

“I Like the Teacher Who Always Listens to My Opinion:”
Prospective Students’ Views of ‘The Best Kind of Teacher’

Philip C. MACLELLAN

要 約

「いつも意見を聞いてくれる教師が好き」 —学生が抱く「もっとも理想的な教師像」—

Philip C. MACLELLAN

教養教育や外国語の習得(SLA)に関する教授法の理論では、学習する側の役割が強調されることが多い。しかしながら、「大学側が学生を選ぶというよりはむしろ学生側が大学を選ぶ」という日本の大学をとりまく経済事情もあいまって、教員の授業方針や一般教養の内容など、教師についての学生の見解を注意深く調べながら大学の制度改革が行われている。神戸女学院大学では、2001年の春、内容重視の言語教授(CBLT)のプログラムを応用する形で英文学科にグローバルコミュニケーションの新しいカリキュラムを立ち上げ、これに重点をおいた。このカリキュラムでは、少人数のクラス編成により、学生が積極的に参加したり相互に議論するなど、「実践」を通して英語の言語能力を高めると同時に、内容について理解し、知識を深めることをめざしている。このような取り組みは、ビジネスや政治、学問領域における指導者において必要とされる新しい能力につながるため、これらの能力を学生に教育することは、21世紀の教養ある専門家に求められる重要な道具の1つを身に付けさせることを意味すると考えられる。

神戸女学院大学では、新しいカリキュラムを実行した最初の年の終わりに評価のための調査を実施した。この調査は、新入生の意見や要望に新しいカリキュラムの目標設定や取り組みが一致しているかを評価するものであった。調査対象者は、2001年度、神戸女学院大学の学生になる可能性がある学生(受験生)であり、彼女たちが表現した教員像の記述データに焦点をあて、分析を試みた。調査内容は、2001年2月2日の入試に出題された「もっとも理想的な教師像」について受験生が回答した小論文であった。対象者843名の記述内容についてコード化し、質的データに関する妥当性を高めるための帰納的な手続きをとった。

その結果、学生が求める教師像に関する意見は、専門的アプローチ、学生との人間関係、個人特性という3つに大きく分けられた。本調査において学生がより好ましいと評価した教師像に関する記述データは、学生の個性を引き出したり、個性にあった教育を行うことや、講義のみの授業というよりはむしろ、議論や意見交換を通して教員と生徒と一緒に協力し合い、相互の関係を深めることなど、興味深い授業を提供することをめざして新しく設立されたグローバルコミュニケーションのプログラム内容と一致していることが示された。これらの結果は、神戸女学院大学がめざすべき教育方針の基準を示唆していると考えられた。今後、さらに、妥当性の高い質的データを収集するため手続きや教授法における意義について検討する必要があると考えられる。

Introduction

Looking back at myself as a learner in a variety of contexts and with different teachers, I recall how certain individuals were able to bring out my best, to get me to think and expand, while others completely turned me off to a subject. Most of us can recall situations in which learning has been greatly promoted and those in which it has been hindered. More often than not, it is not the subject, but the channel through which we learn that makes the difference between inspiration and boredom, encouragement and despair.

Karen Ogulnick, in *Onna Rashiku: The Diary Of A Language Learner In Japan* (1998: 48)

What kinds of teachers do students see as being exceptional, 'the best'? Though this question may at first seem insignificant and dismissed as the subject of a popularity contest, pedagogical theory in education drawing on cognitive and social psychology suggests that learners co-construct meaning as they interact with others in their social environment (Moll 1990, Vygotsky 1978, Wertsch 1985). This view places considerable importance on the effects of the social environment on learners' attitudes toward learning and their subsequent social interactions. In a formal educational setting, the role of the teacher in creating the conditions for learning can be as important as the delivery of course content itself. Factors such as a student's perception of whether the teacher is "kind" or "strict" and the manner in which the teacher interacts with students might be as important considerations for learning as more traditional professional attributes such as the ability to explain concepts clearly and succinctly.

Recent research in second language acquisition (SLA) suggests, moreover, that successful learning of a second language (L2) is motivated not only by a cognitive inquisitiveness but also by an affective desire for identity and community (Norton 2000, Ogulnick 1998). The people and contexts of the learning environment may significantly affect how the learner identifies with the target culture, thus either enhancing or detracting from learning. Thus learners' interactions with and attitudes toward their teachers have profound implications for their success as learners. This is not lost on many language teachers in Japan who regularly find that the first and most important step in teaching here is creating a positive, trusting classroom community within which learning can occur.¹

These pedagogical theories from general education and SLA which place an increased emphasis on the role of the learner in education and which incorporate the learner's views of teachers and the educational context are becoming important considerations in Japan. Private tertiary educational institutions in Japan, even elite institutions that previously enjoyed their choice of student applicants, now face a situation whereby they must compete more vigorously with other institutions in order to maintain enrollment. This is expected to intensify further as the university-aged student population declines in the next decade. This emerging situation in

which “schools no longer choose students but students choose schools” has caused many institutions to re-examine their programs, taking a careful look at students’ interests as to course content, types of classes, and the educational context in general in an effort to create programs that are more attractive to students. These include such alterations as introducing technology, developing programs that teach skills useful in the workplace, and creating smaller classes for more individualized instruction.

