Curriculum Revitalization in a Japanese High School: Teacher–Teacher and Teacher–University Collaboration

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This chapter describes curriculum development toward communication-oriented English in a Japanese public high school over a 5-year period. It compares and contrasts two 2-year projects in the same school, the first beginning in April 2001 and the second in April 2004 (see Table 1), to determine what factors contributed to the successful revitalization of the curriculum. In the first project, teachers resisted the program; they struggled and learned through trial and error, yet they lacked the communication and collaboration necessary for sustained revitalization of the curriculum. In contrast, in the second project, four teachers volunteered and formed a team. As these teachers collaborated to develop the curriculum, they generated more learning opportunities for teachers in the context of their school. Furthermore, they found that their students' learning improved.

In this chapter, we first describe the school context and provide details on the roles we assumed. Then, we delineate each project, incorporating stories. We believe these stories offer valuable insights from a teacher's perspective of how teachers revitalized their curriculum in the school.

The School and Curricular Context

The public high school charged with incorporating the programs is coeducational and located in a central regional area of Japan. Each grade has six classes with, on average, 38–40 students per class. Some students begin working directly after graduation, and others enter university. To cater to the

Table 1. Overview of Projects

Year (Grade Level)	Class	Goals (Improving...)
2001 (1st grade)	Oral Communication I	Oral communication skills
2002 (2nd grade)	Writing	Speaking and writing skills
2003 (3rd grade)	Writing: Teachers work in different ways	
2004 (2nd grade)	Writing	Speaking and writing skills
2005 (3rd grade)	Writing	Discussion and debate skills, writing skills

Note. Project 1 took place during the school years of 2001 and 2002; project 2 took place during the school years of 2004 and 2005.

latter group, two of the six classes in each grade prepare students for university entrance examinations. When the first project started in 2001, there were 10 English teachers in the school, including one native-English-speaking teacher, who was an assistant language teacher. The average teaching experience was 15.6 years (range 0–31 years).

The main goal of the projects was to improve students' communication skills in English in accordance with the guidelines on communication-oriented English implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). These guidelines, which were renewed with a further emphasis on communication skills in 2003, were designed to address a perceived need to improve the *typical* high school student's ability to communicate in English, which was felt to be inadequate despite several years of instruction in English. The overall objectives of the guidelines were "to develop students' practical communication abilities such as understanding information and the speaker's or writer's intentions, and expressing their own ideas, deepening the understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages" (MEXT, 2003, p. 7). Although the guidelines required teaching Oral Communication twice a week to 1st-year students, most teachers had been replacing it with a grammar class as they thought grammar was essential to prepare students for university entrance examinations.

Oral Communication was taught only when the native-English-speaking assistant language teacher visited each classroom approximately once a week. Oral Communication was taught using student-centered activities, such as games. For other English classes, such as English I and II, most teachers relied on the textbook. They focused on grammar explanation and translation, with little or no instruction in communication-oriented English. This type of covert curriculum and traditional way of teaching, which is contrary

to official guidelines, has been the norm in Japan for many years (Sato, 2002). Table 2 shows the structure of the English curriculum of the school. In 2001, the project began with Oral Communication for 1st-year students and Writing for 2nd-year students. In 2004, the second project started with Writing for 2nd-year students followed by Writing for 3rd-year students. The goal was to continue to improve students' communication skills (vertical articulation—coordinated, coherent curriculum over several years) over 3 years. Although there were some attempts to integrate the two English classes (e.g., Oral Communication and English I) in the same grade (horizontal articulation—coordinated, coherent curriculum among different subjects), the teachers did not succeed in achieving this. Therefore, this chapter focuses solely on vertical articulation (Oral Communication and Writing; see Table 2).

With respect to the teaching culture at the school, initial interviews with teachers at the outset of the project revealed three distinctive characteristics:

- Teachers had low expectations of students' performance and often complained about their students.
- Managing students and keeping classroom order were particularly important to teachers.
- There was little communication among teachers regarding teaching issues and goals.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) categorize this as a weak school teaching culture in which most teachers are isolated and rely on routine practices (see also Kleinsasser, 1993; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004).

Roles and Motivations

In spring 2001, chapter co-author Sato, a university teacher, was asked by fellow chapter co-author Takahashi, a member of the Communicative Language Teaching Study Group organized by Sato (see Sato, 2003), for advice. The prefectural Board of Education had just unexpectedly assigned

Table 2. The School's English Curriculum

Year (grade level)	Classes where projects were implemented (vertical articulation)	Other classes
1st year	Oral Communication I (2 hours)	English I (4 hours)
2nd year	Writing (2 hours)	English II (4 hours)
3rd year	Writing (2 hours)	Reading (4 hours) English II—elective (2 hours)

Takahashi's public senior high school to experiment with a 2-year project (the project name, translated from Japanese, is the Communication Power-Up Plan). Sato was interested in the project, and asked for permission to do research. It took 6 months for the principal of the school to accept Sato as a researcher and curriculum adviser, after which Sato was allowed to visit the school and collect data. Sato visited the high school once a week, observed classes, and gave advice to the teachers involved in the projects. Multiple data sources, including interviews (teachers and groups of students), classroom observations, documents (e.g., teachers' materials, videotapes of students' speaking tests, students' portfolios), and student surveys, were used to document how the teachers revitalized the curriculum and how students improved their communication skills. Sato interviewed teachers and groups of students twice a year (September and February–March). He collected and analyzed all data except for the students' speaking tests, portfolios, and surveys.

Takahashi, who became the coordinator of the projects, collaborated with Sato and met with him every week after his visit. She received additional advice from Sato through online communication. Based on this advice, Takahashi created lesson plans and developed materials, which she then shared with other teachers. She also created a student survey, and asked other teachers to administer it in their classes twice a year (October and February). Takahashi was responsible for summarizing the survey data. She also collected comments from students' portfolios in July, December, and February and translated them into English.

Project 1 (2001 and 2002 School Years): Revitalizing 1st-Year Oral Communication and 2nd-Year Writing

INTRODUCTION

The first project started in April 2001, although Sato did not become involved until September 2001. Most teachers were not sure how to teach Oral Communication and thought students might perceive it as a *fun* class. They thought it would not be useful to students taking university entrance examinations. The teachers had to change their curriculum, and to some degree their teaching approaches, because of the top-down reform initiatives. During the first 3 months of the project, teachers often complained about the students' lack of progress on their speaking tests. However, as the teachers began to discuss assessment criteria during meetings in October and collaborate to assess speaking tests, they witnessed a remarkable change in the students' performance. The second year started in April 2002. Even after engaging in a long discussion, three teachers did not agree to integrate

writing and speaking to further improve their students' communication skills. Takahashi took the initiative and tried the new approach recommended by Sato; the other two teachers relied on the textbook. Over time, the other teachers began taking risks, and moved away from the textbook as they observed Takahashi's class and saw how well Sato's approach worked. The following sections describe how the Oral Communication curriculum was revitalized when the textbook was changed and speaking tests were implemented and how the revitalization continued in the second year as writing and speaking were integrated.

