

An Analysis of the Effect of Student-Teacher Interactive Written Dialogue on Autonomous Learning in a Media Production Studies Class

Asami Tominaga^{* 1} and Norio Hozaki^{* 2}

^{* 1} Institute of Information and Media, Aoyama Gakuin University

^{* 2} Waseda University

授業リフレクションシートにおいて大学生と教員が主体的に行う対話的な文字コミュニケーションの分析

富永 麻美^{* 1} 保崎 則雄^{* 2}

^{* 1} 青山学院大学情報メディアセンター ^{* 2} 早稲田大学

Abstract: One important task teachers encounter in teaching is enhancing and motivating students' attitudes toward situation-targeted writing proficiency. In this study we clarify how effectively a writing activity could be embedded on the reflection sheet (RS) in a Media Production Studies (MPS) class, with the premise that moderately-targeted writing activity encourages students to write more freely. In the RS of MPS students, both personal and academic writing in either or both Japanese and English was exchanged in an evaluation-free dialog between the students and the instructor. Qualitative analysis of the course evaluation of thirty-nine college students revealed the following: 1) most students were satisfied with evaluation-free writing and became more active in writing, 2) the RS written in a pressure-free situation lead to students' autonomously writing their opinions to the instructor like a dialog, 3) the instructor's formal and informal and hand-written quick responses were highly appreciated and stimulated learning, and 4) writing the RS motivated students to learn the class contents. Possible problems regarding putting personal writing into academic writing: the debate between personal writing and academic writing, as well as evaluation of the writing activities are discussed by referring to the students' responses as well as course evaluation conducted at the end of semester.

Keywords: reflective writing, Activity Theory, autonomous learning, hand-writing, quick response, Japanese-English interactive dialog

1. Introduction

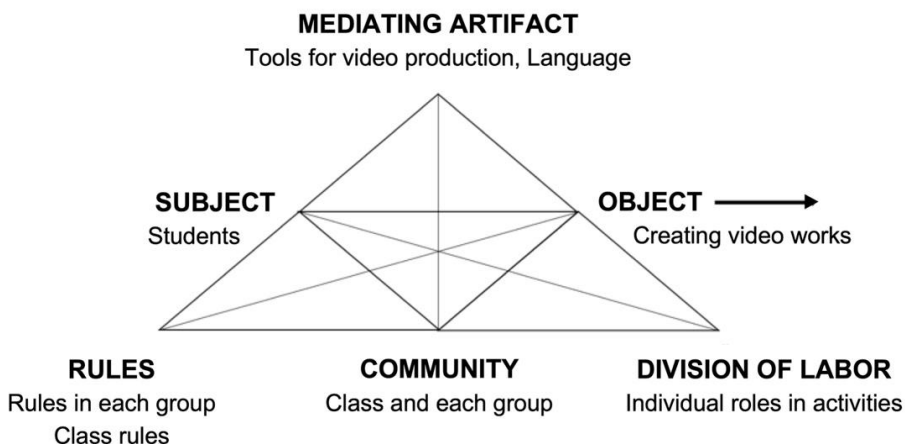
1.1 Problem Statement

What are practical reasons why many college students are not very proactive toward writing activities, regardless of whether it's in Japanese or English? Students might naturally feel they are required to write on class content only. Frequency and/or deepness of written interaction may offer a solution, and meaningful student – teacher communication might be another solution. Additionally, superficially meaningless-looking communication like casual writing or small talk might actually help the learner to write more effectively.

How can we create unforced-writing situations to develop language skills, as well as learning content in each disciplinary area? What kind of learning situations, which include unforced-writing activities as naturally as possible, can we create so students discuss class-related topics actively? Could the concept of the traditional instructional design (ID) help to create such class instruction? There are arguments both for and against because in the main the fundamental concept of ID does not get into each disciplinary area of study, especially at the college level. In response to this challenge, we considered re-organizing the class teaching-learning system itself, using a Media Production Studies (MPS) class as a test case. A class system like English-Medium Instruction (EMI) may be a good fit, and is introduced in the present study. The fundamental concept of EMI also meshes effectively with the activity theory (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Meditational Triangle (after Engeström) to Include Rules, Community, and Division of Labor



Note. Based on “A cultural-historical approach to distributed cognition” by M. Cole & Y. Engeström, 1993, *Distributed Cognitions*, p. 8. The authors further added words applied in MPS. From “Transformation of College Student Attitude and Consciousness in Collaborative Work Experience in Synchronized Online Media-Production Class” by A. Tominaga & N. Hozaki, 2023, *Waseda Journal of Human Sciences*, 36(1), p. 17.

