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Introduction

Prior to the 2022 inaugural year of Osaka Metropolitan University, members of the English departments of the city and prefectural universities to be merged came together to form the English Course Committee. The objectives were to discuss and plan what would become the new core University English language program to be implemented within the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Sciences, and Global Education. This core program would be taught to all first-year and second-year students.

The University English program would be divided into two complementary halves. One half, to be taught by the native Japanese teachers of English would become the A program. The other half, to be taught by international speakers of English would become the B program.

One aspect of the first-year B program is an online textbook unit reflection activity which all students are asked to complete after finishing each of the seven textbook units. Figure 1 shows the completion rates for each of the textbook unit reflections for the 2022 (n=2914) and 2023 (n=2889) academic years.

Analysis of data

Figure 1 reveals several trends in student engagement in the textbook unit reflection activities. In both 2022 and 2023 student engagement dropped from unit 1 to unit 2. In 2022, unit 3 increased to experience the highest completion rate at 42.9%, but this dropped in each subsequent unit till unit 6 at its lowest point of 21.2%. In 2022, unit 7 the final unit of the academic year experienced a rebound and increase in completion to 33.6%. Despite the stronger start, 2023 also experienced a steady decline falling to its lowest point of 18.4% in unit 6. In 2023, units 4 and unit 7, the final units of each of the spring and fall semesters, experienced slight rebounds from the previous unit's completion rates. Notably, from unit 3

onward the 2023 completion rates were consistently lower than in 2022. There was an overall reduction in the average completion rates from 32.6% in 2022 to 28.3% in 2023.

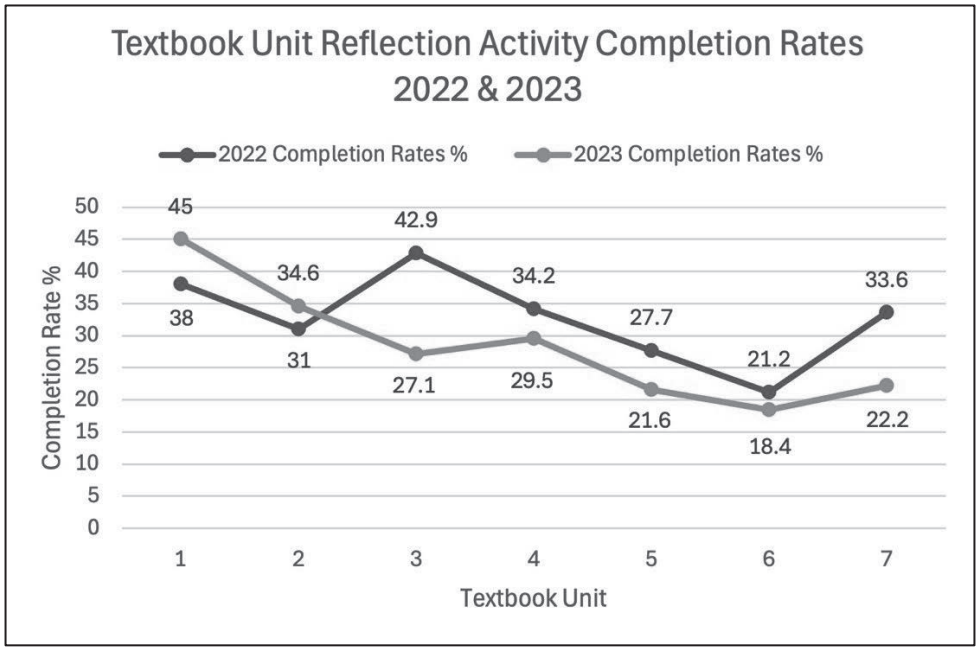

Figure 1. *Textbook Unit Reflection Activity Completion Rates 2022 & 2023*

Two aspects of this data prompted the researcher to undertake this desk-based study. Firstly, the general downward trend in completion rates as the textbook units progress each year. Secondly, the reduction in average rates from 2022 to 2023. Both aspects illustrate declining student engagement in these activities. The aims of this desk-based study are to review the processes that affected the set-up and design of the textbook unit reflection activities, and how they are administered. The objective is to identify factors that could be contributing to the declining engagement and determine how the reflection activities could be improved. The outcomes of this study will provide suggested modifications for the B program student reflection activities and future practice that could also assist other institutions when they implement similar tasks.