THE FIRST YEAR: ORAL COMMUNICATION FOR 1ST-YEAR STUDENTS

The Process of Revitalization: Changing the Textbook and Adding Speaking Tests

Oral Communication (twice a week) started with five Japanese English teachers and one assistant language teacher. One class (approximately 40 students) was divided into two, and the assistant language teacher team-taught one of the two classes a week with each Japanese English teacher. Teachers were uncertain how to teach Oral Communication, and the prefectural Board of Education had not provided guidelines. Sato immediately suggested the following:

- Use a different textbook, *Impact Intro* (Ellis & Sano, 1997), which has many pair and self-expression activities, including a teacher's manual with clear directions in English. (The manual is attached to the textbook.)
- Give a speaking test[1] after finishing each unit, and make sure speaking test results are incorporated into the total grades of the Oral Communication class.
- Have a weekly meeting for teachers who teach Oral Communication classes.

Following Sato's advice, teachers stopped using the required textbook approved by MEXT in June and made it a supplementary text.[2] They began

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[1] Although the term *test* is used, the tests would be more appropriately thought of as a form of continuous assessment based on performance. However, as formal tests are highly valued in the context, the term *test* was retained for these assessments.

[2] Senior high school teachers in Japan can choose textbooks from a list of MEXT-approved books. The municipal or prefectural Board of Education decides which textbooks are used in junior and elementary schools. Teachers are required to teach using the approved textbook. Therefore, the school retained the MEXT-approved textbook as a supplementary resource, although teachers used *Impact Intro* as the main textbook.

using *Impact Intro* in July, after the midterm examination of the first semester. The teachers were motivated to use speaking tests as they thought the tests would encourage students to engage in oral activities in class. However, attending a weekly meeting was difficult for the teachers because of their tight schedules and reluctance to do so. Table 3 shows the structure for Oral Communication classes in the 2001 school year. Nine speaking tests (i.e., assessments) were administered: four individual speeches, four pair presentations, and one group presentation. Presentations 1–4 were scheduled for the first semester of the year (April to September) and presentations 5–9, for the second semester (October to March). Appendix A shows sample handouts for the presentations. *Hello There* was the required MEXT-approved textbook.

Five speaking tests were administered from April to July, before Sato began visiting the school. The tests involved individual, pair, and group presentations on predetermined topics. Students prepared for the presenta-

Table 3. Structure for Oral Communication Classes in the 2001 School Year

	Lesson/Unit	Topic	Speaking Test
1	Introduction (*Hello There!*)	Self-introduction	Individual presentation
2	Lesson 1 (*Hello There!*)	What are you interested in?	Individual presentation (What I am interested in)
3	Lesson 2 (*Hello There!*)	This is my class schedule.	Individual presentation (My favorite subject)
4	Lesson 3 (*Hello There!*)	What club do you belong to?	Pair presentation (Club activity)
5	Unit 1 (*Impact Intro*)	My family	Pair presentation (My…won't let me go!)
6	Unit 2 (*Impact Intro*)	My friends	Pair presentation (Nice to meet you!)
7	Unit 3 (*Impact Intro*)	My pastimes	Pair presentation (Are you doing anything on…?)
8	Unit 6 (*Impact Intro*)	Modern sounds	Individual presentation (My favorite bands)
9	Unit 7 (*Impact Intro*)	Food	Group presentation (At the restaurant)

tion, memorized what they wrote, and gave the presentation in front of the class. The other students watched and assessed each performance. During this period, however, there was little improvement in fluency, delivery, and enthusiasm in the way that students deliver their presentations and teachers began questioning the effectiveness of the speaking tests. Some teachers thought the speaking tests were too difficult for students who did not have a basic knowledge of English grammar. In addition, students' grades varied to a great extent, depending on which teacher they had.

When Sato first visited the school as a researcher and advisor in September, he strongly recommended that teachers hold regular meetings to discuss assessment criteria. In October, teachers finally began to meet weekly. In the meetings, teachers watched videotapes of the students' performances and discussed how best to assess them. Some teachers had relied on the assistant language teacher for assessment, but they all agreed the Japanese English teachers should also participate in assessing the speaking tests. In the following meetings, the teachers shared the problems they were having in the class and their ideas for improvement.

As the teachers collaborated toward the goal of developing coherent assessments and performance tests, the students' performance improved significantly. Students began to enjoy the presentations they had created. The students' communication skills (fluency, delivery, and enthusiasm) improved as they began to expand on their memorized scripts. One teacher, Ishikawa,³ reported,

Students developed presentation skills over the year. They could perform with gestures and emotions. (second interview, March 2002)

Miike, the assistant language teacher, commented on the speaking tests:

Students gained self-confidence. They still may be very, very shy. I think their confidence is growing. Certainly they are learning new skills. They are becoming more and more interested in presentations. Once we did a group presentation, and there were some really original skits. (second interview, March 2002)

In a meeting, the teachers discussed the ratio of each assessment component for Oral Communication. Although they had been relying on term examinations as the single assessment component, they decided to incorporate speaking tests and to have them count for as much as 40% of a student's final grade. Thus, the teachers now had three assessment components for Oral Communication: (a) term examination, 50%; (b) speaking tests, 40%; and (c) participation and assignments, 10%.

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³ All teacher and student names, except for authors', are pseudonyms.

From their initial experience, teachers learned the following:

- Giving nine speaking tests throughout the year is important because it takes time for students to get used to and to gain confidence in using English. Teachers, therefore, must be patient and try new ways of working.
- Continuous assessment through speaking tests can develop students' speaking and listening skills.
- It is important to discuss assessment criteria because it encourages teachers to observe more carefully the students' performances and stages of learning.
- Both teachers and students should participate in the assessment of speaking tests. Students can learn much from watching the performances of other students. Japanese English teachers need no longer rely on the assistant language teacher.
- A weekly meeting is important because it gives teachers the opportunity to share their problems and teaching ideas.

However, teachers stopped having weekly meetings in January as students became used to making oral presentations. Without the weekly meetings, the teachers stopped sharing their ideas as well as problems they were having in their classrooms. They seemed satisfied with the students' performance and thus believed there was no need for the meetings.

