

English Abstracts

An Overview of the New English Curriculum

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The purpose of this article is to give an overview of the new English curriculum to be introduced in the general education program at Nagoya University in 2009. The new curriculum, replacing the current one that was implemented in 2003, aims at developing students' proficiency in "Academic English," the ability to read, write and present academic papers in English. It also aims at a general improvement of students' overall English proficiency; it helps students with lower English proficiency to improve their English skills and assists those with higher proficiency to achieve still higher levels. To realize these aims, the new curriculum adopts a sequenced approach with proficiency-dependent class formation for the first semester, self-study e-learning materials, TOEFL-ITP and Criterion tests for objective evaluation, and classes for developing skills in paragraph reading, paragraph writing and presentation. By developing students' proficiency in "Academic English," the new curriculum will help Nagoya University students to acquire practical English skills indispensable in the age of internationalization.

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Reading, Writing, and Presentation Skills for Academic English

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In the academic year of 2009, our new English curriculum will be introduced, where “Academic English” is the focal point. This curriculum is not a mere integration of four skills, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. We set the development of basic skills for “Academic English” as our goal of new curriculum. This curriculum includes three stratified core course: Academic English Basic (AEB), Academic English Intermediate (AEI), and Academic English Advanced (AEA). In this paper, these courses will be illustrated in terms of the fundamental concept of paragraph/essay reading and writing. For the evaluation of the achievement of this curriculum, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and Criterion will be adopted as partial measurements for grading. Our motivation for the introduction of these global standards for Academic English will also be argued. In the last section, the guideline for the courses and the list of recommended textbooks will be provided, and a sample teaching plan for the courses will be given to show some concrete image of our new English curriculum.

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English Learning through GyutoE and A Socially Collaborative Video Conference System

SUZUKI Shigeo

GyutoE, a network-based learning system to be used in Nagoya University English classes, would ideally function as a means to prevent the English ability of freshmen and sophomores from deteriorating, despite assurances that the material will noticeably improve the learners' abilities. Students may fail to achieve their linguistic goals when material of the same level is assigned to all students without regard to differences in competence and the different departments to which they belong. Uniform assignments will probably reduce the significance of the new English curriculum, where learning proceeds in a step-by-step basis. As for the video-conferencing and collaborative work classes, which are planned for advanced students in the new course, distantly located students will use internet communication tools to participate in presentations, dialogues, and debates for the purposes of language development and cultural awareness. An example of this class by four Nagoya University sophomores suggests that interactions within the group and expectations for a new solidarity with students from different social and cultural backgrounds can provide opportunities to assimilate conflicting ideas and divergent opinions into their learning process. These types of classes may even provoke changes in the students' sociolinguistic competence.

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Towards Improving English Language Abilities for Academic Purposes

TAKIZAWA Naohiro

Nagoya University is scheduled to adopt a whole new curriculum in the 2009 Academic Year, the core of which lies in the focus on what is called "Academic English". The new curriculum has four main characteristics. (1) All students are to use Internet-based e-materials as part of their learning materials. (2) Students are divided into three categories (A-, B- and C-levels) according to the performance on a placement test to be given at the beginning of the academic year. (3) C-level students are to take an additional class which is designed to improve their basic English abilities. (4) Finally, students are urged to develop their paragraph reading/writing abilities in class.

While discussing these characteristics of the curriculum, this article discusses what, in the opinion of the author, constitutes "Academic English" and how best to improve (Academic) English abilities of Nagoya University students. Two specific proposals have been made. One is, as the curriculum itself dictates, the importance of paying attention to the macro structure of the paragraph/essay. The other is the importance of getting students familiarized with "easy-to-understand-but-difficult-to-write" word combinations. Finally, the use of corpora for improving their English writing ability is briefly discussed.

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English Training for Students in Fields of Engineering

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We first describe the necessity for English training and the present status of English education in the field of engineering. We then point out that English training is closely related to communication training. English training may include two aspects, the presentation skill of English and preparation of message to be presented. The latter is important also in the communication in Japanese. We point out that decline of the communication skills of university students, which has been often pointed out recently in many occasions, might actually be incorrect. That is, when the students have appropriate messages, they may communicate with each other quite frequently under suitable discussion environments. This conclusion is provided being based on a discussion held by the committee of “Education programs for engineering students” organized by deans of engineering faculty of eight universities. Therefore, it is important for each student to have an appropriate message and a suitable environment for effective English training. As for the English skill, the students should also note the difference between the structures of logic in English and Japanese.

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English-Taught Courses in Japanese Universities

NAKAI Toshiki

Recently, English-taught courses have been encouraged in universities of countries where English is not the domestic language as in Japan. This paper aims to examine issues with English-taught courses in Japanese universities. To diffuse effective teaching ideas, the Center for the Studies of Higher Education developed and published a handbook, *Teaching in English: A Faculty Guide to Classroom English*. Findings from the analysis of the development process of the handbook and reactions to it can be summarized as follows:

First, faculty members are required to have course design skills as well as English skills to teach their courses in English effectively. This is supported by the results of interviews with faculty members who have many years of experience with English-taught courses.

Second, many faculty members need ideas that will assist them to teach courses in English. More than 10 percent of faculty members in Nagoya University asked the Center for the Studies of Higher Education to send them a copy of the handbook. Faculty members need support to start teaching in English if institutions desire to increase the number of English-taught courses.

