

# An Integrated Approach to Developing Japanese Students’ English Presentation and Discussion Skills

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**Abstract:** We examined the types of difficulties that Japanese high school students have in English presentation and discussion activities. We conducted factor analysis (principal factor method with promax rotation) on the survey data, which was divided into four stages: (1) the presentation preparation stage; (2) the presentation stage; (3) the listening stage; and (4) the discussion stage. The results showed that students had difficulty with the following skills during each of the four stages: (1) “effective ways of providing information,” “revision,” and “collaborative work” during the presentation preparation stage; (2) “basic presentation skills,” “handling questions,” and “audience management” during the presentation stage ; (3) “active interaction” and “active understanding” during the listening stage; and (4) “overcoming communication anxiety,” “adaptation to classroom activities,” “problem solving approach,” and “self-relativization” during the discussion stage.

## 1. Introduction

The 2015 nationwide survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology showed that high school students, who learned under the current Courses of Study, have challenges in speaking and writing in English. Also, the survey revealed that 34.8% of high school teachers provide students with speech or presentation activities; only 10.8% provide debate or discussion activities. In reaction to the results, the subsequent Courses of Study for upper secondary schools (revised March 2018) place an emphasis on “integrated language activities” and “enhancement of communication abilities”; they require student learning through language activities such as presentations and discussions where students identify problems, explore solutions both independently and collaboratively, and communicate their ideas and opinions with each other.

Along with the dissemination of the new Courses of Study, conventional teacher-centered teaching styles will be gradually revised or improved. However, quite a few teachers have no experience in teaching presentations and discussions. Therefore, even if teachers think it is necessary to change their teaching styles, they are likely to face difficulty creating a clear picture of required approaches and will ultimately continue with conventional teaching styles.

Under these circumstances, we set two research objectives for the next Courses of Study in 2018. First, we provide an example of the new approach, in which presentation and discussion activities are integrated (“an integrated lesson”), and the other is to determine the types of difficulties that Japanese high school students encounter during presentation and discussion activities. Furthermore, based on the analysis of the students’

difficulties, we argue what instructions or support students need during such activities.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Subjects

Two hundred students (109 male, 91 female) who were 11<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in Fukuyama High School, which is attached to Hiroshima University, participated in this study. Participants came from five different classes with English proficiency ranging from <sup>1</sup>STEP Eiken Grade Pre-1 to Grade 3: 22 students (11%) held Grade Pre-1; 123 students (61.5%) held Grade 2; 27 students (13.5%) held Grade Pre-2; and 28 students (14%) held Grade 3 or did not hold any. Overall, they were at the B2 level on the <sup>2</sup>CEFR scales, where they can manage most of the basic interactions seen in daily settings. Few of these students had taken any presentation or discussion course in the formal education system, but they had regularly engaged in speaking and writing activities in their English classes and are accustomed to speaking and writing in English.

### 2.2 Teaching Plan

The present study was conducted from the end of April through the middle of July in 2017. Each lesson was carried out in regular English classes three times a week. Table 1 shows the overall procedure of the teaching plan. Lessons for the presentation and discussion were provided in two subjects: the former in English Expression II and the latter in Global Communication (see Table 1).

Table 1. Overall Teaching Plan

	Preparation for the presentation	Presentation	Discussion
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General introduction to presentations and discussions</li> <li>● Grouping for presentations</li> <li>● Students begin to research presentation topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Core structure: Introduction, Key Messages, Conclusion</li> <li>● Key elements of successful introduction</li> <li>● Effective ways of delivering main ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to engage in a productive argument</li> <li>● Learning to present a logical opinion using Toulmin's Argument Model</li> <li>● Learning to find logical fallacies</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students select presentation topics and their roles in presentations</li> </ul>		
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students begin to write a draft and make visual aids for presentations</li> <li>● Rehearsal for presentations</li> </ul>		
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom presentations</li> <li>● Select classroom discussion topics</li> <li>● Classroom discussions</li> </ul>		

#### 2.2.1 Lessons for Presentation and Discussion

Lessons for presentations are conducted based on *Successful Presentations* (Hughes & Mallett, 2012), which provides step-by-step instructions on how to provide a successful presentation. Practical examples from business settings and feedback from experts make the textbook easy to follow, even for beginners. In this study, we used the worksheets modified according to the level of the English proficiency and interest of Japanese high school students. Students learned about presentations once a week for 15 minutes.

