A Sequential Theme-based Method for Teaching English

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Abstract

This practical report aims to explore and explain the ways in which a sequential and theme-based approach to the teaching and learning of English in a university level course in Japan was both beneficial and enjoyable for approximately 180 students in seven classes, which were taught at two different universities.

The aim was for students to practice speaking and writing based on the functional and grammatical use of English in natural situations, using short movie clips as the source material and using the themes and relevant vocabulary to create their own situations and conversations. Over the duration of the course, students were progressively challenged to expand their range of abilities. Group learning and peer support were encouraged to allow for a shared learning experience.

Key Words: sequential learning 連続学習, theme-based teaching テーマに基づいた教育法, movies as source material 教材としての映画, group learning グループ学習, peer support ピアサポート

1. Introduction

You may have looked at your watch and experienced a “time not moving” phenomenon. Does your watch have a hand that sweeps or jumps from second to second? Does it have a second-by-second digital display? Glance at your watch or any slowly changing readout and you will notice what feels like a slight pause before the hand moves or the readout changes. This pause will feel longer than all subsequent pauses.

The effect, a result of our attention shifting between different experiences, is well documented and can be seen as proof that our brain plays “catch up” with reality.

Reality, as Jean-Paul Sartre has described it, is a condition in which everything happens all at once and the human tendency is to create or imagine a beginning, middle and end through a process of storytelling.
Another way to frame this thought is that we naturally try to interpret the world sequentially. Our brain wants to create a logical order of events or experiences\(^4\) and this is intimately connected with how we process information. It is reasonable to suggest this is equally true about how students encode information.

This practical report will discuss ways students were provided with the opportunity to develop their English abilities in study units that progressed through a number of steps designed to flow clearly from one to the next and that were unified by a weekly theme. Techniques such as pattern-matching, trial-and-error (and correction) learning, group learning, information gap exercises, role plays, presentations, writing assignments—a “full dance card” of tasks and methods—were employed.

Practically, the “always keep things moving” approach is a useful classroom management technique. Students are constantly challenged by the rapid pace and entertained by the variety show or invigorating magazine format of the class. Underlying the fun is the flow of the lesson, where each successive step builds on the last one and students enjoy the “ah-hah!” experience of seeing the links between each stage of the class.

Beyond the atmosphere of the classroom and into the future lives of these students, each of the skills students must practice will become invaluable assets in professional, social and personal situations. The talent to spot a trend, to see the world from another person’s perspective, to demonstrate creativity in a team situation, to adapt to a rapidly changing environment—on the job, in family life, while traveling in a foreign country—will be a valuable life asset. Moreover, and as the centerpiece to any English course, students must be satisfied and aware (and are often surprised and delighted) at how much useful English they have actually learned.

One of the key aims of this practical report is to share an approach that may be useful to other educators in creating, selecting or using theme-based content to support their students’ learning goals.

2. Objectives

The goal of the course, provided to students in the course outline, was for students to practice speaking and writing based on the functional and grammatical use of English in natural situations, using short movie clips as the source material and using the themes and relevant vocabulary to create their own conversations.

The course syllabus students received appears in the Appendices at the end of this practical report as Appendix item 1.

3. Method - The source material paradox and structure of the lessons

The choice of which source material to use was guided by two seemingly conflicting sentiments. The first was the desire for material that would be engaging and fascinating, something that would feel like entertainment. Also, with a sense of what was “proper” in a university setting, there was the desire to provide students with a “text” or at least a reference work to supply students with ample opportunities to practice English in a storytelling context.

Taking heart from the famous Marshall McLuhan quote, “Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn’t know the first thing about either.\(^5\)”, a movie was chosen from one of the world’s top 100 best comedies as the starting point for themes that would unite each lesson.
and a storyline that might capture the students’ interests.

In preparing to write the individual lessons, a preliminary sorting and storytelling process had to take place. This began with a complete viewing of the movie to generally sense whether there were enough interesting and important themes to mine from the comedic action.

Next, five to 10 minute segments were viewed several times. The constant question was, “What relevant themes can we use from this segment?” For example, a scene in which characters quarrel and then make up could be used to explore the language of conflict resolution, good and bad ways to express disagreement, how to apologize and so forth.

Only two themes were chosen from each segment and only one theme was used as the writing topic for each class. This was done to provide students with a relatively consistent focus for each lesson.

Individual elements of the lessons will be discussed below. Samples of two consecutive lessons appear in the Appendices at the end of this practical report as Appendix items 2 and 3.

3.1 Themes for the lessons

At the start of each class students received a lesson plan, samples of which are shown as Appendix items 2 and 3, which also functioned as a worksheet for class activities. The preamble to the vocabulary and phrases sections described the flow of the class and listed the themes for the two classes that were based on each five to 10 minute movie clip.

Thirty weeks of themes for the classes and “writing stimulus” questions appear at the end of this practical report as Appendix item 4.

The theme was introduced at the onset to set the tone for the entire lesson. Students could settle into their seats, read the short description at the top of their lesson plan and get acquainted with the idea of the class.

For a theme like giving compliments, the class might begin with a nice 15 second round of comments to random students, like “what a cool watch”, “your necklace is beautiful”, “that’s a really modern looking mobile phone”, “your backpack is wonderfully colorful”, etc. In smaller classes, students were encouraged to trade compliments with their partners. The theme was established and students were laughing and ready for the class.

3.2 Vocabulary: Words and Phrases

Students are quickly activated by the listen and repeat pronunciation drill in the vocabulary section. All of the words chosen have been taken from the movie clip and there may be some that are from the subsequent comprehension quiz. There are a number of selection criteria for the 10–15 vocabulary words and five to 10 phrases. Particular attention is paid to select words that are relevant to the lesson themes, that are high-frequency words, that are words whose meanings must be known in order to understand the movie clip and that are words that will be used in the subsequent comprehension quiz. There is also attention paid to idioms that students will likely encounter in natural spoken English and that may be used in the movie clip. All words in the vocabulary section appear and are defined with the usage that will be used in the movie clip. These criteria are also used to select the phrases in the vocabulary section.