At Kobe College, the implementation in April 2001 of a new curriculum in global communications marked an expanded emphasis within the English Department to include a “third pillar” consisting of a more applied program of content-based language teaching (CBLT) to simultaneously develop students’ English language abilities and knowledge of global studies content through “hands-on,” small-sized classes. The global communication motto is “think globally while learning English,” and it is hoped that students will achieve this by actively participating in their learning through “interactive” lessons. This CBLT approach² is designed to equip students with a new set of skills that business, government and academic leaders are stating will become required tools for educated professionals in the 21st century (Wijers-Hasegawa 2000, Warschauer 2000). As we approach the end of the first year of implementation of this new curriculum, it is timely and appropriate to assess the views of incoming students on teaching, learning, and preferred approaches to education as a first step in evaluating the success of the new program. Specifically, I will evaluate whether students’ views of teachers and their approach to teaching are consistent with the goals of the global communications curriculum described above.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and curricular design

Though it is learners who are the primary consumers of the educational enterprise, research on education has tended to focus either on the teacher or on the institutional, socioeconomic, or political dimensions of the educational context. Though recent studies informed by social-constructivist and other learner-centered pedagogies call for an increased focus on the learner in education (Huba and Freed 2000, Wilson 1995, Brooks and Brooks 1999), few studies have focused on the learners themselves. For example, Gorsuch (2000) addresses constraints faced by Japanese ESL teachers in implementing communicative learner-centered language curricula, but does not consider students’ views of this approach to language education.

Our knowledge of students’ individual narratives of their language learning experiences is limited. Studies of learners in foreign language settings, including several studies conducted in Japan, have tended to rely on large-scale survey instruments focusing on a broad range of issues rated either on a binary or Likert quantitative scale for ease of coding and statistical analysis (see Gorsuch 2000, Kimura *et. al.* 2001, Matsuura *et. al.* 2001). Other studies have evaluated student responses through a system of coding developed *a priori* by the researcher according to theoretical expectations or coding systems established in previous studies. While these approaches make valuable contributions, neither of these approaches addresses students’ views based exclusively on students’ voices themselves. Furthermore, while such quantitative, survey-based research provides information about relative preferences of students as a group, they do not facilitate the analysis of individual student’s preferences, nor do they provide an under-

standing of why such concepts are preferred or dispreferred, information that would be useful in developing instructional programs that better accommodate student preferences and needs.

One landmark study on language learning that predates the field of second language acquisition (SLA) itself and which does elicit the attitudes of learners towards language learning through qualitative, semi-structured interviews, is the “Good Language Learner” study undertaken by Naiman *et. al.* in the mid 1970s (Naiman *et. al.* 1975, cited in Skehan 1998: 263). The common qualities that ‘very successful language learners’ attributed to their success include: an active approach to learning; realization of language as both a system and a means of communication; handling of affective demands; and self-monitoring of progress (Skehan 1998: 263). These results characterizing successful language learners as independent, active, and questioning spawned new directions in learner-centered syllabus design, encouraging interaction and promoting learner autonomy through new pedagogic approaches including task-based language learning (TBLT), communicative language teaching (CLT), and the process syllabus. This latter syllabus is considered the most learner centered of all as it places the responsibility for syllabus design and curricular choice squarely on the shoulders of the learner (see, for example, Breen 1987, and Prabhu 1987).

An assumption of the process syllabus is that in order for learners to embrace responsibility for their own learning, their needs and motivations for learning a language must be understood and met. Recognizing that these needs were often not met, further advances in language teaching addressed the language needs of the learner in their current context. A range of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabi address workplace language needs, and specialized academic needs are met through English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) provides an even more comprehensive, general approach to addressing issues of learner autonomy, motivation, responsibility for language learning, and language skills needs through a syllabus that is relevant to learners through its subject content. In ESL settings and particularly in EFL settings in which learners are not surrounded by the target language on a regular basis, a desire to learn the subject matter itself provides a strong motivation for learning a second language. Authentic purpose, content, and context for communication thereby encourage learners to embrace newfound authority and responsibility for their language learning.³

The voices of learners: An ‘emic’ perspective

In the enthusiastic wave to develop curricula that more effectively address learners’ needs, however, the voices of learners have sometimes been all but lost. Recent attempts to rectify this imbalance include qualitative ethnographic studies that attempt to understand learning from an “emic” perspective—through the views of the learners themselves as they are involved in the process of learning, rather than through the preconceived views of researchers based on theory or other “etic” or “outsider” perspectives. Often, these have challenged our basic assumptions about language learning. Norton (2000), for example, provides a critical ethnographic diary study of female foreign language learners in Canada in which the learners’ successes and failures in learning their second language can be attributed as much to emotional or affective factors such as identity and sense of belonging as to cognitive or metacognitive attributes identi-

fied by Naiman *et. al.* in 1975 that have formed the basis of our ideas about language learning ever since. In another diary study, Ogulnick (1998) examines the interplay of gender, identity, and culture during her own experience as a learner of Japanese language in Japan. Morita (2000), on the other hand, provides an ethnographic account of academic discourse socialization of both native and non-native speakers of English in a TESL program in Canada.

