

**An Evaluation of a Proportional Syllabus.**

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## **1. Introduction**

In the scope of this paper, the syllabus employed by the Native English Teachers (NET) at the author's school is described and evaluated, and a shift from a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to one employing a Consciousness-Raising (C-R) and Task Based Learning (TBL) methodology is suggested. Then, a framework for six C-R/TBL lessons to be taught to a newly formed class of returnee learners is presented. Furthermore, having worked at this school in Yokohama, Japan for five years in an eight-year old language-teaching program, the author is in an opportune position to evaluate the syllabus employed.

NET teachers have a responsibility to every element of syllabus design, choice of materials utilized in the classroom, but also have a large degree of pedagogic autonomy. However, the limited exposure time between learners and fluent Target Language (TL) speakers; and the necessity of having to test learners at the end of each quarter, restricts learners and teachers from receiving the full benefit of this program. Unless a remedy is found, learners and teachers will study and work respectively below their capabilities, which could have a de-motivating effect.

Therefore, the goals of this paper, mentioned in the first paragraph, undertake to help the author and perhaps others, to begin developing the areas over which they do possess control (i.e. such as their pedagogic freedom to discuss, then to experiment with, and perhaps finally to implement teaching methodologies within their lessons that not only improve learners' Second Language Acquisition (SLA) but also enhance the NET teachers' professional development).

The context of the third goal of this paper is situated in a newly formed returnee class. First of all, this class is unique because learners are already native-level English

speakers, secondly because a course book and test criterion are not in place, and finally because returnee learners receive two lessons per week with the NET (learners in the usual EFL programme receive just one NET lesson per week).

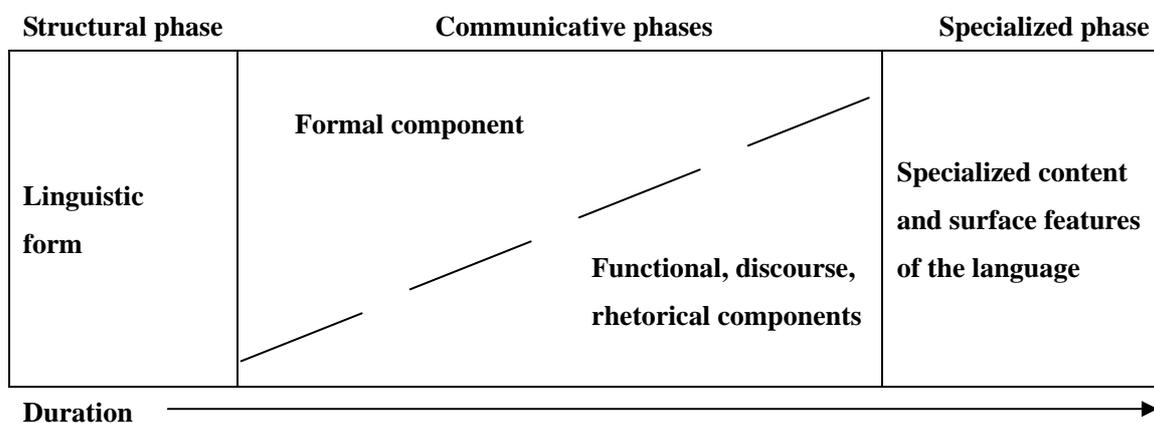
In the next section the syllabus at this school is described. Research findings in the field of syllabus design have been drawn upon to do so. Then the following aspects of syllabus design, goals and objectives; methodology; materials; the syllabus; and student evaluation are addressed. Additionally, the quantitative and qualitative results of a questionnaire circulated among the NET will be linked to these sections to give a more balanced range of ideas and opinions (see Appendix 3).

## **2. A description of the syllabus employed**

All three years of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education are encompassed by this syllabus, which corresponds to Whites' (1988) description of a 'Type A syllabus' (White, 1988: 75-93), combining notional (e.g. location: 'The book is in/on/under the desk') and functional aspects (e.g. using open-ended questions to ask for information).

Specifically, the syllabus is a 'proportional syllabus' (Yalden, 1983 in White, 1988: 81), which is illustrated in Figure 1 below. A proportional syllabus comprises a blend of structural and functional elements.