The vocabulary section also provides an opportunity for the teacher to “flag” particular words or phrases that will be necessary for the group writing exercises, that may be challenging in the comprehension quiz, or that may be important in the role play, conversation or bonus exercise sections of the lesson. Only a cou-
ple of words are usually selected for special notice and always with funny and illustrative examples, such as asking if students want two Brad Pitts or Johnny Depps to illustrate the word “clone” or about the price of a real versus fake Chanel, Gucci or Prada handbag when “knockoff” is the target word.

3.3 Individual writing exercise

Moving from the vocabulary to the individual and pair-work writing exercises may be integrated into the “listen and repeat” activity when the teacher has particularly large classes. With 20 to 40 students there is more benefit in group activity than in attempting to correct each student’s writing while 19 to 39 others labor alone. Students enjoy the teacher’s expansive gestures and comment to students, “You have words [hands almost touching each other] and phrases [hands a bit wider apart]. Now you will make sentences [hands further apart] and conversations [hands very far apart]. Then we will watch a movie that uses everything [arms far apart and waving in the air]!”

When class sizes are from five to 10 students, it can be helpful to have students do the individual writing exercise and read their completed sentences to their classmates. Individually, students can be encouraged to write sentences that are about their own experiences or that are about topics that are interesting or important to them. As with the logical flow from hearing words, using them in sentences, using the sentences in conversations, and then watching these words and phrases used in a movie to convey the themes of the lesson, the message is that everything may be expressed in a logical order and in a meaningful context.

3.4 The pair work writing exercise

In small classes of five to 10 students, there is a lively pair work exchange between partners who assess each other’s sentences and decide what sort of conversation they will create together. As a “teaser” to the other students, each dyad (or triad in unevenly numbered classes) will write their target English sentence on the board and others can decide if they want to try making a conversation using that sentence or (as is usually the case) create their own dialogue.

In small classes each dyad or triad completes all of the conversations, which are like mini-skits, and quite happily performs them to the approving nods, delight and applause of the other groups.

Larger classes must have a different format and pair work becomes group work. A “safety in numbers” approach is used to ensure that everyone gets a chance to perform and to encourage increased levels of peer support. Rather than have each group perform each conversation, three to five students work together to create a conversation based on only one word or phrase. The teacher may then use the same amount of time per group with 20 to 40 students in larger groups as with six to 10 students individually.

With larger class sizes the individual writing exercise has been absorbed into the group writing exercise, but the fun level has been increased and there is usually a lively atmosphere as students craft and practice their presentations.

In the large class situation, each group writes their entire dialogue on the board. Again, there is a very social atmosphere as students write, the teacher makes corrections in a contrasting color and other students copy all the dialogues onto their worksheets. The “take-away” benefit of this activity is that all students have corrected example dialogues of the target vocabu-
lary for the lesson.

Then come the presentations, where groups are called to the front and present their dialogues using a cordless microphone. The smallest groups in the large class-size situations may have speakers A, B and C. Larger groups may have A, B, C, D and E. Each member will perform in turn and then switch roles for a second round. The teacher may erase all or part of the dialogue (since students should have and actually may have rehearsed their conversations) for the second round to the gasps of glee and mock-horror from the students.

There is the same result and sequential flow as in the smaller classes, but the process may require a good deal more choreography. Throughout this activity, the teacher may act as master of ceremonies and animator to focus the large group on the performers and ensure their support for each of the groups.

After applause for jobs well done and as a break after the hustle and bustle to this point, students return to their seats for the first showing of the movie clip.

3.5 First showing of the 5 to 10 minute movie clip

The movie clip allows students to see and hear the words and phrases they have been using to make sentences and conversations in a natural context. Vocabulary practice and individual and group writing sections have prepared students to catch the target words and phrases more easily. The movie clip allows students to reflect on how the target language is used in the order that they have just practiced using it. Importantly, the movie clip features the theme of the lesson as part of the storyline.

While one obvious function of the movie clip is to provide an opportunity for students to improve their listening and comprehension skills, this section also provides the teacher with clues about the students’ abilities and temperament. During the screening of the movie, the teacher must notice which parts students seem to be finding difficulty with and parts that the students enjoy. The teacher can monitor individual students to roughly gauge listening skills and also monitor group responses to the movie content. Expressions of confusion, mirth, concern, enjoyment, amusement, distraction and boredom are valuable indicators to the teacher. These reactions hint at whether students require clarification or are prepared for an enriching expansion later in the class.

Especially interesting during the showing of the movie clip is the non-attentive behavior students may exhibit in larger classes. Attempts to sleep, check mobile phone emails, send text messages, chat with desk mates and so forth must be addressed in a positive, gentle and respectful manner.

Teachers are usually sympathetic to students whose ability needs improvement, but may feel disappointment, resentment or hostility toward students whose motivation is not high enough. It has been this writer’s experience that a good−natured response — positive, gentle, respectful, polite, and friendly — is absolutely essential. Immediately take the student’s perspective and concede their point. Teachers may direct behavior back to attentiveness by politely saying, “[Student’s first name], I understand it’s more fun to text friends [or whatever other non-attentive action the student is taking] than study English. Try to also have fun in class with everyone here. OK?”

Students are typically extremely embarrassed to have been “caught out” in their antisocial behavior and praising them with phrases like “welcome back to the group” or “thank you for coming back to us” usually evokes a blush
and a smile that restore equilibrium.

While much more could be said on the important topic of student motivation and classroom harmony, we will not delve further into this area at this time. Within the scope of this practical report on a sequential theme-based method for teaching English, the next stage to be discussed is the comprehension quiz.