As with “emic” approaches to researching language learning generally, studies that present the voices of Japanese learners of English in Japan are few. A review of editions of *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal* from 1999–2001 reveals only two researchers who have directly presented the views of students (see Usuki 1999 and 2001, and Parmenter 2000). The current research also aims to help further fill this void.

The Study

This study attempts to begin a process of evaluating the implementation of the new global communications curriculum by providing baseline data as to the expectations of incoming students regarding teachers’ approaches to teaching, classroom interaction, and other attributes.

The new curriculum implemented in April 2001 emphasizes a content-based approach to teaching language through “hands-on,” small-sized classes in which students actively participate in their learning through “interactive” lessons. By analyzing the views of prospective students, this study will evaluate whether students’ views of teachers and their approach to teaching are consistent with the stated approach of the global communications curriculum. Other aspects of evaluating the global communications curriculum, such as an assessment of whether the content of the curriculum meets the needs of learners, is beyond the scope of this study.

Data collection

Views of students are assessed through a thematic analysis of the essays written by candidates sitting for the Kobe College Entrance Examination in English who were applying for entrance to the School of Letters. This exam was held on February 2, 2001, and the written component of the exam consisted of a 430 word reading passage in English on the topic of education, followed by several pages of questions assessing reading comprehension and knowledge of grammar. Questions were entirely in English, and called for a range of responses, including both short answer recognition type responses in multiple choice and true-false formats and longer more open-ended production type responses. The data for analysis in this study consists of student responses to Part E. The full text of the prompt is as follows: “What kind of teacher do you think is the best? Why? Write a passage of 5 sentences in English.”

A total of 843 essays were obtained. Although the researcher had been involved in the creation, administration, and evaluation of the exam and was therefore familiar with the exam and had viewed the original exam papers, efforts were made to preserve the confidentiality of students. The researcher was not granted access to the original examination papers for the current study, and instead, photocopies of the originals were made and provided for analysis after the candidate number identifying the applicant had been removed.

Method and Coding

In order to preserve the views of students in constructing an emic-based view of “the best kind of teacher,” the data were analyzed through an iterative and inductive process of thematic analysis in which each pass through the data served to identify, clarify, and validate major themes expressed by students as important attributes of superlative teachers. The resulting themes are generalized domains that emerged from the data, constructed from the specific ideas expressed in key words or phrases written by students. All attributes in this construction of superlative teachers are those expressed by students in an open-ended essay, and do not include attributes generated by theory or other empirical studies. These external resources are utilized however in the validation process described below.

The coding procedure implemented in the current study is as follows:

1. All 843 essays were scanned and a one word or one phrase characterization of the main theme was noted (at this stage, unreadable essays were excluded from subsequent analysis).
2. A subset of 30 randomly selected essays were analyzed in detail for emerging themes. These results were further analyzed and a preliminary coding scheme was developed.
3. A random selection of 84 essays (10% of the complete data set) was thematically analyzed using the coding system developed in step 2 above. During this stage, further revisions were made to the system of categorization.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (also referred to as “ethnographic content analysis” by some researchers) is a qualitative extension of *content analysis*, a quantitative method of analyzing texts in which frequency counts of instances of concepts are performed based on a coding system developed by the researcher prior to data analysis. Thematic analysis, however, is a qualitative, inductive approach to identifying general themes expressed in a text through the individual words. It involves searching for recurring topics; recognizing patterns; creating metaphors or analogies for what is expressed; making connections between particular events and general ones; and noting similarities and differences (Kellehear, 1993: 40). Kellehear further contrasts thematic analysis with content analysis:

While content analysis may refine this down to words, thematic analysis usually looks for ideas in the narrative of the text being examined... Moreover, a priori categories which come from theory tend not to be the main approach... Thematic analysis is more subjective and interpretive... [and] takes the data itself as the orienting stimulus for analysis, [attempting] to overcome etic (outsider's) problems of interpretation by staying close to the emic (insider's) view of the world (1993: 39).

Though thematic analysis of long texts can become a lengthy process and raise concerns

of subjectivity, in the case of the short texts under examination here, limits of time and of vocabulary may necessarily have caused students responses to be more general and brief than would have been the case if the data were collected under different conditions. With instructions to write 5 sentences, students may have recorded general words and ideas that are closer to general themes than would be the case if longer texts with more diverse vocabulary had been collected. It could be argued, therefore, that examination conditions facilitate the current thematic analysis.

Results: The “Best Kind of Teacher”

The composite view of the ideal teacher that emerges from the essays of prospective students is one who is knowledgeable not only about subject content but who has also had many life experiences and who is willing to share these with students. The ideal teacher does not only teach subject matter, but also how to learn, and even how to live. Student essays suggest that lessons to be learned from daily experiences are as valuable as the subject matter itself. Honesty is important in the ideal teacher, both in admitting to students what s/he does not know but also in dealing with controversial issues that might emerge in the educational context. Students expressed disdain for hypocrisy and prejudice from teachers who they felt should be teaching them how to live, but yet were less able to recognize hypocrisy and prejudice than the student. Essays also indicate that the personality of the teacher and his or her relations with students is crucial to learning in the classroom, particularly in establishing trust.