Lessons for discussions were conducted once a week for 50 minutes. The class developed three-fold. First,

<sup>1</sup> Standardized Tests of English Proficiency, also known as Eiken, is one of the most recognized English tests in Japan

<sup>2</sup> Common European Framework of Reference of Languages

the students learned about discussion by watching a film, *Twelve Angry Men*. The film is a courtroom drama, where twelve jurors determine by discussion whether the accused is guilty of murder. Before the jurors reach a verdict, some jurors provide non-constructive feedback (i.e., by diverting from the subject of discussion or attacking someone's personality), while others argue logically about the case. The students learned what was appropriate and what was improper in a discussion.

Second, the students learned how to construct a logical argument based on Toulmin's argument model with a claim, data, and warrant. A claim is a statement that reflects a position on the issue, data is the evidence to support the claim, and a warrant is a link that describes how the data is connected to the claim. Because a warrant is sometimes unspoken and implicit, the lessons were mainly focused on making warrants explicit. In April, when stating a claim, few students offered any data to support the claim, and for those who offered data, the link between their claim and the data was not sufficiently clear. However, in July, many students seemed to realize how a warrant legitimizes a claim and why they need to make a warrant explicit.

Finally, they learned how to identify logical fallacies in an argument. To most students, the idea of a fallacy was new, and thus we only dealt with fallacies or false beliefs that many students had. At first, many students were confused to discover that an idea they believed was logical was, in fact, not. Towards the end of June, however, some students identified fallacies in their own arguments.

### **2.2.2 Integrated Lesson**

After the lessons on successful presentations and productive arguments, students put their knowledge into practice. Students were divided into groups and gave a presentation followed by student-centered discussions (an integrated lesson).

Each group was allocated about 10 minutes for presentation time, but the time for the question and answer session that followed each presentation varied by group; thus there were two or three presentations per lesson. Discussions did not follow every presentation due to time constraints, and thus the students selected topics for the discussion session by vote. Each class chose one topic from the following topics: "pictograms intelligible to visitors from overseas," "whale hunting: preservation of an animal or a culture," "the system of the national center test," "how to promote Fukuyama as a tourist destination," and "the school lunch program in Japan's high schools and junior high schools."

The groups whose topics were selected for discussion gave their presentations again before they move on to the discussion. Each class was divided into five groups consisting of eight members. Each group had a chairperson who was in charge of the group discussion. After the discussions, each chairperson reported to the entire class what they had discussed in their group and shared their ideas. Each chairperson took a leadership role and guided the discussion based on a procedure manual given beforehand.

### **2.3 Survey**

After completion of the integrated lesson, we conducted a written questionnaire survey to identify difficulties students encountered during the presentations and discussions. First, we discussed possible question items for the survey, and 89 items were selected. Next, these items were divided into four categories: items that should be considered before the presentation (31 items), during the presentation by the performers (20 items), during the presentation by the audience (13 items), and during the discussion (25 items). A simple five-point

Likert scale (1: Easy, 2: Fairly Easy, 3: Neither, 4: Fairly Difficult, 5 Very Difficult) was used.

### 3. Types of Difficulties by Learning Stage

The data obtained from students who were absent from school on the survey day and those who left questions unanswered were regarded as missing values. Therefore, data obtained from 179 students were analyzed. To investigate the difficulties reported by students, the data were tested by factor analysis using SPSS (ver. 21) for the four stages: the (presentation) preparation stage, presentation stage, listening stage, and discussion stage.