**Figure 1: The proportional syllabus (White, 1988: 81)**



The benefits of a proportional syllabus are that it overcomes ‘the problem of reconciling functional and structural demands...[and] offers a close interweaving of structural and non-structural, systematic and non-systematic elements over time’ (*ibid.*: 81). In other words, a proportional syllabus assumes a mid-way position between the diametric extremes mentioned by White (1988). This is illustrated by options one and three in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Procedural, Proportional and Structural Syllabi**

<b>Procedural</b>	<b>Proportional</b>	<b>Structural</b>
Focus on Meaning	Focus on Meaning and Form	Focus on Form
TBL Methodology	CLT Methodology	GT Methodology

In addition, a proportional syllabus allows for classroom content to be dependant upon either the length of time that learners have been studying, or upon their special needs. For example, learners studying for Japan’s notoriously form-focused university entrance exams would study proportionately more of language’s form than of its function. However, the special needs of a learner traveling and living abroad in the near future dictate that more emphasis be given to functional aspects in favor of form. This type of syllabus design is an attempt to encompass these two extremes.

The author works with a group of ten NET, who teach an Oral Communication (OC) component of EFL to the junior and first-year senior high school students (a total of 3120 students). Each class of fifty learners is divided in two, and is then taught by two NET at the same time but in a separate locale. NET, in this particular teaching context, have a large degree of autonomy regarding choice of materials and teaching methodology. For example, NET decide upon the textbook, and are free to supplement

it with additional resources.

### **3. An evaluation of and suggested improvements for this syllabus**

In the next subsections the goals and objectives, methodology and materials that are related to the learners' SLA will be evaluated and suggestions for their improvement will then be made.

#### **3.1 Syllabus goals and objectives**

The syllabus goals, ordered according to frequency of the questionnaire responses are provided in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Results of the Teacher Questionnaire**

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1.	To expose learners to native English speakers, and by implication to expose learners to natural, authentic spoken English.
2.	To help build learners' confidence when using English.
3.	To supplement the traditional GT lessons taught by JTE with a spoken component.
4.	To help learners achieve 'communicative competence' (Canale and Swain, 1980).
5.	To assist learners in becoming familiar with different cultures by being directly exposed to them.

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These are affective, cognitive, humanistic and transferable goals and objectives. Numbers one, two, three and five are 'affective' objectives (Stern, 1992: 86-7). It is hoped that they contribute to the development of generally positive impressions about language learning. Furthermore, the four competencies - grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic are encompassed by number four (Canale and Swain 1980, in Richards and Rogers, 2001: 160). It is an umbrella term including all of the above-stated goals and objectives, but more specifically, communicative competence is

both a cognitive/linguistic and humanistic goal. It encompasses the four macro-skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and views the learner's learning context as central to the learning of these (Knight, P. in Candlin, C and N. Mercer, 2001: 152).

Stern (1992) states that 'obtaining insight into language and culture; and developing positive generalized attitudes to language, culture, and language study' (1992: 93), are qualities that can be carried over to more than one situation, including situations later on in life. As one NET concisely stated in the questionnaire: 'Here in Japan I believe it is often just trying to spark an interest in English so students can carry on and study more in the future' (appendix 3). Thus, these goals and objectives are also 'transfer' goals and objectives (*ibid*: 93).

The degree that NET are able to balance their teaching goals and objectives with those of the institution depends on the amount of freedom allowed them by the institution. Inevitably, the policies upheld by any particular teaching institution have a significant influence upon syllabus design, as well as the teaching approaches and materials teachers employ in their classrooms. This holds true for the predominantly top-down education system present within the author's school.

NET are at times burdened by institutional demands to supplant their professional teaching goals and outcomes with those of the institution, with the result that the above-stated goals and objectives are not necessarily what transpire in the classroom. For example, preparing learners for the end-of-semester test often takes precedence over the above-stated goals. Further, contact time with learners is often limited. Learners receive a total of six hours of EFL instruction each week. With regard to OC instruction, this translates to an average of six hours per quarter, or twenty-four hours per year. Even with a reduced class-size of between twenty to twenty-five learners, the

author is uncertain whether they are able to receive sufficient amounts of comprehensible input deemed necessary for effective language acquisition. Moreover, when learners begin senior high school their contact with NET is reduced to one fifty-minute OC lesson every two weeks (i.e. the pedagogical focus shifts even further away from communicative goals).