Figure 1 depicts how writing activities are embedded in students' learning of media production as well as media theories in MPS. "To mediate" is the key concept in this learning model of the activity theory. The original learning model of the triangle was developed by developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky in the early 1900s. His original model has been revised and modified several times with various factors in social context by many researchers over a long period of time. Engeström, the third-generation activity theory researcher, has expanded and modified the model as in Figure 1 (Cole & Engeström, 1993; Yamazumi, 2008). Regarding what students do in MPS, the mediating artifacts such as community, rules, and working in groups, as well as the English language, which is the instructional language in class, enhances their learning. Learning something through the use of a tool or media, including a language, enhances learning under the advanced activity theory (Engeström, 1999).

One educational practice is introduced in the present study related to enhancing writing skills in EMI. Through this practice it is posited that an active attitude toward writing either in L1 or L2 will be developed. An important fact is the MPS class introduced here is not categorized as an English class, but a content or *senmon* class (専門科目) in the curriculum. The activity theory and the concept of EMI constitute the basic theoretical background of the present practice.

Another important aspect to encourage students to write more actively and independently would be to set up an evaluation-free situation within class learning activities. Learning, by itself, is an active behavior if it does not occur as a counter part of being taught. The key point is whether teachers can commit to work on evaluation-free activities in which teachers are required to spend some extra time and effort, adding to the class teaching load.

Can evaluation-free activities be closely enough related to meaningful class content in students' overall learning? It would be possible to learn academic theories about media production and to write many opinions on the reflection sheet (RS) based on what is learned in each class, which embodies evaluation-free interactive written dialogs. Can a teacher not only provide but actually participate in students' evaluation-free writing activities which are generally a requirement in more or less almost all college classes? Is grading or evaluation the sole purpose of class teaching in our job? Classes are taught FTF (Face-To-Face) or online, evaluation vs. evaluation-free, with students enjoying writing and interactive dialog. Not all these approaches necessarily fit together well, but they could work together more effectively and flexibly.

1.2 Literature Review

Reflection in learning is a purposive activity directed toward a goal in a teaching-learning situation (Boud et al., 1985). Boud et al. (1985) point out that we process an enormous amount of information when we learn something new, and we also overcome attitudes and emotions which might affect our understanding (Boud et al., 1985). In class, students advance toward understanding the objectives more effectively by relating what they have already obtained with newly learned

concepts and acquired experiences (Boud et al., 1985). One aspect, reflection, is background or retrospective learning. Various reflection methods have been developed and theorized, with one of them being individual writing. When reflecting on their own learning through writing, the most important aspect for students is that they can clearly recognize what they actually experienced in their learning process through excluding subjective judgmental feelings (Walker, 1985). Walker (1985) further discusses the idea that “whatever feelings are observed can be the basis of reflection that can lead to a deeper appreciation of the learning process and of the learner's way of experiencing” (p. 64). Considering these points on reflection in the initial learning, it is important for learners to write down both their experiences and their own opinions and feelings as is done in the case of MPS of the present study.

Additionally, Boud et al. (1985) point out that attitudes and emotions generated inside the students may distort cognition, lead to a misinterpretation of events, and damage sustainable will. External assistance and participation might occasionally be required for the students to proceed in a positive manner with reflection. In the field of language studies, how to enhance students' motivation in class activities has been focused on and researched. Dörnyei (2001) advocates an important strategy related to appropriate teacher behavior, which involves elaborately developing a personal relationship with students. He indicated exactly how teachers could create a good relationship with students in the following three fundamental bases: (1) teachers show students that they accept and care about them, (2) teachers pay attention and listen to each of their students, (3) teachers indicate their mental and physical availability. The third base could be embodied in the process of the teacher providing some extra time or some ways to talk with students and facilitating two-way access channels so students and the teacher can communicate flexibly. If the academic and casual communication within and outside class about how the students learn the materials introduced in class could be maintained continuously, this would promote learning. The concept of the instructor's working on the RS would also eventually bring out students' tacit knowledge and hidden ideas. Dörnyei (2001) continues, saying that the friendly relationship between the teacher and the students will be developed effectively and meaningfully, and the students are well motivated if the teacher's positive attitude is transferred to students by quality functioning of the above three bases. Teachers can sometimes participate in various ways to assist students. The point here is how teachers honestly and quickly notice, accept and appropriately respond to students' individual voices.