#### 3.1 Types of Difficulties at the Preparation Stage

First, frequency distribution was investigated on 31 items of the difficulty scale at the preparation stage. The results showed some variance; however, after reviewing all of the items with higher variance than expected, we determined that all of the questions items were appropriate and indispensable for measuring difficulties at the preparation stage. This implies that it is necessary to analyze all of the question items without excluding any of them.

Table 2. Factor analysis on difficulties at the preparation stage (factor patterns after promax rotation)

	I	II	III
<b>Factor 1: Effective Ways of Providing Information (<math>\alpha=.90</math>)</b>			
18. Simplifying presentation slides	<b>.84</b>	-.13	.03
17. Selecting slide content	<b>.81</b>	-.11	.03
20. Selecting font size and layout	<b>.74</b>	-.19	.15
21. Preparing illustrations, figures, and tables	<b>.70</b>	-.14	.11
16. Creating title of slides	<b>.66</b>	-.03	.00
19. Using simple words on slides	<b>.64</b>	.07	.05
13. Using interesting words	<b>.54</b>	.17	-.10
14. Using effective ways of explanation	<b>.52</b>	.32	-.15
11. Selecting words for ease of understanding	<b>.52</b>	.18	-.05
15. Exemplifying in effective ways	<b>.46</b>	.27	-.02
9. Selecting speech content	<b>.41</b>	.28	.02
12. Using interesting words	<b>.39</b>	.38	-.13
<b>Factor 2: Revision (<math>\alpha=.85</math>)</b>			
23. Identifying others' error in English usage	-.16	<b>.91</b>	-.01
25. Evaluating others' content in presentation script	-.03	<b>.74</b>	.08
22. Identifying own error in English usage	-.08	<b>.73</b>	.02
24. Evaluating own content in presentation script	-.06	<b>.72</b>	.08
10. Composing	.20	<b>.55</b>	-.05
31. Anticipating questions	.02	<b>.50</b>	.14
8. Organizing	.16	<b>.48</b>	.01
6. Incorporating video learning	-.06	<b>.42</b>	.13
<b>Factor 3: Collaborative Work (<math>\alpha=.80</math>)</b>			
28. Rehearsing (group)	-.11	.01	<b>.84</b>
26. Rehearsing for time limitation	.02	-.06	<b>.75</b>
27. Rehearsing (personal)	.05	-.08	<b>.71</b>
29. Revising own performance after rehearsal	.14	.10	<b>.55</b>
30. Revising others' performance after rehearsal	.11	.14	<b>.46</b>
7. Determining roles in presentation	.09	.18	<b>.37</b>
2. Managing time	.01	.14	<b>.35</b>
1. Determining members in groups	-.05	.17	<b>.34</b>
Correlation Between Factors			
I	—	.56	.40
II		—	.23
III			—

After that, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method to test the 31 items. Our results showed eigenvalue changes in the order of 9.25, 2.90, 2.20, 1.52, 1.31, and 1.21. Based on these results, we determined that a three-factor structure was suitable, considering the purpose of this research. Then, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method again on the assumption of a three-factor structure. Based on these results, factor analysis using the principal factor method with promax rotation was conducted without three items that had not shown adequate factor loadings. Table 2 shows the final factor patterns after promax rotation and the correlation among factors; the three factors before rotation explained 43.45% of the total variance of 28 items.

The first factor consisted of 12 items. High loadings were observed on the items regarding how to present information to the audience, such as “simplifying presentation slides,” “selecting font size and layout,” and “using effective ways of explanation.” We named this factor “effective ways of providing information.”

The second factor consisted of eight items. High loadings were observed on the items about feedback on drafts such as “identifying own and/or others’ errors in English usage” and “evaluating own and/or others’ content in presentation script.” We named this factor “revision.”

The third factor consisted of eight items. Items such as “rehearsing (group)” and “rehearsing for time limitation” showed high loadings. What is common in these items is a cooperative mindset. Therefore, we named this factor “collaborative work.”

### **3.2 Types of Difficulties at the Presentation Stage**

As in 3.1, frequency distribution was investigated on the 20 items of the difficulty scale at the presentation stage. This analysis was also conducted without excluding any items because it was assumed that all of the question items were essential for measuring difficulties.

