidays, school, best friend. They are roughly 5 to 10 sentences long including a photo.</li> <li>✓ Can write a short summary about a book as well as a book report.</li> <li>✓ Can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters of every day life.</li> <li>✓ Can write a short descriptive diamante poems.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, requests for information.</li> <li>✓ Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorized phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about self, family, school, and everyday activities.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a small repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for the words.</li> <li>✓ Has lexical limitations that cause repetition and difficulty with word forms.</li> </ul>

## **Levels 3 and 4 Proficiency Statements**

### *Fluency Skills Level*

On completion of level 4 students will have participated in an 18-day individual homestay experience in Adelaide, Australia. They are able to communicate on a simple level with their Australian host families, classmates and the public using familiar language structure in context. They can write an introduction and thank you letter to their homestay family, fill out an official homestay application form, and compose a 150 to 200 word essay about their experience in Australia. They are becoming more confident using English both in and out of the classroom. From this experience, there is an overall improvement in their English comprehension and fluency.

### **Fluency Skills Level 3**

#### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to:

- read short simple texts from their textbook.
- skim and scan brochures, movie times, shopping information to find pertinent information
- read and understand 60 to 80% of level 2 or level 3 readers
- express acceptance and refusal, giving reasons
- understand place, location and give and receive directions
- write simple sentences with connectors (and, or, because) and provide extra information

- give an oral report about the books they are reading
- ask and answer questions about their photo journals
- deal with situations while traveling abroad, for example, restaurants, shopping, transportation, telephones, and airport activities
- give and ask reasons for or against an idea or activity

Table 16: Fluency Skills Level 3: Suggested Structures and Vocabulary

**Suggested Structures**

**Suggested Vocabulary**

Tense	Present Perfect/Past Perfect
Forms of address in letters and forms	Dear, Sincerely
Negative adverbs	never, nothing,
Definite/indefinite articles	the, a, an
Positive Quantifiers	some, few
Agree/Disagree	I agree with ...../I disagree with.....
Ask for and offer help	Could you help me?
Relative Pronouns	that, who, which
Prepositions	since, for
Passive Voice	This book was written by Stephen King.
Understand commands and respond to them	Close the window.
Factual Conditional	If it rains, we will go the movies.
Infinitive to + verb	It is very important for you to study.

**Fluency Skills Level 4**

### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to

- offer, ask for, accept, and decline things, invitations, and suggestions
- understand and describe how to do or use something
- communicate about plans for the immediate future
- communicate about obligations and responsibilities
- give and seek permission
- communicate about the quality, quantity and cost of things
- give a short 5 minute presentation about an aspect of Japanese Culture, for example, origami, tea ceremony, and Japanese writing
- write a short factual description about their stay in Australia
- write a diamante poem
- read and understand 60 to 80% of level 2 or level 3 readers

*Table 17: Fluency Skills Level 4: Suggested Structures and Vocabulary*

<b>Suggested Structures</b>	<b>Suggested Vocabulary</b>
Reviewing basic grammar structures	S+V+O, S+V+O+O, S+V+O+C
Comparing Cultures	In Japan, we take our shoes off when we enter a house. In Australia, they leave their shoes on.
Idioms	We are looking forward to meeting you.

	I am fond of watching movies.
Reviewing question and answer strategies	Who, what, where, why, how, when, which
Expressions of acceptance and agreement	Sure. That's great. Yes, please. Yes, I can.
Expressions of non-acceptance and disagreement	No, thank you. I'm sorry, but....., No, I can't.
Interaction skills at the airport	Can I have your passport, please? How long are you staying?
Quantity, quality, and cost	How much....? How many.....? good, bad, fine, poor expensive, cheap, reasonable
Permission	Do you mind if I watch TV? Is it alright if I sit here?
Health	Review health and body parts
Item description (lost item)	color, size, material,

## Themes and Topics

### People

- Living in Japan
- Living in Australia
- Homestay Families

### School/Work

- School Life in Japan/ Australia
- Homestay Life
- School Events in Japan/ Australia

- Occupations in Japan/ Australia

### Abilities/Interests

- Fads
- Australian School Sports/Japanese Clubs
- Afterschool Activities/Weekend Activities
- Culture Exchange

### Food/Health

- Doctors/Hospital/Sickness
- Special Food/ Allergies
- Japanese Dish (Making it for host family.)

### Places

- Adelaide (Popular Places)
- Places around Adelaide (parks, downtown)
- Public Transportation (bus, train)
- Japanese Famous Places

### Experiences

- Weekend
- Adelaide (homestay/trip)