Student Learning: The Pleasure of Using English

At the end-of-year departmental meeting, teachers did not have enough time to discuss what they had learned, what kind of problems they had had, and how they could develop the Oral Communication class in the following year. Although they had conducted a student self-evaluation survey twice during the year, the results were not fully discussed. It was clear, however, that the students wanted the challenge of participating in more spontaneous and natural conversations, as their comments in their portfolios showed.

> **Mika:** *I enjoyed presentations but I don't have confidence in speaking with a native speaker. I want to be able to have a natural conversation in English. (third portfolio, February 2002)*

> **Takeshi:** *I want to be able to think in English so that I can speak more freely in a conversation. I hope we can have many interactive activities. (third portfolio, February 2002)*

The students evaluated their own speaking and listening skills in October and February, comparing them with those from the previous April. They responded to a questionnaire developed by Takahashi. The results showed the students believed their speaking and listening skills had improved

through their oral presentations (see Tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B). For example, in terms of speaking skills (Table B1), the percentage of students who said "I can hardly speak" decreased from 19% to 1%. In terms of listening skills (Table B2), the number of students who said "I could hardly understand" decreased from 28% to 4%. Because the students' level of English was not high, teachers were afraid that pair activities and speaking tests would be too difficult for students and, thus, the students would not enjoy these activities. However, the survey showed students liked the student-centered and communication-oriented classes better than the teacher-centered grammar translation class. As students made oral presentations, their communication skills gradually improved and they began to enjoy using English in class.

Unfortunately, most teachers did not seem to notice how much students wanted to continue to learn oral English. As their comments show, students had a strong desire to try more spontaneous and natural conversations. However, their teachers did not use the results from the student surveys when they evaluated their Oral Communication classes, nor did they attempt to share at meetings what they had experienced. Although teachers became aware of the improvement in students' oral skills, they did not consider working toward further improving students' communication skills. In addition, as the curriculum shows (see Table 2), there was no Oral Communication class in the second year. The new school year started without enough discussion and evaluation of the program. The next section describes how 2nd-year teachers struggled to revitalize a writing class.

THE SECOND YEAR: WRITING FOR 2ND-YEAR STUDENTS

The Process of Revitalization: Integrating Writing and Speaking

As there was no Oral Communication class for 2nd-year students, teachers had to teach a Writing class. Takahashi was again at a loss and asked Sato for advice. Sato recommended that three 2nd-year teachers try the approach used at his university. The approach, which integrates writing and speaking, had been successful at the university (Cholewinski & Sato, 2005). Brown (1994) maintains that the integration of language skills is the only plausible approach within the framework of communicative language teaching. He affirms that "by attending primarily to what learners can do with language, and only secondarily to the forms of language, we invite any or all of the four skills that are relevant into the classroom arena" and that "often one skill will reinforce another" (p. 219). Moreover, the student survey and the group interview conducted at the end of the first year clearly showed that the students wanted to continue to improve their oral communication skills. Sato visited the school in early April 2002 and demonstrated how

to teach writing and speaking in an integrated way. However, except for Takahashi, none of the teachers liked the approach. The other two teachers thought it was a speaking, not a writing, lesson. In particular, they resisted abandoning their familiar textbook, which included many translation exercises.[4] After a long discussion, the two teachers compromised and said they would use the textbook as a main tool and incorporate some free composition exercises. They said they might try the new approach after they observed how Takahashi's writing class went. Thus, in April 2002, the teachers implemented different writing classes for 2nd-year students. Mori, an experienced teacher, reflected on those days:

> *To be honest, I didn't like the approach. Although I participated in the demonstration and received explanation from Takahashi afterward, I was at a loss about how to teach. Because I am a teacher, I want to teach students with confidence in my class. Then we had a meeting among us. We had to compromise. I mean I had to be in the middle between Takahashi and Kawai. Otherwise, I thought we would go our own ways and get nowhere. So I made effort little by little and tried to cooperate with other teachers. (second interview, March 2003)*

As a consequence, two types of class were introduced. Kawai and Mori mainly taught according to the textbook, with some inclusion of free writing. Takahashi told her students to do all the exercises in the textbook as homework. In class, she attempted the new approach and had students express their ideas by writing on a range of topics, from Three Things About Me! to Asking About Japan.

The students in advanced classes covered 10 topics and the students in general classes covered 7 topics following the 8 steps listed below:

1. introducing three questions about a topic
2. practicing conversation strategies
3. writing assignment (homework): (a) what you want to say, (b) vocabulary you want to use for this topic, and (c) three new questions you will ask in the next conversation
4. peer correction of the composition
5. timed conversation, changing partners (3-minute timed conversation and 2 minutes of summarizing) × 3 times
6. recording: record the timed conversation on tape

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[4] Although the new MEXT guidelines (2003) stipulate that "writing instruction is conducted more effectively by integrating writing activities with listening, speaking and reading activities" (p. 14), most teachers continued to ignore the guidelines and rely on the textbook with which they were familiar.

7. self-assessment (homework): (a) transcription of the recorded conversation, (b) self-assessment of the recorded conversation, and (c) setting a goal for the next conversation

8. writing assignment (homework): fun essay writing with pictures

For each topic, students were required to analyze their recorded conversation at home. After transcribing their recorded conversation, they answered the following self-assessment questions: (a) What were three things you said that you are proud of? (b) Find three mistakes you made and try to correct them. (c) What conversation strategies did you use? (d) What useful expressions did your partner say? (e) What advice can you give to your partner? and (f) What is your goal for the next conversation?

Takahashi gave a demonstration class in November and showed how much progress students had made since June. Other English teachers, two junior high school teachers, an inspector from the prefectural Board of Education, and Sato participated in the classroom observation. Students had 4-minute conversations and wrote a 15-sentence composition about a serious topic. After that, participants had a meeting at which divergent views were expressed. The inspector was impressed with the class and commented that this could be a model for communication-oriented English, which is the goal of the MEXT guidelines. However, toward the end of the meeting Kawai spoke up, and commented

I have been teaching the other half of the class that Takahashi taught today, relying on the textbook based on grammar translation method.

Then Kubo said

Why was our school assigned to do this project? How about higher level high schools? All they have to do is to prepare students for prestigious university entrance exams.

The inspector replied

The most important thing is to improve students' communication skills. We cannot ignore this goal. Teachers need to change their beliefs about English-language teaching.