3.6 Comprehension quiz

After the movie clip, students are asked to turn over their papers and complete the comprehension quiz. The instructions, “Please work on the answers to these questions together. This is not a test. Please work together. Please talk together.” are given and the teacher visits students as they fill in their papers.

The comprehension quiz employs three types of questions. The general comprehension multiple choice questions, which are asked in the same order as these events appear in the movie, test the students’ ability to follow a storyline. The next questions are “true” and “false” choices. The last few questions are “information gap” multiple-choice questions in which students may use vocabulary from “Today’s Words and Phrases” to complete the task. These types of questions are similar to TOEIC examination questions and will help students feel more comfortable taking these types of tests.

Another component of the quiz is that students may switch papers and check each other’s answers. This allows for peer learning and gets students ready for the role-play and conversation parts of the class.

The quiz performs a number of other functions in the orderly flow of the class. Question order echoes the sequence in which students were introduced to the target vocabulary, sentence creation and conversation writing part of the class. The quiz also reviews the events in the movie, which feature the theme of the lesson. Quite often, the quiz is used in a pass-the-cordless-microphone event in which one student asks the question and the next student gives the answer. This allows 14 to 16 students to speak and the entire class to focus on the movie content.

3.7 Second showing of the movie clip

As with the quiz, the second showing of the movie clip also performs a number of functions useful in the orderly progress of the class.

Most importantly, the second showing of the movie clip or a shorter part of the movie clip is a clear transition to the role-play section of the class that most often focuses on the theme of the class. For example, the topic of going to parties may be evoked by showing a brief conversation people have at the start of a party. Often, students are able to understand and confirm the answers they got in the quiz and get ready for the speaking part of the class.

In the interests of providing a tighter focus on the lesson’s theme and with the aim of reducing non-active time for students, the second showing of the movie clip may be dramatically shorter than the first showing. A typical first showing may be five to 10 minutes. The duration of a typical second showing is 30 seconds to a minute. This is just long enough to show a conversation that is similar to the role-play conversation.

3.8 Role play

The role-play usually begins with a “listen and repeat” run through the dialogue and the assigning of roles, with students alternating between roles. Students are asked to stand up for the conversation and to act out the scene. Gestures, pronunciation, facial expressions and other elements of oral presentation are all prac-
ticed role-playing the scene and, in the follow-
ing week, in the conversation with substitutions section and in the further development of the lesson theme in the bonus exercise section.

3.9 Conversation with substitutions

This opportunity for students to improve their spoken English skills builds on the role-play from the previous day. Substitutions allow students to practice many short conversations using the same pattern sentences and new information that has been provided.

3.10 Bonus exercise conversation

The is another chance for students to practice conversation with substitution suggestions and a greater amount of freedom, where students are encouraged to provide their own information and to expand the conversation using their own ideas.

In the bonus exercise conversation, as in the role-play and the conversation with substitutions, the teacher sets up the activity and ensures it takes place smoothly. This is accomplished with a “listen and repeat” rehearsal, monitoring the progress of the conversations and ample praise and encouragement. The conversations are also places where students may practice presentation and speech-making skills. Gradually moving away from the scripted conversation and into their own ideas and following such suggestions as “gesture, smile, speak clearly and make eye contact” all help students speak more naturally.

3.11 Short essay writing

This section may be an in-class activity, assigned as homework or used as part of a midterm or final exam in smaller-sized classes.

Students must write a few sentences about some aspect of the day’s lesson. The topic will be assigned and “thought stimulation” questions may help students generate ideas about the day’s writing topic. In addition to writing, students may practice peer learning, support and evaluation. Students may have the opportunity to read their compositions to their partners or to the class, comment, make changes and suggest grades for each other’s writing in class.

The short essay writing section may also be adapted into a “bucket brigade” activity for a first class, larger class or class that has invested a longer amount of time in some earlier part of the lesson.

In a “bucket brigade” drill one student may ask a question and another will answer it and, in turn, ask the next question to the next student who then answers it and asks the next question to the next student and so on. The question list, using appendix item 2 as an example, may be: “Do you like parties? Why? Why not? What kind of parties do you go to? When did you last go to a party? Where was it? Did you have fun? What did you wear? Formal clothing? A costume? What did you do at the party?” and other questions students come up with.

Each short-essay writing topic section contains a similar list of questions to act as a stimulus for writing, but which can be adapted to facilitate a more free-ranging discussion in more advanced classes or provide support lower-level students may require.

In whatever way the short-essay writing topic section is used it will still accomplish the goal of enabling students to engage in production of the theme of the lesson, whether that is talking about going to parties or practicing ways to give and receive compliments. The earlier elements of the lesson will have given students the vocabulary, models and practice to achieve this
5. Discussion

This practical report described ways in which a sequential and theme-based approach to the teaching and learning of English in a university level course in Japan was both beneficial and enjoyable for approximately 180 students in seven classes, which were taught at two different universities.

The challenge was always to move the perception students may have had of English study as boring, unnatural and serious toward the possibility that English study could sometimes be interesting, intuitive and humorous. This is an attitude shift that serves to make English learning more enjoyable and beneficial.

The limitations and adaptations in a sequential theme-based course of study also merit some discussion. Three questions will be addressed: 1) Does following a storyline impose an unnecessarily rigid structure on the course? 2) Can lessons function as stand-alone units? 3) What if a student misses a class?

On the issue of storyline importance, the reality is that the movie is simply a 10-minute source material resource in an English class rather than the text of a film appreciation course. The lesson plans students receive each week are the text of the course.

While the internal structure of each lesson is laid out to be most effective when the teacher proceeds in a sequential manner, each lesson may function as a stand-alone unit. While there is continuity from the first to the second day of each two-day cycle, there is enough overlap to ensure that either day will provide overall storyline continuity.