### Stories:

- Penguin Readers
- MacMillan Readers
- Oxford Readers
- Cengage Readers

Table 18: Exit and Entry Profile for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can handle and understand very short exchanges but has some difficulty keeping the conversation going of his/her own accord.</li> <li>✓ Can work in pairs and small groups.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.</li> <li>✓ Can manage simple, routine exchanges with effort, can ask and exchange ideas and information on</li> </ul>
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	familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.
<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can generally understand the topic of discussion around him/her which is conducted slowly and clearly.</li> <li>✓ Can understand the essential information from short recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are spoken slowly and clearly.</li> <li>✓ Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters, although in a real life situation he or she might have to ask for repetition or reformulation.</li> <li>✓ Can understand directions relating how to get from x to y by foot or public transport.</li> <li>✓ Can catch the point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can handle simple business in shops, post offices, or banks.</li> <li>✓ Can understand phrases and expressions related to immediate needs.</li> <li>✓ Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without too much effort</li> <li>✓ Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents, and so on where the visual material supports the commentary.</li> <li>✓ Can understand enough to be able to meet concrete needs in everyday life provided speech is clear and slow.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple texts containing the most common words, including some shared international words.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short, simple texts written in common everyday language</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand between 300 to 600 headwords for Graded Readers.</li> <li>✓ Can understand short personal letters</li> <li>✓ Can understand everyday signs and notices in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations and in school.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can find specific information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, brochures, menus, and timetables.</li> <li>✓ Can identify specific information in simple written material such as letters, brochures, and revised short newspaper articles.</li> <li>✓ Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life such as public telephone.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand between 1000 and 1200 headwords for Graded Readers.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations., provided the other</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can discuss what to do in the evening, at the weekend</li> <li>✓ Can compare books.</li> </ul>

<p>person helps if necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can manage simple exchanges on familiar and routine matters.</li> <li>✓ Can give a short descriptive summary about cultural sites in Kyoto.</li> <li>✓ Can give a short oral book report about a book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can make and respond to invitations, apologies, and suggestions.</li> <li>✓ Can agree and disagree with others</li> <li>✓ Can work in pairs and give a 5 minute Japanese Cultural Presentation with visual aids.</li> <li>✓ Can establish social contact</li> <li>✓ Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interests</li> <li>✓ Can do a short PowerPoint Presentation describing their experience in Australia.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b>writing competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write descriptive short paragraphs for a photo journal for their host family. The short paragraphs are about self, family, city/town, club activities, hobby, favorite season, winter holidays, school, best friend. They are roughly 5 to 10 sentences long including a photo.</li> <li>✓ Can write a short summary about a book as well as a book report.</li> <li>✓ Can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters of every day life.</li> <li>✓ Can write a short descriptive diamante poems.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b>writing competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can describe past activities and past experiences</li> <li>✓ Can write a letter to their host family with little effort.</li> <li>✓ Can describe plans and arrangements</li> <li>✓ Can write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology.</li> <li>✓ Can write a basic composition about 100 to 150 words describing their overseas experience in Australia including pictures.</li> <li>✓ Can write a contrastive/comparative report about two books.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a small repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for the words.</li> <li>✓ Has lexical limitations that cause repetition and difficulty with word forms.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a basic repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations while transiting at an airport and studying and participating in a homestay in Australia.</li> </ul>

## **A Deeper Insight**

After designing the proficiency framework for Ritsumeikan, I know I have gained a deeper insight into many facets that need to go into a curriculum, especially developing achievement objectives and entry and exit profiles. When I started to brainstorm achievement objectives, I had to take a hard look at the context of the entire English program offered at Ritsumeikan. I had to articulate what students needed to achieve linguistically and be realistic about the timeframe needed to achieve these linguistic goals. By writing down the entry and exit profiles, I was able to visualize how students would achieve each level. These two processes helped me see more clearly the destination where I wanted my students to go. Even though it has been a long journey, it has been a very worthwhile process. The combination of my courses at SIT and the material from my trusty curriculum file gave me many ideas and resources to work with in order to accomplish this curriculum. Developing a curriculum has long been a task I felt was necessary to undertake in order for me to become a more aware and a responsible teaching professional. In the following chapter, I will explain the future and aspirations for my curriculum.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

#### Fire

What makes a fire burn  
is space between the logs,  
a breathing space.  
Too much of a good thing,  
too many logs  
packed in too tight  
can douse the flames  
almost as surely  
as a pail of water would.

So building fires  
requires attention  
to the spaces in between,  
as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build  
open spaces  
in the same way  
we have learned  
to pile on the logs,  
then we can come to see how  
it is fuel, and absence of the fuel  
together, that make fire possible.  
We only need to lay a log  
lightly from time to time.  
A fire grows simply  
because the space is there,  
with openings  
in which the flame  
that knows just how it wants to burn  
can find its way.

*Teaching With Fire*  
(Brown, p. 89, 2003)

When I was a girl scout, I had to learn how to make a fire. It is not as easy as it looked. There is a certain way to build a fire. First, you gather different sizes of kindling, and lay it beneath the wood. Then, you make sure to leave enough space

between the kindling and wood for air to circulate. Next, you strike a match and light the kindling. You fan it just enough to get the fire to catch to the other pieces of wood. If you fan too much, the breeze could stop the flame from catching. If you don't fan it enough, the flame weakens and the fire dies out. The poem above captures the process of writing the competency-based curriculum and its future. The kindling represents projects like Extensive Reading and Pen Pals. The different pieces of wood neatly arranged to give support to the curriculum represent the guidelines and competencies. The air between the wood is the space students and teachers need to grow. Once the match is struck, my colleagues and I must work together to fan the flame just right in order to keep it burning brightly.

### **Possible Hurdles to Face**

Developing the competency-based curriculum is just the first step. It is a major one but only the beginning. I have worked on this curriculum for the past two and a half years and some of it has been implemented in the junior high school and is ready to be implemented in the senior high school. I have learned a lot about curriculum design and working with my school's administration. For example, it has been beneficial to see how presenting ideas to some key teachers and talking about projects in depth help the faculty be more accepting. However, I also know that there will be several challenges to face.