Research questions

1. What are the factors that could have contributed towards the downward trend in textbook unit reflection activity completion rates, and the reduction in average rates from 2022 to 2023?
2. How can theories of reflection inform suggested changes to the design and implementation of the activities with the intention of enhancing student engagement and

completion rates?

This study will first outline the timeline and processes that went into setting up the reflection activities. Then, each of the factors affecting the reflection activities will be examined to determine what could be contributing to the data trends. Finally, based on literature the discussion will suggest how the reflection activities could be enhanced.

The timeline and processes that went into setting up the reflection activities

Two 16-week syllabi were drawn up on the base content of a textbook focusing on developing students' abilities to prepare and deliver presentations, first on personal and then academic topics. Each textbook unit would follow a similar format incrementally building on and reinforcing the previous. In class, students would complete introductory activities to become familiar with the topic and language to be used. They would then progress through structured writing tasks preparing for the presentations. Physical presentation skills would be introduced incrementally. Students would first present individually with no visual support but would then learn how to design and use posters and then PowerPoint slides for group presentations. They would learn how to take notes while watching, ask questions, and respond.

In 2021, the year before the new University English program was to begin, the 5-member international faculty of which this researcher is a part, were notified that a budget had been made available for the creation of an online platform dedicated to supporting students' English language learning. This platform would host, amongst other things, an area dedicated to reflection activities that would be carried out by students in both the A and B programs after the completion of each textbook unit. The international faculty were told that a quantitative methodology would be applied using "can-do" statements with Likert scale responses. Members were tasked to assigning "can-do" statements to the objectives of each of the textbook units within the B program to form the basis of each unit's reflection activity.

The "can-do" statements

"Can-do" statements are described by the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) as "*what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively*" (Council of Europe, 2024). Illustrating six levels of competence A1 and A2 levels demonstrate a basic user, B1 and B2 the independent user, and C1 and C2 the proficient user.

An example of the first of these “can-do” statements from Unit 1 of the textbook in which students are required to give a self-introduction presentation is “I can ask and answer simple questions to prepare me for the theme of introductions.” This “can-do” statement is assigned as a speaking interaction language skill in the CEFR B1 level.

The number of “can-do” descriptors gradually increase through each unit of the textbook due to the repetitive nature of the tasks and the incremental addition of skills leading towards each of the presentations. The unit one reflection activity features 14 “can-do” statements, unit two and three 18, units four, five and six 20, and unit seven 23.

On completing each textbook unit students are asked to log on to the dedicated online platform and self-assess their ability to achieve each of these “can-do” statements by selecting one of five responses. The responses show different degrees of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “Not True,” “Slightly True,” “Moderately True,” and “Mostly True” to “Very True.” The “can-do” statements and the five responses are available to students in both English and Japanese languages. There are no qualitative reflection methods such as open-ended questions.

What students are told about the reflection activities

At the start of the academic year students are asked to watch a 20-minute Japanese language explanation video on the University English program. The guidelines on the reflection activities are a 2min 40s section of this video. Summarized, guidelines are that students should preview each unit’s learning goals to clarify the objectives, and at the end of each unit students should self-reflect on their learning by selecting their progress level for each of the “can-do” statements. Students are told that the self-evaluation will help them to identify goals and areas needing improvement, that they can use their reflections to improve skills in subsequent units, and that instructors will review reflections to enhance the classes.