The ideal teacher is one who relates well to students, who communicates with them, listens to their opinions, and above all values students as equal human beings, rather than treating them as children, flaunting a status differential, or otherwise dictating personal opinions. The ideal teacher is one who cares enough for students to give advice, not only about subject matter but also about life in general, for this is what the majority of students really look for teachers to provide. In a professional capacity s/he delivers lessons that students can readily understand and that tend to have relevance to their own lives. This teacher is one who encourages students, who builds their confidence through love and caring, and who responds to students' situations appropriately because s/he listens to students' opinions and knows each student individually. On the other hand, while the ideal teacher is friendly, s/he should not be afraid to scold a student when necessary, as that shows that the teacher cares sufficiently about the student to take that sometimes difficult action.

The personality traits of the ideal teacher are varied and in some cases inconsistent, perhaps reflecting the need for teachers to provide appropriate guidance or instruction according to what is needed at that particular time and place and for that individual student. The ideal teacher is friendly, experienced, knowledgeable, well rounded, honest, passionate about his or her subject matter, energetic, kind yet strict when necessary, respected, creative and humorous. Overall, students expect such a teacher to serve as a role model.

These are high expectations for teachers, and student essays indicate that the ideal teacher is a rare individual. While some students used examples from their own experiences to describe their ideal teacher, many more used negative examples of the kinds of qualities that were dis-

preferred. Others expressed a wish to find their ideal teacher *someday*.

Through the thematic analysis, student views of the ideal teacher have been classified into three general domains, as shown in Table 1. These three domains consist of factors associated with the teaching/learning of subject content, factors associated with the interpersonal relationship between teacher and students, and teacher's personal attributes. A surprising result of the analysis is the extent to which affective or emotional factors have been expressed as a precondition to learning. The latter two domains of teacher-student interaction and personal attributes of the teacher are both concerned with affective or emotional conditions that might motivate the learning of content. While the relationship between cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning are beyond the scope of this study, this provides an interesting prospect for future study. It is possible, for example, that under such an interpretation, the three domains might be causally related, representing "what students want to learn," "the interaction with teachers that will facilitate that learning," and "the personal attributes of the teacher that will encourage that kind of interaction."

Table 1 describes the three domains of the ideal teacher and the main themes underlying each domain. What follows is a description of each of the three domains followed by examples

Table 1: Thematic coding of essays written by applicants sitting for the Kobe College School of Letters entrance examination, February 2, 2001 (N=84)

Professional	Interpersonal	Personal
Academic knowledge -subject-specific, expertise -broad, general life experience Approach to teaching -teaches broad-based, practical content -not a lecturer -draws out student's thinking -teaches understandable lessons -encourages student self-reflection Correction -content errors -misbehavior -teaches morality	Understands Ss -feelings -what Ss can understand -both "mind & heart" Close interaction -accessible/approachable -frequent interaction -participates in activities Encourages, Builds confidence -"helps Ss grow" -builds confidence -encourages Doesn't dictate opinion Doesn't treat as a child Status differential -not low -not high -slightly higher Listens to Ss Responds to S situations Loves Ss Authority -provides advice/guidance -career/academic -personal -disciplines/scolds/reprimands	Friendly Trusted Kind Strict Honest with students Creative/unusual Funny/sense of humor Respected Role model Authoritative

of representative student views from the essays. Leading each section is a short excerpt from Ogulnick (1998) which encapsulates that domain. That the views expressed by Ogulnick, a learner of Japanese in Japan, reflect the opinions of Japanese learners of English hints at a universality of experiences of language learners independent of culture and target language.

Factors in the Teaching/Learning of Subject Content

One of the things that bothered me about the role Keio assumed as “teacher” was that he played a more active part than I did in my language practice sessions. He often initiated topics, asked a lot of questions, and filled in gaps when there were impasses.... I actually made very little progress learning to read and write with him. My diary strongly suggests that the problem lay in the didactic role Keio played in my practice. Rather than it being a collaborative and interactive process, learning how to read and write with Keio came to mean little more to me beyond the discipline of memorization and repetition. (Ogulnick, 1998: 44 – 45)

Essays written by prospective students of Kobe College expressed a strong preference for teachers who were knowledgeable about their subject content but who made this information relevant to the lives of students. Students also indicated a preference for a teacher with a broad knowledge who presented various perspectives of the content, and who provided lessons about broader life experiences as well. It should be noted that in the quotations that follow, the writings of students have not been revised, in order to preserve their voices. Though there may be imperfections in language, the views remain clear:

I think that the best teacher is to teach anything. For example, to teach the way of live. Because, to live is not only to learn English or math. Otherwise, to teach pupils like thing. And pupils interested in everything.

I think that the teacher who make the students pleasant is best. Because the lesson is pleasant, too. So the students come to want to go to school. And the students can be friendly relation with the teacher. It lead to their heart which the student want to learn.

I think that the teacher who brings out what is in my mind is best. It is difficult for the pupils to open themselves. If they are brought out this inner ability, they will be happy. These days, the number of the best teachers is very small. In the future, they will be increasingly needed by pupils.

I think that teachers who don't teach their students the right answers soon are good. They give their students some chances to think for themselves. When their students are adults, this education must be useful.

A teacher who has an open mind and several aspects of objects is best... If a teacher teaches students only knowledge, all students have same knowledge and same thoughts. It is foolish to teach

students same things, because students have their own character.