One challenge will be obtaining Ritsumeikan Academy's approval for the implementation of the entire curriculum. Writing the curriculum was my research project for the Academy and Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. Developing this curriculum involved a lot of research, compilation of data and writing of material by myself with a lot of encouragement from my colleagues. To implement this curriculum involves seeking the cooperation and understanding of the administration and entire faculty. It will require the allocation of resources and

time which has to be considered amongst the overall school curriculum. Furthermore, I foresee it taking a lot of time and discussion for progress to be made.

Another challenge is teacher flexibility. Some teachers are very set in their ways and are reticent to make changes, even when the changes might improve their teaching style. Some teachers are hesitant because of the time or additional workload they perceive the changes adding to their already busy lives. Others are hesitant because they cannot “see” how the change is to be implemented. Still others are hesitant because it is another thing in their basket to do. During my sabbatical, I started a Teacher Roundtable where teachers came together to reflect on what was happening in the classroom, discuss pedagogy, have the opportunity to share lesson plans and so on. We met once a month. Teachers were interested in the topics but when the day came to meet very few teachers participated because of other work-related obligations. The teachers who did attend felt the time was well spent because it was the first time for them to create dialog and be listened to without being judged. There is a strong need to help teachers by educating them through peer mentoring and providing professional training on an ongoing basis.

Still another challenge is related to teachers’ hesitancy (described above) and that is having time in the school calendar allocated to allow for professional development training. Teachers at Ritsumeikan are notoriously busy with small committee work and extra curricular activities such as swim club and working with students on speech contests. The school ideally needs to implement a monthly system of professional development in each department. One suggestion for professional development entails rearranging the schedule to accommodate time for classroom observation for all members of the department. The way observation is set up now is if you are free during a period when there is an open class, you can observe. There are several drawbacks to this situation. Sometimes no teachers attend an open class because of schedule conflicts. Another drawback is having time to give and receive proper feedback. Not all open classes have time allocated for giving feedback. Sometimes you go and just watch. More teacher training of how to observe needs to be established. This would be a big help to all teachers. Another

idea is having teachers work in small groups to choose an area of teaching they are interested in such as vocabulary development or conversation strategies and to conduct research throughout the year. At the end of the year, the English Department could have a mini-conference so everyone can show what they have been working on. On a bi-monthly schedule, the English Department could have weekend workshops about classroom management, using technology in the classroom, or implementing effective speaking activities. This would encourage more dialogue among teachers and create a better learning environment.

A final challenge is how to shift language use from Japanese to English in the English classes and this is ultimately related to how English is taught in the classroom. I believe English is a tool for learning and communicating with others from around the world. Unfortunately, classes that do not have a native English speaking teacher often use more Japanese than English to teach English. There are a couple of reasons why this is true. One is the comfort level of teachers to teach a 50-minute class in English. Finding or creating material that is communicative instead of grammar based may take more time to do. Another reason is the student comfort level. There are many teachers who have been trained in TESOL and are comfortable using English but due to student complaints of difficulty, they use more Japanese in their classes. When the students attend classes that are team-taught or solo taught by Native English Speakers, they are 90% to 100% done in all English. The way English is used in the classroom is unbalanced. If the English Department could come to an agreement about how much English to use and how it is to be taught in the classroom, the affective filter of students' anxiety would be reduced greatly and the students' communicative ability would be raised.

### **My Aspirations**

One of my aspirations is for the English Department to be able to provide each student with a strong foundation in English. I want us to give students support, guidance, and inspiration in their language development and to make their environment more conducive to learning English. This curriculum renewal project

was a product of attending SIT during my two-year summer sabbatical from Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. During that time, I had a reduced workload including administrative duties. Therefore, I was able to have time to devote to the design of the curriculum. However, after my sabbatical had concluded and I resumed my former workload I realized that somehow or other the school administration needs to implement a schedule that allows us time and resources to further develop and implement the curriculum.

I believe that by articulating the Guiding Principles and Teacher Competencies in a way that teachers can buy in to, we can begin the curriculum renewal. My second aspiration is to share and discuss the curriculum outlined in this paper with the English Department faculty and administration at Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School. Together we can fine-tune the curriculum by trying some of the suggestions offered in our classes and seeing what works and what does not work. By doing so, we can learn how the planned curriculum can be improved. It is an ideal time to create such a dialogue about curriculum renewal, especially since the Fukakusa Campus will be moved to a new location in 2013.

This paper is a result of my two-year summer sabbatical from Ritsumeikan Junior and Senior High School from April 2007 until March 2009. The goal of my research was to create a six-year competency-based English curriculum. In addition, as part of my research, I was able to implement two projects that gave our students more support in their second language acquisition: ER and Pen Pals. I believe if this curriculum is implemented, it will have a long-lasting affect on the way English is learned and taught. But most of all, it will be the catalyst for positive change.