Not just the NET, but also learners and learners' parents are expected to have read and to have understood the content for the relevant semester. The author usually allocates the first fifteen to twenty minutes of the first lesson of each semester to review the new syllabus; class expectations (e.g. learners should bring their textbooks, do their homework, be punctual); the grading system (e.g. a grade of A, being the highest, B, C, D or F is allocated in each lesson); and how learners can achieve a good grade for this particular class (e.g. learners should display a positive attitude, volunteer, speak English, ask questions when they do not understand). These conform to Nunan's (1999: 15) 'weak interpretation' of learner-centered classrooms. That is, while the NET formulate and design the study document, and also decide upon the lesson content, learners are aware of the goals and objectives, and of what is expected of them. Thus learners have a clear idea of what they should do and how they may improve their grade.

### **3.2 Methodology**

Perhaps the most central area of debate among researchers with regard to syllabus design relates to the division or unification of syllabus and methodology. While Sinclair and Renouf (1988: 145-6) view syllabus and methodology as separate, Nunan (1988: 175), Lewis (1996: 11) and Willis (1990: 6) do not. In this case, a structural syllabus is combined with a CLT and Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) teaching

methodology is being employed (i.e. syllabus and methodology are distinct).

A CLT approach is communicative because it involves learning through use (Willis, 1990: 6), a PPP methodology states that language can be isolated into simplified grammatical items, and that learning takes place through the accumulation of these structural entities (Rutherford, 1987: 49). Communication could also be defined as when people use whatever language they have available to communicate meaningfully rather than in a contrived way. However, communicative teaching and learning is restricted by the employment of a separate (structural) syllabus and a (PPP) methodology. Willis (1990:7) outlines ‘a basic dichotomy in the language classroom between activities which focus on form and activities which focus on outcome and the exchange of meanings’. In other words, there is a problem when a syllabus specifies the teaching of discrete, specific, prescribed linguistic structures via the employment of a communicative methodology, which by definition is anything but discrete, specific or prescribed.

The fact that while TBL, CLT, and PPP teaching methodologies differ in many respects, C-R is a common element within each is illustrated in Table 3, below. Therefore, a paradigm shift from a CLT approach to a TBL methodology by the NET according to their level of comfort in incorporating this shift is suggested.

**Table 3: Similarities and differences within PPP, CLT and TBL**

PPP	CLT	TBL
Fundamental goal is for learners to acquire structures through practice in a systematic way in teacher-led lessons	Fundamental goal is for learners to acquire structures through meaning-focused interaction	Fundamental goal is to turn input into intake through listening/speaking tasks (at lower levels), and through reading/speaking tasks (at

May include C-R	May include C-R	higher levels)
Simulation/citation of real world communication	Attempts to replicate real world language	Incorporates C-R
Language is divided into simplified structures	Language is holistic	Replication of real world communication
Focus on form occurs at the beginning of a unit	Focus on form occurs at the beginning of a unit	Language is holistic
Usually accompanies a structural syllabus	Usually accompanies a structural syllabus	Focus on form occurs at the end of a unit
		Ideally accompanies a lexical syllabus

Direct support for paradigm shift in general is given by Woodward (1996: 4-10), and specifically for C-R and TBL teaching methodologies from Lewis (1996: 10-17; 2002); Skehan (1996: 17-31; 1998: 93-120); and Willis (1990: 73; 1996: 42-52).

A change in pedagogy from CLT to TBL can be achieved through the employment of C-R. Shifting to a C-R approach and from there to adopting a TBL methodology does not require a great amount of re-training or effort for the NET, because most are already familiar with the fundamentals of both. Moreover, C-R has a basic defining function in language learning as a ‘bridge’ (Yip, as cited in Odlin, 1994: 125) between opposing linguistic elements (see appendix 5). For example, the author often utilizes C-R activities to focus learners on form/function relationships in the structures that they are studying. This shift could first of all be achieved by raising the team member’s awareness of what they already know about a TBL methodology, and of what the advantages of employing it in the classroom could be. Then a comparison of CLT and TBL lesson plans utilizing the same course unit could be carried out.