Students’ completion of the reflection activities

For each textbook unit reflection task students receive three reminders. First, in the final week of each textbook unit the English Course Committee sends all first-year students an email in English and Japanese through a group announcement. For each unit the wording of the email is identical except for the textbook unit number and the reflection activity completion dates. Second, teachers are asked by email to remind students in class to complete the activity. This

email is also identical each time with the same exceptions. A period of 10 days, including 7 days between the end of a textbook unit and the start of the next textbook unit is given to students in which to complete this reflection activity. At the end of this period a further email written in Japanese is sent, indicating that the students have been given a further 7 days in which to complete the activity if they have not done so. The completion of these reflection activities has no consequence on the unit or semester grades so as not to influence student's responses (Moon 2004), and because the reflection activity is not an assessment metric taught in classes.

The reflection activity data available to students and teachers

Students can log into the platform to review their self-assessed achievement of each unit's objectives. Teachers can download a PDF formatted document of the quantitative results of the reflection activity compiled by the online platform. The results provide teachers with the percentage of students in a class that have completed the activity, and for each "can-do" statement the percentage of students that have selected each of the five responses. The student reflection responses are anonymous. The fewer responses there are from each class will mean a less accurate representation of that class's perceived achievement of the unit objectives.

Desk-based Research Methodology

This study employs a desk-based research methodology to investigate the design and implementation of the textbook unit reflection activities in order to inform suggestions for enhancing student engagement. Secondary research is appropriate for this study as it allows for a review and interpretative analysis of existing data and academic literature from a variety of relevant and credible sources including seminal works regardless of publication date.

Factors influencing the student textbook reflection activity data

The following section will present a review of literature around reflection and 13 factors that have been identified as contributing to the data trends. Much of the literature on reflection in education is guided by qualitative descriptive exploration methods, such as described by Gibbs (1988). It will be made clear when this is not the case.

1. The reflection cycle

Reflection is a suitable tool to guide this study not only as it is the purpose of the activity being analyzed, but also as it aims to influence positive change by questioning why things are,

and how they might be. Why is the reflection activity completion data as it is, and if carefully considered changes were made to factors within the process, what could it be?

Combining common definitions of reflection by Boud (2001) and Mezirow (1997) we can recognize that “why things are” can be determined through an exploration of and making sense and meaning from experiences. “How they could be” can be revealed as new understandings and appreciations, or transformative learning arising from that meaning and understanding.

As a cyclic process of experience, reflection, conceptualization and experimentation initially defined by Dewey in 1933 (Rogers, 2002), the benefits of reflection can also be described in the following ways. First, as facilitating a deeper understanding of self within the dimensions of practice. Second, as influencing learning by encouraging critical thinking and development of evaluation skills. Third, as implied knowledge transfer through higher order cognitive skills to induce conceptual change (Huang, 2010; Scanlan & Chernomas, 1997; Strampel & Oliver, 2007).

There are four stages that commonly appear in the reflection process. The first stage requires a purposeful look back at or return to activities and/or experiences. This can entail articulating and reviewing the processes and/or products, investigating actions in a situation and successful or failing accomplishments. In this study, this first stage was achieved by outlining the processes of the textbook unit reflection activities. The second stage involves an analysis, an evaluation of achievements to determine whether the desired outcome has been created. Alterio (2004) suggests that the activities in this stage can re-shape reality and change the meaning of experience. In this study, reality is being reshaped by the recognition of the trends identified in the completion rate data. Third involves creating meaning from the second stage through contemplation of strategies that can be employed to enhance the success of future similar activities. It is here that consciousness growth occurs that will influence future actions through deeper learning and new understandings (Kitchenham, 2008). This study is the representation of this third stage, contemplating the possible reasons why the textbook unit reflection activity completion rates data is as it is, and how it could be if carefully considered changes are made. The final stage is to make the changes, incorporating and utilizing the transformative learning and changed conceptual perspectives suggested in the previous stage. After completing this fourth stage and allowing successive students to complete the

transformed reflection activities, the resulting completion rate data will then be able to reveal whether the altered strategies influenced positive change. The reflective action research cycle can then be repeated.

These four stages have distinct similarities with two models, Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, summarized as plan, act, observe, reflect, and the action research model of plan, implement, observe, reflect (Del Buono, 2014).