Subsequently, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method on these 20 items. The result showed eigenvalue changes of 7.27, 1.60, 1.34, 1.12, and 1.03. Based on these results, we determined that a three-factor structure was suitable, considering the purpose of this research. Therefore, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method again on the assumption of a three-factor structure. Based on these results, factor analysis using principal factor method with promax rotation investigated the items without four of them that had not shown adequate factor loadings. Table 3 shows the final factor patterns after promax rotation and the correlation among factors; the three factors before the rotation explained 46.07% of the total variance of 16 items.

The first factor consisted of nine items. These are important items on effective ways of providing information with the audience such as “presenting in a confident manner,” “using appropriate voice volume,” and “using silence effectively in communication.” The results showed high loadings on these items. We named this factor “basic presentation skills.”

The second factor consisted of five items. High loadings were observed on the items regarding interaction with the audience such as “understanding questions accurately,” “determining who should answer questions promptly,” and “answering unexpected questions promptly.” We named this factor “handling questions.”

The third factor consisted of two items: “tailoring speaking speed based on audience’s understanding” and “building interaction between the speaker and audience.” High loadings were observed on these items regarding managing the presentation for the audience. We named this factor “audience management.”

Table 3. Factor analysis on difficulties at the presentation stage (factor patterns after promax rotation)

	I	II	III
<b>Factor 1: Basic Presentation Skills (<math>\alpha = .82</math>)</b>			
37. Presenting in a confident manner	<b>.84</b>	-.17	.11
34. Using appropriate voice volume	<b>.67</b>	-.05	.04
35. Using silence effectively in communication	<b>.57</b>	.00	.19
32. Managing thoughts	<b>.48</b>	-.11	.15
45. Presenting without a script	<b>.46</b>	.11	-.18
38. Conveying key message	<b>.45</b>	.18	.14
33. Using correct English pronunciation	<b>.44</b>	.28	-.07
40. Using eye contact	<b>.40</b>	.17	.20
44. Using presentation devices effectively	<b>.33</b>	.26	-.05
<b>Factor 2: Handling Questions (<math>\alpha = .81</math>)</b>			
48. Understanding questions accurately	.04	<b>.78</b>	.01
49. Determining who should answer questions promptly	-.17	<b>.77</b>	.16
51. Answering unexpected questions promptly	-.14	<b>.75</b>	.14
50. Answering expected questions promptly	.15	<b>.59</b>	-.07
46. Bringing out questions from audience	.38	<b>.42</b>	-.26
<b>Factor 3: Audience Management (<math>\alpha = .75</math>)</b>			
42. Tailoring speaking speed based on audience's understanding	.01	.02	<b>.94</b>
41. Building interaction between the speaker and audience	.11	.09	<b>.52</b>
Correlation Between Factors			
I	—	0.57	0.47
II		—	0.40
III			—

### 3.3 Types of Difficulties at the Listening Stage

As described in 3.1, we checked the frequency distribution of the 13 items of difficulty scale at the listening stage and determined that all of the questions were necessary for measuring difficulties. Thus, we analyzed all the items.

Table 4. Factor analysis on difficulties at the listening stage (factor patterns after promax rotation)

	I	II
<b>Factor 1: Active Interaction (<math>\alpha = .85</math>)</b>		
59. Being the first to ask questions	<b>.85</b>	-.16
62. Asking questions multiple times	<b>.81</b>	-.27
61. Asking the same group multiple questions	<b>.72</b>	.00
64. Explaining a lack of understanding	<b>.68</b>	.10
57. Thinking of questions while listening	<b>.65</b>	.23
60. Asking easy-to-understand questions	<b>.62</b>	-.04
58. Thinking of questions on the spot	<b>.59</b>	.19
<b>Factor 2: Active Understanding (<math>\alpha = .82</math>)</b>		
52. Concentrating	-.13	<b>.81</b>
54. Understanding slides and speech simultaneously	.01	<b>.77</b>
55. Listening with interest	-.05	<b>.71</b>
56. Understanding the contents of the presentation	.31	<b>.65</b>
53. Following the order of the presentation	-.17	<b>.62</b>
63. Having concern for the presentation group	.19	<b>.39</b>
Correlation Between Factors		
I	—	.32
II		—