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## APPENDIX A

### 1000 WORD JAPANESE BILINGUAL TEST

#### 語彙水準テスト

これは、語彙（単語）のテストです。右の日本語の意味に合う英単語を選びなさい。答えは番号で\_\_\_の上に記入しなさい。  
初めに解答例です。

1 business  
2 clock            \_\_\_ 壁  
3 horse            \_\_\_ 馬  
4 pencil           \_\_\_ 鉛筆  
5 shoe  
6 wall

答え方は以下のようになります。

1 business  
2 clock            6 壁  
3 horse            3 馬  
4 pencil           4 鉛筆  
5 shoe  
6 wall

テストの中のいくつかの単語は、この水準よりも難しい単語です。これらの単語の意味を捜す必要はありません。上の例題で言えば、**business, clock, shoe** がそれに当たります。

それではこれから実際にテストです。

1 could  
 2 during    \_\_\_    ーすることができた  
 3 this        \_\_\_    ーの間  
 4 piece       \_\_\_    ーするために  
 5 of  
 6 in order to

1 indeed  
 2 what        \_\_\_    私の  
 3 along       \_\_\_    確かに  
 4 my           \_\_\_    いくらかの  
 5 some  
 6 away

1 church  
 2 scene       \_\_\_    車  
 3 hour        \_\_\_    困難  
 4 trouble     \_\_\_    事実  
 5 fact  
 6 car

1 meet  
 2 leave       \_\_\_    置く  
 3 put          \_\_\_    与える  
 4 give        \_\_\_    使う  
 5 use  
 6 begin

1 wind  
 2 room       \_\_\_    男  
 3 line        \_\_\_    線  
 4 enemy      \_\_\_    夜  
 5 night  
 6 man

1 kill  
 2 reply       \_\_\_    前進する  
 3 advance    \_\_\_    返事をする  
 4 appoint    \_\_\_    殺す  
 5 divide  
 6 receive

1 moment  
 2 separate   \_\_\_    離れた  
 3 worse      \_\_\_    瞬間  
 4 free        \_\_\_    黄色の  
 5 heavy  
 6 yellow

1 spring  
 2 danger     \_\_\_    姉  
 3 stone       \_\_\_    危険  
 4 product    \_\_\_    石  
 5 sister  
 6 subject

1 example  
 2 breadth    \_\_\_    幅  
 3 fear        \_\_\_    恐怖  
 4 desert      \_\_\_    会館  
 5 bit  
 6 hall

1 surround  
 2 shoot      \_\_\_    はまる、ふさわしい  
 3 paint       \_\_\_    警告する  
 4 fit          \_\_\_    撃つ  
 5 command  
 6 warn

## APPENDIX B

### 2000 WORD JAPANESE BILINGUAL TEST

1 coffee	1 adopt
2 disease    ___    賃金	2 climb        ___    登る
3 justice     ___    スカート	3 examine     ___    調査する
4 skirt        ___    公正	4 pour         ___    囲む
5 stage	5 satisfy
6 wage	6 surround
1 choice	1 bake
2 crop        ___    温度	2 connect     ___    つなぐ
3 flesh        ___    肉	3 inquire      ___    歩き回る
4 salary      ___    給料	4 limit        ___    制限する
5 secret	5 recognize
6 temperature	6 wander
1 cap	1 burst
2 education   ___    教育	2 concern     ___    破裂する
3 journey     ___    目盛り	3 deliver     ___    上達する
4 parent      ___    旅行	4 fold         ___    届ける
5 scale	5 improve
6 trick	6 urge
1 attack	1 original
2 charm       ___    財宝	2 private      ___    最初の
3 lack        ___    魅力	3 royal        ___    私有の
4 pen         ___    欠如	4 slow         ___    全体の
5 shadow	5 sorry
6 treasure	6 total
1 cream	1 ancient
2 factory     ___    クリーム	2 curious      ___    難しい
3 nail        ___    富	3 difficult    ___    古代の
4 pupil       ___    生徒	4 entire       ___    神聖な
5 sacrifice	5 holy
6 wealth	6 social

**2,000 word level (continued)**

1 copy			1 admire		
2 event	___	先端、頂点	2 complain	___	伸ばす
3 motor	___	モーター	3 fix	___	紹介する、導入する
4 pity	___	写し、模写	4 hire	___	賞賛する
5 profit			5 introduce		
6 tip			6 stretch		

1 accident			1 arrange		
2 debt	___	轟音、吠え声	2 develop	___	発展する
3 fortune	___	負債、借金	3 lean	___	整頓する
4 pride	___	誇り、自尊心	4 owe	___	好む
5 roar			5 prefer		
6 thread			6 seize		

1 birth			1 blame		
2 dust	___	スポーツ	2 elect	___	製造する
3 operation	___	勝利	3 jump	___	選挙で選ぶ
4 row	___	誕生	4 manufacture	___	溶ける
5 sport			5 melt		
6 victory			6 threaten		

1 clerk			1 brave		
2 frame	___	飲み物	2 electric	___	普通の
3 noise	___	事務員	3 firm	___	空腹の
4 respect	___	雑音、騒音	4 hungry	___	勇敢な
5 theatre			5 local		
6 wine			6 usual		

1 dozen			1 bitter		
2 empire	___	機会	2 independent	___	美しい
3 gift	___	ダース	3 lovely	___	僅かな
4 opportunity	___	税金	4 merry	___	人気のある
5 relief			5 popular		
6 tax			6 slight		

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>

APPENDIX C

Table 19: A statistical analysis of the number of English words needed to meet at a given occurrence rates to 'learn' that number of words