Other related research is found in the field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and media theory class. It suggests how to develop good and effective relationships with students, which in turn leads toward important students' learning (Baba, 2012; Hozaki, 2023). Baba (2012) analyzed the content of the messages that students sent to the teacher by the RS in college EFL class. The analysis revealed that students frankly wrote comments and questions about unclear points on English grammar. They also made requests about contents showing that they would like

the instructor's explanations in class. Additionally, the students more often wrote about personal matters, such as their motivation to attend class and recent events that had happened on the way to university and this response continued all through the semester (Baba, 2012). The RS, with teacher's comments to students' messages and questions, was returned to each student in the following class. The results of this analysis and observation suggests that the use of the RS would generate active interaction and build better relationships between the instructor and students in class, which in turn could lead to creating better classes. Hozaki (2023) also used the submission-free and non-evaluated RS to communicate effectively with students. He developed his own RS and replied with his hand-written interactive comments by paying attention to students' comments on any topics as well as their understanding of the content of media theory class. This activity was implemented online after class and the instructor returned a quick feedback within two or three days after class by a mail-attached PDF message. Hozaki (2023) found continuing the RS stimulates students' active learning. The difference between Baba's (2012) and Hozaki's (2023) studies is that the RS was counted toward the final grade in Baba's study but not in Hozaki's. Interestingly, both Baba's (2012) and Hozaki's (2023) studies were consistent in their finding that students' writing covered more personal topics as the class went on.

Some outside intervention including teachers' attitude is sometimes necessary to assist individual students in making their reflection advance in a positive way. In both studies, students wrote freely about what they felt and thought. Knights (1985) claims that most students would not be confident of their capacity of thinking and are afraid of being knocked back or laughed at. She also points out that this makes students reluctant to participate in collaborative group discussion and individual reflection. Students' individual communication with the instructor by means of the RS would be appropriate to encourage students' positive participation in class. The rule of writing freely and equally should also be guaranteed so students can concentrate on writing about any topic without any interruption by others (Knights, 1985).

A series of research on academic writing has also been conducted, to be contrasted with personal writing mainly in the U.S.A., where the importance of academic writing has been emphasized in the college curriculum. The debate between Elbow insisting on the meaningfulness of personal writing and Bartholomae insisting on the importance of academic writing needs to be briefly touched upon. Mlynarczyk (2006) compiled and summarized both characteristics in writing studies in Table 1 below.

Table 1*Comparison of Personal and Academic Writing*

	Elbow	Bartholomae
Writing	Privileges [personal] writing	Privileges academic writing
Reading	Uses the students' own writing as the key text (class magazine)	Emphasizes critical reading of key texts
Students	Sees students as individuals	Sees students within a social context
Teachers	Sees teacher as "coach," not "test evaluator" (Elbow's metaphors) Feels teacher should get students to "trust language" (be comfortable) Feels teacher should encourage students' "credulity"	Sees teacher as "manager," not "frontier guide" (Bartholomae's metaphors) Feels teacher should get students to "distrust language" (be critical) Feels teacher should encourage students' "skepticism"

Note. Adapted from "Personal and Academic Writing" by R. W. Mlynarczyk, 2006, *Journal of Basic Writing*, 25 (1), p. 10.

As can be seen in Table 1 above, students write freely in their own words and without any pressure mainly in personal writing. In academic writing, contrastively, students write to acquire and learn skills to write academic and formal content. Could the same RS encourage both kinds of writing, personal and academic, when it is elaborately made and interactively implemented?

Related to the personal versus academic writing debate, Tani (2021) conducted research on the cross-genre thinking transformation from personal writing to academic writing. She concluded the transformation is possible if enough time is given and students reflect on their writing effectively and systematically. Analysis of the developed TEM (Trajectory Equifinality Model) based on the interviews with students' actual writing, clarified each five EFP (Equifinality Point) based on the students' experiences (Tani, 2021). She also confirmed students' perspective toward writing changed gradually from the first stage of reluctance to writing to the fifth and final stage of self-realization. The participation of the instructor in the process of students' writing, however, was not included in her research, whereas the instructor's and students' active and interactive participation was significantly meaningful in the present study.

Another aspect of writing studies, different recognition of typing or hand-writing, has been researched by Terada and Hozaki (2018). Their research was conducted with college students and people who have jobs and learn online. The researchers focused on the image of hand-written Japanese kanji characters and compared typing with handwriting. Analyses clarified several interesting characteristics of the image of hand-written Japanese compared with typed Japanese

(Terada & Hozaki, 2018). One was that those seeing hand-written characters felt that the characters conveyed the writer's positive feeling or sincerity. Another was that the nature of written characters created an affective mood (Terada & Hozaki, 2018). These findings indicate that students view the hand-written message positively when compared to typing along with the content of the message in the case of class.