Next, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method for these 13 items. The changes of

eigenvalues were 4.87, 2.67, 0.86, 0.74, and 0.70, and we determined that a two-factor structure was appropriate. Assuming two factors, we performed factor analysis again, using the principal factor method with promax rotation. As a result, we confirmed sufficient factor loadings for all of the items. Final factor patterns and the correlations between factors are shown in Table 4 above; the two factors before the rotation explained 50.81% of the total variance of 11 items.

The first factor consisted of seven items. Some items showed high loadings, which were items about listening to the presentation and the listener's relationship to the speaker, such as "being the first to ask questions," "asking questions multiple times," and "asking the same group multiple questions." Thus, we named the factor "active interaction."

The second factor consisted of six items. Some items showed high loadings, which were items about the listener's ability to understand the speaker, such as "concentrating," "understanding slides and speech simultaneously," and "listening with interest." Thus, we named the factor "active understanding."

### **3.4 Types of Difficulties at the Discussion Stage**

As explained in 3.1, we checked the frequency distribution of the 25 items of the difficulty scale at the discussion stage. We also determined that all of the questions were necessary for measuring difficulties, and thus we analyzed all of the items.

Next, we performed factor analysis using the principal factor method for these 25 items. The changes of eigenvalues were 10.66, 1.72, 1.64, 1.40, 1.00, 0.85, and 0.77, and we determined that a four-factor structure was appropriate. Assuming four factors, we performed factor analysis again, using the principal factor method with promax rotation. Based on the results, we confirmed sufficient factor loadings for all items. Final factor patterns and the correlation between factors are shown in Table 5; the four factors before the rotation explained 54.68% of the total variance of 25 items.

The first factor consisted of 10 items. Items that showed high loadings were those about social communication, which is indispensable to an active discussion, such as "being the first to speak," "sharing common questions," and "participating actively in discussions." We named this factor "overcoming communication anxiety."

The second factor consisted of seven items. Items that showed high loadings were those about the forms of activities set up by teachers, such as "managing student discussion," "determining discussion topics by vote," and "discussing in English." Thus, we named this factor "adaptation to classroom activities."

The third factor consisted of five items. Items that showed high loadings were those items about creating the better ways for solving problems and developing what was discussed, such as "advancing a compromise opinion," "stating a new opinion," and "stating constructive opinions or alternative ideas." We named this factor "problem-solving approach."

The fourth factor consisted of 3 items, which were "controlling emotions," "removing any preconceived ideas," and "changing an opinion after considering others' logical opinions." These items, which reflect the ability to accept the best parts of others' opinion without placing absolute trust in personal feelings, values, experiences, also showed high loadings. Thus, we named this factor "self-relativization."

Table 5. Factor analysis on difficulties at the discussion stage (factor patterns after promax rotation)