I think that the best teacher is Kinpachi sensei. Because he teaches not only studying, but also living. I think he really loves his students.

Recently, some teacher ignore the happenings like prejudice. Probably, they afraid that the school's reputation will be bad. These teacher should not be qualified to teach something. I don't think who teach only academic subject is good.

Interpersonal Relationship between Teacher and Students

Unlike the rigid boundaries I experienced with Keio, which made me feel blocked off and distanced from him emotionally, Akemi's personal stories, vivid details, imagery, and concreteness, helped to draw me in.... [W]hen the relationship was distant and unconnected, communication became skeletal; when I perceived mutuality and connectedness, there seemed to be a corresponding feeling of extending, responding more fully, sharing more of myself. There are important implications here for language learning, in that feeling connected to another person helps to motivate a learner to want to talk to him or her; whereas, experiencing no such connection often makes communication (even among people who speak the same language) strained and difficult (Ogulnick, 1998: 61).

Like Ogulnick, prospective students at Kobe College expressed that a close relationship with teachers was conducive to enabling them to open up and embrace the learning experience. Even when recognizing the importance of possessing knowledge, a caring, sharing relationship between teacher and student was emphasized, not one that was condescending or that highlighted the status differences of the teacher-learner roles:

I dislike the teacher who already scold his students. I want teacher to think things as if they are students. If teacher do so, teachers will be able to understand our students' will and mind. If more teachers understood our students's mind, the more class is interesting.

It sounds very difficult to be a good teacher but I think its easy. First of all, the best teachers should have a lot of informations and experience many things. Second, at some disposal, they have to be polite to people. Some teachers are very rude to us, I think that such people think that "I am god" and I don't think we will be able to have a good conversation with them. After all, the best teacher must love people, and they must really love to teach things to the next generations.

A teacher whom I think the best doesn't regard his students as only his students.

The great teacher who talk to us very well and listen to our thought. Because we can know that we can depend on the adult. So we come to don't feel uneasy. It's a very important.

The teacher who hear what students talk about is the best. Recently, more and more students become not to trust their teachers. If teachers talk to students or enjoy playing together, students will open their mind. Relation between teachers and students will be good. I think that young people's crimes decrease, too.

[My teacher] helped me a lot and cheered me up when I was depressed and sad. When I talked over her about my friends, she told me what should I do and how to make friends. So this is the teacher I like best and she is the best teacher in the world!

Personality Attributes of Teacher

I was able to relax with her. She is a nice, easygoing person. She also has a good sense of humor; it's very subtle, but she's quick to laugh. We seem to share a strong interest and desire to speak another language.... (Ogulnick, 1998: 116)

Personal attributes were more varied in student essays, but friendly, humorous, kind and honest were commonly cited. Opinions differed on whether an ideal teacher should be knowledgeable, but a broad knowledge was preferred to knowledge limited to a specific subject:

I have my best teacher at my school. He is very kind all of us. He never has his best student. I think it is not so important that teacher's ability. All important of them is whether he loves his student or not.

I think that the teachers who have intelligences are best ones. They are interested in many things and read many books. When I ask them something, they answer it more indeed than I expected.

I think teachers should learn to the world. Because almost of the teachers probably do not know out of school. So they should work other place, and they know out of school.

I think that I like the teacher who is honest. A person who has the courage to tell the truth is. Because when a teacher asked some questions whose answer is unknown by his students, if he fears of telling them that he don't know, he would give them wrong answer. After turning out his mistakes, perhaps he'll lose a respect from his students.

Validation Procedures: Triangulation

Qualitative research is concerned primarily with providing a full description or comprehensive explanation of the collected data rather than providing a generalized model that can be applied to other contexts. For the current study, the focus is largely on the opinions of prospective Kobe College students rather than on the opinions of all students or of language learners more generally. However, an attempt was made to assess the compatibility of the views of pro-

spective students with results obtained in other contexts, and validation evidence was collected for purposes of triangulation.

The main source of data for the triangulation procedure was a collection of 67 essays written by Kobe College freshmen and juniors on their attitudes about the relative importance of teachers and students in the learning process and the attributes of the best teachers and best students. A separate thematic analysis was performed on these essays in which descriptions of teachers were coded in order to help establish whether the views of prospective students align with the views of current Kobe College students.

Kobe College students' views on "the best kind of teacher."

*Write your opinions about the following question: "Who is more important for successful learning, teachers or students?" Then describe your ideas about the **best kind of teacher** and the **best kind of student**.*

This free-writing prompt was given to students in preparation for a discussion on educational issues. The data were collected in three classes, two freshman Writing and Discussion classes (N=42) and a sophomore Current English class (N=25), for a total of 67 essays. A separate thematic analysis was performed on this data. Results are provided in Table 2. In addition to emergent themes, a frequency count of the tokens associated with each theme is provided. Additionally, a summary statement that characterizes the data is provided for each of the three domains.

The thematic analysis of current Kobe College students exhibits similarities to the main data of prospective students. This may not be surprising, as some of the current freshmen are indeed also included in the prospective student data group. However, not only do the data from current Kobe College students corroborate and validate the results of the analysis of essays written by prospective students, but they further elaborate on the significance that emotional or affective dimensions of learning play in the educational process. That the current Kobe College student group includes sophomores who are not enrolled in global communications, nor were part of the entrance examination data set, yet who express similar views, provides further validation evidence.