After the demonstration lesson and meeting, other teachers (including those from other grades) attempted to use pair work in a positive way. For example, after practicing pair work, Mori tried recording conversations for the first time. Kawai also tried pair work for the first time and would sometimes ask Takahashi what the next topic would be and what kind of materials they would use. Little by little, Kawai and Mori began using innovative approaches. Kawai recalled what he did:

Well, I started to use a new approach, which would integrate writing and speaking in the second semester. I mainly used the textbook in the first semester because I was not sure of how to use new approaches. Anyway, when I saw students enjoying using English with their partners, I thought this might work well. Actually, I enjoyed teaching, too. Gradually, I got used to the new approaches and spent more time on free writing and speaking. (second interview, March 2003)

Takahashi's Episode 1: The Power of Portfolios

The following is Takahashi's first-person description of her writing class:

In the writing class for 2nd-year students, I asked the students to write a report assessing their portfolios at the end of the school year in March. When they looked over all the worksheets in their file, they noticed improvements. By reflecting on their learning history, students gained confidence.

However, slower learners seemed to make so little improvement that I often did not notice the improvement in class. For example, I was discouraged that the slower learners were unable to have 3-minute conversations, even in December, and to see them spending an entire period writing only 10 sentences. Thus, I didn't expect they could make improvements, and I began wondering whether this class was helping them learn. However, their semester reports showed that their speaking and writing skills did improve and that they had gained confidence in learning English. Some students wrote the following comments:

Hiromi: *It was very difficult or almost impossible to have a 2-minute conversation even in October. I didn't know how to keep a conversation going. It's still difficult to ask new questions but I came to use conversation strategies more and more. (third portfolio, February 2003)*

Ichiro: *I couldn't speak English at all in April, but now I can use the expression "How ya doin'?" to open a conversation, "How 'bout you?" to ask the same question, and "Nice talking with you!" to close a conversation. This is a big change for me. (third portfolio, February 2003)*

Kaori: *I didn't know any conversation strategies. But I now use the shadowing strategy, and it is very helpful to keep a conversation going. (third portfolio, February 2003)*

For the speaking test in December, most students in the general class failed to have a 3-minute conversation. I gave a speaking test three times a year after I had covered a couple of topics. Students prepared for all

topics but didn't know until the test started which topic they would have to talk about and who their partner would be. However, after writing their semester reports, the students gained confidence. I was surprised that for the speaking test in March, most students succeeded in having a 3-minute conversation.

Student Learning: The Pleasure of Communicating with Other Classmates

The 2nd-year students evaluated their own writing and speaking skills in October and February, comparing them with those from the previous April. (This included students in the other teachers' classes as well as students in Takahashi's classes.) These evaluations showed that students noticed their speaking and writing skills had improved by interacting during speaking and writing activities. For example, regarding writing skills activities (see Table B3, Appendix B), the percentage of students who said "I can hardly write what I want to say" decreased from 23% to 4% over 10 months, and the percentage who said "I can write what I want to say with grammatical mistakes" increased from 11% to 46%.

Regarding speaking skills, the survey asked students about timed, 2-minute conversations they had based on the writing assignments done as homework. They described what they wanted to say and the vocabulary they wanted to use and asked three questions. They were encouraged not to look at the writing assignment (the composition) when they had the timed conversation. The percentage of students who said "I can hardly speak" decreased from 32% to 5%. The percentage who said "I can speak without compositions" increased from 8% to 33% (see Table B4, Appendix B). For 3-minute conversations (Table B5, Appendix B), the percentage of students who said "I can speak using compositions" decreased from 61% to 36%, and the percentage of those who said "I can speak without composi-tions" increased from 19% to 40%.

In summary, students felt they had made progress in speaking and writing skills through continual self-assessment and by setting a specific goal for the conversation. Students initially wrote only five to six sentences about a topic and had a conversation for 2 minutes at the most. By the end of the semester, students in advanced classes could write approximately 20 sentences about a topic and had 4- to 5-minute conversations. In general classes, students wrote 10–15 sentences and had 3-minute conversations without looking at their compositions.

AFTER THE FIRST PROJECT: TEACHING ON THEIR OWN

When the next school year started in April 2003, the teachers finally met to talk about what they were going to do and how they were going to teach. In

a meeting, Takahashi proposed following Sato's advice that they continue to use the integrated approach and develop students' communication skills by using discussion and debate. Nonetheless, the teachers could not come to an agreement, mainly because some teachers thought it would be too difficult for their students. Another reason might have been that the teachers had never debated in English when they were students. Although the teachers finally agreed to use the book *Impact Topics* (Day & Yamanaka, 1999) instead of a MEXT-approved textbook, they disagreed about the speaking tests. Mori and Takahashi decided to try discussion and debate, whereas Kawai and Goto, a new teacher, preferred the more familiar individual presentations. The four 3rd-year teachers started to teach on their own and had little communication with other teachers.

Project 2 (2004 and 2005 School Years): Revitalizing the Curriculum Through Teacher Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

The second project started in April 2004. The high school was designated a model school because of its excellent English program and was assigned another 2-year project. This time, the prefectural Board of Education asked Sato to be an adviser. A report on the study was to be presented at a national conference for high school teachers of English in November 2005. First, there was a heated discussion among those in the English Department about whether they should accept the project. Many teachers were reluctant because they felt they were under pressure and that preparing for the conference presentation would take too much time. Then, four teachers, including Takahashi, volunteered and formed a team. Sato advised them to create a syllabus and have weekly meetings, which he attended. With the help of Sato, Takahashi made a syllabus and presented it at the meeting. The syllabus was modified and agreed on by the teachers. The next section reports what happened in 2004 when the four teachers began working together. The results were surprising.

THE FIRST YEAR: REVITALIZING 2ND-YEAR WRITING AS A TEAM

The Process of Revitalization: Sharing Ideas and Problems

The four teachers, including Takahashi, met several times before the school year started in April 2004, during which time they devised a plan. First, the teachers organized an orientation meeting for every class. They showed students a video created by recent graduates to introduce the new subject—

Writing. Before school, during the spring holidays in March, Takahashi asked two graduates to explain in Japanese what they had learned from her class and how they had prepared for it. Takahashi thought students would understand what these graduates said better than the teachers' explanations. In addition, teachers gave each student a syllabus written in Japanese. The syllabus included goals, topics to be covered, and assessment components as follows:

Goals

- Improve communication skills (focus on speaking and writing skills)
- Develop awareness about language learning

Objectives

- Enable students to have 3-minute conversations about daily topics
- Enable students to write 15 sentences about daily topics
- Enable students to be autonomous learners through peer editing, self-assessment, and portfolio assessment

Topics

- Three Things About Me!
- My Favorite Stories
- The Athens Olympics (Part 1)
- The Athens Olympics (Part 2)
- My Hometown
- The School Trip to Okinawa
- People I Admire

Assessment Components

- term examination (50%)
- speaking test (20%)
- fun essay (25%)
- portfolio (5%)

It was the first time teachers had given students a complete syllabus in an English class. Takahashi commented on it in her first interview:

Our new attempt is that we showed our students concrete goals of the class at the beginning of the year. Also, we explained the syllabus by using the video made by our graduates. I guess our students could have an overall picture about this class and were encouraged to see graduates as models. Moreover, they could recognize that all the students in the same grade will take the class using new approaches. (1st interview, September 2004)

The orientation meeting was successful in that all the teachers and students were put on the same track.

