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Lorna S. Asami, Kanda Junior and Senior High School,  
Tokyo, Japan

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### **Literature Review**

In 2017, the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) published the pamphlet, “Overview of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.” In it, MEXT states that the Central Council for Education has been discussing revisions to the National Curriculum Standards “with the aim of realizing a ‘curriculum open to society’.” The council also advocates “proactive, interactive, and deep learning (improving classes from the perspective of active learning)” (MEXT, 2017, p. 8). Regarding junior and senior high schools, MEXT states that “... schools should verify and adopt an evaluation method, etc. which covers various aspects including students' motivation and attitude for active learning. This can be achieved by focusing on students' interest, motivation and attitude towards communication, which all lead to active learning” (MEXT, 2017, p. 8). As I have found it possible to combine active learning concepts that MEXT advocates with my research interests in autonomy and motivation, I am challenged to design a more learner-centered classroom. Walker and Symons (1997) state that human motivation is at its peak when certain requirements are fulfilled. One requirement is that people have sufficient autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001). It follows that to increase our students' motivation for learning, we need to allow our students to have the autonomy they need to thrive.

At Kanda Junior and Senior High School, the first MEXT aim of having a “curriculum open to society” is met by ten language instructors from seven different countries, who independently teach their own classes, are responsible for various clubs and school activities, and run the school's newly established learning center called K-SALC (Kanda Self-Access Learning Center). Active learning, the second MEXT aim, has been promoted by Kanda's staff who have been given in-house workshops on the teaching method. It is at these workshops that I heard about active learning and began to introduce this type of activity in my class. One of these was a self-reflection activity that provided students a way to assess themselves. As students considered among themselves how to improve their presentations, they appeared increasingly motivated to improve their written speeches as well as presentation performance. A bonus was being able to connect the classroom to our newly established K-SALC.

## **The Self-Reflection Task**

At the finals period of each term in our trimester school year, students write a speech and create an accompanying PowerPoint slideshow to present in front of their classmates. Students are required to memorize their speeches and the pressure to perform is quite high. Students and teachers spend several weeks on writing and rewriting their speeches and PowerPoints. Students are encouraged to visit the K-SALC to practice with native English teachers. When presentation day finally arrives, everyone is nervous and excited. On our latest round of presentations, several classes requested to give their speeches in our brand-new K-SALC room with a large screen for their PowerPoints.

Following the presentations, I created a reflection sheet for the students to fill out in English or Japanese. I modeled it after one that was made for a classical Japanese class by my senior colleague who regularly uses active learning strategies in her classes. One part was for the student to comment on each of their classmates' presentations (Table 1) and one part was for the student to comment on their own presentation (Table 3). Ushioda (2016) states "as teachers we need to motivate students to do the thinking and troubleshooting for themselves". To do this, I asked the students to tell me what they thought made a great presentation, and how they would like to improve for the next one. Their comments were illuminating and different from mine. They emphatically said it was important for the speaker to smile. They said that animation made their PowerPoint more interesting, and being able to properly use the PowerPoint clicker to change the slides smoothly and with correct timing was important. Some expressed that they were disappointed in the level of their English and needed to challenge themselves more. This self-reflection activity was transformed with the student comments. As I revised the reflection sheets I had written by adding the students' comments, the sheet became less of my evaluation and more of the students' concept of a good presentation and goals for future work. (Tables 2 and 4) Autonomy has been defined as "the capacity to take control over one's learning" Benson, (2011, p. 14). By allowing the students to reflect on their own work and have a say in their evaluation, they have taken control over their learning and shown their understanding of the task.

An important point I included in my reflection checklist was to indicate if my students had gone to the K-SALC to practice their speech with a native English teacher. I felt that further discussion was necessary to help the students understand that practice would improve their performance. MEXT (2014) also advises teachers "...to conduct language activities where students can actively share their ideas and feelings with each other through speaking and writing at junior high and high schools." In our class discussion, students talked about

why they had not gone to the K-SALC. Most of the students said they would go the next time we have presentations as they now realized it will improve their presentations. Rather than being negative and about what they had not done, the discussion ended up on an excited note, motivating them to do better next time.

Before the next round of presentations in our final trimester, I will give the students the revised reflection sheet as a guide and reminder of our discussion. Nunan (2003) suggests allowing learners to create their own goals as a step to increasing learner autonomy. Deci and Ryan (2002) state that "...an activity that promotes perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is performed volitionally because it nurtures these three basic psychological needs" (p. 49). For our students at Kanda Junior and Senior High School, their English presentation is one activity where they can express themselves and experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness with their fellow students.

Table 1: First Version of Peer Reflection Sheet

Term 2 Presentation			
Name of critiqued student: _____			
Critique by: _____			
Point	Great!	OK	Try Again
Easy to understand message			
Speed			
Voice			
Eye Contact			
Expression			
Gestures			
PowerPoint			

Table 2: Revised Version of Peer Reflection Sheet

Term 3 Presentation			
Name of critiqued student: _____			
Critique by: _____			
Point	Great!	OK	Try Again
Easy to understand message			
Spoke slowly & clearly			
Big voice			
Eye Contact			
Expression			
Smile			
Colorful PowerPoint			
Used PowerPoint clicker well			

Table 3: First Version of Self-Assessment Sheet

Term 2 Presentation			
Name of student:			
Title of my speech: _____			
Preparation Point	Yes	OK	Try Again
My speech was long enough.			
I learned some new grammar writing my speech.			
I learned some new words writing my speech.			
I was satisfied with my speech.			
I went to a teacher to practice my speech.			
I went to K-SALC to practice my speech.			
Presentation Point	Did		Didn't do
I remembered my speech.			
I tried to make my speech understandable to the audience.			
I used body language.			
Eye contact			
Speed			

Table 4: Revised Version of Self-Assessment Sheet

Term 3 Presentation			
Name of student:			
Title of my speech: _____			
Preparation Point	Yes	OK	Try Again
My speech was long enough.			
I learned some new grammar.			
I learned some new words.			
I was satisfied with my speech.			
I went to a teacher to practice my speech.			
I went to K-SALC to practice my speech.			
Colorful PowerPoint			
Presentation Point	Did		Didn't do
I remembered my speech.			
I tried to make my speech understandable to the audience.			
Smile			
Eye contact			
I spoke slowly and clearly.			
Big voice			

### Notes on the contributor

Lorna Asami is a full-time instructor at Kanda Jogakuen High School. She has an M.A. in English Education from Temple University Japan and her research interests are in motivation and autonomy, especially in connection with self-access centers.

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