The application of these lesson plans within two classes would logically follow; one to a control group, employing the CLT lesson plan, the other to an experimental group,

employing the TBL lesson plan. An evaluation of each, perhaps including student and teacher interviews to gain qualitative impressions of the lessons would conclude this experiment. Further, Woodward (1996: 9) recommends that teachers ‘start somewhere’ in the way of realizing a more effective teaching and learning methodology. The NET team’s relatively autonomous situation allows for freedom to experiment, within reason, and evolve towards more effective methodologies.

### **Materials**

This sub-section discusses the practical justifications regarding the textbook for paradigm shift to C-R/TBL methodology, and will focus exclusively upon the compatibility of these texts to a C-R/TBL teaching methodology. The course books *Go for it!* Levels one and two and *Cambridge English Worldwide (CEW)* Level one are based on notional-functional and content-based instruction respectively.

In Table 4 (below) the criteria for identifying a C-R/TBL activity are consolidated, this data is then related to the *Go for it!* and *CEW* course books. Table 4 illustrates that the course books are compatible with the application of a C-R/TBL teaching methodology.

**Table 4: How applicable are these course books to C-R and TBL methodologies?**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b><i>Go for it</i></b>	<b><i>CEW</i></b>
1. Learners have direct contact with native-level teachers	✓	✓
2. Learners can make generalizations about the TL from the data	✓	✓
3. Recycles the TL in different contexts	✓	✓
4. Isolates the TL, thereby providing data for study	✓	✓
5. Requires intellectual effort to complete	✓	✓
6. Learners are not required to create perfect sentences	△	△
7. Low-level learners may use their first language (L1)	✓	✓

8. Forms a bridge between form and function	✓	✓
9. Facilitates the cross-over from learning to acquisition	△	△
10. Rejects the 'accumulated entities' perspective	△	△
11. Is learner centered	✓	✓
12. Raises learners' awareness of learning strategies	△	✓
13. Encourages learner autonomy	✓	✓
14. Seeks to create implicit knowledge	△	△
15. Utilizes authentic language	×	△
16. Accepts learners' previous knowledge	✓	✓
17. Employs a discovery approach to learning	△	✓
18. Explicitly utilizes TBL activities	✓	✓
19. Explicitly utilizes C-R activities	✓	✓

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✓ = Yes      × = No      △ = Not sure

### **The syllabus**

The syllabus currently employed at this school is designed and written by the NET. The units and their sequence for the academic year are first of all outlined in a yearly document, and then quarterly documents for each year are created for use by NET and learners (see appendices 1 and 2). One area of concern with regard to this practice is a tendency to copy the details of the previous year's document onto a new template. While this is a convenient and time-saving practice, a periodical re-examination of the underlying processes involved in the creation of this document of study is recommended. Otherwise the documents' pedagogic validity is endangered.

### **Student evaluation and testing**

Learner evaluation is divided four-ways at this school. These are: Writing and Grammar (WG), Listening Laboratory (LL), Reader (R) and Oral Communication (OC). Each component equals twenty-five percent of a learner's final grade. JTE evaluate

the WG, LL and R components, while the OC component is evaluated by NET. Eighty percent of NET evaluation is done in the classroom. A one or two minute speaking test balances the difference.

To what degree does this test correspond to the syllabus? First and second year learners are graded out of a possible ten points for the following categories: Language use/grammatical accuracy (4 points), effort (3 points), and language extension (3 points). Learners are asked open display questions (notional aspect) about a unit of work that they have studied (functional aspect). Third-year learners are graded according to the accuracy, fluency and quality of their presentations. Learners give one or two minute presentations on a previously studied theme.

The third years' test-format more closely correlates to a TBL syllabus than the first and second years' test. The first-year learners' test tends to focus on learners' knowledge of how the language works. Therefore, opportunities for creative, meaningful dialogue were limited; for example, learners could ask a teacher to repeat a question, to speak more slowly, or to rephrase a question because it was not understood. However, the third-years' test allowed for more creative and meaningful language use. The shift from form to function over time as described above is in line with Yalden's proportional syllabus design. Even though the test is regarded as an institutional restriction, NET have created tests that do correspond with the overall syllabus. NET teachers' are teaching consistently in accordance with their stated goals and objectives.