This is accomplished by stating the two themes students should watch for in the movie clip and repeating the movie clip and vocabulary each day of a two-day cycle while varying
the sentence and dialogue writing sections, providing a new set of comprehension questions, a different focus for the conversation section and a new theme for the short−essay writing section at the end of the lesson on a lesson-by-lesson basis.

Students who miss a day will still have the sequence for each lesson and the themes for the entire course.

6. Conclusion

Teachers may find it useful and are wholeheartedly encouraged to reformulate a combination of the elements described in this practical report to their own purposes and to serve the needs of their students.

Notes

1) http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/eagleman09/eagleman09_index.html
2) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul_Sartre
3) This is one of the thoughts in “Being and Nothingness” that Sartre discusses as a case of ontological temporality (and our wish to deny it) at http://books.google.co.jp/books?id=Ezee3ude5QC&pg=PA130&lpg=PA130&dq=the+ontology+to+temporality&source=bl&ots=p9cUVHrnxY&sig=NGEa3tGHC7xI3pku-XWUqHuOplo&hl=ja&sa=X&ei=rdRbUPeSG-SOmQW_7IGgBw&ved=0CEEQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=the%20ontology%20to%20temporality&f=false
4) http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/eagleman09/eagleman09_index.html
5) http://thinkexist.com/quotations/anyone_who_tries_to_make_a_distinction_between/152852.html

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http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/eagleman09/eagleman09_index.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequence_learning
http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/content−based−instruction

Appendices

Appendix item 1

The syllabus students received is set out below:
Course Syllabus

Course Goals and Aims: The goal of this course is for university students to practice speaking and writing—based on the functional and grammatical use of English in natural situations—using short movie clips and conversations as a basis for these lessons.

Method: Each week students will view a short clip from a popular Hollywood movie and have the opportunity to use a sample dialogue as an aid to understanding the particular language function that week’s lesson will focus on. For example, students may practice greetings, ways to say goodbye, intonation to communicate meaning, asking for clarification and a wide range of other practical topics.

Plan: Classes will feature the following basic outline and structure for each lesson.

Vocabulary: Today’s Words and Phrases: Here, 10 to 15 words and five to 10 phrases, which appear later in the movie clip or comprehension quiz, are presented.

Individual writing exercise: Students use the words and phrases to write sentences that convey the meaning of the target vocabulary.

Pair work writing exercise: Students have the chance to compare their work from the individual writing exercise and use it with a partner to write short conversations. These conversations are then practiced and performed for the benefit of the presenters and the students watching each presentation.

First showing of the 10-minute clip from the movie: This allows students to see and hear the words and phrases in a natural context. It also introduces the teaching point of the lesson—which may be, for example, to demonstrate the use of intonation to convey different meanings—and provide both listening and comprehension practice.

Comprehension quiz: After the movie clip students, in groups, will have time to answer and discuss three types of questions. The general comprehension multiple choice questions, which are asked in the same order as these events appear in the movie, test the students’ ability to follow a storyline. The next questions are “true” and “false” choices. The last few questions are “information gap” multiple-choice questions in which students may use vocabulary from “Today’s Words and Phrases” to complete the task. These types of questions are similar to TOEIC examination questions and will help students feel more comfortable taking these types of tests. Another component of the quiz is that students switch papers and check each other’s answers. This allows for peer learning and gets students ready for conversations/role play parts of the class.

Second showing of the 10-minute clip from the movie: This is a clear transition from the comprehension quiz to the role-play section of the class. It enables students to understand and confirm the answers they got in the quiz and prepares them for the speaking part of the class.
Role Play: Students take roles of characters in the movie in a short conversation. The conversation may focus on a skill like intonation or the functional theme of the lesson may be practiced.

Conversation: with substitutions and additional conversations These build on the role play from the previous day. Substitutions allow students to practice short conversations using new information that has been provided. Students complete the substitution task and then move on to an additional conversation where they may provide their own information to expand the conversation.

In-class work/ Homework: Short essay writing topic: Students must write a few sentences about some aspect of the day’s lesson. The topic will be assigned and there will be “thought stimulation” questions to help students generate ideas about the day’s writing topic. In addition to writing, students will practice peer learning, support and evaluation. Students will read their compositions to their partners, comment, make changes and grade each other’s writing in class.

Evaluation: Classroom performance—vocabulary practice, reading, listening, using lesson themes and teaching points, showing comprehension, speaking and writing—will provide the teacher with a basis for assessing students’ abilities. A mid-term and final exam will provide an additional measure of student achievement. This course should be useful, practical, interesting and fun!

Appendix item 2

This is the first sample of the lesson worksheets students receive at the start of each class. An odd numbered lesson is always the first day of a two-week cycle.

L1 (L15) plan Otsuma Women’s University

● Introduction: Today’s themes are going to a party and giving compliments. You will practice using vocabulary and phrases, watch a short movie clip to see the vocabulary and phrases used in natural conversation and have a short quiz about the movie clip. You will practice a conversation. Then you will write a short essay on the topic of going to a party.

● Vocabulary: Today’s Words and Phrases

Please check the meanings of the following words:

uh uh=a casual way to say “no thank you”,
“I don’t want to”, “no” or “I don’t”
delighted=very happy
delighted=very happy
maître d’=the boss of the serving staff in a restaurant
tuxedo=a formal suit men often wear at special events
knockoff=copy of something else
knockoff artist=someone who copies someone else’s ideas
cloned=made an exact copy of
incisive=able to see and understand deeply
Beluga=eggs from the sturgeon fish, called Beluga caviar
(Beluga caviar costs 700,000 to 1,000,000 yen per kilogram)
imintimate=comfortable, personal and informal
invisible=something that can’t be seen
attracted=interested in getting closer
vulnerable=in a weak position
Please check the meanings of the following phrases:

- love your tux = your tuxedo looks very nice
- get everyone’s input = ask for everyone’s ideas
- up front = at the start of the project
- Glad you could make it = I’m happy you came here.
- Now that’s what I call a tuxedo = That is a wonderful tuxedo.
- Watch it = Be careful about what you are doing.
- I’m not really a big one for... = I don’t like...
- it’ll pass = you will feel better in a while

Please make sentences to show the meanings of the following words or phrases:

- uh uh  [Example: My stomach was full so I said “uh uh” when he asked me if I wanted some cake.]