Communicative dialog through wiring the RS would be effective in classes that require collaborative or groupwork, such as the MPS of the present study. The students can also have ample time to understand the contents and to consolidate ideas in working on the RS as they are well motivated by communicating with the instructor. The previous research shows that the cycle of student writing and receiving the RS in class, along with teachers' returning comments, might be effective in triggering students' reflection in learning. The manner of the teacher's comment-writing may also affect learning. The present practical research followed a similar research frame to Hozaki's (2023) in media communication class, and was conducted as a replicate study with different students from different classes in 2022 and 2023 in addition to those in the MPS class of 2021 (Hozaki & Tominaga, 2023).

The purpose of this study is the following:

- 1) Which situation is the most comfortable for students to communicate in (in class, in group or on the RS) and why is it so?
- 2) How did participating in writing the RS affect students' learning?
- 3) How do students feel about and evaluate the interactive written dialog on the RS throughout the semester?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

A total of forty-five college students (freshmen to seniors) taking the MPS class at the School of Human Sciences of Waseda University in the Autumn semester, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

2.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Data for this study was collected by using the course evaluation that was implemented at the end of Autumn semester. Two groups of questions were implemented, Part A and B in the class evaluation as follows:

- Part A: general course evaluation asking about student participation, instructor's teaching, class materials, class system, and class environment
- Part B: eleven questions to ask how students evaluate the system of the RS - No respondent's name was required.

Only all the responses from Part B (Figure 2) were analyzed for the present practical study. Part B is composed of the following types of questions:

- Q1: answered YES or NO
- Q2 - Q6: responded on a Likert scale; 1. Not at all - 5. Very much
- Q7: multiple choice from three options with the reason for the choice
- Q8 - Q11: free answer

The other kind of data, the RS, was given after each class session online on the Learning Management System of the university. The RS was submission-free and non-evaluation. A few students preferred the paper version of the RS. The RS asked only two questions written in both English and Japanese as follows:

- Q1: What did you notice and/or learn in today's class? (今日の授業で何に気づき、学んだと思いますか。)
- Q2: Any comments or questions? (疑問に思ったこと、伝えたいことなどを書きましょう。)

The instructor wrote hand-written responses to all RSs and returned them to each student within two or three days as a mail-attached PDF. A sample RS written by a student with the instructor's comments is attached at the end of the article in the Appendix.

Figure 2*Part B of the Course Evaluation*

MPS's Course Evaluation - Part B: Reflection sheet					
1. I knew that writing the RS was not counted toward class grade.	Yes / No				
	Not at all			Very much	
2. Writing the RS was helpful to understand class content.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I wrote the RS for no particular reason.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I enjoyed writing the RS.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Feedback to my writing the RS was unnecessary.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I want the RS to be continued in MPS.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The easiest way to express my opinion was ().	① in class discussion ② in group discussion ③ on the reflection sheet				
(Reason: _____)					
8. What did it mean to you to write the RSs in MPS?					
9. What did you think about receiving hand-written responses from the instructor on your RSs?					
10. Did you feel like responding to the instructor's comments on your RSs?					
11. Any other comments?					

2.3 Data Analysis

Forty-one students returned the course evaluation, all of whom agreed to have their responses analyzed and used for research purposes. Of those who submitted, thirty-seven students completed Q1 - Q6 and thirty-nine students completed Q7 - Q9.

In this study, Q1 to Q 9 related directly to the purpose of the study and were the subject of analysis. The distribution was calculated in Q1 through Q7 and the comprehensive tendency of the responses to each question was confirmed. Data in Q7 through Q9 were analyzed qualitatively based on structuring qualitative content analysis (Structuring QCA).

A note on Structuring QCA: “while structuring QCA is usually used to structure the material according to topics and themes, the evaluative strategy allows the researcher to assess segments of

the data that are relevant to specific research questions” (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023, p. 98). There are seven phases of Structure QCA as follows:

1. Initial work with the text: read, write memos and case summaries
2. Develop main categories
3. Code data with main categories (1st coding cycle)
4. Develop sub-categories inductively
5. Code data with sub-categories (2nd coding cycle)
6. Simple and complex analyses
7. Write up results, document process

Detailed steps of the analysis procedure for each question are explained below.