#### **4. A framework for the implementation of a C-R/TBL methodology within a returnee class**

This section outlines the design and implementation of a C-R/TBL teaching

methodology within a classroom of returnee learners. It is based on Willis' (1996) 'A flexible framework for task-based learning' (Willis and Willis, 1996: 52-62). In the following sub-sections a rationale for the implementation of a C-R/TBL methodology in this class is given, the learners' backgrounds and learning needs are examined. Finally, the role of TBL is discussed in relation to an outline for six C-R/TBL lessons.

#### **4.1 Rationale**

The rationale behind the proposed implementation of a C-R/TBL teaching methodology stems first of all from the uniqueness of the situation (i.e. the learners in this context are already native-level speakers - therefore, their English language knowledge is more than that in the course books). The contrasts between this returnee class with the usual EFL classes are considerable, and are illustrated in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Differences between EFL and Returnee classes**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>EFL</b>	<b>Returnee</b>
Syllabus type	Structural	Unspecified
Number of NET classes/week	1	2
End-of-semester test?	✓	×
Prescribed course book?	✓	×

✓ = Yes      × = No

Table 5 illustrates the favorability for implementing a C-R/TBL methodology within the Returnee class.

#### **The learners**

The returnee class consists of fourteen learners, all Japanese males, aged from twelve to thirteen years old. Table 6 illustrates the countries where learners have lived and the

number of years that they have lived outside of Japan. The implications of the returnees' diverse backgrounds are discussed in the Section 4.

**Table 6: Returnee learners linguistic background**

Student ref.	Country/Countries	Years (#)
1.	Australia	7
2.	U.S.A., Hong Kong, China, Thailand	6
3.	England	5
4.	Germany	5
5.	France, Switzerland	5
6.	U.S.A.	5
7.	China, U.S.A	5
8.	Hong Kong, China, Malaysia	5
9.	U.S.A.	4
10.	U.S.A.	4
11.	Kenya	3
12.	U.S.A.	3
13.	U.S.A.	3
14.	U.S.A.	3
15.	U.S.A.	2

### **4.3 Towards a definition of TBL**

Prabu (1987) states that meaning-centeredness is the most fundamental element of TBL, which is also the most direct path to acquiring a language, and is facilitated by ‘a phenomenon analogous to...language learning, namely that of structure being abstracted sub-consciously from a piece of language while the learner is consciously occupied with its meaning’ (in *SLA course book*, 1997: 124). Additionally, Willis (1996: 53) defines the outcome of a task in broad terms of having achieved ‘real’ communication, and Stern (1992: 178) as authentic language occurring inside or outside the classroom, which is oriented around a ‘message [rather than a] medium’. Finally, Lewis (2002:

44/47) states that turning learners' input into intake is a central goal of TBL. According to Willis (2000: 79) the most appropriate starting place for TBL is 'topic'. Furthermore, the most benefit from TBL will be gained if the activities include a blend of 'private [and] public' utilization of language (1996: 55).

Prabu's (1987) argument against group work is important to this paper. His main contention seems to be that a shared learner 'interlanguage' (IL) (Lightbrown and Spada, 1999:131) is a disadvantage to SLA. Communication between students who share the same IL is 'quite satisfactory in spite of numerous errors in speech' (*ibid*: 131). Teachers are also more capable of understanding learners' messages. While this may seem advantageous, it is not. Students who expend only a little effort are unlikely to retain a deeper understanding of what they learn (Thornbury, 1996: 282). Students who share the same IL are likely to experience more difficulty in 'noticing' differences between their IL and the target language than students who do not (Schmidt, 1986, as cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 318); with the result that their development to new levels of understanding will be negatively affected. However, in this particular case, the unique backgrounds of each returnee student implies that each learner's IL will also be unique. It is hoped that the linguistic interaction and exchange that group-work activities promote will benefit each learner's unique IL.

#### **4.4 A framework for six C-R/TBL lessons**

The topic chosen for these lessons is a Japanese word, *mottainai*, which is gaining international usage. Loosely translated, *mottainai* means, "it is a shame to waste (something)". This topic was chosen first of all because of the relevance of this word to Japanese culture, where on the one hand, most goods are excessively packaged, and

on the other hand, strenuous efforts are taken to separate, reduce and recycle rubbish. Secondly, because of the relevance of a Japanese word that has become international to these Japanese learners, who are themselves more international than is usual, and thirdly because the topic is compatible with project-task work, which Willis (1996) observes 'can be appreciated by a wider audience' (1996: 154).