- delighted

- knockoff

- clone

- get everyone’s input

- up front

With your partner, please make a short conversation using the sentences from above:

- uh uh  [Example: A: Hey, you don’t have any of the cake! Why didn’t you get some?  
  B: My stomach was full so I said “uh uh” when he asked me if I wanted some cake.

- delighted

- knockoff

- clone

- get everyone’s input
First showing of eight to 10-minute clip

● Comprehension quiz:
Please choose the correct answer:

1. What does Miss Patterson tell the boss, Mr. MacMillan?
   a. Miss Patterson says she is having a lovely time.
   b. Miss Patterson says she didn’t go to the last party.
   c. Miss Patterson says she wants a double scotch whisky.

2. Why do people laugh when Josh arrives at the party?
   a. Josh falls down the stairs when he arrives.
   b. Josh arrives at the party wearing an unusual tuxedo.
   c. Josh smokes a cigarette when he gets out of the elevator.

3. Where does Susan look at a dinosaur?
   a. Susan looks at a dinosaur beside Josh’s apartment.
   b. Susan looks at a dinosaur inside Josh’s apartment.
   c. Susan looks at a dinosaur outside Josh’s apartment.

4. The boss thinks Susan needs to spend more time talking about business ideas.
   a. True.
   b. False.

5. Susan and Josh stand up on the car seats.
   a. True.
   b. False.

6. Susan wants to give her boss a compliment and says, “__________”
   a. I love your tux.
   b. I love your watch.
   c. I love your books.

7. Susan compliments Josh for being able to understand deeply which toys are fun by telling him his ideas were ________.
   a. incisive
   b. intimate
   b. invisible

8. Susan tells Josh she doesn’t really like parties by saying, “__________”
   a. I’m not really a big one for parties.
   b. I like parties that are really big ones.
   c. I’d really love to go to a big party with someone.

REPEAT of role play conversation video clip

● Role Play: SCENE 41

MISS PATTERSON: It's very beautiful and I'm having a lovely time.
MR. MACMILLAN: I'm glad Miss Patterson.
MISS PATTERSON: It's much better than last year. I just wanted to tell you that.
MR. MACMILLAN: I'll have another scotch... Susan.
SUSAN: Love your tux.
MR. MACMILLAN: I think it's the same as the maitre d's.
SUSAN: Have you decided what you're doing on the Danberry line? I think if you got everyone's input up front, I mean right from the beginning...
MR. MACMILLAN: Susan, have a drink. In fact, have a couple drinks. It's a party!
Short essay: Please write two or three sentences about going to parties: Do you like parties? Why? Why not? What kind of parties do you go to? When did you last go to a party? Where was it? Did you have fun? What did you wear? Formal clothing? A costume? What did you do at the party? You can use these questions and your own ideas. Or, you can write about what happened in the movie.

[Please switch papers and check your partner’s short essay.]

Homework Please review vocabulary, conversations and your writing from today.

Appendix item 3

This is the second sample of the lesson worksheets students receive at the start of each class. An even numbered lesson is always the second day of each two-week cycle. The same movie clip, which contains two themes, is shown for two consecutive weeks. Each week the introduction lists the movie clip themes, describes the work of the class and tells students which of the two themes they see in the movie clip will be their writing topic for that lesson. The vocabulary section remains constant for two weeks while the individual sentence and short conversation writing sections move through the vocabulary list. Naturally, the comprehension quiz features new questions each week. There are always eight questions for the first week of each two-week cycle and only seven questions for the second week. In the first week of the cycle, the “production” section after the quiz is a short role-play repeat of a conversation from the movie. In the second week, two role-plays are offered that feature more complex and expanded opportunities for natural conversation, conversation with substitutions and a bonus exercise. Finally, the short essay writing section and “thought stimulus” questions change weekly.

L2(L16) plan Otsuma Women’s University

Introduction: Today’s themes are going to a party and giving compliments. You will practice using vocabulary and phrases, watch a short movie clip to see the vocabulary and phrases used in natural conversation and have a short quiz about the movie clip. You will practice a conversation. Then you will write a short essay on the topic of giving compliments.

Vocabulary: Today’s Words and Phrases
Please check the meanings of the following words:
**Please check the meanings of the following phrases:**

- **love your tux** = your tuxedo looks very nice
- **get everyone's input** = ask for everyone's ideas
- **up front** = at the start of the project
- **Glad you could make it.** = I'm happy you came here.
- **incisive** = able to see and understand deeply
- **Beluga** = eggs from the sturgeon fish, called Beluga caviar
  (Beluga caviar costs 700,000 to 1,000,000 yen per kilogram)
- **delighted** = very happy
- **maitre d'** = the boss of the serving staff in a restaurant
- **tuxedo** = a formal suit men often wear at special events
- **knockoff** = copy of something else
- **knockoff artist** = someone who copies someone else's ideas
- **cloned** = made an exact copy of
- **incisive** = able to see and understand deeply
- **Beluga** = eggs from the sturgeon fish, called Beluga caviar
  (Beluga caviar costs 700,000 to 1,000,000 yen per kilogram)
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- **tuxedo** = a formal suit men often wear at special events
- **knockoff** = copy of something else
- **knockoff artist** = someone who copies someone else's ideas
- **cloned** = made an exact copy of
- **intimate** = comfortable, personal and informal
- **invisible** = something that can't be seen
- **attracted** = interested in getting closer
- **vulnerable** = in a weak position