2. Reasons for completing the reflection activities

Providing greater instruction and clarification so that the "why" can be clearly understood has several benefits. It can reduce resistance and cultivate positive attitudes (Boud, 2001) and encourage students to move along the self-determination theory scale from passive engagement with the activity to active engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It may improve the quality of qualitative reflection leading to deeper levels of cognitive processing and more significant learning outcomes (Moon, 2004) and can foster a deeper connection to learning objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In turn, this can promote the development of self-assessment skills and adaptability necessary for lifelong learning (Mezirow, 1997).

However, not understanding the value and purposes of reflective activities can make them seem unnecessary and time-consuming leading to resistance and/or passive completion (Fullan, 2007; Moon, 2004; Ross, 2006), and without proper guidance, may not translate into changed learning behaviors or increased efforts (Deci & Ryan, 2000) reducing their effectiveness (Zimmernan, 2002).

3. The number of times students are asked to complete a reflection activity

Kirschner (2002) suggests that excessive workload can lead to cognitive overload, potentially reducing its effectiveness, and causing disengagement. For Sweller (2011), the solution to this means assigning fewer, more focused, effective reflective tasks which can maximize their impact, rather than numerous, superficial ones (Boud, 2001).

4. The use of "can-do" statements and Likert scale responses

The advantages of providing "can-do" statements and the Likert scale responses is the objective simplicity of the format, which can be straightforward, less intimidating (Cavana et al., 2001), and less time-consuming for students to complete (Hartley & Betts, 2010), which

can potentially increase completion rates (Sweller, 1988). The standardization and consistency that this format allows also enables easier collection and analysis of data for large student groups, which can simplify comparison and analysis (Cohen et al., 2011). With appropriate training and instruction (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013) students can self-evaluate their abilities, promoting proficiency awareness (Little, 2005), increasing motivation (Zimmerman, 2002) and helping to set goals (Council of Europe, 2001).

Despite this, the disadvantages of Likert scales are that used repeatedly they can decrease motivation to respond thoughtfully (Porter et al., 2004) and may lead to boredom, reduced engagement, and decreased quality of responses (Hartley & Betts, 2010). This can be especially true with students who have low levels of motivation (Ross, 2006). Reliability can be affected as each student's interpretation of the scales may differ (Artino et al., 2014), and there can be a tendency to choose middle options (Cohen et al., 2011). Likert scale responses provide impersonal, unemotional surface-level perceptions that lack individualized detailed explanations and critical analysis (Boud, 2004; Kember et al., 2000; Moon, 2004) and these responses may not reveal specific areas of strength of weakness making it harder for teachers to address individual needs (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

An alternative method of reflection would be to employ a qualitative approach, guided by, for example Gibbs' (1988) Reflective Cycle. This would require students to undertake a deep and comprehensive examination of their personal experiences through a description of actions, exploration of emotional responses, evaluation, analysis, summary of learnings, and creation of a plan for the subsequent future similar actions (Gibbs, 1988). A process such as this can promote critical thinking and deeper understanding (Moon, 2004) by utilizing meaningful personal insights, feelings and interpretations (Boud, 2001). However, similar to oral methods of reflection it requires students to invest more time either inside or outside the classroom detracting from other learning which may be more of a priority, and can be more challenging and time-consuming to analyze (Cheng & Chau, 2009; Garrison, 1992; Gough & Wedum, 2000; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Huang, 2010; Liuolienė & Metiūnienė 2009; Smith, 2011).

5. The number of "can-do" statements for each reflection activity

According to cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988; Sweller 2011) balancing the amount of assigned work with a student's capacity to engage meaningfully in reflection can ensure more effective, sustainable, and beneficial learning. This entails reducing the complexity of

activities and limiting the scope to focus on key learning experiences (i.e. intrinsic load), reducing complex instructions or poorly structured activities (i.e. extraneous load), and encouraging meaningful engagement without overloading the cognitive effort required to complete the activities (i.e. germane load).