Next, based on Sato's request, teachers began holding weekly meetings. Sato asked Takahashi to arrange each teacher's timetable so that all four 2nd-year teachers could participate in the meeting. Because of their tight schedule, not all teachers willingly came to the meeting. Yet as time passed, the teachers began to appreciate having an opportunity to communicate with other teachers. At the meetings, the teachers shared their ideas and problems. In particular, around the beginning of the year, the three teachers who had just started to teach the new subject asked Takahashi and Sato many questions about how to teach and what to do next. Sato observed all four teachers' classes, videotaped part of each class, and showed the video to the teachers in the weekly meeting, reasoning that they could learn much better by watching other teachers' classes. One of them, Sugiura, made a comment in the meeting:

> *I really appreciate the opportunity to watch the video of other teachers' classes. I can learn a lot about how other teachers use the same activity in a bit different way. Every week I can learn something new in the meeting. (field notes, April 21, 2004)*

Sato also occasionally gave advice to teachers. For example, he advised teachers to create assessment criteria for the speaking test. Teachers sat together, watched a videotape of a few performances, and negotiated the criteria. This gave them the information they needed to develop rubrics. Table 4 shows the original rubric for the speaking tests, and Table 5 shows the modified version, which was created after a long discussion. At first, teachers had difficulty defining each criterion; however, they learned to develop their understanding and clarify the definition of each criterion in the end. For example, "Asking questions" in "Fluency" in Table 4 could be included in "Strategies," and "Spontaneity" in "Delivery" could be included in "Fluency." Also, the group decided that "Impression" was too subjective and thus deleted it when they modified the rubric (see Table 5). The revised version had a greater focus on criteria for communicative effectiveness and provided more detailed descriptors. In addition, allowing all students to achieve a mark other than zero in each category was less demoralizing for weaker students.

The weekly meeting offered many learning opportunities for teachers. As Sugiura commented, talking about teaching and teaching issues became the norm among these teachers. Moreover, they got together at other times when they felt a need, despite their busy schedules.

Finally, in addition to the required materials, teachers started to develop

Table 4. Rubric for the Speaking Test (July 2004)

Criteria	Total points	Description and rating
Fluency	8	• Asking questions (2, 1, 0) • Response rate (2, 1, 0) • Answer in more than two sentences (2, 1, 0) • Maintain a 2-minute conversation (2, 1, 0)
Accuracy	2	• Grammar (1, 0) • Pronunciation (1, 0)
Delivery	4	• Volume (2, 1, 0) • Spontaneity (not memorization) (2, 1, 0)
Strategies	4	• How ya doing? (1, 0) • Nice talking with you. (1, 0) • Shadowing (1, 0) • How about you? (1, 0)
Impression	2	• Impressive (2, 1, 0)

their own materials and to share them. For example, Kubo made a handout about the Athens Olympics, which included three quizzes. For the topic The School Trip to Okinawa, Sugiura created a handout to check the use of strategies. She was concerned that her students might not be able to use the conversation strategies she had taught, so she asked them to interview three students (using four questions) and circle the strategies they had used on a handout (see Figure 1).

For the topic People I Admire, Takahashi created a guessing game as a warm-up activity (see Figure 2).

In short, the teachers developed materials and shared them with other teachers. This allowed the teachers to learn from one another and to further develop the curriculum. Sugiura commented in her first interview:

I am glad that I could join this team. I think I could develop my teaching repertoire. Now I have many choices and can choose a suitable activity in the future. We shared our teaching experiences with one another. I really think we became open-minded and talked about many problems. In the past, we didn't share what we were doing. (1st interview, September 2004)

Takahashi's Episode 2: The Power of Peer Editing

The following is Takahashi's first-person description of how peer editing helped her students learn:

Table 5. Modified Version of the Rubric for the Speaking Test (December 2004)

Criteria	Total points	Description and rating
Fluency and content	10	(10) Be able to maintain 3-minute conversation fluently, with good content (7) Be able to maintain a 3-minute conversation with some silence, with adequate content (4) Be able to maintain a 3-minute conversation with some silence, with poor content (1) Be hardly able to maintain a 3-minute conversation with some long silences
Accuracy (grammar and pronunciation)	3	(3) Be able to communicate with accuracy (2) Be able to communicate with some errors (1) Communicate with many errors, using mainly key words
Delivery (volume and eye contact)	3	(3) Be able to speak with good volume and eye contact (2) Occasionally speak with adequate volume and eye contact (1) Be hardly able to speak with adequate volume and eye contact
Strategies (conversation strategies and follow-up questions)	4	(4) Be able to use many conversation strategies and follow-up questions (3) Be able to use some conversation strategies and follow-up questions (2) Use a few conversation strategies and follow-up questions (1) Be hardly able to use conversation strategies and follow-up questions

Figure 1. Conversation Strategies Handout

Communication Strategies
Me too./Me neither.
I see.
Oh, really?
Oh, yeah?

Questions
1. What did you eat in Okinawa?
2. What did you buy in Okinawa?
3. What was the most impressive place?
4. What else did you do?

Figure 2. People I Admire Guessing Game

Student A No. 1-2 A

1. Guessing Game
Ask many questions about a famous person and guess who he/she is!
*Let's try with your partner.

Name: J.K.Rowling
Occupation: Writer
"Harry Potter and the order of phoenix"

Name: Cho JiWoo (チェ・ジウ・99)
Occupation: actress
"Winter sonnet"

Name
Occupation:

Student B 1-2 B

1. Guessing Game
Ask questions about a famous person and guess who he/she is!
*Let's try with your partner.

Name: Hayao Miyazaki
Occupation: animator and director
"Spirited away" (千と千尋の神隠し)

Name: Takuma Sato
Occupation: Driver
F1 Debut: 03 Mar 2002

Name:
Occupation:

Sato advised us to try peer editing in a meeting. He demonstrated each step, and we started to try the technique in the classroom. I learned from my students that peer editing works well for slower learners, too. With the help of peers, students can deepen their ideas and are encouraged to rewrite their composition. What's more, they enjoy sharing their writings. For instance, after their 9-month study, students began writing and talk about a new topic, People I Admire, in January 2005. When a student in a general class, Hideki, finished writing about the topic, he had written only four sentences. To be honest, I was quite shocked to see his poor writing. Then it was time for peer editing. Students exchanged papers and began peer editing using the following four steps:

- *Step 1.* Read for 1 minute, and ask five questions to your partners about the topic. (Questions are given by teachers.)
- *Step 2.* Underline words and sentences and mark as ☆, more, or ?.

