

College students' L1 and L2 writings

Minako Inoue

Abstract

In recent years, low academic standards have become a pervasive concern at Japanese universities. University education seeks to prepare students for success in a global society, and so implementing rigorous academic skills within a limited time frame has become a critical assignment for college instructors. The current study focuses on one such academic skill: writing. As a higher level cognitive ability, the ability to write well is crucial to critical thinking and skillful communication. However, in higher education, there is, at present, a gap between the expectation of students' writing and students' actual ability. This study investigates students' self-perception of difficulties in writing, their previous writing experiences, and their actual English writing proficiency. The participants of the study are 188 first- and second-year students in the departments of welfare and psychology, and physical therapy at Health Science University. The English proficiency test includes a writing sample, and a questionnaire. In addition, the reviews of the Course of Study in different years have been conducted to get a clear picture of students' learning. The results are analyzed, deploying both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The study found that the majority believe that English writing is difficult and they believe such difficulty results from the difficulty of English grammar. These students engage less in pre- and post reading activities and use internet translation services. For these students, English writing and Japanese writing are quite different things; they use different approaches to produce writing, and they have different definitions of what constitutes good writing in each language. This study concludes with several pedagogical suggestions, including implementing a remedial course that combines both English and Japanese writing.

Key words: Writing in English
Writing in Japanese
Writing process
Writing product
Students' English proficiency
Students' perceptions
Learning experience
College English instruction

Introduction

In recent years Japanese universities have come to a difficult phase in English education. Due to the decreasing population of 18 year olds, many universities have sought to fill their classrooms by lowering the bar for student admission. This has resulted in a lowering of academic standards, as evidenced by recent research. Corroborating those studies, the results of the university placement tests where this study was conducted show declining scores, with an increase in the proportion of students whose score is below 50 (out of 100) for the past three years. Additionally, after universities were given control over the curriculum in 1994, many opted to drop or loosen their foreign language requirement resulting in a drop of many students across Japan studying foreign languages, including English. This social condition clearly ran counter to the intention of the Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities' proposed by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2001. The proposal aimed to make great strides by improving English education, thus preparing university graduates to compete in a global society. Ideally, universities would focus primarily on academic skills, prepare students to work across cultures, read and write research papers and present materials in international conferences: a scholarly competence built upon the basic language skills acquired in junior high or high schools. However, as of 2009 this is not the reality of Japanese higher education. Implementing rigorous English academic skills targeting underprepared students with limited time has proved a difficult task for college instructors.

Statement of the problem

Many U.S. universities require students to pass a writing proficiency examination before receiving an undergraduate degree. Japanese universities do not require such a writing proficiency test in Japanese and current research shows that college students have limited ability in writing Japanese. In terms of English writing, it is a necessary academic skill but there seems to be a gap between the expectations of educators and the actual ability of students. Two of my previous studies found that Japanese college students have limited experience in English writing. They have little exposure to varied English writing, and many simply translated sentences from Japanese to English or vice versa in junior high or high school. In college English, they are then expected to acquire paragraph writing skills. Without good training, these students struggle to produce sentences. The study found heavy involvement in Japanese in the process of English writing. For example, more than half (52%) first write in Japanese and then translate into English, and some use translation software on the Internet. Moreover, 69% of

participants believe *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* is necessary for English writing. Students thus lack a clear idea of English writing structures, including an introduction, body, conclusion, thesis statement and suggesting arguments. The study suggested that literal translation from Japanese to English contributes to difficulty translating and poor quality of written English. However, it should be noted that these students also reported that they have limited experience writing in Japanese. If this is the case, these Japanese students lack writing skills in either language. Therefore, at this point it remains a question whether possessing writing skill in one's native language will improve second language writing skill.

Significance of this study

In response to MEXT's 2001 global initiative, the current trend of English teaching in Japan emphasizes spoken forms of the language with less emphasis on writing skill. Nevertheless, writing requires a high level of cognitive activity, involving critical thinking skills, construction of logical arguments based on such critical thinking, with analyses of various facts and views. Moreover through writing, one may develop original ideas and strategies to express ideas and convey messages. At the college level, such writing should be valued since it is only through mastery of such higher level cognitive activities that one may function in a global community. Therefore, this paper will focus on college students' written English skill, endeavoring to discover what is needed for implementing an effective academic writing curriculum. For that, it seems necessary to have needs analysis in varying forms. This study conducts the following needs analyses : 1) students' English writing skills in relation to their English proficiency levels, 2) students' previous learning experience in terms of English and Japanese writing, 3) students' perception of English and Japanese writing, 4) the students' process of English and Japanese writing, 5) perceptual differences between the two languages (if available) in terms of reader and writer responsibilities and 6) students' motivation, willingness and commitment to writing activities in either language. With such information, writing instruction may set a clear and feasible goal for students. It may use an effective step-by-step approach, develop the basic skills of writing, and help to improve such skills by building bridges between thought processes and writing. Ultimately, such instruction can encourage students' motivation and confidence.

In the past, various studies investigated English writing skills in relation to the native language (L1). Some studies were quantitative, examining students' writing while others were qualitative, involving interviews in which participants' writing process were elicited. In terms of students' perception, some studies surveyed college students, using questionnaires or interviews. This study deploys both quantitative and qualitative

analysis to measure Japanese students' proficiency in written English through analyzing their writing as well as investigating their perception and experience of writing. It is also important to examine students' pre-university experience. One way to look at the students' previous experience is by examining the Course of Study set by the MEXT since it sets the standard, prescribing the contents and allocated time (or units). Therefore, this study will review the current Course of Study set by MEXT, comparing it with both the earlier (2003) study and upcoming Courses of Study, coming into effect in 2009 for elementary schools, 2010 for junior high schools, and 2011 for high schools.

Literature review

Review of Second language (L2) writing research

Many studies have investigated L1 influence on L2 writing. Beginning in the late 1950s, research dominating the field of L2 writing was the product-centered approach, which highlighted the rhetorical and linguistic forms of the text. These studies compared the written products of L1 and L2 writers and tried to identify influential factors on L2 writing. Some studies focused on the differences between two languages in terms of writing symbols and the writing system (Lado, 1957; Kuno 1974) as well as cultural bound rhetorical patterns (Kaplan, 1966). More recent research emphasizes process approaches. Mace-Matluck, for example, argues that research on second language writers should investigate the process of writing in relation to second language proficiency as well as the effects of the first language and background knowledge (1982).

Some studies claim that writing skill in the native language plays a significant role in successful second language writing. Cumming (1989) argues that writers' expertise and second language proficiency account for a proportionately large variation in the quality of written texts. Ito (2004) examined the interrelationship among L1 writing skills, L2 writing skills, and L2 proficiency of Japanese EFL college students, using standardized tests. The study found an observable interrelationship among L1 writing skills, L2 writing skills, and L2 proficiency. Ito concludes that the better quality of students' L1 writing appears to bring about better performance in L2 writing, and L2 linguistic proficiency seems to facilitate overall quality of L2 writing products. As in Ito, various studies focused on L1 writing skills, L2 writing skills and L2 proficiency levels and found interrelationship among these factors.

