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Special Lectures on Academic Writing and Presenting: Participant Satisfaction
特別講義 Academic Writing and Presenting：受講者満足度

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1. Introduction

　Special Lectures on Academic Writing and Presenting in English were initiated for graduate students in 2011. These Special Lectures were held for the third time in the first semester of 2013. Past reports on these Special Lectures have focused on leveled courses and objective, quantitative student improvement[1,2]. This report confirms the consistency of the test results and focuses on subjective data from student course surveys.

2. Methods

　For the 2013 Special Lecture, there were 27 registered participants spanning six majors. For this report we will look at results from pre-course and post-course tests and surveys to assess the merits and demerits of the course and to form a better picture of the participants' areas of achievement and future needs. During the first session and the fifteenth (final) session, these students took an entrance test and an exit test similar to the previous years' tests [1,2]. Twenty-two participants completed both tests. Also, during the first session and the fifteenth session participants took a survey about their interests, English abilities, the number of academic papers read, etc. Nineteen participants completed both surveys. Please contact the authors for complete test and survey data.

3. Results and Discussion

　Consistent with 2011-2012 quantitative data, average achievement between pre-course and post-course tests was approximately 5 points out of 25 (See Table 1). Also consistent were the rates of improvement as the beginner class improved the most (9.22 points), the low-intermediate course students improved by the approximate average amount (4.33 points), and the advanced course improvement was negligable. This is typical for the design of the test where the advanced students enter the course knowing the concepts and the other groups learn them through participation in the course. All students leave the course with a knowledge of academic writing and presenting concepts.

　Results regarding the students' areas of focus from the pre-course survey and areas of improvement from the post-course surveys, shown in Table 2, indicate that the students improved in the majority of the areas that students wanted to focus on at the beginning of the course. Preparing a paper and grammar were the two areas where students need more focus in order to be satisfied with the course. Other areas students felt they improved were communication skills, interest in presenting in English, and new knowledge because students from different fields presented their research to one another.

Table 1. Average Score and Average Improvement

	Entrance	Exit	Improvement
2011 (Max. =16)	7.58	13.92	6.33
2012 (Max. =20)	13	17	4
2013 (Max. =25)	14.14	18.95	4.82

Table 2. Areas of Focus and Perceived Improvement

Area (n=19)	Pre-course Focus	Post-course Improvement
Background Reading	37%	**37%**
Paragraph Writing	21%	**37%**
Paper Structure	42%	**58%**
Preparing a Paper	79%	**58%**
Presentation Skills	79%	**84%**
Q & A Strategies	68%	**84%**
Preparing a Poster	5%	**11%**
Grammar	37%	**21%**

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Regarding reading, prior to the course, all of the students who completed both surveys (n=19) had read 3 or more articles in Japanese and at least 1 in English. During the course, the majority of students read at least one article in both Japanese and in English, and about half read 3 or more in both languages (See Figure 1). Regarding the focus of the reading, prior to the course 32% of the students had not read any or had only read one article on their research topic. By the conclusion of the course, 89% of students had read 2 or more articles, with 37% reading 6 or more articles focused on their research topic.

In regard to English paper and presentation preparation, 74% (14 of 19) of the students had not started preparation, shown in Figures 2 and 3. By the end of the course, 2 had completed 25% of their paper and 4 had finished but needed to edit. Regarding presentations, by the end of the course the number who were 25% complete had risen from 2 to 5 students and 2

students were 50% complete. One student who thought he had both a complete paper and presentation seems to have realized he needed to edit.

When asked if they would be presenting at the annual NU, CST conference, a third replied yes (3 in English and 4 in Japanese), a third were undecided, and a third declined.
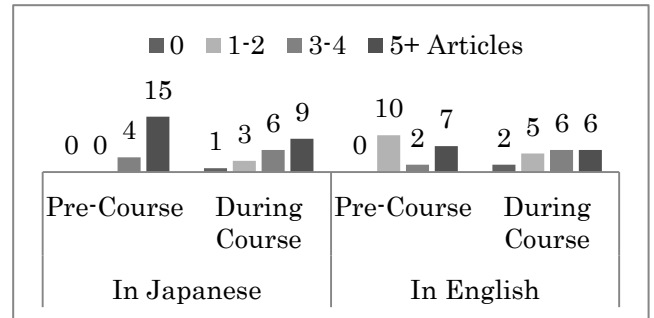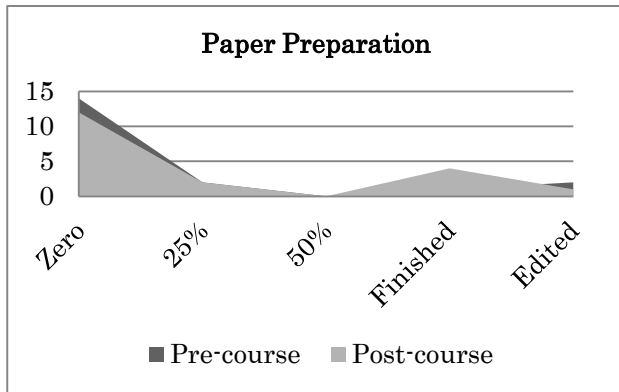

Figure 1. Number of Articles Read
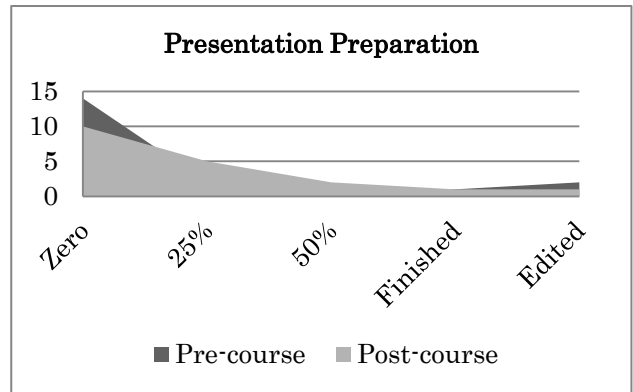

Figure 2. Paper Preparation

Figure 3. Presentation Preparation

4. Conclusion

The test data indicated that course participants from 2011 to 2013 learned the concepts which were taught regarding academic writing and presentation structure as well as question and answer strategies. The 2013 survey data indicated that students perceived improvement in the majority of the areas which they wanted to focus on; however, paper preparation and grammar were areas which needed a heavier focus. The majority of students did background reading in both Japanese and English, but completion of a complete, edited paper and presentation within the timeframe of the course was not possible or not a goal for two-thirds of the students. One-third (7) of the participants planned to present at the annual Nihon University, CST, conference.

5. References

[1] Ruth Vanbaelen and Jonathan Harrison (2011) "Academic Writing Workshop vs. Semester-course Participant Improvement", 第 55 回日本大学理工学部学術講演会, 日本大工理工学部, 口頭発表, 2011 年 11 月 26 日.

[2] Ruth Vanbaelen and Jonathan Harrison (2012) "Leveled Courses for Academic Writing", 第 56 回日本大学理工学部学術講演会, 日本大工理工学部, 口頭発表, 2012 年 11 月 28 日.