First, to confirm whether the evaluation-free and submission-free condition influenced the submission rate of the RS, we, the present researchers checked the number of YES and NO answers to Q1 and the submission rate of the RS in the semester.

Next, we created histograms for each item of Q2 - Q6, and from the results confirmed the students' awareness of writing the RS under evaluation-free and submission-free conditions in MPS class.

Third, we calculated the number of the responses in Q7 chosen for each option - (1), (2), or (3) (see Figure 2). The free-text answer of “Reason” in the latter half of Q7 was also analyzed by using Structuring QCA to confirm what students perceived as “an easy situation in which to express opinions” in each situation of (1), (2), or (3). We inductively created main and sub-categories by reading the free-text answer based on the findings of the previous studies. In the process of analysis, there were some written contents that were difficult to summarize into categories. Therefore, only categories developed by using the written data of two or more students were used for this analysis in order to eliminate personal preferences as much as possible.

Fourth, the free-text answers in Q8 were analyzed by using Structuring QCA procedure to confirm the meaning of writing the RS from students' perspectives.

Finally, the free-text answers in Q9 were analyzed using Structuring QCA procedure. We confirmed the effects of receiving hand-written comments from the instructor. The analysis was then continued to confirm the factors behind these effects.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Submission Rate of RS

The mean ratio of the RS submission for all the forty-five students all through the semester was approximately 70%. Also, 78.38% of the students knew the RS was evaluation-free, while 21.63% did not know. In fact, there were several students who submitted the RS every week. Many students

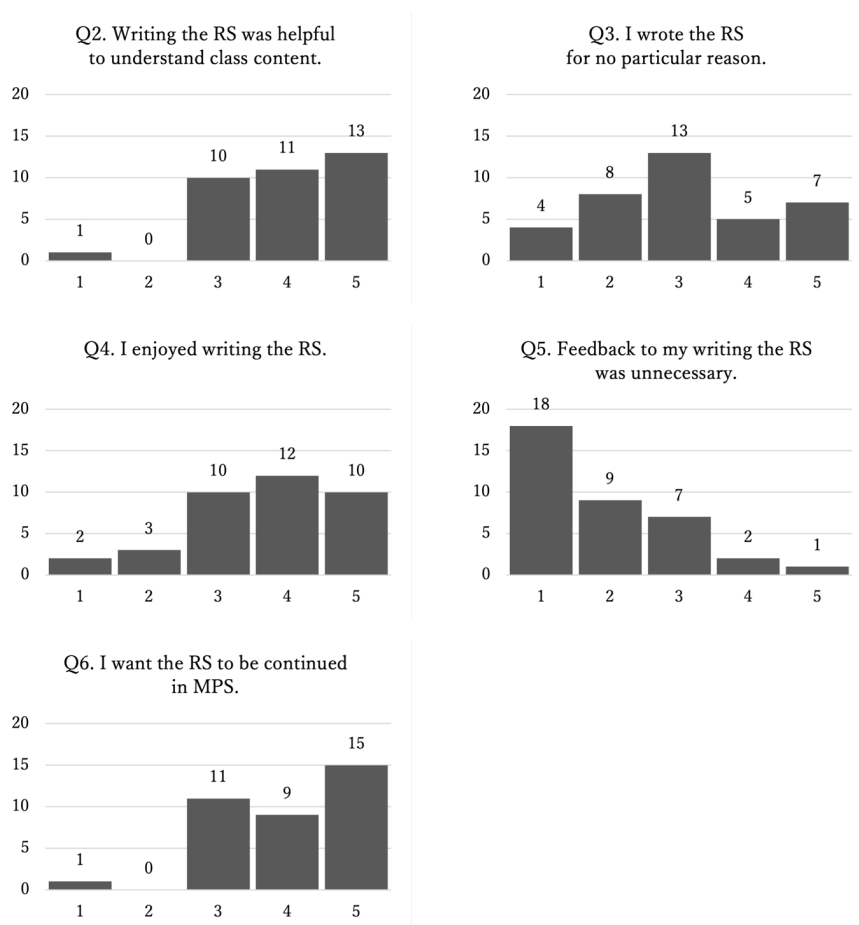
were proactive in writing the RS on an evaluation-free and also submission-free basis.