Sasaki, M., Hirose, K. (1995) added an additional variable to the analysis of L1 and L2 writing proficiency: 'metaknowledge.' This study found that students' L2 proficiency, L1 writing ability and metaknowledge are significant in explaining the variation in L2

writing ability. They argue that good writers pay more attention to overall organization while writing in L1 and L2, and they write more fluently in L1 and L2. Kamimura and Oi (1994) examined cultural awareness as it bears on writing proficiency, administering the cultural awareness test in their L1 and L2 writing study. They concluded that 1) Students with high English proficiency and high cultural awareness produce letters closest in style to that of native speakers of English; 2) Students with low English proficiency and low cultural awareness produce letters closest in style to that of native speakers of Japanese; 3) Students with high English proficiency and low cultural awareness produce letters with culturally inappropriate content but acceptable English; and 4) Students with low English proficiency and high cultural awareness produce letters with generally culturally appropriate content but problematic English. Kimura and Oi suggest that students need to develop not only their English proficiency but also their cultural awareness.

The following two studies showed different results among students who have different English proficiency levels. Kamimura (1996) studied the potential interrelationship between L1 and L2 writing behaviors. She found that participants' behaviors in L1 and L2 writings are positively correlated only when these seemed to be at a threshold English proficiency level. Jones & Tetroe (1987) found that proficient L2 learners do not depend heavily on the L1 to drive their writing process because they have a sufficient level of L2 automaticity and knowledge to think and plan in the L2. Lower L2 proficient writers, on the other hand, rely more heavily on their L1 during the writing process in order to sustain the process and prevent a complete breakdown in language (Arndt, 1987; Cumming, 1989; Raimes, 1985; Uzawa & Cumming, 1989; Wolfersberger 2003). These two studies emphasize the importance of a certain threshold level of L2 proficiency for L2 writing.

Contrary to the above studies, some studies showed weak correlations on this matter. For example, Carson et al. (1990) found weak correlations between L1 and L2 writing skills among Japanese and Chinese subjects. Their study concluded that L1 writing skills do not predict L2 writing skills. In their case study, Pennington and So (1993) compared the composing process between L1 and L2 of college students in Singapore. They reported similar patterns in subjects' writing process. In addition to the weak relationship noted in the L1-L2 writing correlations for both groups, the multiple regression analyses indicate writing never appears as a variable that predicts writing (p. 260). Rose (1984) argues that poor L2 writing skills are the result of writer's block. According to his definition, writer's block is an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skills or commitment. Premature editing, excessive concern with form, and lack of strategies for dealing with complex writing

tasks are examples of such blocks.

Other studies emphasize the importance of reading for developing writing. Krashen et al. (1984, 1993, 2004) has done several studies to investigate those factors that lead to successful L2 writing. They argue that extensive reading enhances language knowledge that, in turn, leads to better writing. Kaplan and Palhinda (1981) study adult ESL students and report that those who read more perform better in L2 writing. Adult students of English as a second language who report that they read more, write better (Janopoulos, 1986). Reading helps us to understand content, intuit/grasp the role of message sender and recipient (different cultures have different expectations), become aware of the different writing styles acceptable in different contexts, and develop summary skills. In his survey, Stotsky (1983) found that there are correlations between reading achievement and writing abilities, between writing quality and reading experience and between reading ability and complexity in writing. The previously mentioned study by Carson et al. (1990) similarly suggested that literacy skills transfer across languages.

As described in the above, research in L2 writing indicates that no single theory can explain all relevant issues since writing is a complex process involving the interaction of many factors. Therefore, in order to gain better understanding of L2 writing, we should look into potential sources of fluency such as the cognitive, developmental, social, cultural, educational and linguistic characteristics of individual writers.

Review of research on Students' perception

A needs analysis of the learner includes learner characteristics, abilities, perception of learning, perception of themselves, their needs and so on. In order to implement effective instruction, such information is necessary. A needs analysis of learners becomes increasingly important in current university education. The educational reforms implemented in elementary, junior high and high school in the past have had an impact on English instruction with the focus shifting from written to spoken English. The need for increased enrollment, which led to lowering the bar for admission, forced universities to accept less academically prepared students. Therefore, the English classrooms of universities may now present a different picture than the past in terms of the needs and abilities of students.

Various studies have aimed to elicit information about prior learning experience from college students. Uchida, Ito and Hidai (2001) conducted a survey, primarily focused on these students' experience of English instruction from primary to senior high school. The study found that primary English education that students experienced

has departed from grammar oriented instruction and emphasized speaking and listening. However, there was a huge time gap between those who experienced non-native speakers' instruction and those who did not. Therefore, the study suggests that the levels of listening and speaking skills among students may be varied. Lee and Tajino (2008) argue that understanding students' perception of difficulty is important from a pedagogical perspective. According to Tajino (1997), a high level of difficulty may decrease students' motivation and cause anxiety or a negative attitude toward L2 learning. Lee and Tajino conducted a case study, using questionnaires and an interview. The study found that students perceive English writing as a difficult task, with the difficulty stemming from the language-related components of academic writing rather than structure and content-related components.

The following two studies surveyed students whose major is International Communication. Kanagawa, Misaki and Kawashima (2005) surveyed first, second, third and fourth-year students asking them to evaluate the strength and weaknesses of their English skills, as well as indicate the skill they most wished to improve. The results show that many students perceived their speaking skills, grammar knowledge and vocabulary as weak points. On the other hand, these students also perceived that they are good at reading. About half of the participants wished to improve speaking skills most. On the other hand, those with high English proficiency responded that grammar knowledge and vocabulary were important to improve their overall skill in English.

Winskowski and Hanna (2004) had the participants rate their skill level when they entered college and after they finished the two-year program. The survey included participants' thoughts on college English instruction. The study found that students believed they have stronger reading and writing skills, compared to other English skills when they entered the university. However, at the end of their course of study, the participants indicated that improvement was broadly distributed among all language skills such as reading, writing, listening, conversation, and cultural understanding.

Arimichi (2009) conducted a survey regarding English skills and English instruction, targeting Technology majors. Participants expressed confidence in reading, followed by listening and writing. These students would like to improve their speaking, listening, and writing skills, believing these skills are necessary in their future.

The above three studies found that students believe they have relatively better reading ability compared to other second language skills. This may be the result of their experience with the college entrance examination or high school English instruction both of which emphasize reading comprehension. Moreover, it should be noted that the subjects of the above study expect to use English in their future work place due to their majors. Studying different populations whose majors are directly related to English use

in their future occupation may come up with different results.

Moreover, students' perception of learning is not always in accordance with their performance. Therefore, comparing student perceptions of English skills with actual performance may lead to a more effective and efficient tool for curriculum development and choice of materials. Currently, students' proficiency levels are becoming more divergent, and so their needs have become more diversified. Therefore, information on students' experience, and perception toward English in conjunction with their performance is helpful to establish feasible goals for students and to identify factors that may promote or impede learning and motivation.