Opinions of freshmen express a strong emotional aspect to learning, and describe the learning experience as a shared enterprise with the teacher and other students:

I think students. Because student's emotion is very important. If student's emotion is nothing, everything doesn't successful. Teachers always teach us hard.... In other way, teachers is very kind (FSH. 1. 9)⁴.

Mr. MacLellan said "When class' atmosphere is feel down, I try to more active." I think this word very thoughtful. And I feel sympathy from your words "Don't worry," and your comment in journals. So students will be encouraged and make an efforts. I think most important thing is trust (FSH. 1. 20) [underlined in original].

Table 2: Thematic coding of 67 free-writing samples of Kobe College English majors (42 freshmen, 25 sophomores) on the topic of "The Best Kind Teacher." Numbers in parentheses indicate number of tokens—keywords or phrases—coded for each category

Professional Approach to Teaching	Interpersonal Relationship with students (Ss)	Personal Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interests Ss in learning(17) ● Draws out students' abilities(12) ● Individualizes instruction(9) ● Understandable explanation(6) ● Much information(5) ● Information beyond subject matter(4) ● Does not lecture(2) ● Exchange of Opinions(2) ● Variety of approaches(1) ● Equality of all Ss(1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Close T-S interaction(10) ● Listens, accepts, learns from Ss(8) ● Builds S's confidence(7) ● Understands Ss(5) ● T-S cooperate/ help each other(3) ● Advises/counsels Ss(3) ● Scolds/disciplines Ss(1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enthusiastic, passionate(11) ● Knowledgeable, continues to study/ learn(8) ● Considerate/thoughtful(4) ● Kind(4) ● Confident(2) ● Trusted(2) ● Fun(2) ● Flexible(1) ● Friendly(1) ● Independent thinker(1) ● Strict(1)
<p>Summary statements for each domain:</p> <p>Professional: The best kind of teacher interests students in learning by drawing out their abilities, helping them to think and learn by individualizing instruction and providing understandable lessons with much information not exclusively on the subject matter or via lecture but allowing for an exchange of ideas and opinions using a variety of approaches and treating all students equally.</p> <p>Interpersonal: The best kind of teacher is not distant but, rather, is accessible and cultivates a close relationship with students in which both students and teacher freely communicate. The teacher listens to and accepts students' opinions, understands students, builds their confidence. Teacher and students interact in a cooperative manner, with the teacher and students helping each other, and teacher providing advice and discipline when appropriate.</p> <p>Personal: The best kind of teacher is enthusiastic and passionate about teaching as well as knowledgeable about the subject matter through a process of continuous learning. Considerate, thoughtful, kind, confident, trusted and fun.</p>		

Maybe... students. Learning needs thinking. Students always have to think. Teachers are important too. They help students to think. They lead students to answers or truth. If students become not to sure, then if a teacher help her to lead to answers or truth, it might be helpful. BUT, then, adding another students to one student's thinking, they try to think to find answers by their own. Latter is much better than former, I think (FSH. 2. 5).

I think that both teacher and student are important for successful learning. Because, when a teacher teach students, the teachers learn too. Of course, students do.... I think that teachers who do lectures one-sided aren't Best Kind of Teacher.... In fact, I have no idear what kind of teachers and students are best. I can describe what kind of teachers or students is bad (FSH. 1. 11).

I think that both teacher and students work on the lesson with take pleasure. If only teacher hard and students not hard, it is not succeed. That is, what both teacher and students help each other is the most important, I believe (FSH. 1. 17).

Opinions of sophomores tend to emphasize cognitive dimensions of learning more than freshmen, and call on teachers to introduce students to content that is relevant to students' lives and that includes experiences that will help students develop as human beings as well as learners. Additionally, the role of teachers in communicating closely with learners remains apparent:

Students are important. Students have to think for themselves. Nobody can think for others. It is good way for students to think for themselves and try to learn "how" to learn. Teachers are also important. It is good for teachers to teach what is "learning." Knowledge that only memorized is not helpful (SPH. 6).

I think that teachers and students are both important. Teachers should try to teach with considerate mood and attractive talk. If teachers don't have passion, student won't have it too. I want teachers to teach not only studies but also knowledges. Students should be bent on classes. Learning make us grow up. And both should communication with each other. If they get well on, they will learn more (SPH. 9).

Teacher should think about students and have to understand the individually characters. Education is important, but to develop their personality is the most important thing. Jenerally, to teach is the rule of the teacher, but they had better come in contact with students for successful learning (SPH. 13).

Students is more important. Because they must study for themselves. Under coercion studying is no significance. Teachers had better tell them not how to study but what to study. They learn what to study and must find how to study. It is hard for students, but its effort is the secret of success (SPH. 22).