6. Use of an online platform

Several studies including Fageeh (2011), Lee (2010), and Sun (2012) have shown that the use of online platforms can positively influence language learning, attitudes towards learning and levels of self-reflection. However, the reflection in these studies was carried out through smaller studies of qualitative descriptions, explorations, evaluations, and analysis, and not in the large scale quantitative methods used in this case.

7. The design of instructions sent to students

The messages sent to students can have a great impact on their engagement and response rates to reflection activities. Repeatedly sending messages with identical wording can lead to message fatigue, where recipients become desensitized and ignore communications (Dilman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). To avoid this, Keller (1987) recommends varying messages to maintain attention and convey relevance to coursework and experiences. Liu (2005) supports this, and suggests where possible, the use of personalized emails.

8. When students are asked to complete reflection activities and the amount of time given to complete them in

To complete what Schön (1983) refers to as reflection-on-action, or reflection-for-action Moon (2004) emphasizes that it is most effective when it occurs soon after the learning experience. This allows students to capture their immediate thoughts and feelings, which can lead to a more authentic and detailed insight. Sweller's (1988) cognitive load theory suggests that overwhelming students with tight deadlines can impede learning. He, Gibbs (1988) and Schön (1983) all highlight the importance of allocating enough time for students to reflect and move from the surface level reflections to deeper critical thinking and analysis of their experiences. However, the amount of time provided will be impacted by external influences (Sweller, 1988). These could be the complexity of the task, time needed to complete it, the curriculum the activities are incorporated into, or the external workload and activities.

9. The instructions given to teachers to request students complete the reflection activities

The messages sent to teachers requesting them to ask students to complete the reflection activities play an important role in how effectively they encourage students to engage. Clear, supportive and purposeful communication with teachers can enhance their ability to motivate students. Instructions should convey the value of reflections and how they align with course objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Larrivee, 2008) and should clearly state what teachers are expected to do, including specific actions and timelines (Brookfield, 2015). Finlay (2008) proposes that participation can be encouraged by either integrating reflection activities into class discussions or providing examples in the classroom so activities can be completed outside.

10. Teachers' motivation to ask students to complete the reflection activities

When a department implements quantitative reflection activities that provide only anonymized data, teachers may have less motivation to encourage students to take part. Factors contributing to this include the perception that the data provided gives no perceived benefit to students or teachers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and that they are non-essential due to misalignment with pedagogical beliefs (Moon, 2004). Involving teachers in the planning processes can increase their willingness to participate and lessen possible thoughts that an additional unnecessary workload is being created (Taimalu & Luik, 2019).

11. The teacher's instructions to students

In a similar manner that the messages sent to teachers can play an important role, the messages that the teachers give to students in the classroom can also be heavily influential. A goal should be to show how the reflection aligns with course objectives making it relevant to the students (Biggs & Tang, 2011) and how these skills can be valuable in real-life situations, enhancing problem-solving and decision-making abilities (Schön, 1983). To do this, clear instructions are needed to inform students that reflection can help them gain deeper understandings by connecting new knowledge with prior experiences (Moon, 2004), can enhance critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 1995), and contribute to future professional roles (Boud, 2004).

12. The reflection activity data available to students and teachers

If there is a lack of individual student accountability in the reflection activities and

participation cannot be individually monitored teachers cannot identify the students who did or did not take part. When teachers only have access to generalized results of Likert scale reflective activities, they face limitations that can impact their ability to support individual student growth and adjust teaching strategies required to meet individual or group needs (Tomlinson, 2014). This can lead to students feeling less compelled to engage seriously (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which may result in decreased motivation to participate, or surface level/ superficial engagement, which can undermine the purpose of the activity and the development of critical reflection skills (Kember et al., 2000). Personalized feedback can be essential for helping students understand their strengths and areas for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

13. How the data is used

Students are informed that teachers can use reflection activity data to enhance their classes. But when students invest time in completing reflection activities and see no evidence that their input is used, they may feel that their efforts are meaningless (Taras, 2002), leading to decreased motivation and negative attitudes towards future similar activities (Boud, 2001; Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008). A failure to see how feedback data is used can also lead to an erosion of trust in the educational process (Carless, 2006). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) claim that for reflection activities to promote self-regulated learning by helping students to monitor progress and set goals, as they are intended, students need to be shown how to interpret and use the data, engaging them in the self-assessment and learning process. For this engagement to happen in the classroom teachers may also need to receive instruction or training and dedicated time should be made available in the syllabus.