Summary of literature review

Available research on students' L2 writing finds various possible factors such as L1 writing skills, L2 proficiency, cultural awareness, and metaknowledge. These studies exclusively measure students' skills or knowledge by standardized tests or analyses of written products. Few studies involving students' perceptions have been done. On the other hand, studies on students' perceptions usually do not include students' abilities based on examination. However, this literature review suggests writing is influenced by various factors. Including students' perceptions and experience of writing in L1 and L2, as well as comparing their process and their definition of L1 and L2 writing seems to provide a better picture of this complex issue. Moreover, reviewing the Course of Study is believed to clarify the learning experience in primary and secondary school. Identifying possible factors that may contribute to students' difficulty in L2 writing may help develop college writing instruction. Therefore, the purposes of this study are :

1. To study and analyze students' performance on English exams, which include grammar, listening, reading and writing. The analysis includes writing content, and the relationship among these skills.
2. To understand students' perception of English and Japanese writing including usefulness and fondness of language study, their perception (or criteria) of good writing, and their confidence level.
3. To understand their process of writing (if they use translation from Japanese to English and if they use any translation tools such as software or the internet for English writing), and to find if there are any differences between languages in terms of the above perspectives.
4. To elicit students' previous experience of English and Japanese writing.

In the end, this study revealed how students' perceptions and experience of L1 and L2 writing stood in relationship to their writing skills. The following questions guided the study :

- 1) What are these students' English proficiency levels?
- 2) What were the students' previous learning experiences?
- 3) What are the students' perception of English, English writing and Japanese writing?
- 4) What are the students' perception on English, English writing and Japanese writing?
- 5) How do they write? What is their process of writing?
- 6) Where do they find difficulties? How do they overcome such difficulties?

Research Design and Methods

Participants of this study

Total of 188 students, including 70 first-year students from Welfare and Psychology department and 118 second-year students from Welfare and Psychology (92) and Physical Therapy department (26).

Methods and Procedure

A survey and a test were administrated for this study. The survey consists of 29 questions, which are mostly multiple choice questions with a few open-ended questions. The participants were asked to respond to these surveys at the beginning of the Fall semester. The questionnaire included a self-evaluation of English skills, past English experience, perceptions and expectations of English and English instruction, questions regarding English and Japanese writing, and a comparison of English and Japanese writing. The test included 17 grammar questions, three listening questions, and 6 reading questions from TOEIC past exams. A writing test was also given. The assigned topic was 'my summer vacation' in which students were required to write free-style essays within 30 minutes. Their writings were graded on 0-5 scales.

Review of the Course of Study has been done using the governmental document issued by the Ministry of Education. The comparison of the two Courses of Study (2003 version and 2009 version), focusing on the subjects of English and Japanese, was performed for this study.

Results

Results of the Survey and Tests

This section reports the results of the survey and English examination. Both results were used for a statistical evaluation of the data, answering the six questions mentioned the above. For answering question 3, the review of the Course of Study is included in the presentation.

1) What are these students' English proficiency levels?

The following table shows the average score of each section of the English test.

Table 1 Average score of each section

	Total	Grammar	Listening	Reading	Writing
Full Marks	30	17	3	5	5
Average	12.54	7.94	1.01	1.78	1.82

The overall average score of the test was 12.54, but the average score of those who scored 0 on writing (N=36) was 9.69. These 36 students turned in a blank essay page. L2 proficiency (Subtotal score of Grammar, Listening and Reading) and L2 writing are positively correlated ($r=0.942$). Students who have 16 or more in three areas (Grammar, Listening and Reading) perform better in writing. In terms of grammar and writing scores, a low correlation was found (0.46), whereas listening and writing scores showed a negative correlation (-0.91). Those who have lower listening scores have higher writing scores. A moderate correlation was found ($r=0.841$) between reading and writing scores. When students had a better score in reading, they also had a better writing score. In particular, those with higher reading scores (4 and 5) had significantly higher scores in writing.

2) How do they assess their L1 and L2 writing skills?

The participants were asked to rate their writing skills in English and in Japanese on five-point scales. The average self-evaluation rate in English writing was 2.11, whereas that of Japanese writing was 2.96. Predictably, students had more confidence in their Japanese writing.

In terms of self-evaluation, the group with the lowest rate (1) in English writing had the average of the lowest level (2.81) in Japanese writing. Similarly those who had the lowest rate in Japanese (1) had the lowest average rate (1.50) in English writing. The most frequent answer for English writing was 2: More than one third (35.6%) of participants rated their English writing level as 'bad'. The next frequent answer was 1, 'very bad' which was the response of 59 (31.4%) participants. On the other hand, for Japanese writing, the most frequent answer was 3; about 45.2% believe they write okay. Only 5% said their Japanese writing is very bad. Regarding self-evaluation of English reading and writing, there was a correlation between these two variables. ($r=0.87$). When students had better reading evaluation, they had better writing evaluation.

In terms of the relationship between self-evaluation of Japanese writing and average English writing test score, a low negative correlation ($r=-0.68$) was found between these two variables. On the other hand, regarding self-evaluation and average

score of English writing, a high correlation was found ($r=0.97$).

3) What were the students' previous learning experiences?

In order to answer this question, the review of the Course of Study focusing on English and Japanese in different periods has been done and the results are as follows.

1. Previous Review of the Course of Study (English) in different years

The Course of Study outlines guidelines that each school should follow for all subjects. It is modified every 10 years. The comparisons of overall objectives for English instruction in lower and upper secondary levels, standard number of hours per week for English instruction in the lower secondary levels, and standard credit for English instruction in the upper secondary levels in 1989, 1993 and 2002 or 2003 have been described in my previous study (Inoue, 2007). The summary of this study is described below.

In this comparison, the new Course of study (2003) uses the following terms as keys. *Communication skills / understand the language and culture / positive attitudes / practical skills / integration of four skills / nurturing / understanding of message of senders (speakers, writers).*

In terms of the standard number of hours for the lower secondary level, there were no changes in the 7th grade, and 1 hour per week was added for the elective in the 8th and 9th grades. For the secondary level, Oral communication I and II were added as new subjects and Oral Communication A, B and C were deleted. Although it was not mentioned, in order to take Oral Communication II, students had to complete Oral communication I. On the other hand, Oral Communication A, B, and C did not require mastery since students were not required to take them sequentially. In the previous Course of Study, foreign language was not required, whereas it is required in the new Course of Study. Under the guidelines, students have to take English as a foreign language, and 2 units minimum from either Oral Communication I (2 standard units) or English I (3 standard units.) These changes in English study were due to "The Action Plan to Cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities' " proposed by MEXT in 2003, and introduced as a strategic measure to improve English education. The aim of the Action Plan is to endeavor to improve English education at the junior and senior high school level, building a solid foundation of English and nurturing a positive attitude toward English, thus preparing graduates to conduct basic English communications. However, in terms of standard units of English (foreign language for previous Course of Study), the 4 units recommended in the previous Course of study is now reduced to 3 units. At the same time, the levels and the content of English were lowered. For example, the

number of vocabulary words required for mastery at the junior high school level was reduced from 1,000 to 900 and 1,500 to 1,300 in high school.