  ☆ = words and sentences you are impressed with

  more = words and sentences you want to know more about

  ? = words and sentences you don't understand
- *Step 3.* Write comments and questions about the content in your first language (Japanese).
- *Step 4.* Share the comments with your partner.

After the first peer editing, Hideki added three sentences to his composition. He tried to answer the questions from his peer (see Composition 1, Figure 3). Hideki and the others did two more peer-editing sessions with different students and were asked to rewrite their compositions at home. In the next class, I was surprised to find that Hideki's composition was longer (see Composition 2, Figure 4). He even brought to class a magazine that featured his fishing hero. After one more peer-editing and conversation activity with several different students, Hideki finished the final draft, which included pictures. He was very proud of the final product (Composition 3, Figure 4).

2–3. Takahashi's Episode 3: The Power of Conversation Strategies

The following is Takahashi's description of how conversation strategies helped her students develop their skills:

In Writing for 2nd-year students, students wrote and talked about a topic many times in class. Students had a 3- to 4-minute conversation with several different partners, an activity we called timed conversation. A final timed conversation was recorded on tape so that students could transcribe and analyze the conversation. To keep a conversation going, we introduced conversation strategies for every topic. Students practiced

Figure 3. Composition 1

After the first peer editing, he added these three sentences.

This is good. Do you go fishing? In what way is his casting good? Why do you like him? (English translation)

I'm not sure why you like him (English translation)

What aspect do you think is cool about him? (English translation)

Composition 1 (the first draft)

useful expressions such as "How 'bout you?", "Sounds great!", "Pardon me?", and "What does that mean?" They also practiced useful strategies such as how to shadow (echo) key words and ask follow-up questions.

Some students were quiet and rarely had conversations with classmates in their daily life. They did not have communication skills, even in their first language. Therefore, I often wondered whether they could improve their communication skills through timed conversation. I was also worried they could never enjoy timed conversation or any interactive activities in class. However, I learned that even quiet students enjoy having conversations as they learn to use more and more strategies.

Another benefit of the timed English conversations was that they made students more open-minded. I will tell how one quiet student (Ami) came to enjoy timed conversations.

In everyday situations, Ami would speak with only a few friends at school. At the beginning of the course, I saw that she often had a tense face and spoke in a low voice. The class required Ami to converse with several different partners, a situation she had never encountered. I felt sorry for Ami and did not expect her to enjoy the class. However, as Ami learned more and more conversation strategies, she came to enjoy the timed conversations. When Ami learned how to keep a conversation going in English, she found she could relax more during a conversation. After the third speaking test in February, she said to me excitedly, "This

Figure 4. Compositions 2 and 3

Composition 2 (the second draft)

Composition 3 (the final product)

was a test, but I really enjoyed having a conversation. I feel so happy."
She also wrote the following comments in her portfolios:

> *As I had timed conversations many times, I got used to having a conversation little by little. At first, I didn't know what to say, but I started to use "How 'bout you?" and shadowing during a conversation. Then gradually I could understand what my partner said. (1st portfolio, July 2004)*

> *Before the summer vacation, I just said what I had memorized. However, as I came to use conversation strategies such as "Me, too!", "Sounds good!", and shadowing, conversations became more natural. I'd like to practice asking follow-up questions more, and I will make effort to say something even if I don't know the right expressions. (second portfolio, December 2004)*

> *In April, I was very nervous when I had timed conversations. Today I had a speaking test and I was surprised to notice how much I relaxed and enjoyed having a conversation. I was happy because I could enjoy talking. I explained to my partner what I didn't understand and asked her to explain more. It was wonderful! I can manage a conversation if I practice a lot. (3rd portfolio, February, 2005)*

As Ami's transcription (see Figure 5) shows, she could maintain a 4-minute conversation by using conversation strategies (or communication strategies). This was completely different from using a memorized conversation because Ami could negotiate the meaning with her partner. The next section talks about how other students acquired these conversation strategies and thus improved their communication skills. The results support Sato's (2005) finding that developing learners' ability to use communication strategies leads to their overall acquisition of a second language.

Student Learning: Developing Confidence in Using English

Both teachers and students were unsure about what would happen in the Writing class. Yet, by the end of April, teachers began to see some positive results. Inagaki said in the meeting, "This approach is good because students are busy working on activities, and they have no time to sleep in class" (field notes, April 28, 2004).

As teachers became accustomed to this approach and began to see students enthusiastically engaging in activities, their confidence increased. Although there were ups and downs, students reflected on what they had learned in February 2005 and reported in their portfolios that they felt they had improved their writing and speaking skills.

Figure 5. Ami's Transcription and Fun Essay

Part of Ami's transcription	Ami's fun essay
Ami: Who do you admire? Maki: I admire Tabuse Yuta. Do you know him? *(follow-up question)* Ami: He is a basketball player. ---cut--- Maki: OK.OK But recently he...Tabuse laid off from Phoenix Suns. Ami: Laid off? *(Shadowing; Asking for clarification)* Maki: Ah...hmm...laid off....Now he can't play in the Phoenix Suns. So..... Ami: He leaves the team. *(using other words)* Maki: Yes! Yes! Ami: I see! Maki: So he is ....now he is free. He is waiting offer from another team in NBA. He is very small.	*MyHero* (handwritten essay)

Tomoko: *I wrote only five sentences in April, and it was difficult. Now I can write 10 sentences even if it takes a long time. And I now use a dictionary when I write! This is a big change for me! (3rd portfolio, February 2005)*

Satoshi: *We had a lot of timed conversations with different partners. After this conversation class, I managed to have a conversation for three minutes. It is important to have a lot of conversation practice. I also learned many expressions from my friends. (3rd portfolio, February 2005)*

Hiroko: *Conversations helped me write more about the topic, because I got more ideas during and after conversations. (3rd portfolio, February 2005)*

Student self-evaluation surveys conducted in October 2004 and February 2005 corroborated the results. In April, 58% (19% and 39%) of the students said they thought they could write fewer than five sentences about a topic and only 8% (6% and 2%) thought they could write 15 or more sentences. In contrast, in February, 8% (2% and 6%) reported they could

write fewer than 5 sentences, and 57% (29% and 28%) reported they could write 15 or more sentences (see Table B6, Appendix B). Regarding speaking skills (Tables B7–9, Appendix B), in April 77% (32% and 45%) of students said they thought they could not maintain a 2-minute conversation without compositions. Only 2% thought they could speak for 2 minutes without looking at a written paper. In contrast, in February, 13% (2% and 11%) reported they could not maintain a 2-minute conversation without compositions, and 87% (34% and 30% and 23%) reported they could keep talking for 2 minutes without compositions. In February, 84% (40% and 32% and 12%) of students reported that they could have a 3-minute conversation without compositions. Of students in the advanced classes, 89% (48% and 23% and 18%) reported they could maintain a 4-minute conversation without compositions. In 2002, only 58% (40% and 15% and 3%, see Table B5) of students reported that they could achieve a 3-minute conversation without compositions. By 2004, there was a 26% increase in the number of students who could do so. In an interview, Takahashi commented why most students achieved the goal:

A good thing about this year is that we established goals and objectives and showed them to our students in April. Also we used the videos of speaking tests and written materials of our previous students two years ago. Our students were encouraged by the good models. Moreover, teachers collaborated more and held weekly meetings, which we could not do two years ago. As a result, students in all six classes worked toward the same goals. That made a difference, I think. (1st interview, September 2004)

Another teacher, Inagaki, said that students in her class were impressed with the fun essays displayed on the wall that Takahashi's students had written.