## **5. Implications for future research**

Section three of this paper can be viewed as a pilot to a dissertation study. An 'intrinsic case study' (Stake, 1995), focusing that on the unique circumstances of the returnee class, and on a comparative study of task-types (i.e. their advantages/disadvantages and their efficacy regarding learners' IL development).

An additional case-study option could be to examine the long-term efficacy of implementing a C-R/TBL teaching methodology. This would address the question, *'Does the passage of time affect the degree to which learners are able to retain, recall and utilize what they have learned through a C-R/TBL teaching methodology?'*

## **6. Conclusion**

A Type A proportional syllabus, covering three years of EFL education at a privately funded Japanese junior high school has been described and evaluated. After various aspects of syllabus design were examined, suggestions for improvements, including their justifications were offered.

This paper also described a unique teaching situation involving returnee learners. The planning, design and implementation with regard to a C-R/TBL teaching methodology within this class were briefly outlined.

It is hoped that the suggestions within this paper will be of benefit to any teachers who are also on the threshold of paradigm change. As Woodward (1996) states:

Whatever your insight or hunch, whether from SLA research or your own gut feeling, try applying the insight to a part of your course and see how it affects other parts of the course. You may start with an apparently tiny change and find that the ripple effect is considerable and beneficial throughout the rest of the course (as cited in Willis and Willis, 1996: 9).

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## APPENDIX A

### **Native English Teachers (NET) Questionnaire**

- If you don't mind, could you please take about fifteen or twenty minutes to answer these questions?
- I would like to use this questionnaire in a paper I'm writing for the Distance Learning course I'm doing with Birmingham University.
- The information gathered will (1) help to organize my own thoughts on these topics, and (2) help me to complete module three's assignment using a more balanced range of ideas and opinions.
- For I - III, please check the answer(s) that suit you best. Your honest opinions and comments here and in IV are highly valued! Meaning, sometimes there is a difference between what you think is right and what you actually do in the classroom. If this is the case, please give what you really believe is the right answer, even if you don't actually do it in the classroom. (If you run out of space, please continue on the back of the form).
- For V, please mark 'T' for true or 'F' for false in the boxes provided.
- Thank you!

The answers you write are *absolutely* confidential. Information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances. However, please let me know which questionnaire is yours, either verbally or by writing you initials.

I. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE

- Language is made up of grammatical units
- Language is made up of words and phrases
- Language is a social tool

Language is...

II. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

- Language learning occurs through formal study of the Target Language (TL)
- Language learning occurs naturally through exposure to speakers of the TL
- Language learning occurs through a blend of the above

Learning is...

III. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE TEACHING

- Language teaching means teaching grammar and vocabulary
- Language teaching means using tasks and projects
- Language teaching is about finding a balance between the above

My theory on teaching English is basically...

IV. TEACHING ENGLISH AT TOIN GAKUEN

1. Please outline in general terms the goals and objectives of Oral Communication (OC) program at Toin Gakuen.

2. If you could change anything about the teaching program at this school, what would it be?

V. THE SYLLABUS

	True	False
1. The syllabuses we use are copies of the textbooks' tables of contents.		
2. I'm happy with this situation.		
3. I often refer to our syllabus(es) during the semester.		
4. I am aware of different syllabus/curriculum types, e.g. lexical or procedural syllabuses.		
5. Given the opportunity, I would like to learn more about different syllabus/curriculum types, e.g. like the ones mentioned above.		