Other Validity concerns

Constrained opinions

Firstly, though the essay prompt itself is open-ended and would seem to encourage free expression without imposing any constraints or influence on the responses, the essay data was collected under examination conditions, and as such, presents two concerns. The first concern is the time limit—students may possibly not have sufficient time to fully formulate and express their response. Particularly as they are asked to write in their second language, time constraints become more pronounced, and lack of resources such as dictionaries mean that applicants will be limited in their ability to fully express their ideas. Another concern is that the applicant realizes that her responses will be graded, and will determine, in part, whether she is accepted by

Kobe College or not. While these concerns are recognized as valid, on the other hand, the context in which the data were collected have validity benefits as well. In particular, the limited range of vocabulary and time constraints may mean that students will only have time and resources to respond with their honest opinions and those which are most important—there is no time to second guess the examiner, nor to decide which word is more appropriate in a given context. Additionally, as the essay consists of only a portion of the English exam, its effect on acceptance decisions are more limited than if it consisted of the entire evaluation.

In any case, these validity concerns have been addressed through the process of triangulation, and their concordance with views expressed in other contexts and absent time constraints and with resources such as dictionaries to support expression enhance the validity of the current study.

Suggestive prompt

As the student examinees read a passage in English prior to writing the essay, the possibility exists that the reading passage might have been suggestive, resulting in opinions expressed that are not truly their own but rather, had been suggested by the reading passage. A reading of the essays, however, shows that this is not a concern. The reading passage contrasted two approaches to teaching subject content: the “sausage filler” approach and the Socratic method. A small number of essays that merely reproduced the passage were discarded from the analysis. However, while students did address issues of learning content, a range of ideas were expressed, and moreover, students’ views of teachers tended to incorporate affective dimensions as often as cognitive dimensions, thus presenting views of learning that were not addressed in the passage. Furthermore, triangulation evidence supports the views expressed in the essays, as they concur with views expressed by current Kobe College students who did not read the passage.

The ideal teacher and the Global Communications curriculum:

If one statement can be made about this study of “the best kind of teacher,” it is that from the viewpoint of the learner, the subject content seems less important than teacher personality, attitudes towards students and the types and extent of interactions the teacher has with students in determining whether learning will occur and whether the student will evaluate the learning experience positively. Therefore, while students might apply to Kobe College because of an interest in the subject matter of the global communications curriculum, it is likely that it will be the interactions with teachers in and out of class, the classroom activities, and the extent to which the content can be made relevant to students’ lives that will determine its success!

Several aspects of the global communications curriculum are consistent with the types of knowledge and interaction patterns that students profess to desire in the ideal teacher. The subject matter itself with its applied focus and examination of personal viewpoints, opinions, and identity supports the expressed views of prospective students who stated that they wanted to learn lessons that would help them grow as humans as well as academically. Small classes enable teachers to know each student as an individual, both in the classroom and through sup-

portive mechanisms such as student journals which allow teachers and students to continue a dialogue that helps the teacher to understand his/her students and develop a closer relationship with students. Interactive lessons which allow students to express their opinions are important in facilitating a supportive atmosphere that is conducive to students opening up and becoming ready to learn. Moreover, these types of lessons help to facilitate student learning by providing students with opportunities to co-construct meaning about the content to an extent that could not be achieved through a lecture format.

If we are to accept the expressed views of students as important factors enabling students to learn, then this information should be useful in allowing the global communications program to develop approaches that are aligned with student views. While personality attributes of teachers are clearly a subjective matter, it may be possible to incorporate methods of instruction that satisfy needs expressed by students. A project-based curriculum, for example, can address student interests, individualize instruction, develop academic and life skills, and encourage interaction between students and faculty.

Pedagogical Implications: Social Constructivism, Learner Autonomy, and Scaffolded Projects.

Students have described the ideal teacher in ways that incorporate not only the direct transfer of knowledge but also the ability to encourage students to learn for themselves, and an understanding of the student as a human being, not only in the role of learner. This view of the ideal teacher incorporates not only the cognitive domain but also the affective domain, and the personality of the teacher and interaction the teacher has with students are vital components in preparing the learner for the transfer of knowledge. The importance of social interaction expressed by prospective and current Kobe College students appears to align well with the social constructivist paradigm for learning:

The social constructivist model assumes all knowledge is social in nature. Learning occurs in a context of social interactions leading to understanding. Learners are active risk takers who accept challenges and understand how and why to learn. They are given opportunities to restructure information in ways that make sense to them. Learners connect with their previously known information. They generate questions and comments as learning becomes internalized. Learners first experience active problem-solving experiences with others, but gradually they become independent problem-solvers. Initially, the teacher or more knowledgeable person controls and guides the learners' activities. Eventually, the teacher and learners share the responsibilities with the learners taking the lead. The teacher continues to guide the learners' emerging understandings, providing assistance as needed. Finally, the teacher gives the learner the full range of responsibilities by removing all assistance. This progression from someone else being responsible for the learning to the student being responsible for themselves is an appropriate way to create an effective sequence of learning. This internalization process begins on a social plane and moves to an inner plane where information becomes part of each individual's

evolving knowledge base (Roehler and Cantlon 1996: 2).

Naiman's (1975) "Good Language Learner" research highlighted the significance of a questioning attitude, responsibility for one's own learning, and an awareness of self and one's ability in the foreign language to the extent that one can monitor one's own performance, as these attitudes were shown to provide learners with increased exposure to target language input and opportunities to interact in the target language (Skehan: 1998: 263). It is suggested here that learner autonomy in particular is a crucial learner outcome in foreign language settings such as Japan, because the opportunities for target language input and interaction are fewer than in second language settings. However, foreign language syllabi such as the process syllabus in which the learner is understood to take the primary responsibility for learning appear to require too much of the learner at the beginning.