2. New Review of the Course of Study (English and Japanese)

Yutori education under the 2003 Course of Study has been blamed for declining academic ability among Japanese children in an international survey. MEXT has reviewed the 2003 Course of Study and introduced new one, partially starting in 2009 in elementary and junior high school, and with the shift expected to be completed 2011 for elementary schools, 2012 for junior high schools and 2013 for high schools. In addition to reviewing the Course of Study for English, this study compares the Course of Study for Japanese since the study deals with students' L1 writing skills.

2-1 Major overall changes (English)

The main changes and modifications related to English education found in this new Course of study are described below.

① In 2011, English will be a mandatory course for 5th and 6th grades.

English is not a regular subject, which is taught by using textbooks, and grades are given. Instead it is considered as a part of a domain (discipline), which may not have textbooks or grading. It aims to promote better understanding of language and culture, and to nurture a positive attitude towards communication activities among children. Through hearing English sounds and basic expressions, children are to nurture basic skills of communication. English instruction will be delivered 35 hours a year (1 hour is 45 minutes). Classroom teachers are in charge of English teaching. They may employ a team teaching approach with ALTs or others who are good in English.

② At the junior high school level, hours allocated for English will increase proportionate to the increase of school hours. As a result it will increase from 315 hours per year (3 hours per week) to 420 hours per year (4 hours per week). The vocabulary to be taught will increase from 900 to 1,200.

③ At the high school level, the subjects will change as follows.

2009			2003 version		
Subject	Units	Mandatory	Subject	Units	Mandatory
Communication English Basic	2	○ (Can be reduced to 2)	Oral Communication I	2	○
Communication English I	3		Oral Communication II	4	
Communication English II	4		English I	3	○
Communication English III	4		English II	4	
English Expression I	2		Reading	4	
English Expression II	3		Writing	4	
English Conversation	2				

Note: The new version reorganized elective courses, and a required course

“Communication English I” will be implemented to nurture basic skills.

The standard number of vocabulary to be learned will be increased from 1,300 to 1,800. English will be taught using English.

2-2 Major overall changes (Japanese)

In terms of Japanese, allocation time has been changed as follows in the Course of Study. In elementary school Japanese, for the 1st and 2nd grade levels, the hours for writing activities have been increased from 90 to 100, while 3rd and 4th grade levels remained at 85 units, and 55 units for 5th and 6th grade levels. In high school, the subjects and requirements have changed as follows.

2009			2003 version		
Subject	Units	Mandatory	Subject	Units	Mandatory
Integrated Japanese	4	○	Japanese Expression I	2	} Either one
Japanese expression	3	(Can be reduced to 2)	Japanese Expression II	2	
Contemporary Japanese A	2		Integrated Japanese	4	
Contemporary Japanese B	4		Contemporary Japanese	4	
Classic Japanese A	2		Classic Japanese	4	
Classic Japanese B	4		Reading Classic Japanese	2	

2-3-1 Comparison of the Course of Study (English)

The following is comparison of The Course of Studies between the new version and the 2003 version in junior high and high school English. In these comparisons, only notable changes related to writing will be mentioned. (See Appendix A Table 1, 2)

2-3-2 Summary and Related Issues for English

It was found that basic communication skills and positive attitudes toward foreign language have been emphasized. The following are the objectives for each grade level :

Elementary school

English instruction aims to promote better understanding of language and culture, and to nurture a positive attitude towards communication activities among children. Through listening to English sounds and basic expressions, children are to nurture the basic skills of communication.

Junior high school

Foreign language instruction/English instruction aims to promote better understanding of language and culture. It seeks to nurture positive attitudes toward communication while cultivating basic communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

High school

Foreign language instruction/English instruction aims to promote better

understanding of language and culture. It seeks to nurture positive attitudes toward communication while cultivating communicative abilities such as accurately understanding information and ideas and conveying them appropriately.

Throughout the document, the new Course of Study treats writing as a communication tool. Reading, writing and speaking are to be integrated. Materials should be prepared for practical use. It is noteworthy that the word “repeat” such as “repeat the practice,” “repeat the content,” is mentioned in various places, which can be considered to nurture solid basic skills.

A notable change in high school English is that in the new Course of Study, the subject of “Writing” is eliminated. Writing activities are included in the subjects “English Expression I” and “English Expression II.” These subjects are designed to nurture students’ ability to express through speaking and writing. This change encourages students to read and revise their own product. Such activities were not mentioned in the 2003 version.

Other notable changes between the 2003 and 2009 Course of Study

- ① Description of the Course of Study sets only lower limits and does not set any upper limits for learning content.
- ② Grammar and vocabulary should be taught via meaningful content, which relates to the activities that students are engaged in learning.
- ③ Enriched language activities such as criticism, essays and debates are mentioned.
- ④ The word “repeat” is mentioned in various places, an activity designed to build solid basic skills.
- ⑤ Language activities should be conducted in English.

Analysis of the revisions in Course of Study guidelines raises certain questions. First, teaching personnel should be considered thoroughly. Although active involvement of ALT teachers is recommended in the Course of Study, regular teachers who have limited English skills are now given responsibility for planning the curriculum, choosing materials and implementing instructions. Moreover, they are asked to teach English in English, a requirement not achievable for those with limited fluency. The question remains if such teachers who have little confidence in spoken English can provide good role models with positive attitudes toward language learning with their lower confidence level. Second, there is a gap between the content learned in elementary and secondary school and the content of the university entrance examination. Unless the content and aim of the university entrance examination changes, it will be difficult to shift the objectives of English learning. The Course of Study emphasizes cultivating communicative capabilities among students; however, the university entrance examination does not focus on such skills. Traditionally, the

entrance exams focused on vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension, and the content of English courses has been geared to fluency in these areas. The modification of the entrance examination seems to be necessary.

2-4-1 Comparison of the Course of Study (Japanese)

The followed are comparisons of the Course of Study between the new revision and the 2003 version in elementary school Japanese, junior high school English and junior high school Japanese. Like English, only notable changes related to writing will be mentioned in this comparison. (See Appendix A Table 3, 4, 5)

2-4-2 Summary and Related Issues for Japanese

Elementary School

At the elementary school level, the new Course of Study treats writing as an interactive process and places emphasis on pre- and post-writing activities such as resource seeking, discussion, peer reviews. Through such activities, students are believed to think of the structure and organization of their writing.

Junior High School

In junior high school, Japanese writing is also treated as an evolving process of pre- and post-writing activities. It is stated that students deepen their views and thoughts as well as developing logical arguments through such processes. In the new Course of Study, descriptions for 8th and 9th grades are separated while the current one put them together. Moreover, use of library and IT is mentioned in the new Course of Study.