**Please make sentences to show the meanings of the following words or phrases:**

**incisive**  
*Example: The teacher has incisive knowledge of the subject, so the class is very interesting.*

**intimate**

**invisible**

**attracted**

**vulnerable**

**I'm not really a big one for...**

**With your partner, please make a short conversation using the sentences from above:**

**incisive**  
*Example: A: Do you think the teacher knows a lot about the material in our classes?  
B: Yes. The teacher has incisive knowledge of the subject, so the class is very interesting.*

**intimate**

A:

B:

**invisible**

A:

B:
attracted
A:

B:

vulnerable
A:

B:

I'm not really a big one for...
A:

B:

First showing of eight to 10-minute clip

Comprehension quiz:
Please choose the correct answer:
1. Why does Mr. MacMillan think Susan should have a drink?
   a. He thinks Susan should have a drink because she looks very hot and thirsty.
   b. He thinks Susan should have a drink to relax instead of talking about business.
   c. He thinks Susan should have a drink so that she will talk about her work at the company.

2. What happens when Josh tries Beluga caviar?
   a. Josh really loves the taste of Beluga caviar.
   b. Josh spits out the caviar because it tastes terrible to him.
   c. Josh wants to have more caviar and to drink a milkshake.

3. Susan gives a compliment to the boss, Mr. MacMillan, about his tuxedo.
   a. True.
   b. False.

4. Josh comes to the party on time.
   a. True.
   b. False.

5. Susan says she has already seen Josh's apartment.
   a. True.
   b. False.

6. Mr. MacMillan thinks Josh is very well dressed and compliments him by saying, “Now that’s what I call a tuxedo.”
   a. That looks like a new tuxedo.
   b. Now that’s what I call a tuxedo.
   c. I’m not a big one for your tuxedo.

7. Susan thinks the party is like an exact copy of a party from an earlier time and says it’s like they cloned some party from 1983 and just kept having it again and again.
   a. attracted
   b. delighted
   c. cloned

[Please switch papers and check your partner’s answers.]
**Conversation : with substitutions**

MISS PATTERSON : It's very beautiful and I'm having a lovely time.
1. a nice party — having a good time  
2. a wonderful party — enjoying myself here  
3. a nice event — having fun  

MR. MACMILLAN : I'm glad Miss Patterson.

MISS PATTERSON : It's much better than last year. I just wanted to tell you that.
4. more fun than the last one  
5. the best party so far  
6. the best one yet

MR. MACMILLAN : I'll have another scotch... Oh, hello Susan.

SUSAN : Love your tux.
7. That's a very nice tuxedo.  
8. Your tuxedo looks really good.  
9. That tuxedo looks good on you.

MR. MACMILLAN : I think it's the same as the maitre d's.

SUSAN : Have you decided on our new line of Danberry toys? If you talk to everyone right away, I mean from start...

MR. MACMILLAN : Susan, relax and have a drink. In fact, have a couple drinks. It's a party!

**Bonus Exercise** : Situation : at a party : Student A will **compliment**.  

Student B will **reply**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A :</th>
<th>Hey, <em>(student B)</em>, this is a great party <em>(really fun/amazing/so nice)!</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B :</td>
<td>Thanks, <em>(student A)</em>, I'm happy you're enjoying it here. And what a beautiful outfit <em>(pretty skirt/cool jacket/bright top/ --- add more of your own ideas)</em> you're wearing. I love it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A :</td>
<td>That's kind of you to say. I got it at the <em>Louis Vuitton</em> <em>(Fendi/Prada/ --- add more of your own ideas)</em> store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B :</td>
<td>I like going there. The staff there are so helpful <em>(friendly/considerate/pleasant --- add more of your own ideas)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A :</td>
<td>Yes, they are. By the way, your bag <em>(necklace/earrings/shoes/boots/ --- add more of your own ideas)</em> is/are also fabulous. <em>(Switch. Please try to use some of your own ideas and the examples above to practice the conversation with your partner.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Short essay** : Please write two or three sentences about giving compliments : When do you tell someone he or she looks good? When do people usually say good things about you? What do you say to your family, friends or others to compliment them? What do others say about you? You can use these questions and your own ideas. **Or**, you can write about what happened in the movie.
[Please switch papers and check your partner’s short essay.]

● Homework Please review vocabulary, conversations and your writing from today.

Appendix item 4

This is the list of writing topics, the lesson themes used in the course under discussion in this practical report, and the “thought stimulus” questions that accompanied them.

- Writing topics
  - Games: Do you play video games? Which games do you like best? What about old style games?
  - Wishes: Do you wish? Imagine you can have whatever you ask for. What would you wish for?
  - Having a surprise: Do you like it when something happens that you did not expect? Why are surprises good or bad? What was the last surprise you had?
  - Making a travel plan: When was the last time you traveled? Where did you go? What do you usually take when you travel? (For example, clothing, money, other...)
  - Visiting a big city: What do you do when you visit big cities? Which big cities have you visited? Which one did you like best?
  - Needing help: When have you needed help? What kind of help did you need? How have you helped others? (Example: seat on train, directions).
  - Looking for a job: What would you do to look for a job? What is the best way to get a job? What kind of jobs do you want to do?
  - Going to an interview: Have you been to a job interview? Have you been to other kinds of interviews? What do you say when someone asks you about yourself?
  - Songs: Listen to these two songs. How do you feel listening to Josh’s mother’s song? Why? How do you feel listening to the song Billy and Josh watched on TV? Why? What kinds of songs make you feel sad? Which ones make you feel happy?
  - Eating too much: When do you eat too much - at parties, special events? Why do we eat too much? How does your stomach feel when you are too full? What can you do?
  - Playing: Do you play an instrument? Which instrument? Which songs do you play on it? Do you play sports? Which ones? Do you watch other people playing sports? Do you play games? Which ones do you like best?
  - Talking about what you do (at work or school): What do you do at university? What is the difference between university and high school for you? How many classes do you have each week? How much homework do you have for each class? Do you study with friends or alone? What other activities do you have during your usual week at university?
  - Asking to have something explained: When do you want something explained? (cooking, shopping, ordering food at a restaurant, or when?) What do you need explained? What’s the best way to explain something to another person?
  - Living away from home: Do you write your parents when you are away from home? Will you rent an apartment when you finish university? What kind of apartment do you want to rent? What would you put in your new apartment?
  - FIRST TERM FINAL EXAM
  - Going to a party: Do you like parties? Why? Why not? What kind of parties do you go to? When
did you last go to a party? Where was it? Did you have fun? What did you wear? Formal clothing? A costume? What did you do there?