A	B	C (=100/B)	D (=x times C)			
Word rank	Percentage of English this word covers	Number of running words needed to meet all these words once	Volume of text needed to be read to meet the words at these recurrence rates			
			5 times	10 times	20 times	50 times
1 <sup>st</sup> most frequent (the)	5.83898%	17 <sup>(1)</sup>	86	171	343	856
2 <sup>nd</sup> most frequent (be)	5.12332%	20	98	195	390	976
25 <sup>th</sup> (as)	0.44382%	225	1,127	2,253	4,506	11,266
50 <sup>th</sup> (like)	0.24109%	415	2,074	4,148	8,296	20,739
100 <sup>th</sup> (hear)	0.10505%	952	4,759	9,519	19,038	47,595
500 <sup>th</sup> (present)	0.02477%	4,037	20,183	40,366	80,732 <sup>(4)</sup>	201,829
1000 <sup>th</sup> (blood)	0.01172%	8,533	42,665	85,329 <sup>(3)</sup>	170,658	426,645
1500 <sup>th</sup> (intent)	0.00677%	14,773	73,864	147,727	295,455	738,636
2000 <sup>th</sup> (stumble)	0.00432% <sup>(2)</sup>	23,103	115,625	231,250	462,500	1,156,250
3000 <sup>th</sup> (sergeant)	0.00211%	47,343	236,713	473,425	946,850	2,367,126
5000 <sup>th</sup> (satellite)	0.00076%	132,143	660,714	1,321,429	2,642,857 <sup>(5)</sup>	6,607,143
10,000 <sup>th</sup> (relativity)	0.00016%	632,894	3,164,475	6,328,947	12,657,895	31,644,733



Examples:

1. The most frequent word in English (the) covers 5.839% of any general English text (i.e., it occurs once in every 17 words).
2. The 2000<sup>th</sup> most frequent word (stumble) in English covers 0.00432% of any general English text (an occurs once every 23,103 words).
3. To meet all the 1000 most frequent words in English once, you'd need to read 8,533 words.
4. To meet all the 500 most frequent words in English 20 times, you'd need to read 80,732 words.
5. To meet all the 10,000 most frequent words in English 10 times, you'd need to read 79.1 books that are 80,000 words long.

(Waring, 2009)

## APPENDIX D

Table 20: Senior High School Culture Projects

Month	4 <sup>th</sup> <b>Blogging</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> <b>Presentations</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> <b>Debate</b>
Apr	Introduction What is blogging? Pros/Cons/Language used.	Introduction Different types of Presentations/Effective Presentations/Planning a presentation	Introduction to the course. Styles of debates/
May	Choose themes Look at different blogs.	Presentation Skills/Watch videos of presentations How to write one. <b><u>Informative Speech #1</u></b>	Linguistic Vocabulary/ Stating and supporting arguments
Jun	Do blogging within the classroom between groups.	Designing Presentation Visuals /Capturing the audience attention /asking questions <b><u>Demonstrative Speech #2</u></b>	<b><u>Debate #1</u></b> 1 Pro/1 Against
Jul	Read blogs during the summer break.	Test #1/Information about how to do a Poster Session	Test #1 Explanation of Debate #2
Aug	Search for schools who would like to do blogs. Establish themes and deadlines for postings.	Make posters in summer break.	Research for Debate #2 during Summer HW.
Sep	Have students form new groups. Give each group a country. Explain the exchange.	Practice doing a poster session.	Defending your ideas. Linguistic Vocabulary Preparation for Debate #2
Oct	Theme #1	<b><u>Poster Session #3</u></b> Introduction to Persuasive Speech Analyzing the audience/Motivating the audience	<b><u>Practice and do Debate #2</u></b>  Test #2

Nov	Theme #2	Organize a persuasive presentation/methods of a persuasion	Information about Debate #3. Finding resources and citing it. Get into groups. Choose themes.
Dec	Theme #3	<b>Persuasive Speech #4</b> Winter HW: Group Presentations/ Assign assignment and jobs.	Prepare for Debate #3 (Research)
Jan	Theme #4	Preparing for Group Presentation	<b>Debate #3</b> Power point Presentation/Feedback
Feb/ Mar	Theme #5/Feedback	Group Presentation #5 Feedback	

#### APPENDIX E

### TEACHER COMPETENCIES

#### Language and Culture

##### English as a Foreign Language

###### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher uses English as the language of instruction in and outside the classroom.
- b. The teacher enjoys using English and is not afraid to use it in front of his/her students.

##### A link to the world

###### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher creates and utilizes engaging activities to give students the opportunity to practice and develop communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening (e.g. interviewing, journaling, reading pen pal letters, speeches).
- b. The teacher chooses supportive topics and tasks to develop skills in learning and

communicating about themselves and their community, and about their country and the world.

- c. The teacher introduces a variety of topics of interest for comparison of cultures and international issues.

## **Communicative Competence**

### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher creates and utilizes engaging activities to give students the opportunity to practice and develop communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening (e.g. interviewing, journaling, reading pen pal letters, speeches).
- b. The teacher chooses topics and tasks that support learners to develop skills in learning and communicating about themselves and their community, and about their country and the world.
- c. The teacher creates lessons that have communicative objectives instead of an over emphasis on decontextualized vocabulary and grammar. The teacher sets reasonable achievable goals and steps toward meeting them.
- d. The teacher infuses grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary instead of isolating each as separate units. The focus should be on communicative competence.
- e. The teacher not only uses scaffolding techniques to support students in their learning but also teaches learners how to use language strategies to aid in their learning and communication.

## **Learners and Learning**

## **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills**

### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher creates and plans activities that support students to think reflectively, critically, and creatively.
- b. The teacher develops a mutual relationship with their learners. Learners learn from teachers and teachers learn from learners.
- c. The teacher facilitates and encourages creative and critical thinking skills by viewing their learners than they presume.

