

## A1-3

**English Communication における TOEFL iBT 型筆記テスト**  
**English Communication and Written TOEFL iBT-like Examination Items**

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In 2009 Nihon University, College of Science and Technology began a new English Communication (EC) program. Within EC are four sub-courses with two levels each. Each sub-course has guidelines and an online testing component. One of the sub-courses is Cultural Appreciation 1. Due to the ambiguity of the concept of culture, the teacher guidelines for this specific course suggest a focus on building student skills in describing their culture and expressing their opinions. A TOEFL iBT-like short written answer test was created to measure the students' ability to describe their culture and to express their opinions. Results from 21 students' pre- and post-tests were rated. The results were insufficient which indicates a need for: 1) more faculty development, 2) test refinement, 3) a focus on grammar and writing within EC, and 4) more focus on writing in the overall English curriculum.

## 1. Introduction

Cultural Appreciation 1 (CA1) was first offered in the first semester of 2010 as part of the new English Communication (EC) program which began in 2009. Although teaching methods vary by teacher, the guidelines for the CA1 sub-course focus on teaching the students the skills to give their opinions and to describe various aspects of their culture. To measure achievement in this sub-course, pre- and post-tests were given online via a university server hosted Moodle website. The results from the TOEFL-like short answer essay items were analyzed by word count and sentence length as well as being holistically rated by two raters.

Table 1. Ratings Scale with Examples

Rating	Scale	Example responses to the post-test anchor item: Some people think it is best to hang out with old friends. Others think it is more fun to go out and make new friends. Which do you think is better? Explain why.
1	Simple answer	I play soccer with my new friend.
2	Answer with a reason	I like old friend. Because I love hometown.
3	Answer with a reason and some details and grammatical errors	I think that going out and making new friends is better. Because making new friends is very fun and exciting.
4	Answer with reason(s) and details yet some grammatical errors	I think borth of them is important. The old friends are always around with me and chere my happiness and saddness. But i also like to make new friends. Because they will tell me something I did not know.I think it is very funny
5	Grammatically correct answer with reasons and details	I think it is best to hang out with old friends. When I hang out with old friends,we talk about many episodes we have shared.It is very fun. And we talk about ourself today.To hear what they do motivate me. The time to hang out with old friends is very precious for me.

## 2. Methods

Prior to the start of the 2010 academic year, it was decided that items similar to those from the speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT were best suited for the purpose of testing EC:CA1 students as the items were suitable by student proficiency level and length. Items of this type, although written, are similar to in-class conversations and discussions.

Pre-tests (3) and post-tests (3) were created, each consisting of the same eight multiple choice items and three short answer items, one anchor item, which was the same on all tests, and two random topic items. For this report, only the short answer items will be discussed. The short answer items were similar in format with each item asking students to give an opinion on a given topic or describe a certain aspect of their cultures. The items also asked for details and reasons. The various pre- and post-tests were to be rotated; however, due to the number of test takers, only two pre-tests and one post-test were made available for students. The pre-tests were available to students online during the first three weeks of the course, and the post-tests were available during the last

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three weeks of the course. Student responses were analyzed by word count and sentence length. Then, pre- and post-test student responses were mixed and blind rated by two NS raters using a modified TOEFL iBT scale <sup>1</sup>(See Table 1). Teacher feedback on the courses was gained via EC Teacher Surveys.

### 3. Results

Results from word counts and sentence length analysis were inconclusive; The word count sum of the three pre- and three post-test answers in total yielded a total difference of a mere 14 words. Rater results (See Table 2) also showed no real improvement. The maximum, minimum, and average scores were 4, 1, and 3.13 on the pre-test and 5, 1, and 3.06 on the post-test.

Table 2. Dual-Rater Results for Pre-/Post-Test Items

Item/ Student	Pre-1		Pre-2		Pre-3		Item Avg.	Post-1		Post-2		Post-3		Item Avg.	Avg. Dif.		
	R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2		R1	R2	R1	R2	R1	R2				
1	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.83	3	4	4	3	3	3	3.33	-0.50		
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00	1	2	2	1	2	2	1.67	-1.33		
3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2.83	3	3	3	2	3	4	3.00	0.17		
4	2	1	3	3	3	4	2.67	3	3	3	3	4	4	3.33	0.67		
5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00	3	3	4	4	4	4	3.67	-0.33		
6	2	3	3	3	3	4	3.00	3	3	3	3	1	1	2.33	-0.67		
7	3	3	4	3	4	4	3.50	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.83	0.33		
8	3	3	4	4	4	4	3.67	3	3	3	4	3	4	3.33	-0.33		
9	3	3	3	4	1	1	2.50	3	3	3	3	3	4	3.17	0.67		
10	3	3	3	3	2	3	2.83	3	3	3	2	2	2	2.50	-0.33		
11	4	3	3	3	3	4	3.33	3	3	3	2	2	1	2.33	-1.00		
12	4	4	3	3	4	4	3.67	4	4	4	4	3	3	3.67	0.00		
13	2	3	2	3	3	2	2.50	1	2	2	2	2	2	1.83	-0.67		
14	2	3	3	3	1	1	2.17	2	3	2	2	3	3	2.50	0.33		
15	3	2	3	3	3	4	3.00	4	3	4	4	1	1	2.83	-0.17		
16	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.00	3	3	4	4	3	4	3.50	0.50		
17	3	3	3	4	4	4	3.50	5	5	3	4	3	4	4.00	0.50		
18	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.83	4	4	4	4	2	4	3.67	-0.17		
19	3	3	3	3	3	4	3.17	3	3	3	4	3	3	3.17	0.00		
20	2	1	1	2	2	2	1.67	3	3	2	2	3	3	2.67	1.00		
21	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.00	0.00		
Average								3.13								3.06	-0.06

### 4. Conclusion

The results were insufficient which indicates a need for 1) test refinement, 2) more faculty development and communication with students, 3) a focus on grammar and writing within EC, and 4) more focus on writing in the overall English curriculum. First, this test was a pilot to test TOEFL iBT-like items. Secondly, teachers may have taught to the guidelines but not focused on students giving thorough, grammatically correct responses in written form. Some students also may have been responding to items like these for possibly the first time in their academic careers. Next, the average rating for both pre-test and post-test was 3, an answer with a reason and some details, but with grammatical errors. Both teachers teaching CA1 indicated on EC Teacher Surveys that they achieved the written and spoken outcomes for the course. This indicates that the teacher guidelines may not be sufficient to achieve a rating of 5 on this test and more focus on grammar and writing is needed within EC. This may also indicate that the prerequisite courses for EC need more actual student produced writing and feedback on said writing.

### 5. References

[1] Educational Testing Services. (2007). The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT. McGraw-Hill: New York.

### 6. Acknowledgements

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