When they wrote about the Olympic games, they wrote more than I had expected. Moreover, they were influenced by students in other classes. For example, some boys wrote using only a pencil at first. Then, after they saw other students' work displayed on the wall, they started to write with colored pens and add pictures. I was impressed with how all the classes were involved in this project. (1st interview, September 2004)

In short, teacher collaboration resulted in better student outcomes. Compared with the first project, Takahashi felt that all six classes worked toward the same goals. Successful teaching experiences encouraged teachers. Kubo, a senior teacher, reflected on his experience in that year:

To be honest, I was really surprised to know this kind of teaching approach exists. I will retire in three more years. But, I really had a great experience this year. If I had studied English with this kind of approach as a high school student, I would have improved my communication skills. I had been teaching English based on a traditional approach for over 30 years. Therefore, it was an eye-opener for me. (second interview, March 2005)

The following section describes how three teachers continued to teach in 2005.

The Second Year: Challenging Discussion and Debate

Takahashi and two other teachers, Inagaki and Kubo, continued teaching the 3rd-year students and formed a team. With Sato's advice, they set goals to further improve students' communication skills. As they did the previous year, they developed a syllabus and showed it to students at the beginning of their Writing class. The syllabus was as follows:

Goals

- Improve communication skills (focus on speaking and writing skills)
- Develop awareness about language learning

Objectives

- Enable students to have 4-minute discussions about social topics
- Enable students to write a five-paragraph essay about social topics
- Enable students to think logically and express their opinions in a debate
- Enable students to be autonomous learners through peer editing, self-assessment, and portfolio assessment

Topics (from Impact Topics, Day & Yamanaka, 1999)

- I Can't Stop (Unit 4; discussion)
- My Pet Peeves (Unit 19; discussion)
- Smoking (Unit 3)
- Living Together Before Marriage (Unit 10; debate)
- English Should be a Second Official Language in Japan (Lesson 7; English and the Filipinos, from the textbook in English Reading class; debate)
- Cosmetic Surgery (from Impact Issues, Day & Yamanaka, 1998; debate)
- Cyber Love (Unit 8; debate)

Assessment Components

- term examination (40%)
- assignments (15%)
- speaking test (20%)
- fun essay (20%)
- portfolio (5%)

Furthermore, Sato advised teachers to use a video camera instead of a tape recorder so that students could see how they interacted with their partners. On recording days, students brought their own videotapes and watched them after recording for self-evaluation. As students became accustomed to discussions, they began learning how to debate in July, according to the syllabus. This was another challenge to teachers because they had never held a debate in class. Yet these teachers, with Sato's help, practiced debating, made a videotape, and showed it to their students in class. Takahashi tried a debate in her class (see Appendix A for sample handouts). Although the debates had not been very successful 2 years previously, they worked well this time. Takahashi talked about debates in her first interview in 2005:

> I tried a debate in my class. It was successful, and I have learned a lot about debate. When I tried it two years ago, it did not work. Since then I have learned what skills are necessary for debate. Following Sato's advice, we had our students practice summarizing what their partner said. Also, students were encouraged to use conversation strategies when they could not understand what their partner had said. I could understand that this kind of practice led students to successful debate. (1st interview, September 2005)

In November 2005, Takahashi presented the results of the two projects at a national conference for high school teachers of English, which more than 3,000 teachers and teacher educators attended. The other teachers helped Takahashi prepare for the presentation. Educators evaluated the projects very hightly, and the teachers gained confidence in curriculum revitalization at their school. Inagaki commented on the presentation,

> To be honest, before the conference, I did not clearly understand what we had been doing. I guess other grade level teachers did not understand, either. However, as we reflected on what we had done over five years, we could confirm the significance of the projects and some achievements we had made. (second interview, February 2006)

Conclusion

This chapter has described how teachers in an English department in a Japanese high school struggled with projects implemented by the prefectural government and overcame difficulties to revitalize their curriculum. The teachers were forced to work on curriculum revitalization based on top-down initiatives, and they often resisted and struggled with the projects. Yet, stimulated by the outside support of a university teacher, they began collaborating and striving to meet the same goals, particularly during the second project. The more they worked together, the more successful their teaching practices were. As the benefits of the teachers' efforts were confirmed by improved student outcomes, the teachers began to develop materials and share them with one another. They generated many teacher-learning opportunities within the context of their school as they worked on their curriculum revitalization as a team.

Throughout the first project, the teaching culture of the school was typical of the culture in other schools. Teachers resisted new approaches; low-ered their expectations, especially in general classes; and avoided discussing teaching issues. As Kubo said, quoted earlier in our chapter, most teachers thought they could continue to teach based on traditional approaches, as done in other high schools. Moreover, they reported in their interviews that teachers of other subjects in their high school expected the English teachers to place more emphasis on examination-oriented English. Without suf-ficient communication and evaluation of the project, they might easily have gone back to their routine practices.

Yet, the teachers gradually began to take risks. They also changed their teaching practices and assessment strategies, communicated more about teaching, and moved away from the textbook. Through these activities, the teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning evolved (see Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999), and this had the potential to affect the culture of the school (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). In particular, by changing how they performed assessments and developing coherent assessment criteria, teach-ers develop new and effective practices (see Sato & Takahashi, 2003). Falk (2001) affirms that "[i]nvolving teachers in scoring students' responses to large-scale standard-based performance tests offers rich opportunities to enhance teacher learning" (p. 127).