3.2 Students' Awareness of Writing the RS (Q2 - Q6)

Figure 3 shows the histograms of the five questions Q2 - Q6 by the Likert scale. The responses to Q2 were almost evenly distributed between 3 and 5, indicating that writing the RS was highly helpful for students in understanding the contents of the class. The responses to Q4 indicate that the students enjoyed writing the RS. These results show that students recognized that the RS allowed them to reflect on class and deepen their understanding of the class contents. They also enjoyed writing the RS. The students would also like the RS to be continued as a class activity because the time factor was on the student side in this activity. Another point to note is that in responses to Q5, about a half of the students chose 1 (necessary) and a total of over 70% of students chose 1 or 2 (necessary). It can be assumed that feedback from the instructor on the RS was useful for the students, both to reflect on class and to learn the contents.

Figure 3

Distributions of Responses on the Likert Scale (n=37)



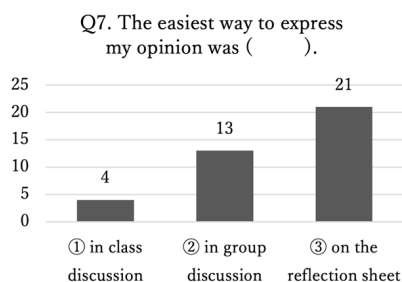
3.3 Easiest Way to Express Opinions in Class (Q7)

The following categorization was carried out from questions 7, 8 and 9.

Figure 4 shows 21 out of 39 students felt comfortable with the RS communication. Thirteen students felt comfortable in-group communication. Only four students chose in-class communication. Only one student answered “All,” and was excluded from the analysis. Most of the students were reluctant to express their opinions in class discussion, which involved all students and the instructor. Nervousness regarding on-screen communication is one main reason for this. Many students seemed intimidated by on-screen 2D communication in which individuals see all faces of the students including the instructor and the TA on the screen all at the same time and they cannot see the neighboring students as classmates sitting close by.

Figure 4

Easiest Way to Express Opinions (n=39)



Analysis of Structuring QCA revealed that the main category “**External factors making it easier to initiate speaking during class**” was extracted. In addition, four sub-categories were developed to differentiate the characteristics of the main category: (a) **Low psychological burden**, (b) **Secured time to organize thoughts**, (c) **Relaxed atmosphere among students**, and (d) **Harmonious atmosphere**. Details of each sub-category are described below, explaining how (1) in class discussion, (2) in group discussion, and (3) on the reflection sheet applied.

(a) Low psychological burden:

Although (a) was common to both (2) and (3), the viewpoint was different between (2) and (3). Students who chose (2) said that compared to some other classes of about 20-30 students, MPS class was made up of groups of only 3-5 students meeting face-to-face. It was much easier to speak because there were fewer participants, which reduced the sense of tension. Those who chose (3) said that there was no psychological burden of talking and delivering their messages to other students. Simply not having such a psychological burden made communication much easier for them to deliver their opinions. They might have felt more comfortable communicating only with the instructor through the medium of typed messages. In addition, regarding online class, some students

said that it was difficult to say something in the presence of some other students whose video was off on the screen.

As for **(a)**, choosing (2) is related to the “situational reason” of a small number of students. The RS communication in (2) is much related to the strategy to communicate, which did not require complicated face-to-face interaction in a small group.

(b) Secured time to organize thoughts:

This is the factor included only in (3). Students said that they could take their time to independently organize their thoughts and summarize their opinions because they wrote the RS by spending ample time after the class, and submitted it on the LMS on the same day. Some responses also indicated that the students realized the benefits of being able to deliver coherent opinions on the RS after organizing their thoughts.

In addition, some other students mentioned that their opinions might not be organized when they spoke, but rather consisted of only what they had thought of on the spot during class. In (3), compared to the oral discussion of (1) and (2), they could think slowly about one topic when writing the RS. Even five to ten minutes to write the RS is certainly a productive amount of time when no one interrupts thinking and writing. There could be a rule that students should share time equally to concentrate on pursuing their own opinions at a comfortable pace (Knights, 1985).

(c) Relaxed atmosphere among students:

This is the factor included only in (2). Some students said “we would like to exchange opinions easily” during the class time when students were talking by themselves, as was described in **(b)**. As a result, students in small groups started to make various comments, and they said that they were influenced by that relaxed atmosphere and were able to speak more freely. This group-chat function on Moodle provides an explanation of how a comfortable interaction within a small student community occurred in situation (2).

In addition, students also mentioned the fun of being able to interact freely with the students they had met for the first time in (2) in class. Therefore, it can be suggested that **(c)** is related to “size of group,” where peers in the same position can communicate with each other.

