Action Research Final Report 2015

Yuka Saruwatari

Title: Communicative writing (Incidental Focus-on-Form Instruction)
My research issue for 2015 is to see how communicative writing can help students improve communicative abilities in English, especially in writing and speaking, and how it affects their attitudes toward English learning.

Teaching context:

Level: 3rd year of senior high school Class size: An elective course, 20 students

Time: 50mins×2/ week

Textbook: Talk a Lot, Book One (EFL press)

I conducted the research at a public senior high school. The participants were 20 students in the third grade. There were 14 girls and six boys. The level of English proficiency was very low. They chose this course, Practical English, as an elective course. However, only five students chose this course as a first choice and the other students were not so motivated in learning English at the beginning of April. The class met twice a week from April to February, and one period of class was 50 minutes.

Problems:

- 1. **Students' behavior problems.** Most of the students are slow learners and they easily lose attention in class. They can do pair work; however, after they finish it, they tend to continue to chat in Japanese.
- 2. **Students' English proficiency.** Since most of the students failed to learn English in the previous English learning experience, the level of their English proficiency is very low and they do not like English, neither.
- 3. **The lack of experience in student-centered learning.** Students don't get enough chance to be the center of learning. In most of the classes in high school, there is a tendency that teachers are the ones who can give knowledge and students are the ones who listen to teachers and receive knowledge. Simply, they have few chances to state their opinions and express themselves.
- 4. **The lack of grammar knowledge.** Students have learned grammar through focus-on-form instruction since last year; still, they tend to forget most of the grammar rules because they don't usually study at home and the amount of time they are exposed to English is not enough.

Goals:

- 1. The students can express themselves about certain topics and improve their communicative competence through communicative writing and speaking activities.
- 2. The students are engaged in interactive activities in English and enjoy them.
- 3. The students can use conversation strategies.
- 4. The students have appropriate assessments, including performance tests and fun essay writing activities to have them participate in class actively and to appreciate the importance of the class.
- 5. The students have a positive attitude in learning English.

What I did:

1. Selected familiar topics for the students.

- 1) Getting to know each other
- 2) Interests (movies, TV programs, and food and drinks)
- 3) My Family
- 4) Gratitude Letter
- 5) Talking about People (My best friend)
- 6) My Future Husband/Wife
- 7) My Future Job/Dream

2. Organized a communicative writing and speaking activity.

Brainstorming → First draft → Peer Editing → Common mistakes → Second Writing → Timed-conversation→(Recording→Transcribing→)Self-reflection→Speaking test and Fun essay writing

They usually started with brainstorming a topic, and then wrote a first draft. After they wrote the first draft, they had a chance of peer-editing. Based on the first draft, I collected some common mistakes that the students could pay attention to forms. Next, they added some sentences from the first writing based on peer-editing and sharing common mistakes and wrote a second draft. After that, they had a speaking activity with a timed conversation in pairs. They usually changed a partner three times as a speaking activity, using conversation strategies. They also recorded their conversation and reflected on it.

Timed conversation 1) Getting to know each other- 2 minutes, at least 60 words

and Writing

- 2) Interests (movies, TV programs, and food and drinks) -2 minutes and 30 seconds, at least 70 words
- 3) My Family- 3 minutes, at least 80 words
- 4) Gratitude Letter- at least 80 words
- 5) Talking about People (My best friend)-3minutes, at least 80 words
- 6) My Future Husband/Wife-3 minutes, at least 90 words
- 7) My Future Job/Dream-3 minutes, at least 80 words

3. Introduced Conversation Strategies.

I introduced several conversation strategies in small talks which are needed most for beginner students.

(1) Openers (2) Closers (3) Showing Interests (4) Showing you are listening (5) Getting time to think (6) Asking to them to repeat what has been said (7) Shadowing (8) Follow-up questions (9) Agreement and disagreement

4. Conducted three speaking tests and four fun essay writings

Performance tests: 1) Interests (movies, TV programs, and food and drinks) 2 minutes and 30 seconds

- 2) My family 3 minutes
- 3) Talking about People 3 minutes

Fun essay writing: 1) Interests 2) My family 3) Gratitude Letter 4) My Future Husband / Wife

Research Design:

I gave a survey in July and December, and collected data from 20 students in the course. I gave the students a Questionnaire (in Japanese) twice. There were 25 questions (22 close-ended and two open-ended). Students wrote their answers in Japanese. I analyzed the numerical data using descriptive statistics and textual data using thematic analysis.