## **Participatory Learners**

### *Teacher Competencies:*

- a. The teacher recognizes that the conventions and skills of language need to be taught in meaningful and authentic contexts rather than in isolation.
- b. The teacher employs a range of instructional and assessment strategies to motivate their students.
- c. The teacher uses the textbook as a skeleton and plans activities related to learners' interests, prior knowledge, and experience.
- d. The teacher adjusts their practices so that all students can continue to learn even in the face of temporary failure.

## **Self and Other**

### **Interpersonal and Intercultural skills**

#### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher is culturally self-aware.
- b. The teacher communicates clearly to non-native speakers of the language used in the classroom.
- c. The teacher recognizes culture-specific risk factors for learners (loss of face, group identity, etc.)
- d. The teacher models positive behaviors by treating students and colleagues with fairness, respect, and tolerance.

## **Learning Process**

### *Teacher Competencies:*

- a. The teacher plans learning opportunities, recognizing the various learning styles of individuals/groups, according to the nature of the content being taught.
- b. The teacher creates short- and long-term plans that are linked to student needs, performance, and learning styles.

## **Teachers and Teaching**

### **Teacher**

#### *Teacher Competencies:*

- a. The teacher provides opportunities for students to work independently, in small groups, and in large groups.
- b. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.
- c. The teacher cultivates an environment conducive to learning.

- d. The teacher designs opportunities for each student to succeed based on individual learning needs.

## **Supportive Learning Environment and Classroom Management**

### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher creates and maintains a nurturing environment conducive to learning.
- b. The teacher demonstrates an awareness of classroom interactions.
- c. The teacher provides various opportunities that encourage students to learn cooperatively and collaboratively.
- d. The teacher manages time and materials effectively to minimize distraction and disruptions for optimal student involvement
- e. The teacher manages the class so learners know what is expected of them (e.g. sharing the daily agenda and classroom rules, providing rubrics for learner performance).
- f. The teacher projects a positive attitude toward the subject and students.

## **Educational Institutions, Communities, and Professional Life**

### **Intellectual, Personal and Professional Growth**

#### *Teacher Competencies*

- a. The teacher utilizes professional organizations as a learning tool for professional knowledge.
- b. The teacher uses assessment of student learning to improve his or her own teaching and to revise the curriculum

- c. The teacher works with other colleagues to develop his or her teaching.
- d. The teacher conducts some kind of action research project and presents his or her results to the English Department.



## APPENDIX F

### SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL FRAMEWORKS

#### **Levels 5 and Level 6 Proficiency Statement:**

##### *Basic Competence Level*

On completion of level 6, learners can start and maintain short conversations on familiar topics and situations. They are confident enough to maintain fluency and comprehension. They can infer meaning from context when they meet unfamiliar language. They can read independently. They can write 5 paragraph essays with simple, compound, and complex sentence structures. They are developing new self-learning strategies for communication.

#### **Basic Competence Level 5**

##### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to:

- paraphrase what someone has said to make oneself understood
- tell a story
- make requests
- ask for clarification
- continue a conversation
- respond to a negative questions
- take notes in outline form and mind maps
- find important details
- use the dictionary and thesaurus (paperback)

- vocabulary word notebook
- write descriptive, definition, compare/contrast essays
- acquire an understanding of sentence mechanisms
- understand and use a five paragraph essay format
- do the writing process
- peer edit
- guessing meaning from context

*Table 21: Basic Competence Level 5: Suggested Structures and Content*

<b>Suggested Structures</b>	<b>Suggested Content</b>
Essay Structure	introduction, body, conclusion
Dictionary Skills	head word, definition, parts of speech, example sentences, word forms
Thesaurus Skills	synonyms, antonyms
Writing Process	brainstorm, first draft, peer editing, second draft, proofreading, final draft
Brainstorm	mind maps, diagrams, outline forms
Essay Types	descriptive, definition, compare and contrast, narrative
Peer editing	correction symbols
Asking for clarification	Could you repeat that, please? I'm sorry, I don't understand.
Paraphrasing	Is this what you mean.....?

	Do you mean this.....?
Reading Skills	guessing meaning from context, finding important details
Sentence Structures	simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences

### **Themes and Topics**

#### **People**

- Friends/Family
- Famous People surrounding Peace

#### **School/Work**

- Comparing junior high and senior high
- Wearing uniforms/ casual clothes
- Study habits

#### **Abilities/Interests**

- Movie and book themes
- Inventions
- New Club Activities
- Bands/Teenage Fads

#### **Food and Health**

- Healthy Food Choices
- International Holidays/Celebrations

#### **Places:**

- World Heritage Sites

#### **Experiences:**

- Memorable Experiences

#### **Current Events and Issues**

- World/Local Events

**Stories:**

- Penguin Readers
- MacMillan Readers
- Oxford Readers
- Cengage Readers

*Table 22: Exit and Entry Level for 10<sup>th</sup> Grade*

<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.</li> <li>✓ Can manage simple, routine exchanges with effort, can ask and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling.</li> <li>✓ Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions, and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to every day life (family, hobbies, travel, and current events.)</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can handle simple business in shops, post offices, or banks.</li> <li>✓ Can understand phrases and expressions related to immediate needs.</li> <li>✓ Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without too much effort</li> <li>✓ Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents, and so on where the visual material supports the commentary.</li> <li>✓ Can understand enough to be able to meet concrete needs in everyday life provided speech is clear and slow.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or school-related topics identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clear and generally familiar accent is used.</li> <li>✓ Can guess the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and understand sentence meaning if the topic discussed is familiar.</li> <li>✓ Can catch the main points in broadcasts on familiar topics and topic of personal interest when the language is relatively slow and clear.</li> </ul>