- Giving compliments: When do you tell someone he or she looks good? When do people usually say good things about you? What do you say to your family, friends or others to compliment them? What do others say about you?

- Having a visitor at your home: Do you have visitors at your home? When? What do you do with visitors? Do you offer them tea or food? What do you do when friends come over to your place? Where do you meet friends if they do not come to your place?

- Cheating: When do people break the rules? Why do people sometimes not follow rules? Which rules do you think are good? (example: no smoking) Which rules do you think are bad or stupid? (example: no photos in shops) Why?

- Telling someone they have a problem: What do you say to people who have food on their faces, whose bags or backpacks are left open, whose clothing is not done up properly or who sleep on your shoulder in the train?

- Agreeing (to do something somebody else wants to do): When do you “go along” with another person’s idea? What if they suggest something you don’t want to do? (Example: go bowling, play pool, sing karaoke, go to a drinking party, take a taxi, etc.) Do you sometimes say “yes” to be polite and enjoy doing something somebody else wants to do? Do you sometimes say “yes” and wish you had said “no” instead? When has this happened?

- Sharing important news with someone: How do you feel when you have important news to give? Do you sometimes break into (interrupt) another conversation to tell your friends or family your news? When has this happened?

- Asking someone to wait: When you are talking to one friend, does another friend sometimes try to talk about something else (interrupt) in the conversation? What do you say when you need time to finish?

- Thinking about being a child again: What do you remember about being a child? What happy memories do you have? How was school? What did you wear? How was your home life? What favorite things did you do?

- Giving and getting bad news: How do you give bad news to someone? Do you wait for a quiet time? Do you stand up to give bad news? What do you do when you get bad news? What bad news have you given and gotten?

- Making choices: What kind of choices do you make every day? What big choices have you made in your life? How do you decide the best action to take? Do you make a list, talk to friends, go to a fortuneteller, visit a shrine or ...?

- Leaving in a hurry: Did you ever have to leave someplace immediately? How do you feel when someone runs away and does not explain why they are doing it? What do you say to explain your reasons rushing away?

- Saying goodbye: Think of some situations where you have said goodbye. Were you going on a vacation? Was someone visiting you? What did the other person say when you said goodbye? Did they say “see you soon” or “I’ll miss you”?

- Coming home: Try to remember when you were away from your home for a long time. How do you feel when you come home after a long time away? What does your family say when you come back?

- SECOND TERM FINAL EXAM
The first page of this mid-term exam was given to large and small-sized classes. The second page of the exam was only given to small-sized classes.

Please Print in English

Name:

Student number:

Please circle: Period 4 Period 5

MID-TERM QUIZ

Please answer the following questions

----------------------------

Part A: Verbs: Use the verbs “be”, “have” and “make” correctly in the following sentences:

1. Josh wants to ______ a ride on a scary attraction at a carnival because he sees Cynthia lined up to go on the ride.

2. At the carnival, Josh decides to ______ a wish at a machine called Zoltar, that gives wishes.

3. Josh wishes that he could ______ big.

Part B: Prepositions: Use the prepositions “before”, “to”, “until” and “with” correctly in the following sentences:

4. Josh and Billy go ______ New York so Josh can keep out of sight.

5. Billy thinks Josh needs to get a job and wait ______ they can find the Zoltar machine.

6. Billy can’t stay ______ Josh in New York because Billy’s parents want Billy to be home ______ 10:00 p.m. every night.

Part C: Phrases: Match the following three phrases with their meanings:

7. I don’t make the rules. = ______ a. Don’t blame me.
   b. You will get what you want.
   c. Become comfortable in a situation.
   d. Don’t try to do everything quickly.
   e. Write information on this paper.
   f. To stay away from school.
   g. Please help me with this task.

8. Fill this out. = ______

9. Find your way around. = ______

---

Appendix item 5

The first page of this mid-term exam was given to large and small-sized classes. The second page of the exam was only given to small-sized classes.
Please write a short essay, in your own words and using your own thoughts, ideas and experiences, on any one of the following lesson topics.

Note: The questions following each topic are to get your thinking started. You do not need to answer them directly. Please use your own ideas about the topic you choose.

1. **Games**: Do you play video games? Which games do you like best? What about old style games?

2. **Wishes**: Do you wish? Imagine you can have whatever you ask for. What would you wish for?

3. **Having a surprise**: Do you like it when something happens that you did not expect? Why are surprises good or bad? What was the last surprise you had?

4. **Making a travel plan**: When was the last time you traveled? Where did you go? What do you usually take when you travel? (For example, clothing, money, other...)

5. **Visiting a big city**: What do you do when you visit big cities? Which big cities have you visited? Which one did you like best?

6. **Needing help**: When have you needed help? What kind of help did you need? How have you helped others? (Example: seat on train, directions).