Discussion

Based on the literature reviewed around the 13 identified factors, discussion will contemplate strategies that can be employed to enhance student engagement and activity completion rates in the future. However, the limitations are that although modifications can be suggested it may not be possible to adjust some of these factors if they are either a consequence of the timeline of events, a logistical necessity (i.e. the number of students taking part), or the fixed capabilities of the online platform or any financial or time restraints of changing any aspect within it. However, there are factors that are less permanent and could be modified by incorporating and utilizing transformative learning and changed conceptual perspectives developed from this study. Used in combination, these could positively influence activity

completion rates.

The reflection process

Designed in 2021 the year before its implementation there was no opportunity to initiate a full, four-stage trial action research cycle use of the textbook unit reflection activity. Therefore, its strengths and weaknesses, and what student's responses to the initial format would be were unknown. This study lies in the third stage of the first cycle of the reflection/action research process. Therefore, this is the first time that strategies to contemplate new understandings and the enhancement of future activities can take place. The results of this study could be used to initiate future positive modifications to the features within the 13 identified factors.

The messages sent to students and to teachers

A review of the relevant literature revealed that the timing of messages, the method of delivery, and the content can cause cognitive overload, message fatigue and desensitization. Changes in these areas may positively affect activity completion rates. For example, a more positive impact on the unit 1 activity completion rates might be achieved by asking students to watch the 2min: 40s reflection guideline video clip in the same week as the first reflection activity task, completing an in-class activity based around the first reflection, and exploring as a group how it can assist learning. This may also positively affect the completion rate of subsequent reflection activities.

Regarding delivery, to reach the large number of students and teachers the method of email messages sent by group announcement may be the most appropriate with the current methods available. However, whether these emails are effectively reaching students and communicating the desired message is unknown. Given trends in communication a student-popular method of SNS may be more effective but may not be within the means possible. However, the content of each message sent to students and teachers could be adjusted to be more directly relevant to the textbook unit in question and the key learning experiences to encourage meaningful engagement and higher activity completion rates.

The reflection activities, "can-do" statements, and Likert scale responses

Students are asked to complete seven reflection activities throughout the year enabling reflection to take place on the objectives of the seven different textbook units. As an alternative method, assigning two more focused reflective activities, one to be completed at

the end of each semester might reduce any perceived cognitive overload. A weakness of this is that students would be required to recall multiple units from the 16-week semester, which may not be effective in capturing accurate recollections of the incremental progression of objectives through the textbook. They may also be influenced by external end-of-semester activities.

If the seven textbook unit reflection activities are retained the most appropriate time for students to complete each one would be in the time after the completion of each unit and before the start of the next, as is currently done. This not only allows students to capture their immediate thoughts, but also is at a time when they are not being asked to complete activities within the next textbook unit.

Literature on cognitive overload suggests it is not wise to ask students to complete seven personal qualitative descriptive reflections. Also, neither the current online platform nor teachers would be able to perform an analysis of this type of response for cohorts of nearly 3000 students. For these reasons, despite the drawbacks, the box-ticking of the Likert scales responses that allows quantitative analysis to be performed by the host platform may be more suitable than either the oral method of reflection or a written qualitative method such as Gibbs (1988) proposes.