<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can find specific information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, brochures, menus, and timetables.</li> <li>✓ Can identify specific information in simple written material such as letters, brochures, and revised short newspaper articles.</li> <li>✓ Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life such as public telephone.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand between 1000 and 1200 headwords for graded readers.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand general information he/she needs in everyday material such as letters, brochures, and short official documents.</li> <li>✓ Can search one long or several short texts to locate specific information needed to help complete a task.</li> <li>✓ Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond with a friend or acquaintance.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand 1200 and 1800 headwords for graded readers.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can discuss what to do in the evening, at the weekend</li> <li>✓ Can compare books.</li> <li>✓ Can make and respond to invitations, apologies, and suggestions.</li> <li>✓ Can agree and disagree with others</li> <li>✓ Can work in pairs and give a 5 minute Japanese Cultural Presentation with visual aids.</li> <li>✓ Can establish social contact</li> <li>✓ Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interests</li> <li>✓ Can do a short PowerPoint Presentation describing their experience in Australia.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to.</li> <li>✓ Can express and respond to feeling such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference</li> <li>✓ Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose.</li> <li>✓ Can express his/her thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music, films, or books. Can explain why something is a problem.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can describe past activities and past experiences</li> <li>✓ Can write a letter to their host family with little effort.</li> <li>✓ Can describe plans and arrangements</li> <li>✓ Can write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology.</li> <li>✓ Can write a basic composition about 100 to 150 words describing their overseas experience in Australia including pictures.</li> <li>✓ Can write a contrastive/comparative report</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in detail.</li> <li>✓ Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions</li> <li>✓ Can describe the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions</li> </ul>

about two books.	
With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b> , the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a basic repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations while transiting at an airport and studying and participating in a homestay in Australia.</li> </ul>	With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b> , the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</li> </ul>

## Basic Competence Level 6

### *Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to

- listen for details/supporting information/examples
- understand stems and affixes
- distinguish between fact and fiction
- presentation skills (PowerPoint)
- vocabulary word notebook
- make inferences
- conduct a survey
- write a cause/effect essay
- make predictions
- expressing an opinion
- recognizing a point of view and bias
- synthesizing/applying, organizing and analyzing information
- signaling a change in topic/return to topic
- paraphrasing and summarizing reading passages

- using transitions in writing

Table 23: Basic Competence Level 6: Suggested Structures and Content

Suggested Structures	Suggested Content
Presentation Skills	eye contact, stance, pronunciation, intonation, gestures, preparation, notetaking, volume, PowerPoint
Word Forms	stems and affixes
Transitional words and phrases	Illustration, contrast, addition, time, space, concession, emphasis, examples, summary, result, suggestions
Essay style	Cause/effect, report with surveys
Signaling a change in topic/return to topic	By the way...../Getting back to the point.....
Inferring	Using clues to form an idea
Paraphrasing	putting a passage in your own words
Summarizing	putting the main idea in your own words
Expressing an opinion	I believe..../I'd like to say.....

## Themes and Topics

### People

- World Leaders

#### School/Work

- World English

#### Abilities/Interests

- Volunteer Organizations

#### Food and Health

- Recycling
- Save the Earth

#### Places

- Volunteering Overseas

#### Experiences

- Regrets and Complaints
- Congratulations
- Condolences

#### Current Events and Issues

- Environmental Issues
- Kyoto Protocol
- Economic Reform

#### Stories

- Newspapers
- Penguin Readers
- MacMillan Readers
- Oxford Readers
- Cengage Readers

Table 24: Exit and Entry Profile for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

<p>With respect to the <b>interaction competency</b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling.</li> <li>✓ Can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions, and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to every day life (family, hobbies, travel, and current events.)</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b>interaction competency</b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to interests and future interests.</li> <li>✓ Can exchange, check, and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films,</li> </ul>
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<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or school-related topics identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clear and generally familiar accent is used.</li> <li>✓ Can guess the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and understand sentence meaning if the topic discussed is familiar.</li> <li>✓ Can catch the main points in broadcasts on familiar topics and topic of personal interest when the language is relatively slow and clear.</li> </ul>	<p>books, music, etc.</p> <p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can follow a lecture or a talk provided the subject matter is familiar and presentation is straightforward and the language is clear.</li> <li>✓ Can understand simple technical information such as operation instructions for everyday.</li> <li>✓ Can follow many films which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and in which the story is straightforward and the language clear.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand general information he/she needs in everyday material such as letters, brochures, and short official documents.</li> <li>✓ Can search one long or several short texts to locate specific information needed to help complete a task.</li> <li>✓ Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond with a friend or acquaintance.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand 1200 and 1800 headwords for graded readers.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can recognize significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.</li> <li>✓ Can identify the main conclusions in clearly written argumentative texts.</li> <li>✓ Can read correspondence relating to their field of interest and easily understand the essential meaning.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand 2,000 headwords or graded readers.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to.</li> <li>✓ Can express and respond to feeling such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference</li> <li>✓ Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose.</li> <li>✓ Can express his/her thoughts about</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can give a short speech about an experience</li> <li>✓ Can debate pros and cons about a specific topic.</li> <li>✓ Can give a group presentation with question and answer format afterwards.</li> </ul>

abstract or cultural topics such as music, films, or books. Can explain why something is a problem.	
<p>With respect to the <b>writing competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in detail.</li> <li>✓ Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions</li> <li>✓ Can describe the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b>writing competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.</li> <li>✓ Can write a five paragraph descriptive and narrative essay about a specific topic.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b>linguistic competency</b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.</li> </ul>