High School

In high school, writing is included in the subjects “Integrated Japanese” and “Japanese Expression.” In terms of content and instruction, both Integrated Japanese and Japanese Expression mentions learning from others’ writing, peer editing and revision, which were not mentioned in the 2003 version. In Integrated Japanese, time allocation for writing was 30 units in the 2003 version, whereas in 2009 it is 30 to 40 units. In English expression, time allocation for speaking, listening and writing activities are mentioned in different ways. In English Expression I, the 2003 version emphasizes the well-balanced time allocation in these three activities while the new one states that emphasis can be placed on speaking, listening, or writing, depending on students’ abilities and needs.

Other notable changes between the 2003 and 2009 Course of Study

Throughout the elementary to secondary grade levels, the new version treats writing as an interactive activity that serves as a means for communication. New activities such as reading others’ products, peer editing, and revision are introduced. In

such activities, students can learn other people's points of view and the importance of readers. At the same time, by introducing this revision, the new Course of Study may help students recognize the importance of revision for improving their own writing.

The participants of this study have studied English as well as Japanese guided by the 2003 Course of Study. This version was influenced by the Yutori movement as well as 'the Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities' proposed by MEET in 2001. Reduced vocabulary and simplified grammar characterized Yutori education. Promoting students' communicative skills by the action plan shifted instructional emphasis from written forms such as reading and writing to spoken forms such as speaking and listening. Encouraging the use of American Language Teachers (ALT) was also seen in such promotion. In fact, this study found that about 78% of students studied with ALT teachers.

4) What are the students' perception of English, English writing and Japanese writing?

Students' Perception

60.6% students responded that writing was the most difficult language skill. Among these students 14.89% (28) responded that they are good at writing. Speaking and listening follow as difficult tasks. On the other hand, 27.7% perceived reading as easiest, followed by listening. However, it should be mentioned that 28.4% students said nothing is easy in the study of English.

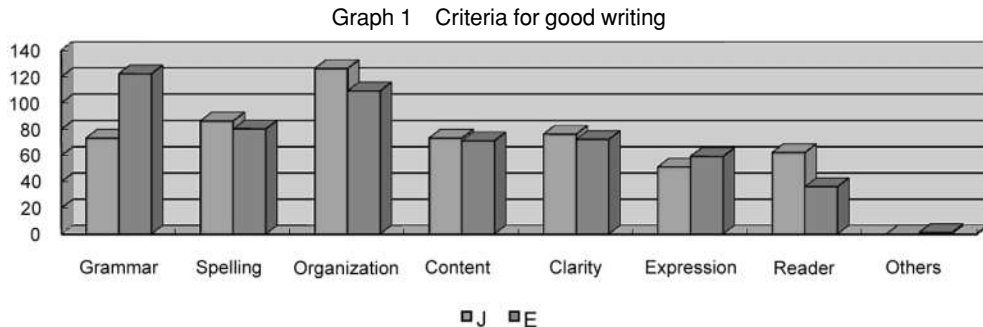
Next, when students were asked if they liked English writing, about 45.6% (those who rated either 2 or 1) displayed negative feelings toward English writing, whereas 19.8% (those who rated either 5 or 4) liked writing. Although students tended to dislike English writing, the majority wanted to improve their English writing. Moreover, the majority of students wished to improve their Japanese writing. (Table 8)

In terms of the perceived importance of writing skills, the participants placed more value on Japanese writing. A larger number of students responded that their writing skills in Japanese were very important (Japanese N=130-69.1%, English N=72-42.0%) as college students. Likewise, for their future, more students felt that their skill in Japanese writing was important (Japanese N=129-68.6% English N=65-34.6%). However, the gap between languages was wider when it comes to their importance for the future.

Moreover approximately a quarter of the participants were determined to take classes to improve their Japanese writing and about half the participants probably take such courses.

Criteria for good writing

The following graph (Graph 1) shows students' idea of what comprises good Japanese writing and good English writing.

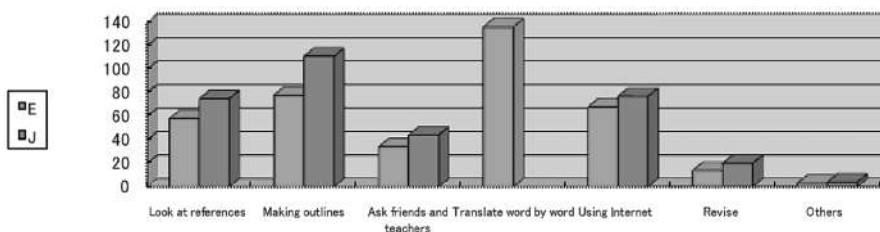


As shown in the above graph, similar responses were found in the area of content, clarity, expression, and correct spelling or orthography. However, differences in perceived importance were found for grammar and being aware of the readers. Students responded that grammar is the most important criterion in English writing (64.9%): this was the most frequent answer in English writing. On the other hand, grammar was not considered an important criterion for Japanese writing. In terms of the awareness of the readers, more responses were found in Japanese writing. 33% of students felt that it is important to take readers into consideration for good Japanese writing while 19.3% felt the same for English writing. For Japanese writing, the criterion cited most frequently was organization, with 67.2% finding it an important criterion.

5) How do they write? What is their process of writing?

The following graph (Graph 2) shows the activities that students include in their writing process. In English writing, 30.9% engaged in pre-writing activities (reading references/researching) while 80.9% engaged in such activities in Japanese writing. The Internet is used in different ways. For Japanese, students used the Internet as an information source, whereas for English writing they used it for help with translation. Making an outline was engaged in by 59.0% students when they write Japanese while 41.5% made an outline for English writing. For revising, 10.6% revised their Japanese writing, whereas only 7.4% revised their English writing. When writing English, 72.3% said that they write Japanese first and then translate it into English.

Graph 2 The students' process of writing



6) Where do they find difficulties in writing? How do they overcome such difficulties?

Students' difficulties

The majority of participants believed the difficulty of English writing was caused by the difficulty in dealing with English grammar, followed by organization and spelling. The next table (Table 3) shows what the students do when they face such difficulties.

Table 3 Strategies for difficulties

	J-E dictionary	E-E dictionary	Translation software	ask friends or family	Ask teachers	Write it in Japanese	Look for reference or Internet search	Nothing	Others
N	153	52	77	98	80	70	49	2	1

The above table indicates that 77 (41%) students depended on translation tools while 70 (37.2%) students left the difficult part in Japanese. The majority (N=153, 81.4%) used a Japanese-English dictionary. 178 students said they asked someone (friends or family N=98 Teacher N=80).

Discussion and Implication

This section will discuss the research findings, answering the six questions posed at the beginning of the study, and concluding with several pedagogical suggestions.

1) Students' English proficiency levels

The findings of this study concur with previous studies such as Cumming (1989) and Ito (2004) in which students' L2 proficiency levels influence their L2 writing performance. In this study, participants with high scores on their reading section showed better writing abilities. Although a cause and effect relationship cannot be proved in this study, possible reasons for the positive correlation between reading and writing can be considered. First, as students read more, they are exposed to more varied types of writings, and may then employ this knowledge in their own writing. Second, if students are exposed to a variety of reading in quantity, they learn more syntax, semantics and vocabulary, which may then inform their own writing. Third,

being able to read well may enhance students' confidence in English. Having been motivated, these students are willing to commit themselves to writing activities.