## APPENDIX B

### NET Responses (n = 6)

#### I. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE

Language is made up of grammatical units	
Language is made up of words and phrases	
Language is a social tool	6

#### **Language is...**

- a. Something we use to communicate and achieve our needs and wants with!
- b. Dynamic and changing. It is part of culture and society and changes as culture and society changes. It is words/phrases grammar but much much more.
- c. As you said, I think language is a social tool. We use it to get things done, or to achieve a certain kind of goal. Language is certainly made of grammar, and words and phrases, but I think there is too much focus on grammar in Japan.
- d. All three statements above are certainly true about language. However the purposes for language may vary, from Japanese students learning/remembering to pass university entrance exams to foreigners in any English speaking country attempting to communicate and be understood to achieve a task.
- e. I believe all are true. All language is made up of grammatical units and most are systematic, but these 'units' are put or can be put together/grouped into words and phrases in order to help promote cognition of L2 (L1) (memorization) and once both of these beliefs plus other things are merged together they all work together to be used in social situations thus language is also a social tool.
- f. To a certain degree I agree with all of the above phrases but primarily language is a social tool. Language enables us to interact to a high degree but in order to do so

effectively, an understanding of grammar is needed. Also idioms and phrases which may not be grammatical are an integral part of language.

V. BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING

Language learning occurs through formal study of the Target Language (TL)	
Language learning occurs naturally through exposure to speakers of the TL	
Language learning occurs through a blend of the above	6

**Learning is...**

- a. Improving your own knowledge via a method.
- b. Learning is a lifelong process. Learning takes place everywhere all the time. Formal study is part of learning but so too is the learning that takes place outside the class. Actually this is more authentic.
- c. I think for these students learning is about memorization of facts and figures. The Native English class is therefore a bit of a shock for them as it requires that they use a different part of the brain.
- d. Learning a language requires learners to have intrinsic or even extrinsic motivation. Learning can occur consciously or sub-consciously as well. This could be through formal study, or from living abroad (natural exposure), but learning a language seems to be best when intrinsic motivational factors are highest.
- e. I think language learning is both a blend of formal study and exposure to a TL. I feel formal study gives the learner the knowledge (basic) of a language but natural exposure to the TL gives the learner things that aren't usually covered or learnt in formal study such as nuance, slang or collocations so to merge these two is

beneficial to learners.

- f. From my experience of learning Japanese, I have found it essential to study grammar using textbooks, internet, etc. to have a good basis, but I found that I really progressed only when I used the language with native Japanese speakers. Also, constantly being surrounded by the TL is essential to hear language being used naturally, eg: pronunciation, intonation, rhythm etc.

### BELIEFS ABOUT LANGUAGE TEACHING

Language teaching means teaching grammar and vocabulary	
Language teaching means using tasks and projects	
Language teaching is about finding a balance between the above	6

#### **My theory on teaching is basically...**

- a. If it's fun, then what you study and practice will be meaningful and thus easy to remember.
- b. Giving to be able to survive (?) outside the class in the real world. Here in Japan I believe it is often just trying to spark an interest in English so students carry on and study more in the future.
- c. Language teaching should be enjoyable for teacher and students. The teacher is responsible for passing on his/her knowledge to students, but he/she is also responsible for letting students take over their own learning too. It is a fine balancing act.
- d. I teach English as a foreign language, and I think it is important for learners to express themselves freely about subject matter they like to talk about. However,

being able to get through language tasks and being able to use proper grammar and vocabulary is part of achieving the goal of communication.

- e. Giving students the basics or building blocks (tools) such as grammar, vocabulary etc. and allowing students to utilize and manipulate tools using a variety of guided/non-guided tasks and projects but to also leave room for expansion and self-learning and giving students some freedom and making them responsible for 'their own' learning will help with stronger retention.
- f. Teaching grammar and vocabulary are essential for language study but in order for the student to have a better grasp of how it is used, the TL needs to be applied in real-life situations. Roleplays or conversation practise where students are free to create dialogue based on what language they know is an ideal way for this to be done.

## VI. TEACHING ENGLISH AT TOIN GAKUEN

**Please outline in general terms the goals and objectives of Oral Communication (OC) program at Toin Gakuen.**

- 1. Improve the confidence, pronunciation responsiveness and ability in general of student (sic.) English. Improve social/communication skills through developing confidence/self-confidence.
- 2. To allow the students to have an opportunity to speak English with peers and Native [English] teachers. Exposure to different cultures. Opportunity to use what they have learnt.
- 3. For learners to get used to speaking with foreigners. And to try and complement their other English classes where they don't get to speak so much (at all!). I think

our main goal and objective is to give students a window to English, and give them the tools to keep that window open, so that in later life they can choose whether or not to climb through it.