	I	II	III	IV
<b>Factor 1: Overcoming Communication Anxiety (<math>\alpha = .91</math>)</b>				
73. Being the first to speak	<b>.74</b>	.21	-.10	-.03
89. Sharing common questions	<b>.72</b>	.04	.25	-.14
70. Participating actively in discussions	<b>.71</b>	.33	-.15	-.05
88. Confirming the intention of the statement	<b>.66</b>	-.12	.27	-.06
72. Speaking without fear of others' reactions	<b>.55</b>	.37	-.12	.03
86. Encouraging others to speak	<b>.48</b>	-.34	.33	.20
71. Using appropriate voice volume when speaking	<b>.48</b>	.29	-.18	.11
87. Summarizing what others say	<b>.47</b>	-.24	.40	.13
75. Stating opposing opinions	<b>.39</b>	.16	.31	-.01
74. Stating supporting opinions	<b>.35</b>	.22	.10	.23
<b>Factor 2: Adaptation to Classroom Activities (<math>\alpha = .85</math>)</b>				
66. Managing student discussion	-.06	<b>.76</b>	.10	-.09
67. Discussing in English	.03	<b>.65</b>	.23	-.11
65. Determining discussion topics by vote	.23	<b>.64</b>	-.13	.00
68. Developing group norms	.14	<b>.56</b>	.11	-.08
69. Discussing without chats	.04	<b>.45</b>	-.05	.20
80. Thinking deeper about what is said by self and others	-.15	<b>.43</b>	.39	.17
82. Making consistent assertions	-.10	<b>.33</b>	.33	.30
<b>Factor 3: Problem-Solving Approach (<math>\alpha = .83</math>)</b>				
78. Advancing a compromise opinion	.01	.02	<b>.87</b>	-.18
79. Stating a new opinion	.11	.08	<b>.63</b>	-.06
76. Stating constructive opinions or alternative ideas	.06	.31	<b>.53</b>	-.01
77. Thinking with multifaceted viewpoints	-.10	.22	<b>.50</b>	.14
81. Controlling a topic	.33	-.03	<b>.43</b>	.03
<b>Factor 4: Self-Relativization (<math>\alpha = .79</math>)</b>				
85. Controlling emotions	-.03	-.13	-.10	<b>.93</b>
84. Removing any preconceived ideas	-.08	.12	.02	<b>.73</b>
83. Changing an opinion after considering others' logical opinions	.19	.02	-.05	<b>.61</b>
Correlation Between Factors				
I	—	.57	.60	.48
II		—	.54	.48
III			—	.55
IV				—

#### 4. Teaching Implications by Learning Stage

##### 4.1 Teaching Implications at the Preparation Stage

Three factors—“effective ways of providing information,” “revision,” and “collaborative work”—were found as difficulties at the preparation stage. We assume that the presence of role models influences the factor of effective ways of providing information. In our research, we did not have model samples that were suitable for our students; instead, the students had to devise their presentations on their own. Also, the students seemed to allocate most of their attention to communicating messages accurately in English. As a result, they did not have much time to focus on the effectiveness of their presentations. This tendency can be attributed to our teaching style: we had them learn a wide range of words and grammar rules, often focusing on their accurate use. We should be more concerned about the rhetorical aspects of language.

As for revision, the students found it difficult to identify their own and others' errors on presentation scripts or slides. Although they did correct some errors, they only conducted minor revisions in the form of word- or sentence-level revisions. Most of them hesitated to rewrite the entire text; the full-scale revision was likely not performed because the students did not have self-confidence in their writing ability and because teachers did not provide sufficient time for revision in class. In any case, elaborate writing and peer feedback should be incorporated in the writing class.

In “collaborative work,” the students seemed to have trouble working in groups, and the teachers organized

the groups regardless of the students' relationship. Some students shied away because they were assigned to a group of people with whom they seldom talk in daily school life. It was easier for them to work with their best friends, but it is hardly feasible for teachers to make group assignments based on friendships. Instead, teachers must create opportunities for students to improve their social skills so that they can easily interact with strangers.

#### **4.2 Teaching Implications at the Presentation Stage**

At the presentation stage, we found that students had difficulties with three factors—"basic presentation skills," "handling questions," and "audience management." Regarding "basic presentation skills," we should have considered the rehearsal setting. Students rehearsed in their groups during class time and this was partly responsible for the problem. During the actual presentation, many of them could hardly make eye contact, control their voice volume, or use proper gestures. Even though some students rehearsed after school the day before their presentation, they merely sat in chairs imagining their presentation or repeating what they had to say. Presentation methods vary depending on the size of the audience, the layout of the room, the position of the presenter, the equipment, etc. Thus, when teachers have students rehearse, they should simulate the actual presentation environment. They should also provide as many opportunities for students to speak in front of their classmates as possible.

"Handling questions" is a high-level language activity, and it places a heavy burden on students in terms of both English proficiency and the contents of the presentation. Based on the student's lack of expertise on the topics, it was difficult for students to express information and ideas in English.