2) *Students' self-assessment on L1 and L2 writing skills*

My study found that a significant number of participants see their English writing skills as being very poor, whereas they believe their Japanese writing has reached an acceptable level. It was also found that students' self-evaluation of their writing accurately reflected their actual writing scores. Several research studies show a correlation between level of confidence and motivation in learning (Brown, 2004 ; Tavani and Losh, 2003). When participants have very low self-esteem about their English writing skill, they are less motivated to write. And yet, in order to improve their writing, commitment to skill enhancing writing activities such as practice and revision is obviously needed. To make such a commitment, motivation, then, becomes key. To have students possess better knowledge and skills is one way to improve confidence, and thus increase motivation.

3) *Students' previous learning experiences*

The new Course of study (2009) states that writing is one means of communication. In the 2003 version, this phrase was not included. When this 2003 version was being formulated, the social and educational mood pushed English instruction to shift its emphasis toward conversation skills in order to encourage speaking and listening activities. Moreover, the Yutori Kyoiku movement reduced the required vocabulary and simplified the grammar students were expected to acquire. However, the content of college entrance examinations or placement tests did not shift accordingly, resulting in a consequent lowering of college students' English proficiency levels. Now, the new Course of Study aims to improve English education by integrating all four skills in the learning content, adding more vocabulary and expressions to be learned in a meaningful context. In terms of writing, the new version has shifted from a product to a process approach. This shift is designed to help students gain mastery and motivation through hands on pre- and post reading activities including peer review and revision. However, one concern still remains. The 2009 Course of Study warns that writing should not be introduced at the elementary school level, or introduced too early at the elementary school level. This seems to contradict the MEXT emphasis on writing as a communication tool.

4) *Students' perception of English, English writing , and Japanese writing*

The results of the study reveal that nearly all students perceive writing as the most difficult task in English learning with half of them noting that speaking is also one

of the more difficult tasks. In terms of likes and dislikes, nearly half of the respondents felt negatively about writing in English. One can imagine that this dislike may cause students to lose interest in English learning. However, the study found that three quarters of respondents wish to improve their English writing skills although wishing to improve does not necessarily mean committing to improve.

A comparison of students' perception of English and Japanese writing showed somewhat different perceptions of each. The participants believe both are important for academic success as well as for their future. However, they believe writing well in Japanese is of primary importance with the majority willing to take extra courses to improve such skills. A belief in the connection between language skill and their future occupation may enhance students' interest and motivation toward learning. Viewed in this light, if students could connect their English writing skills to their future occupational success, their interests or motivation may increase and thus they may become self-directed learners.

In terms of the criteria for good writing, it was found that students have quite different criteria for writing in the two languages. In English writing, the most frequent answer was having correct grammar. However when students pay too much attention to the mechanical aspects of writing in English, they may fail to view the whole picture. Before developing their thoughts, they may begin correcting sentences, which may result in inferior writing. Another concern is attention to audience. In contrast to their perception of Japanese writing in which audience attentiveness is crucial, students perceive such audience attentiveness as less important when they write in English. Writing should have a clear aim and knowing the concerns of the audience is crucial to achieving this aim. Students should realize the importance of readers and take into consideration the readers' perspective for better writing.

5) Students' process of writing

The study revealed that students have different approaches when writing in different languages. When writing in Japanese, students commit to pre-writing activities such as reading references, conducting Internet searches, and making outlines. When writing in English, students often omit such a pre-writing activities; instead, they start writing in English directly. Little time is thus spent seeking information, developing ideas, and organizing their writing. Without such a process, students' writings could be underdeveloped.

In terms of Internet use, when writing in Japanese, students seek information to inform and improve their writing. When writing in English, the primary use of the Internet was as a means of translation. There are various sites available for free

translations. However, students do not realize these translations usually render Japanese into awkward English that conveys the wrong meaning in grammatically incorrect sentences. Most students do not recognize the inherent clumsiness of internet-based translation services, and so they keep using such services.

The study also found that students tend not to revise whether the writing is in Japanese or in English. Reading their own work after the first draft seems not to be considered as part of the writing process. Students should realize the importance of revision not only to correct grammatical error but also to deepen and develop their ideas.

6) *Source of difficulties and strategies for tackling the difficulties*

Many students believe grammar causes the difficulty in their English writing. Such a result could be understood since these students have been trained to produce or translate a sentence with correct grammar and spelling throughout their previous learning. When students face difficulties, the majority use Japanese-English dictionaries and nearly half use internet translation services. Amazingly, more than one third said they would leave it in Japanese even if it is English writing. These strategies may be evidence that students are discouraged to write in English. In other words, students are not really motivated to keep writing.

Pedagogical Suggestions for writing

The following are several suggestions for teaching writing in English as well as in Japanese, based on the findings and discussion.

Suggestion 1: During the research, it was noted that many students do not distinguish between 'writing' and 'translation'? Some may think merely translating a Japanese sentence into an English sentence is writing. Therefore, writing instruction should teach, first of all, basic English writing style. The students have to come to realize that English writing consists of paragraphs, starting with introduction, body and conclusion.

Suggestion 2: If students view writing activities in different languages as totally different, it will not be easy for them to make use of writing skills or strategies that they have in their native language. It is important to have students know that all writing shares common strategies and their acquired skills and knowledge can be used to improve their L2 writings.

Suggestion 3: Students should understand the writer's responsibility and awareness of audience. The new Course of Study introduces peer review and evaluation activities for post-writing activities. Hopefully such activities will help students to become aware of readers, and aim to write accordingly, varying tone and content for appropriateness.

Suggestion 4: A variety of pre-writing activities such as discussion, research, and reading references should be encouraged so that students can explore their ideas and thoughts. Such activities also help students to improve their critical thinking skills. Revision should also be a part of the writing process, as a means to develop and deepen ideas.

Suggestion 5: Students should be exposed to rich reading sources. They should read various types of content. When it comes to choosing reading materials, consideration should be given to the level of readings. Scaffolding reading--the level of difficulty of reading that is neither too hard nor too easy-- can be provided. In such scaffolding reading, instructors provide support if it is necessary and students can challenge themselves to read at a higher level. In such an environment, optimal learning takes place.

Suggestion 6: The study found that students possess greater motivation when their learning is connected to their life. Most students are motivated to write well in Japanese because they see that doing so will serve them well in their future work. If they could see such a connection between writing well in English and achieving goals after graduation, this would motivate students to practice and produce more English writing. The issue is how to present such a connection to students. One way to establish this connection is to implement content-based instruction. In content-based instruction, students can learn English through materials related to their field of study.