4. In very general terms I believe we try to achieve ‘communicative competence’ ...maybe best described by Canale & Swain (1980). On a different level, I think we just want our kids to gain confidence using English, and to enjoy speaking English with other students. We try to achieve this by giving the students as much time for English speaking tasks in pairs and in groups.
5. To expose students to Native speakers. To provide ‘basic’ communication skills (situations). Give students more confidence when using English. Give students opportunities to ask questions about aspects of English. Give and evaluation of their performance.
6. I believe that the goals and objectives at Toin are to give students as much exposure to native English speakers as possible. While grammar can be taught by JTE, students can progress in their spoken abilities through practise with NET. NET can introduce the TL in a much more natural way and are able to correct students English much quicker.

**If you could change anything about the teaching program at this school, what would it be?**

- a. More contact time, less rotation over the year and thus less emphasis on short-term assessment, smaller classes and greater resources; ie: (not just a piece of chalk!)
- b. I’ll start at the beginning. Even our initial meetings before class starts are in Japanese. This to me sets the tone for the whole programme. It should be in

English, the same as more of the documents and procedures. (this is kind of a selfish thing 'coz I'm lacking in Japanese ability but I actually think it is a probability. I never hear any Japanese Teachers of English speaking English outside the classroom. This sets the culture. I think even a simple greeting to students in English around the school helps students remember or gets them used to it. Another thing I would do is have fewer overall classes, but more lessons per class. That is, 2 or 3 times a week. The main thing I would change is the culture of the school towards English.

- c. I would want the number of time we see the students increased from once a week to twice/three even. Students would all have an overseas trip made compulsory to get a idea that there really is a world out there, not just what is on the TV. I don't think this is too much to change, but also if the Japanese English Teachers would lose their traditional style of teaching and instead teach 'real' English, what a jump ahead that would be!
- d. More freedom in the classroom...having a partner to plan/do the exact same lessons would be nice. Perhaps a different grading system would be better...the 'real time' grading is rather stressful on us and takes away from interaction time with the students. It also appears to make students more motivated by extrinsic factors (grades) than intrinsic factors (ability to communicate in English). Just to mention a few...
- e. Syllabus style; classroom dynamics; grading system; leveling of OC classes.
- f. Remove or modify the OC part to give students a longer period to prove that they can use English. The textbooks are also very repetitive.

V. THE SYLLABUS

	True	False
2. The syllabuses we use are copies of the textbooks' tables of contents.	3	3
2. I'm happy with this situation.	4	2
3. I often refer to our syllabus(es) during the semester.		6
6. I am aware of different syllabus/curriculum types, e.g. lexical or procedural syllabuses.	3	3
7. Given the opportunity, I would like to learn more about different syllabus/curriculum types, e.g. like the ones mentioned above.	1	5

## APPENDIX C

### An framework of six C-R/TBL lessons for the Returnee class

**Task topic: Mottainai (*translation*: ‘It is a shame to waste (something)’).**

#### **Learners:**

A class of fifteen returnee learners, male, aged twelve to thirteen years old. They are already organized into three groups of five learners.

#### **Lesson outline:**

<b>Lesson 1 - Pre-task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The topic of ‘Mottainai’ and ‘The 3Rs’ (Reduce, Reuse and Re-cycle) is introduced.</li><li>● A song (‘The 3Rs’, by Jack Johnson) is played to learners, who listen and order lyrics already written on slips of paper and scrambled.</li><li>● The goals for the next six lessons are repeated.</li><li>● One project topic (Reduce, Reuse or Recycle) is chosen by each group.</li><li>● For homework, learners are asked gather and bring information about their topic.</li></ul>
<b>Lesson 2 – Task</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The information that learners collected as homework is gathered in their group.</li><li>● Planning and report preparation is begun.</li><li>● Learners inform the teacher about the materials they will need to complete their presentations.</li></ul>
<b>Lesson 3 – Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Each group’s planned project is presented to the rest of the class.</li><li>● Questions and lively interaction is encouraged between audience and presenting group.</li></ul>
<b>Lessons 4 and 5 – Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Groups work on their presentations.</li><li>● Learners’ language use and progress is monitored and encouraged.</li></ul>
<b>Lesson 6 – Presentations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Groups present their finished projects, and are evaluated by their peers and the teacher.</li><li>● Review of the most frequent language forms</li></ul>