In the second 2-year project (2004 and 2005 school years), four teachers formed a team. They discussed goals and objectives and created a syllabus, which they gave their students at the beginning of the school year. Moreover, they spent 1 hour per week meeting together. The regular meeting became a place not only for asking questions about practices, but also for sharing their teaching ideas and materials. As Sugiura reported, the

weekly meetings created learning opportunities within the school context that were grounded in their daily practices. As a consequence, all teachers and students began working toward the same goals. To the surprise of the teachers, the student self-evaluation survey indicated much better outcomes than 2 years previously. These teachers gained confidence in the curriculum revitalization they had been working on as they confirmed better student outcomes. The teacher learning influenced student learning, and vice versa (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Sato & Takahashi, 2003).

Nonetheless, the teachers talked about the difficulties they faced. Above all, they stated time and again that they lacked time for communication. They discovered that one weekly meeting was not enough. For example, they could not afford time to talk about other English classes (English II or Reading), although they had agreed to improve these classes through the integration of language skills. Thus, horizontal articulation (between different English classes in the same grade) remains weak compared with vertical articulation. Fortunately, Sugiura became a leader for the three 2nd-year teachers and has continued to use the same approach in the Writing class, modifying some materials.

We conclude with a number of questions. How can these teachers continue to develop their curriculum after the project is over? How can a university teacher collaborate more with schoolteachers on curriculum development? How can teachers continue to communicate and collaborate with one another, discuss teaching issues, evaluate programs, and set up new goals? How can they involve other teachers in making a thorough 3-year curriculum? How can they generate more learning opportunities in their workplace and empower themselves to be lifelong learners? We believe the answers lie in continuing teacher development through reflective development of practice. As this chapter describes, the teachers transformed their workplace into a site for inquiry as they struggled, went through conflict, agreed and disagreed with one another, and tried new practices little by little (see Ball & Cohen, 1999). In other words, they began helping to transform their school from one with a weak teaching culture into one that is a learning organization or a "community of practice" (Murphey & Sato, 2005; Wenger, 1998) as they carried out their curriculum revitalization simultaneously with their own professional development.

WORKSHEET WRITING (THREE REASONS)

How to Summarize

Directions: You will explain three reasons in two minutes. Your partner will summarize your points. Then, change roles.

A: How ya doing?

B: I'm OK. How about you?

A: I'm pretty good. Let's talk about smoking. I am for smoking for three reasons.
First, _____ Second, _____
Third, _____ For these three reasons, I am for smoking.

B: Let me summarize what you said. You are for smoking for three reasons.
First, _____ Second, _____
Third, _____ For these three reasons, you are for smoking.

A: That's right. How about you?

B: I'm against smoking for three reasons. First, _____
Second, _____ Third, _____
For these three reasons, I am against smoking.

A: Let me summarize what you said.
_____

Let's Try Ping Pong Debate

Smoking

For | Against

We are for smoking for 3 reasons.
First, _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are against smoking because _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are for smoking because _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are against smoking because _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are for smoking because _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are against smoking because _____

You said, " _____ ",
But we are for smoking

Let me summarize what we said. We are for smoking for 3 reasons.
First, _____
Second, _____
Third, _____
For these 3 reasons, we are for smoking.

Let me summarize what we said. We are against smoking for 3 reasons.
First, _____
Second, _____
Third, _____
For these 3 reasons, we are against smoking.

Conversation strategies
Could you say it again, please?
Could you say the second reason again, please?
Shadowing

Worksheet

■ S m o k i n g ■

I am against smoking for three reasons.
First, smoking is bad for our health.
Smokers will get lung cancer.
If children and expectant mother breathe smell of smoke,
they are injured by smell of smoke.
For example, smoking has bad influence on children and baby in the womb.
Second-hand smoke is more dangerous.
If smokers are smoking in a restaurant when I eat, smoking bothers me.

Second, many smokers throw cigarette butts on the street.
Cigarette butts make the street very dirty.
Cigarette butts give trouble to other people.
It's too dirty.
One day, I find cigarette butts beside my house.
If the fires don't go out, my house will be dangerous.
I'm very afraid.

Third, smokers are waste of money.
Smokers spend a lot of money on cigarette.
Cigarette is expensive.

For these three reasons, I am against smoking.

Appendix B: Student Evaluation Results

Table B1. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 2001 Data From 209 First-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak a little using a script (%)	I can speak aloud without any script (%)	I can speak using gestures without any script (%)	I can speak with emotion without any script (%)
April	19	59	17	4	1
October	5	40	30	23	2
February	1	38	29	31	1

Table B2. Listening Skills Evaluation, 2001 Data From 209 First-Year Students

Month	I can hardly understand (%)	I can understand a little (%)	I can understand half of the class (%)	I can understand most of the class (%)	I can understand everything (%)
April	28	41	22	10	0
October	12	35	33	20	0
February	4	25	39	30	1

Table B3. Writing Skills Evaluation, 2002 Data From 197 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly write what I want to say (%)	I can write a little of what I want to say (%)	I can write half of what I want to say (%)	I can write most of what I want to say with grammatical mistakes (%)	I can write most of what I want to say without any grammatical mistakes (%)
April	23	45	21	11	0
October	7	28	27	36	2
February	4	21	28	46	1

Table B4. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 2-Minute Conversation, 2002 Data From 197 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak using compositions (%)	I can speak without any compositions (%)	I can speak aloud without any compositions (%)	I can speak with emotion without any compositions (%)
October	32	58	8	2	0
February	5	42	33	18	2

Table B5. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 3-Minute Conversation, 2002 Data From 197 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak using compositions (%)	I can speak without compositions (%)	I can speak aloud without any compositions (%)	I can speak with emotion without any compositions (%)
October	13	61	19	6	1
February	7	36	40	15	3

Table B6. Writing Skills Evaluation, 2004 Data From 193 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly write (%)	I can write 5 sentences about a topic (%)	I can write 10 sentences about a topic (%)	I can write 15 sentences about a topic (%)	I can write more than 15 sentences about a topic (%)
April	19	39	33	6	2
October	8	20	36	25	11
February	2	6	35	29	28

Table B7. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 2-Minute Conversation, 2004 Data From 193 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak using compositions (%)	I can speak without any compositions (%)	I can speak aloud without any compositions (%)	I can speak with emotion without any compositions (%)
April	32	45	20	2	0
October	5	33	50	11	0
February	2	11	34	30	23

Table B8. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 3-Minute Conversation, 2004 Data From 193 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak using compositions (%)	I can speak without any compositions (%)	I can speak aloud without any compositions (%)	I can speak with emotion without any compositions (%)
February	3	13	40	32	12

Table B9. Speaking Skills Evaluation, 4-Minute Conversation in the Advanced Class, 2004 Data From 38 Second-Year Students

Month	I can hardly speak (%)	I can speak using compositions (%)	I can speak without any compositions (%)	I can speak aloud without any compositions (%)	I can speak with emotion without any compositions (%)
February	0	11	48	23	18