(d) Harmonious atmosphere:

This is the factor included only in (1), where the entire class had a harmonious atmosphere with all students and the instructor together. In this situation students easily spoke up and felt comfortable with speaking up by themselves. As the students expressed the word “harmonious,” it seems that the class had a different atmosphere with the instructor participating in class from that of (2). In other words, the “instructor's attitude” during class may be related to **(d)**.

As a supplementary note, although it may not be directly related to the construction of **(d)**,

four students, who chose (1), wrote in Q7 that they felt it was good to receive immediate feedback on their work and opinions from the instructor and other students. The following opinions were the reasons for choosing (2) and (3) - reasons which prevented students from expressing their opinions. “I am not good at speaking in front of a large group of people,” “I get nervous when I try to speak on the spot,” and (In the case of online classes) “It is difficult to express my opinion when some students set their video-off and I feel uneasy about what they look like.”

It can thus be suggested that the students who chose (1) had no hesitation or resistance to the immediate exchange of opinions in a large group. Also, since the contents of the class was video production, immediate feedback in class was useful to deepen understanding of visual communication and human cognition and sensations, as well as improving representation techniques of video in order to produce their own groups’ video more effectively. It is also probable that the students who chose (1) likely had a similar perspective of this issue.

It is important for students to say their opinions easily in class, whether or not it is a question or some other doubt or concern. Furthermore, students need to work well with the following factors: “environment,” “strategy,” “rule,” “community” and “instructor's attitude.” These elements are also related to the activity theory.

3.4 The Meanings of Writing the RS from Students’ Perspective (Q8)

Quantitative analysis of free-answer responses to Q8 revealed that writing the RS after each class led to three subcategories: **(A) Organizing thoughts, (B) Dialog with the instructor, (C) Opportunity to speak up.**

(A) Organizing thoughts:

Students can independently organize their thoughts by verbalizing in class and writing onto the RS about what they learned in class. Furthermore, they can reflect the contents of the class to deepen their understanding or clear up questions they had during the class.

(B) Dialog with the instructor:

Students can share their personal opinions, questions, and concerns during class with the instructor through writing the RS. The instructor also gives comments back to the students, helping to deepen their understanding. The students can perceive the fact that the instructor responds individually to the students’ opinions, questions, concerns on the RS in a personal dialog between the instructor and individual student. Also, on the RS, the students can share the topics that they felt difficult to say before others in class or forgot to say to the instructor. It seems that the students perceive the instructor as a person they can communicate with comfortably, which is surely consistent with what Mlynarczyk (2006) clarified about “Teachers.”

(C) Opportunity to speak up:

Students could write even simple questions to the instructor on the RS. The RS functioned as a dialog where students felt comfortable in expressing their personal and academic opinions as the RS gave all students in class an equal opportunity to communicate with the instructor. Accordingly, the students felt quite comfortable in writing the RS and expressing their honest and simple opinions to the instructor. This situation made personal writing possible because no other students interfered with the written dialog (Knights, 1985). This applies similarly to sub-category (b) in 3.2.

3.5 Effects of Instructor's Hand-Written Comments (Q9)

The following four factors extracted as the effects of receiving hand-written comments from the instructor encouraged the following:

- motivated the students to write the RS even though the RS is not related to their grade or evaluation of the class
- reduced the psychological distance between the students and the instructor, and made it easier for students to participate in class activities
- conveyed to the students the instructor's enthusiasm for them
- deepened the students' understanding and learning of the class contents

By further analysis of another three factors were extracted from **Effects of Instructor's Hand-Written Comments (Q9)** as contributing factors to the above four points: (i) **Instructor's attitude**, (ii) **Effects of hand-written characters**, (iii) **Clarity of the contents**, all of which were related to the fact that the instructor's comments were hand-written. (i) was consistent with the three elements of strategies for increasing learner motivation described by Dörnyei (2001), and (ii) was consistent with some of the findings by Terada and Hozaki (2018), in that hand-written characters convey the writer's personality and emotional state. Students described that they felt happy when they received hand-written feedback on their RS from the instructor. With regard to (iii), it was pointed out that hand-written feedback allowed not only characters but also diagrams and symbols, which make it easier for students to understand the instructors' messages.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

The results support the concept of the activity theory overall in terms of the languages (quality class discussions and the independent RS dialog) functioning as a mediating artifact for students to understand the object of MPS. In fact, an analysis indicates many students in this EMI class naturally and willingly used both English and Japanese interchangeably to communicate more effectively with the instructor about their learning of the class topics. Additionally, the topics in the RS were sometimes found to be related not only to learning itself but also to personal or casual

topics. The findings of this study, therefore, suggest the possibility that the interactive written dialogue was activated through individual students' interests in the class topics, which itself changed with the advancing classes. Possible further research would scrutinize the findings in the present study more precisely, and validate them in relation to the class structure.