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Sharing Skills and Know-how in Graduate Research Supervision

CHIKADA Masahiro

Research supervision is a core of graduate education as well as the coursework. As Japanese graduate education has been expanding since the 1990's, it is hard to retain the traditional apprenticeship model. This paper clarifies current issues on graduate research supervision in Japan and examines the possibility of sharing the skills and know-how in its practices.

According to interviews with teaching staff at Nagoya University, they have not shared the skills or know-how of effective practices in research supervision. Professors must endure extra stresses and anxieties with given the lack of the student abilities in academic writing, critical thinking, and motivation. Each professor develops practices to attract and motivate students such as creating learning communities in the laboratories, implementing joint research projects, providing overseas field-works opportunities and so forth. Professors believe that active learning and mental strength are important in the life of graduate students in addition to the basic academic abilities and skills.

Most of these ideas and practical knowledge in graduate research supervision are common across the academic fields. Sharing the know-how among faculty may improve the quality of research supervision and the satisfaction among faculty and students.

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The Change of Physics Students through Participation in Teaching Development Activities

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The education committee by the students (ECS) was established by several students in April, 2003, with the aim of improving education in the physics department of Nagoya University. This committee was established voluntarily by the students without request from faculty members. As voluntary activity, the students of ECS plan and manage events to develop the academic ability of the students in the physics department.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the effect on students as a result of spontaneous participation in teaching development activities. At first, we propose the assumption that students will become independent learners through the activities. To verify the assumption, we interviewed the 11 member of ECS with semi open-ended questions. We learned that such a program needs more than three years for students to become aware of becoming independent learners through participating in ECS activities. The developments of the students through activities are classified as three processes: developing the ability to put things in perspective, developing the ability to plan and manage the events, becoming independent learners.

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The Hundred Mysteries of the Universe: Laboratory-based Training of Science Communication

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The Hundred Mysteries of the Universe was a three-year project of science communication, which is designed for graduate students to improve their science communication capabilities. The whole project was embedded into the daily activities of a single laboratory (the Astrophysics Laboratory at Nagoya University). This style is different from the usual style of science communication training in Japan, where the training is mostly offered as courses, and requires students a tough negotiation with their supervisors and hard work aside from pursuing their research.

The strength of the laboratory-based training was verified through interviews with the graduate students involved in the project and the participatory observations undertaken by the authors. The project enabled students to become aware of the importance and pleasure of science communication directly and naturally with the laboratory professor acting as a good role model. They also came to realize what it means to be an expert, as the project was closely related to their discipline. Arrangement of modest institutional or external support is suggested for a wider application of the laboratory-based style to the training of science communication.

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Coporatization of National Universities: Success or Failure ?

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Almost 5 years have elapsed since April 2004 when all 89 national universities were corporatized with their 120,000 academic and non-academic staffs deprived of their public servant status. The National Universities Corporatization Law stipulated that at least half of the Management Consultation Council members be appointed from outside the university, while at least one member of the Executive Board be recruited from outside the university. In addition, according to the Law, the Minister of Education is to appoint two auditors, one of whom should be selected from outside the university. All of these strategies are aimed at enhancing social accountability for education and research activities by national universities as well as at introducing efficient management expertise and skills from the private sector. The current paper examines whether these non-university people successfully function based on a national survey that the author conducted in the fall of 2006 with national university management as well as with the non-university people themselves. The result was mixed: steady progress was observed toward increased accountability and enhanced efficiency, while there were some instances when those within the universities neglected the advice, suggestions and proposals made by outside people. Yet, whether national universities could and would take advantage of the wisdom, skills and know-how is an essential key to the success of corporatization.

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Needs and Challenges for Clinical Study in Faculty Development: the Effect of Faculty Developers Using Individual Consultations

SATO Hiroaki

This paper presents the needs and challenges for clinical research on the effect of faculty developers who use individual consultations with faculty clients. The pilot study assesses the effectiveness of a faculty developer working in a consulting relationship with six faculty members to develop educational and supportive activities to improve teaching and learning in their classes.

Individual consultation is the one-to-one and continuous activity between a faculty developer and a client for solving together various problems in individual classrooms. From the viewpoint of a faculty developer, it is an assessment of the current situation and possible interventions for the client. In addition to confirming that the interventions are successful, faculty developers need to be assessed also for their contribution to the improved outcomes.

According to an e-mail survey on the effect of individual consultations by a faculty developer for six clients, results confirmed that all clients felt the process improved their motivation for better teaching and caused behavior changes in different ways.

More of these types of clinical studies are needed in faculty development for the following reasons. First, they could identify effective methods that could be used by faculty developers to promote change in teaching and learning. Second, they are needed to develop collaborative partnerships between faculty members and developers to insure change. Third, such studies could contribute to the improvement of the performance of centers for teaching and learning, both outside and inside the campus.

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Factor Analysis of Post-doctors' Career-path in Science and Technology

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The continuous promotions of innovation become important because of the change of social and economical structures. Doctors are considered as the promotions of innovation gradually. In order to promote innovation, it is thought that career-path diversification of doctors is necessary to be promoted.

Doctors should develop their career voluntarily. The universities which support career development of doctors and the organizations which employ doctors should consider how to promote career-path diversification of doctors in order to derive a good deal of social benefit from doctors.

From the results of the web questionnaire about the career development of doctors, the following is read. Many doctors seem to be satisfied with their experience in their doctor's programs and hope to turn the experiences to advantage in their lives. And they seem to consider their seniors in their research fields. Finally, the points of promotion of career-path diversification are discussed on the basis of the results of the questionnaire.

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