7. **Looking for a job**: What would you do to look for a job? What is the best way to get a job? What kind of jobs do you want to do?

8. **Going to an interview**: Have you been to a job interview? Have you been to other kinds of interviews? What do you say when someone asks you about yourself?

**Short essay:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix item 6

This is the final exam that was given to all students.

Part 1: Everyday words and phrases: Please circle the best answers to the following questions:

1. Josh was _______ that Cynthia was happy because he ______ that she was smiling.
   a. sleeping    d. saw
   b. eating      e. seen
   c. sensing     f. see

2. Josh was scared and feeling _______ about going ______ the ride.
   a. apprehension d. at
   b. comprehension e. of
   c. destination f. on

3. Josh tried to show his mother a _______ on his leg.
   a. birthmark
   b. birthday
   c. birthstone

4. Billy feels Josh looks bad and says that Josh looks _______.
   a. terrible
   b. fabulous
   c. wonderful

5. Billy wanted Josh to hide for a few days and said, “You should _______ for a few days.”
   a. head up
   b. lay low
   c. sleepy head

6. Billy tells Josh that he will _______ so that he can visit Josh ______ New York.
   a. cut classes   d. to
   b. get a haircut e. in
   c. take a shortcut f. of

7. Josh and Billy had to pay a $5 _______ to try to get information from ______ Consumer Affairs office.
   a. top floor     d. an
   b. game arcade   e. it
   c. filing charge f. the

8. The lady at the Consumer Affairs office ______ Josh and Billy a piece of paper and says, “________.”
   a. gives      d. I feel really full.
   b. asks       e. Please fill this out.
   c. thinks     f. You need to get out.

9. Josh jokes that Billy must be polite and says, “________.”
   a. Find your way around.
   b. Put her on unemployment.
   c. Don’t give the lady any trouble.

10. Josh says, “________” when he remembers the song his mother used to sing to him when ______ was a little boy.
    a. I got it!     d. it
    b. I bet you!    e. he
    c. I ate them!   f. them

11. Billy and Josh go ______ the bank with Josh’s _______.
    a. away        d. payback
    b. to          e. paycheck
    c. without     f. payday

12. Josh ______ a sore stomach from eating too much and says, “________.”
    a. has         d. Josh is a terrific kid.
    b. gives       e. I’m never eating again.
    c. finds       f. How would you like that?

13. A boy plays ______ Josh in the toy store. The boy thinks he can beat Josh in their game and says, “________.”
    a. when         d. I have some change.
    b. while        e. I’ll blow you away.
    c. with         f. What’s a marketing report?

14. Josh doesn’t like the new hockey game and says their hockey game was more like real hockey _______.
    a. a bad time
    b. the old way
    c. an old game

15. Paul thinks the boss made a bad choice by giving Josh a higher position and tells Susan, “________.”
    a. The old man has finally lost it.
    b. That man is always on my mind.
    c. I don’t mind becoming an old man.

16. Paul feels the company will ______ a bigger _______ when more customers buy toys he wants it to make.
    a. get         d. market share
    b. gone        e. store market
    c. going       f. supermarket store

17. The boss, Mr. McMillan, likes Josh’s idea, wants to ______ it and says, “________.”
    a. go ahead with d. It’s not possible for us to do it.
    b. get his head on e. It’s got all kinds of possibilities.
    c. take the head off f. This idea is completely impossible.

Please turn to page 2.

18. The real estate agent shows Josh and Billy an apartment that has many places to ______ clothing and other items. So, she tells them ______ and says, “________.”
    a. sell        d. it’s going for the throat
    b. store       e. this doesn’t just happen
    c. smell       f. it has ample closet space

19. Billy has decided they will rent the new apartment and ______ the real estate agent, “________.”
    a. calls       d. I don’t get it.
    b. speaks      e. We’ll take it.
    c. tells       f. Forget about it.

20. Josh writes to ______ parents and tells them he will be home in about a month and that ______ he is OK.
    a. his         d. he has no time
    b. they        e. in the meantime
    c. his’s       f. people are mean to him
Part 2: Grammar: Prepositions give information about location (in, on, beside, above, below, under), time (before, after, during, while) and purpose (to, for, of).

Please choose and write the best prepositions to fill the blanks below:
There were many characters _____ the movie we watched. At the start _____ the movie, one character, Josh, made a wish _____ he was at an amusement park. His wish was _____ become big.

Part 3: Grammar: Articles (a, an — used in front of a word that starts with one of the vowels “a”, “e”, “i”, “o” and “u”— and the) are often needed with nouns. Indefinite articles “a” and “an” are used with general items and the definite article “the” is used with specific items or ideas.

Please choose and write the best articles to fill the blanks below:
Josh got ____ wish he asked for. He did become ____ adult. Then, he wanted to become ____ child again. Unfortunately, he could not find ____ Zoltar machine. So, Billy made ____ plan for Josh to hide in New York for ____ while. Josh didn’t like ____ plan, but said OK and had many adventures.

Part 4: Using language in everyday activities (function-based English):
Please circle the most natural reply for B in each conversation:

A: Let’s go to a movie in Tokyo tonight.
B: Well, I don’t have enough money.              B: Well, I don’t attract attention.

A: I feel awful because I lost my expensive pen.
B: I’m gonna be 30 for the rest of my life.       B: Cheer up. I’ll lend you mine until we find it.

A: Your resume says you have experience in this kind of work.
B: Yes, I had the same sort of job for three years. B: Yes, I joined many clubs when I was in university.

A: I think it was the all-you-can-eat buffet that made our stomachs feel so bad.
B: Next time, maybe we better have bigger servings. B: Next time, maybe we better eat less.

A: Let me show you around our campus.
B: Here is the report.                           B: It’s a really beautiful place.

Total = /50