The students had engaged in speaking activities involving improvisation since the first year of high school; however, topics given by teachers had been limited to very familiar ones. By contrast, it seemed that the students were unable to deal with the sophisticated topics used in this study.

As a long-term solution, we suggest that teachers use current affairs and academic topics for presentation topics and have students exchange information or ideas with each other. On the other hand, as a short-term solution, we suggest that students review their manuscripts objectively to predict questions from the audience. Of course, it is beneficial for students to review other group members' manuscripts and discuss what they find in the manuscripts with each other. If possible, during rehearsal, they should ask third parties to watch the presentation and provide feedback.

Regarding "audience management," teachers must make presenters recognize that the audience plays the primary role rather than the presenters. It is often said that presentation is a one-way activity in which a presenter shows or tells his or her audience information or ideas. However, a good presenter, who seeks to guide an audience to react in an expected way, strengthens words during important parts, speeds up the tempo when the audience is losing concentration, asks the audience questions and considers the responses during the parts where listeners would naturally have questions, and makes each listener feel as if he or she was a part of the presentation. The students in this study recited their presentations mechanically, at a monotonous pace, and based on memory. We speculate that this was because teachers did not show the students examples of the type of presentation they expected from their students. Thus, we suggest that teachers should prepare an evaluation rubric and show a model presentation as well as evaluation criteria to the students beforehand.

### 4.3 Teaching Implications at the Listening Stage

Two factors—“active interaction” and “active understanding”—were identified as problems at the listening stage. In a presentation with “active interaction,” there are many questions and answers. After a presentation, the audience has its turn (i.e., the opportunity to speak out). Unfortunately, many students did not speak when provided the opportunity. We imagine that the students felt uneasy speaking in such a formal situation. Unable to predict the responses, they had to reply by improvisation and often did not know what to say. They gave up continuing to ask questions, even if satisfactory answers were not provided. Creating an atmosphere in which students can ask and answer questions without anxiety is necessary. However, asking questions itself is a significant burden on students, and thus teachers have to examine ways to manage question-and-answer activities. For example, teachers can allow time for students to develop questions or think about the responses to the questions in their groups. Also, if satisfactory answers are not provided, teachers should encourage other members in the group to ask questions that will lead to the answers that will satisfy all students. In this way, the burden of questioning may become easier by sharing the responsibility for questioning among the students.

In terms of “active understanding,” we think that both presenters and the audience are responsible for this factor. We are not surprised that students’ listening ability in the study was insufficient. Teachers should have provided the students with some training to help them concentrate while listening to long passages, particularly about unfamiliar topics, or background knowledge about the presentation topics in advance.

We found that the presenters also contributed to a lack of active understanding. Presenters spoke in a low voice, did not take enough time to show their slides, made monotonous presentations, and simply reported the information without emotion. In a Japanese context, the placement of blame for lack of understanding is placed on readers or listeners; however, in an English context, the placement is on speakers or writers. Teachers must recognize that presenters play an important role in helping the audience to understand a presentation’s contents actively.

### 4.4 Teaching Implications at the Discussion Stage

At the discussion stage, students had difficulties with four factors: “overcoming communication anxiety,” “adaptation to classroom activities,” “problem-solving approach,” and “self-relativization.” First, for “overcoming communication anxiety,” in addition to difficulty in having to continue oral discussions in a group for 25 minutes, we speculate that students did not have confidence in their abilities to carry out such tasks. Undesirable actions, such negative remarks, tended to halt discussions. Students also believed that someone else would speak, and thus students kept waiting, making it more difficult for anyone to speak. As a result, the level of discussion decreased. When discussions were happening, students with high motivation for English proficiency participated actively, as well as students with diplomatic personalities, who tended to speak positively. Others just nodded or kept silent. How can we encourage students to participate in discussions actively? Communication anxiety is thought to be caused by an increase in task difficulty and a decrease in self-efficacy, and thus it is essential to set a task with a lower difficulty to increase student confidence. When students hear the word “discussion,” they have the impression that “discussions must be difficult” or “we should say something great.” Thus, it is necessary for students to reduce the resistance toward the discussion itself. We intended to reduce resistance as much as possible by showing the movie *Twelve Angry Men*; however, based on the study’s results, this was insufficient. It is necessary to reduce the sense of resistance