Implication for remedial education

Many universities offer Japanese writing courses in order to help students function well in academic settings. Other universities provide basic English for those whose proficiency level is low. These courses are taught in an isolated manner. In fact, many students see Japanese writing and English writing as quite different. They have a different definition of good writing for each. They also have different strategies to produce writing in each language. However, writing in any language involves exploring ideas, critical thinking, logical arguments, planning, organization, and revising. When students recognize this, their approach toward English writing might change. Writing is a tool for communication as well as a higher cognitive activity. Therefore, when writing using both languages in the same course, students may apply the knowledge, skills and strategies that they use in Japanese. Such a course should improve students' cognitive capability and learning.

Limitations of the study

This study focused on 188 students at a small university in Yamanashi. The

university has majors related to rehabilitation, social welfare and psychology. Due to this, the results of this study may not be generalized to students who are in different fields such as science and technology, business, or liberal arts. However, the findings remain important insofar as they could represent populations whose future success may have little to do with English proficiency.

In addition, the administered tests for English proficiency and writing can be seen to include certain limitations. The test questions were drawn from the TOEIC exam, and the topic of writing was provided by the author. Questions still remain about whether students may perform differently on different types of tests and different topics in writing. Despite such limitations, perhaps this study can serve as a pilot study for further research on English writing. More research and information provided through various types of needs analysis will help to understand the complex issues in English writing. Eventually further investigations will provide a pragmatic approach to improve writing instructions in the future.

Bibliography

- Ardnt, V. (1987). Six writers in search of texts : A protocol based study of L1 and L2 writing. *ELT Journal*, 41, 257-267.
- Arimichi Y. (2009). Analysis of a Survey on English Classes Research. *Report of Takamatsu National College of Technology*. 44. 9-18
- Brown. R. A. (2004). Motivation for Learning English among Japanese University Students. *Research on Information (7)* : Rikkyo University
- Carson, J. E., Carrell, P. L. , Silberstein, S., Kroll, B., and Kuehn, P.A. (1990). The role of cultural awareness in contrastive rhetoric. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning* (8th, Urbana, IL, 1994).
- Carson et al. (1990) Reading-writing relationships in first and second language. *TESOL Quarterly*. 24 : 245-66.
- Cumming, A. (1989). Writing expertise and second language proficiency. *Language Learning*, 39, 81-141.
- Hirose K & Sasaki M (1996) Effects of Teaching Metaknowledge and Journal Writing on Japanese University Students' EFL Writing *JALT Journal* , 22, No.1.
- Ito, F. (2004) The interrelationship among first language writing skills, second language writing skills, and second language proficiency of EFL university students. *JACET Bulletin*, 39, 42-58
- Janopoulos, M. (1986). The relationship of pleasure reading and second language writing proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20 (4), 763-768.
- Jones, S., & Tretow, J. (1987). Composing in a second language. In A. Matsuhashi (Ed.), *Writing in real time* (pp. 34-57). Norwood, NJ : Ablex.
- Kamimura, T. (1996). Composing in Japanese as a first language and English as a foreign language : A study

- of narrative writing. *RELC Journal*, 27 (1), 47-69
- Kamimura, T., Oi, K. (1994) The Role of Cultural Awareness in Contrastive Rhetoric. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning*
- Kaplan, J. and Palhinda, E. (1981). Non-native speakers of English and their composition abilities: A review and analysis. W. Frawley (Ed.) *Linguistics and Literacy*. New York: Plenum Press. pp. 425-457.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1966) "Cultural thought patterns in Inter-cultural Education", *Language Learning*, 16-1 & 2, 1-20
- Krashen, S. (1984). *Writing: Research, Theory and Applications*. Beverly Hills: Laredo.
- Krashen, S. (1993). *The Power of Reading*. Englewood, CO:
- Krashen, S. (2004). *The Power of Reading*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, Second Edition
- Kuno, S. (1974): The position of relative clauses and conjunctions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 5 (1): 117-136.
- Lado, R. (1957) *Linguistics Across Cultures*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press
- Lee, N; Tajino, A (2008). Understanding Students' Perceptions of Difficulty with Academic Writing for Teacher Development: A Case Study of the University of Tokyo Writing Program. Kyoto University
- Mace-Matluck, B. J. (1982). Literacy instruction in bilingual settings: A synthesis of current research. *National Center for Bilingual Research*. (ERIC No. ED 222079)
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2003, 2009) The Course Of Study
- Pennington, M. C. & So, S. 1993). Comparing writing process and product across two languages: A study of 6 Singaporean university student writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 2 (1), 41-63.
- Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 229-258.
- Rose, M. (1984). *Writer's Block: The Cognitive Dimension*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press
- Stotsky, S. (1983). Research on reading/writing relationships: A synthesis and suggested directions. *Language Arts*, 60, 627-642
- Tajino, A. (1997). Learner difficulty: what is it, and how well do we understand it?' *The Teacher Trainer* 11/2: 11-14.
- Tavani, C., Losh, S. (2003). Motivation, self-confidence, and expectations as predictors of the academic performances among our high school students. *Child Study Journal*, Vol. 33,
- Uchida, G, Ito, M. and Hidai, H. (2002). A survey on the English language education from primary school to senior high school was conducted among the students of *Tokyo University of Fisheries Bulletin* 37.
- Uzawa, K., & Cumming, A. (1989). Writing strategies in Japanese as a foreign language: Lowering or keeping up the standards. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 46, 178-194
- Winskowski, C., Hanna, C.; (2004) Junior College Students' Perception of English Skill Improvement *Department of International Cultural Studies Morioka Junior College. Language and Culture* No. 6
- Wolfersberger, M (2003) L1 to L2 Writing Process and Strategy Transfer: A Look at Lower Proficiency Writers *TESOL-EJ* (7) No.2

Appendix A

Table 1 Comparison of the Course of Studies in junior high school English (focus on Writing)

The revised one	The 2003 version
<p>1. Aim Communication includes listening, speaking, reading and writing</p> <p>2. Aims and content English</p> <p>1. Aims (not much difference in comparison)</p> <p>2. Content Writing</p> <p>ㄱ) Write correct sentences, pay attention to the connections between words.</p> <p>ㄴ) Pay attention to the connections between sentences</p> <p>Language activities</p> <p>Take the following points into consideration in instruction</p> <p>7th grade level Consider students' abilities and attitudes that they nurtured in English activities throughout elementary school</p> <p>8th grade level Repeat the content that students learned in the 7th grade level so that their skills would be firmly established</p> <p>9th grade levels Repeat the content that students learned in the 8th grade level so that...</p> <p>(3) Learning materials</p> <p>ㄷ Vocabulary About 1,200 words</p> <p>ㄹ Grammar The word 'basic one' was eliminated.</p> <p>(4) Use of language materials</p> <p>ㅅ Grammar is considered as a tool for supporting communication, and should teach effectively in relation to language activity.</p> <p>ㅇ Pay attention to the difference in terms of word order and modifiers between Japanese and English</p> <p>ㅈ In order to promote students' understanding of English characteristics, related items should be organized and be taught effectively</p> <p>3 Plan and implementation</p> <p>ㅊ Involving active use of words, idioms and phrase so that skills will be established</p> <p>(2) Materials should be prepared for consideration of practical use in order to nurture integrated communicative abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing</p>	<p>1. Aims Communication includes listening and speaking</p> <p>7th grade level Careful consideration that students would encounter English for their first time, try to nurture their positive attitudes toward English communication</p> <p>9th grade levels ㅊ Vocabulary Up to about 900 words</p> <p>ㅅ Focus on listening and speaking in each grade levels (this one is omitted in the new version)</p> <p>Communication abilities are not clearly defined.</p>

Note: The subject 'Writing' is eliminated in the 2011 version. Instead, writing is included in English Expression I and English Expression II.