**Level 7 Proficiency Statement:**

*Social Competence Level*

By the end of level 7, learners can talk about experiences, wishes, goals and dreams and briefly give rationale for their ideas. They can communicate more explicitly about familiar matters including school, leisure, family, and surrounding environment. They are able to get by in most situations when using the language while travelling. They can maintain a conversation with a degree of fluency and naturalness while speaking to a native speaker.

**Social Competence Level 7**

*Achievement Objectives*

Students should be able to

- listen for details, supporting information, examples from media
- take lecture notes in outline/graphic form.
- express their future wishes, plans, and ideas
- give and respond to advice, warnings, and suggestions;
- give and receive a compliment
- correct a misunderstanding
- express opinions with reasons and respond appropriately
- read short articles and analyze the information
- recognize point of view and bias
- develop cohesion in an essay
- write a persuasive essay and argumentative essay.

Table 25: Social Competence Level 7: Suggested Structures and Content

Suggested Structures	Suggested Content
Lecture Notes	Material written on the blackboard, repetition, emphasis, word signals, summaries, reviews
Persuasive Essay	Hook, objective statement, clarification statements, support, essay format
Argumentative Essay	Introduction of problem, history of the problem, solutions to the problem, what will happen if the problem is not solved, essay format, citing sources
Compliments	Praising someone vocabulary/Context to use compliments.
Cohesion	Repetition, synonymy, antonymy, pro-forms,

	collocation, enumeration, parallelism, transitions
Point of view/bias	Third Person Limited, Subjective, and Omniscient
Read and analyze information	Type of literature, literary techniques, literary themes, evaluation, review
Give and respond to advice, warnings, and suggestions	Situational role plays

## Themes and Topics

### People

- Inspiring Role Models

### School/Work

- Ethical situations and dilemmas

### Abilities/Interests

- Pros/Cons with networking (blogs/e-mail/facebook/myspace)
- Individualism vs Group

### Food and Health

- Health issues facing teenagers
- Drug Awareness
- Body Image

### Place

- Changes in the world
- Geographical Awareness

### Experiences

- Future Hopes and Dreams

### Current Events and Issues

- Issues facing the world/ solutions

### Stories

- Newspapers
- Penguin Readers
- MacMillan Readers
- Oxford Readers

- Cengage Readers

Table 26: Exit and Entry Profile for 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to interests and future interests.</li> <li>✓ Can exchange, check, and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, boos, music, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>interaction competency</u></b>, the student can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can paraphrase and confirm the main point of a discussion and help focus the talk.</li> <li>✓ Can effectively use turn-taking strategies when starting, maintaining or ending a conversation.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can follow a lecture or a talk provided the subject matter is familiar and presentation is straightforward and the language is clear.</li> <li>✓ Can understand simple technical information such as operation instructions for everyday.</li> <li>✓ Can follow many films which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and in which the story is straightforward and the language clear.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>listening competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard language at normal speed.</li> <li>✓ Can understand with some difficulty standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, academic or vocational life.</li> <li>✓ Can understand with some difficulty basic short radio or news programs for example, the weather, familiar documentaries, evening or morning news</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can recognize significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.</li> <li>✓ Can identify the main conclusions in clearly written argumentative texts.</li> <li>✓ Can read correspondence relating to their field of interest and easily understand the essential meaning.</li> <li>✓ Can scan longer texts in order to locate</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>reading competency</u></b> the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can read different texts by using appropriate reference sources such as the thesaurus and dictionary.</li> <li>✓ Can read magazine or newspaper articles with some difficulty.</li> <li>✓ Can read and understand 2,500 to 3,000 headwords for Graded Readers.</li> </ul>

<p>desired information and gather information from different parts of a text or from different text in order to fulfill a specific task.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can read and understand 2,000 to 2,500 headwords for Graded Readers.</li> </ul>	
<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can give a short speech about an experience</li> <li>✓ Can debate pros and cons about a specific topic.</li> <li>✓ Can give a group presentation with question and answer format afterwards.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>speaking competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can enter and engage in an extended conversation on most familiar topics.</li> <li>✓ Can sustain a conversation with a native speaker for a period of time.</li> <li>✓ Can express his/her ideas and opinions and present and respond to arguments with some degree of difficulty</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.</li> <li>✓ Can write a five paragraph descriptive and narrative essay about a specific topic.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>writing competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources</li> <li>✓ Can construct a chain of reasoned argument</li> <li>✓ Can speculate about causes, consequences and hypothetical situations.</li> <li>✓ Can write a persuasive and argumentative 5 paragraph essay.</li> <li>✓ Can write a report of his/her choice using references.</li> </ul>
<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.</li> </ul>	<p>With respect to the <b><u>linguistic competency</u></b>, the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments with the aid of a dictionary or other reference source. Can use complex sentence forms to do so.</li> </ul>