Acknowledgment

A part of this study is supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP24K22769 (FY2024–FY2025), Grant-in-Aid for Research Activity Start-up (PI: TOMINAGA Asami).

References

- Baba, C. (2012). Improvement of awareness and motivation of university students in the EFL classroom: Based on the analysis of reflection sheets. *Bulletin of Teikyo University of Science*, 8, 139–144. <https://doi.org/10.18881/00000071>
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). What is reflection in learning? In D. Boud, R. Keogh & D. Walker (Eds.), *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* (pp. 7–17). Routledge.
- Cole, M., & Engeström, Y. (1993). A cultural-historical approach to distributed cognition. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations* (pp. 1–46). Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Engeström, Y. (1999). *Learning by expanding* (K. Yamazumi et al., Trans.). Shinyosha. (Original work published 1987)
- Hozaki, N. (2023). Media komyunikēshon no jugyō ni okeru taiwakatsudō no kanōsei. In N. Hozaki, A. Tominaga & F. Kitamura, *Taiwa wo jūshi shita atarashii onrain jugyō no dezain wo tsukuru* (pp. 11–36). Yuigakushobo.
- Hozaki, N., & Tominaga, A. (2023). Design, implementation, and evaluation of the class, "Media Production Studies" to enhance creative production and learning through collaborative working. *The Shogaku Ronshu*, 92(1–2), 69–85. <https://hdl.handle.net/10270/6216>
- Knights, S. (1985). Reflection and learning: The importance of a listener. In D. Boud, R. Keogh & D. Walker (Eds.), *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* (pp. 85–90). Routledge.
- Kuckartz, U., & Rädiker, S. (2023). *Qualitative content analysis: Methods, practice and software* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Mlynarczyk, R. W. (2006). Personal and academic writing: Revisiting the debate. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 25(1), 4–25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43444074>
- Tani, M. (2021). A process model of the cross-genre thinking transformation from personal writing to academic writing toward a new perspective on the personal writing vs. academic writing debate. *Journal of Japan Association for College and University Education*, 43(1), 159–168.

- Terada, E., & Hozaki, N. (2018). A study of perception on Japanese handwriting and handwritten Japanese characters. *Educational Technology Research Journal*, 42 (Suppl.), 145–148. <https://doi.org/10.15077/jjet.S42077>
- Tominaga, A., & Hozaki, N. (2023). Transformation of college student attitude and consciousness in collaborative work experience in synchronized online media-production class. *Waseda Journal of Human Sciences*, 36 (1), 15–27. <http://hdl.handle.net/2065/00093801>
- Walker, D. (1985). Writing and reflection. In D. Boud, R. Keogh & D. Walker (Eds.), *Reflection: Turning experience into learning* (pp. 52–68). Routledge.
- Yamazumi, K. (2008). Nettowāku kara nottowākingu e. In Y. Engeström & K. Yamazumi (Eds.), *Knotworking: Musubiau ningen katsudō no sōzō e* (pp. 1–57). Shinyosha.

Appendix

Figure A

A sample RS written by a student and the instructor in MPS class

MPS 2021 Reflection sheet

1. What did you learn today? (今日の授業で何に気づき、何を学んだと思いますか。)

Today I learned that visual is interesting. Because even if people look at the same pictures, they get different image from them. I realized it by doing activities in this class. Also, I thought "characters are visual" is interesting. I also understand people get many ideas from color and shape of characters. *Yes, indeed.*

今日の授業を通して、何かを見た時に人々が受け取るイメージは色や形、大きさ、様々なものによって変化することを学んだ。特に、同じ音のものを伝えていても、それがひらがなやカタカナ、また漢字で表されているかによって受ける印象が変わることが面白いと思った。今後の授業を通して、物の伝え方を活用することで、見る人や受け手側が面白いと思えるようなものを作る方法を学んでいきたい。 *Sure.*

2. Any questions? (疑問に思ったこと、伝えたいことなどを書きましょう。)

Through many activities, I thought making production is fun. I learned more that. *Some people even say*

9/30/2021

St. ID #

Name:

Sounds are visual.

*この授業では 当り前だと思っていること
が 疑う。 解釈し直してみよう
視点を変えて
かたじけなく。
時に、懐いて、か解いて見えてくる
ことも。です。
正解も 不正解も どちらにも存在しません。*