by showing the students the evaluation rubric, the activities that students of the same grade can perform, and the kind of performance teachers are expecting in the discussion scene. Also, in this integrated lesson, we held a class discussion one week after the topic was selected by class vote, and we told students that they did not need to prepare. These features are partly responsible for the lack of time and mental preparation that leads to peace of mind. It would be better if teachers informed students in advance to allow sufficient preparation or distributed supplementary materials for discussion. To raise the self-efficacy of students, task setting and feedback by teachers, which provide a sense of accomplishment in daily English classes, play an essential role. Even if students do not achieve the level of performance expected by teachers, it is necessary for students to receive positive feedback and be informed of the goals that are likely to achieve next.

Regarding “adaptation to classroom activities,” this was the first class in which the students in our study had a long oral discussion that was managed by students; thus, it is likely that some students were nervous about this class style. To promote students’ adaptation to this style, students should be provided with repeated practice attempts. Additionally, teachers should gradually introduce the activity to students, such as beginning with a short chat with a little improvisation and extending speaking activities over time.

The “problem-solving approach” factor refers to the difficulty related to problem-solving discussions, which is the purpose of the integrated class discussion. Discussion activities should not be just a place of discussion. Instead, the discussion should be one of problem-solving, with a sense of responsibility, flexible thinking, and multiples perspectives towards resolving the problem. To acquire problem-solving skills, a cross-curricular approach is required as well as teaching efficiency; further, this should be addressed in curriculum management.

In this research, we held discussion activities for 25 minutes, which students felt was too short to solve the problem. We find that it is unrealistic to propose a solution for current affairs issues in such a short time. We recommend that students repeat the discussion activities more than once, while comparing multiple solutions, compromising proposals, and collecting information. If it is difficult to allow sufficient time for discussion activities due to class time limitations, we consider discussion activities in integrated classes as appropriate for brainstorming solutions. Also, it may be good to have the students summarize their ideas in English afterward.

Lastly, regarding “self-relativization,” we think that this was a challenge for the students in the study due to homogeneous groups. When students are surrounded by others with the same age, social position, and same interests, students begin to misunderstand that other people have the same ideas as themselves. Students tend to seek homogeneity, and thus when they meet a different opinion, even if it is a logical argument, it is difficult for them to accept it readily, and they may even become irritated. Through reflection, students will be able to respect others’ opinions. Thus, it is necessary to plan and implement exchanges with partners with different values and ideas, such as intercultural and intergenerational exchanges, in school and grade events.

## **5. Conclusion**

Our research has the following limitations. First, this research was intended for second-grade high school students, most of whom had STEP Eiken Grade 2 and Grade Pre-2. Although we have revealed various difficulties, students’ perceptions on presentations and discussions depend on various factors such as their English proficiency levels, personality, classroom atmosphere, social skills, school policies, student-teacher

relationship, to name a few. Therefore, to generalize the difficulties identified in this research, it is necessary to continue our research through additional studies with different participants.

Second, in the previous section, we have suggested improvements to the integrated lessons based on the difficulties identified in this study. It is necessary to clarify the extent of any reduction in difficulties when the second integrated lessons are carried out. Thus, we will send the same questionnaire to the students in the second integrated lessons and will analyze the differences in difficulties between the first and second lessons. By comparing the differences, it may be possible to differentiate between difficulties that are resolved by short-term efforts and those that are not. We expect to issue more specific guidelines based on that analysis.

Finally, in this study, we only measured students' perceptions of integrated lessons and, thus, did not measure their performance. Evaluation of student performance is indispensable for measuring teaching effects. For this purpose, we need to develop an evaluation rubric for the presentations and discussions that is valid and practical for all teachers. We also need to conduct a second integrated lesson to measure how performance changed between the first and second lesson.

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