Table 2 The Course of Study in high school English (focus on writing)

2013	2003
<p>English Expression I</p> <p>1. Objectives To nurture students' positive attitudes toward communication through English. Foster communicative abilities, examining the facts and opinions and considering logical development and effective expression.</p> <p>2. Contents Set concrete language use situation in which students can try to understand the information or opinions and to convey their message. In this setting, students will - Write things briefly, which fits the purpose and the readers. Items to be considered in instruction - It is important to write with careful attention to the important words, sentences, conjunctions which deal with the main point. Re-read the writing</p> <p>3. Treatment of the Contents Speaking and writing instruction is conducted more effectively by integrating listening and reading.</p> <p>English Expression II</p> <p>Writing Decide the theme and write various types of writing. Clarify the point and the ground of arguments, plan, organize the idea and write. Read your writing and revise it.</p>	<p>Writing</p> <p>1 Objectives To further develop students' abilities to write down information, ideas, etc. in English in accordance with the situation and the purpose, and to foster a positive attitude toward communicating by utilizing these abilities.</p> <p>2 Contents This version prescribed (1) Language activities, (2) Treatment of the language activities which include Items to be Considered in Instruction and Language-use Situations and Functions of Language and (3) Language Elements in detail.</p> <p>3 Treatment of the Contents (1) Writing instruction is conducted more effectively by integrating writing activities with listening, speaking and reading activities. (2) The purpose for writing should be emphasized in instruction, not only learning language elements but also transmitting information and ideas etc. In so doing, emphasis should also be placed on the process of writing to make the students' writing richer in content and more appropriate in form.</p>

Table 3 Comparison of the Course of Studies in elementary school Japanese (focus on Writing)

The revised one	The 2003 version
<p>1st and 2nd Grade levels</p> <p><u>Aim</u> Writing - to nurture positive attitudes toward writing</p> <p><u>Content</u> The word 'readers' is not mentioned. However, peer review and discussion are recommended</p>	<p><u>Aim</u> Writing - to nurture students' enjoyment of expression</p> <p><u>Content</u> When you write, think of readers and aims of writing</p>
<p>3rd and 4th grade levels</p> <p><u>Aim</u> Nurture attitudes, considering means of expression</p> <p><u>Content</u> Present your writing and listen to others' presentation. Discuss others' writing in terms of clarity</p>	<p><u>Aim</u> Nurture attitudes, try to find appropriate means of expression</p> <p><u>Content</u> Write appropriately, think of readers and purpose of writing</p>
<p>5th and 6th grade levels</p> <p><u>Aim</u> To nurture writing ability in terms of structure or organization as well as positive attitudes to engage appropriate writing</p> <p><u>Content</u> Gathering information before writing is recommended Presentation and peer review are encouraged</p>	<p><u>Aim</u> To nurture writing ability in terms of logical development and attitude to engage effective writing</p>

Table 4 Comparison of the Course of Studies in junior high school Japanese (focus on Writing)

The revised one	The 2003 version
<p>7th grade level</p> <p>1. Aims (2) Think of writing purpose and intention/think of organization / help students have a positive attitude toward putting ideas in shape</p> <p>Writing Sort out information for writing / Think of the role of paragraph and organize it. (2) Examples are suggested for writing topics</p> <p>8th grade levels</p> <p>1. Aims Plan organization based on writing purpose and intention / develop(expand and deepen)own thoughts through writing activities</p> <p>Writing Plan the organization Think of connections between paragraphs or sentences to aid reader comprehension Expand your thought through exchanging opinions on writing in peer review (2) Examples are suggested for writing topics</p> <p>9th grade levels</p> <p>(2) Plan the logical development and deepen thoughts by writing</p> <p>B. Writing Constant research for writing source Choose appropriate writing styles and organization Appropriate use of resources and produce convincing writing See writing as whole and check the organization Review and evaluate in peer review and learn from others. Widen your view and thoughts</p> <p>3. Mentioned the effective use of library and IT.</p> <p>Allocation time for writing 8th grade 30~40 units per year 9th grade 20~30 units per year</p>	<p>1. Aims (2) Based on the source, put ideas in shape / improve ability to write precisely/help students to have a positive attitude toward expressing ideas Choose appropriate resources so that they you can write your ideas and thought precisely</p> <p>In this version 8th and 9th's aims and contents were described together.</p> <p>1. Aims Enrich your life through writing activity</p> <p>Clarify the grounds of your argument Try to convince readers</p> <p>Allocation time for writing Each grade level 2/10~3/10 of all Japanese classes</p>

Table 5 Comparison of the Course of Studies in high school Japanese (focus on Writing)

The new version	2003 version
<p>Integrated Japanese</p> <p>2. Content</p> <p>B. Writing</p> <p>(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose appropriate topics depending on the readers and the purpose ; consider the structures and styles of sentences as well as vocabulary. - Consider logical development, organization. Writing should be based on the grounds of the argument - Nurture abilities to express appropriately, explaining or describing things accurately - Learn from others' excellent writings. Do revision and peer editing to improve writing <p>3. Instruction</p> <p>(3) Time allocation for writing activities are 30 to 40 units</p> <p>English Expression</p> <p>2. Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pay attention to logical development and accurate description so that your ideas and emotion can be effectively conveyed - Speak or write in the way that fits with the purpose and situations while considering language uses and styles of writing - Be exposed to various types of expression and learn from them. Do peer editing and enrich your views <p>3. Instruction</p> <p>Emphasis can be placed on speaking, listening, or writing, depending on students' abilities and their needs.</p>	<p>Integrated Japanese</p> <p>Content</p> <p>B. Writing</p> <p>(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose appropriate topics depending on the readers and the purpose ; consider effective means of expression - Consider logical organization, and summarize your thought into writing - Learn from others' excellent writings for improving your own writing. <p>3. Instruction</p> <p>(3) Time allocation for writing activities are 30 to 40 units</p> <p>English Expression I</p> <p>2. Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speak or write in a way that fits with the purpose and situations while considering language uses and styles of writing <p>3. Instruction</p> <p>Speaking, listening and writing should be integrated in instruction and all three should be well-balanced.</p> <p>English Expression II</p> <p>3. Instruction</p> <p>Emphasis can be placed on speaking, listening, or writing, depending on students' abilities and their needs.</p>