The number of "can-do" statements for each of the reflective activities could be perceived to be high. Many of the statements are also reoccurring with the repeated use and incremental reinforcement of previously learned skills. This repetition may be creating an excessive workload and cognitive overload, reducing student's capacity to engage meaningfully and continually with the activities. Reducing the number of "can-do" statements for each reflection activity, to focus only on the key learning experiences may assist students in engaging with them more

Online platform, data available and how it can be used

The online platform and the features it provides including the "can-do" style of questions and Likert scale responses, and the type of completion data it delivers are factors that may be less quickly and easily changed than others. If the platform is not managed by the department or institution using it but instead is outsourced, suggestions for modifications to the reflection activities can be made. However, when these can take place may be dependent on department

financial constraints and the scheduling availability of the provider.

The positive aspects could be that the platform is easily accessible to all students who choose to complete the activities and provides them with an account of their own self-evaluations and achievement of objectives. It is also able to provide accumulated quantitative data to the teachers who may choose to use it to enhance the content of classes.

The negative aspects of the online platform could be that it provides anonymized accumulated quantitative data to teachers limiting the personal support that can be provided to students that take the time to complete the activities as requested.

The literature reviewed for this paper illustrated that students should be able to see teachers using their reflection data and be instructed in how they themselves can use it. Without this, the process can become a meaningless use of time better spent, providing little incentive to participate in future similar activities. For this to happen, teachers may need to apply possibly low numbers of responses to a larger group of students. They may need to be reactive, utilizing the anonymized data available, adjusting plans and materials within the syllabus so that objectives can be retaught. Teachers might also require additional training in how to teach students to use their reflections to become more self-regulated learners. However, the amount of additional cognitive load that this may place on teachers will need to be considered.

Conclusion

The Osaka Metropolitan University first-year English B program textbook unit reflection activities have experienced a downward trend in completion rates, and a reduction in the average completion from 2022 to 2023. This may be an effect of one, or a combination of different factors.

Literature tells us that there are three benefits to the completion of the reflection activities. First, that students will have an online record of their reflections and their self-perceived level of accomplishment of the English program's objectives which, with additional guidance and support could help with motivational and language goal setting. Second, that development of reflection skills can be valuable in real-life situations, enhancing problem-solving and decision-making abilities. Third, that teachers can be informed of the student's self-perceived level of achievement of the activities, which could be used to guide enhancement of their

teaching.

After reviewing relevant studies and discussions around reflection this research has identified several factors within the reflection activities that could be modified. The number of "can-do" statements that are imbedded within the online platform might not be easily or quickly revised, but modifications to stimulate a positive change should be considered. Despite the negativities, the use of Likert scale responses and the production of anonymized data may be a logistical and technological necessity within the online platform so may not be easily altered. To promote more meaningful engagement the messages that are communicated to students and teachers could be tailored to specifically focus on the key learning experiences of each unit. Completion rates may also be positively affected by assisting and encouraging teachers to utilize reflection activities and data to reinforce elements of previous units. Finally, students may need instruction from teachers on how to use the reflections to set future motivational and language goals.

By making these suggested modifications the textbook unit reflection activity completion rates could be positively affected. Undertaking the second stage of a subsequent reflection cycle and an evaluation of alterations made would determine whether the desired outcome has been created, reality has been reshaped and the meaning of experience changed.

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Abstract

Reflective practices can be integral to fostering self-regulated learning and improving language proficiency. Considering this, quantitative reflection activities were developed and implemented within a first-year university English Language program. Over the first two years, the reflection activity completion rates declined indicating students' decreasing engagement. Using a systematic desk-based research methodology reviewing reflective practices, this study investigated the factors contributing to this decline, aiming to offer suggestions on how to enhance participation. The factors examined included the use of online platforms to manage reflection activities for large numbers of students, the employment of "can-do" statements aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), email communications to students and teachers, and the utilization of the data provided by students. The findings of this research suggest that student engagement could be enhanced by reducing students' cognitive load through a focus on key learning experiences, and lessening message fatigue and desensitization to the reflection activity. The study also explores and illustrates the consequences of the inherent features of the online platform and the reflection data that is provided. This research offers actionable recommendations to influence positive change in this reflection activity and provides guidance to other institutions that are considering similar practices.