If we are to believe the views of students that emphasize the social interaction with teachers and with classmates, incorporating affective as well as cognitive psychological domains, then the transition to learner autonomy must be facilitated carefully by teachers. In Japan where the educational culture has tended to cultivate passive learners, the challenge for language teachers in scaffolding or preparing learners for autonomy is even greater. Skehan (1998) indicates that simply relating well to students is not sufficient, and instead involves a complete reversal or transition in the roles of student and teacher that must be planned and incorporated into the curriculum to have maximum effect. Using the process syllabus as an example for doing this, Skehan states:

Learners need to know how to be effective learners, since they are being given considerable authority and power, while teachers need to be able to accept a very different position with respect to their authority. Neither of these changes will occur easily. Learning how to become an effective learner is not an easy task and requires careful preparation.... Similarly, teachers have to learn how to relinquish power, as well as how to provide useful information and advice to learners from their new role (1998: 263).

How to bring about these changes? Benson and Voller (1997) provide a wide-ranging academic discussion of learner autonomy, including an elaboration of Holec's (1981) five principles for autonomy in language learning: the conduciveness of the *contexts*, the *skills* learners need to define and develop, the capacity or *ability* that needs to be enhanced, the *responsibility* that needs to be encouraged, and the *rights* to learn that need to be asserted (Candlin, xi, in Benson and Voller, 1997). These five principles provide a basis for examining the educational contexts in which learners learn.

For a practical view of how to achieve these principles, Skehan (1998), Fried-Booth (1988), Wenden (1998) and Scharle and Szabo (2000) among others recommend a project-based curriculum as an effective vehicle for scaffolding autonomy for learners and power-sharing for teachers, while Haines (1989) focuses exclusively on the EFL context.⁵ Through a gradual process of starting with small-scale closed tasks and then building up the scale of pro-

jects while reducing their specificity, eventually only a framework remains within which students can fill in the details according to their needs and interests (Skehan 1998: 272–279). The above resources provide examples of projects appropriate for each level of the transition.

Extending the project-based curricula further, MacLellan and Grimes-MacLellan (2001), who suggest that the inductive approach of anthropological ethnographic methods of inquiry fit naturally into a curriculum designed to develop learner autonomy, present an ethnographic project-based curricular model developed at Kobe College and other universities in the Kansai area. The flexibility of the modular curriculum design allows for the scaffolding of relinquished control for teachers and autonomy for learners, as the modules can be incorporated gradually. However, other less comprehensive activity-based suggestions for promoting the autonomy that motivate learners to be active in their language learning are available (see Bronner, 2000; Brajich 2000).

Students themselves must improve their ability of self-analysis and encourage themselves to trust in their own potential. At the same time, it is extremely important for students to receive the support and understanding of the teacher if students are to comfortably engage in this productive but risky behavior. The teacher's role is to make an effort to understand the learners' perspectives, and to trust their potential. Van Lier (1996) argues that 'a teacher cannot simply transmit the sort of skills and attitudes to learners that are required, nor can he or she train learners in the way that recruits are trained to march in step.' Fostering autonomy is not just a matter of learning a few techniques—it involves changing the way in which we relate to learners (Usuki 1999: 9). The learners voices themselves are calling on us to do that.

Implications for future research

The current study is intended to begin the process of evaluating the new global communications curriculum by assessing whether its goals and approaches to teaching coincide with the views of teaching and of teachers expressed by current and prospective students of Kobe College. Much additional work is necessary, including assessments of whether the goals of the curriculum are being achieved, whether the manner in which the curriculum is being implemented is the most effective, and, in the more distant future, whether the skills of graduates of the program are indeed in accordance with program goals. These questions, and others identified by faculty, would comprise a long-term research program evaluating the implementation of the global communications curriculum. The current study provides only a first step.

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NOTES:

- 1 See the body of work by Tim Murphey, for example, for a comprehensive decade-long examination of methods for creating a supportive classroom learning community in Japanese universities.
- 2 Brinton et. al. 1989 provides an extensive treatment of CBLT, including its rationale, three basic approaches to CBLT and examples used in ESL and EFL contexts, practical issues such as administrative issues which must be considered, and suggestions for developing and evaluating CBLT programs and materials.
- 3 See MacLellan 2000 for a computer-based syllabus, Choi, et. al. 1998 for a process-based approach to writing with a culturally-sensitive design created by participants from five countries, and Fried-Booth 1988 for a project-based approach to CBLT.
- 4 The alphanumeric code following each quotation is merely a means of identification. FSH. 1. 9, for example, indicates student nine of freshman class one. These reference numbers were created only for

the purpose of this study and have no meaning beyond this context.

- 5 According to Warchauer (2000: 511), a leading proponent of Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) who has worked in numerous EFL settings, "project-based learning-incorporating situated practice and critical inquiry, and based on students' own cultural frameworks-will be required if students are to master the complex English literacy skills required by the emerging informational economy and society." See Shield *et. al.* (1999) and Vilmi (1998) for discussions of two EFL IT-based projects involving MOO and email exchange projects, respectively.

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