Results and What I learned:

Regarding class goal 1: The students can express themselves about certain topic and improve communicative competence through communicative writing and speaking activities.

The students were encouraged to write and speak about meaningful and relevant topics. The students showed positive attitude for speaking and writing. (*Chart 1 and 2*) Most of them thought they improved their communicative competence in English. (*Chart3*) According to Chart 1, they already had a positive attitude toward speaking in English in July and all of them became positive about speaking in December. The number of the students who could write more words increased from July to December.

Chart 1

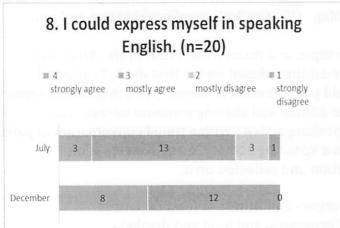
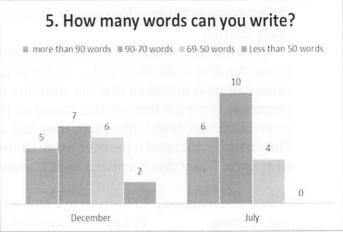


Chart 2



Source: survey-question 8 (n=20) (July and December) Chart 3 Source: survey-question 5 (n=20) (July and December)



Source: survey-question 18 (n=20) (July and December)

Sentence 8: I could express myself in speaking English.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Question 5: How many words can you write?

More than 90 words; between 90-70 words; between 69-50 words; less than 50 words

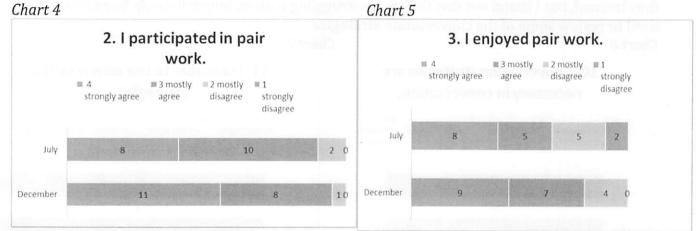
Sentence 18: Communicative competence of English has improved.

4: strongly agree 3: mostly agree 2: mostly disagree 1: strongly disagree

Students' comments (Positive)

- OI enjoyed fun essay writing very much. (2 July + 2 Dec.)
- OI improved the speaking skill. (1 July)
- OI was able to improve my English competence. (1 December)

Regarding class goal 2: The students are engaged in interactive activities in English and enjoy them.



Source: survey-question 2 (n=20) (July and December)

Source: Survey-question 3 (n=20) (July and December)

Sentence 2: I participated in pair work.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Sentence 3: I enjoyed pair work.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Pair work was useful and enjoyable for the students. Most of them participated in pair work and enjoyed it. They had a lot of pair activities to increase interaction to each other. They were centered in learning English. Most of them answered that pair work helped in learning English more. Nevertheless, there are some of them who didn't enjoy it very much. When some students were not motivated in learning, those pairs didn't work well. Pair work played an important role in class, so I thought about how to make pairs and tried to pair them up with a different partner every lesson. Seats were decided by drawing lots every lesson, so they had a different partner at the beginning of every lesson.

Students' comments (Positive)

- \odot Pair work was useful and enjoyable. (5 July +5 Dec.)
- OI could improve the speaking skill through pair work. (1 July)
- OI would like to have more pair activities. (1 Dec.)

Students' comments (Negative)

▼I couldn't take part in pair work seriously. (1 Dec.)

Regarding class goal 3: The students can use conversation strategies.

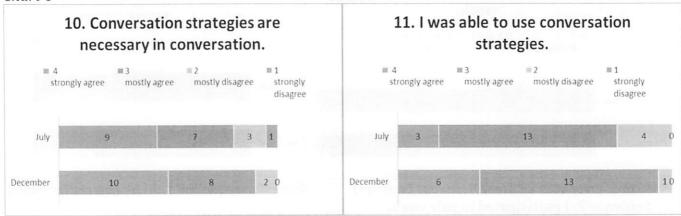
I introduced several conversation strategies in small talks and timed-conversation which are needed most for beginner students. They learned most of the conversation strategies in the previous year, too. Here are the examples of conversation strategies which were introduced to them:

a.) Openers b.) Closers c.) Showing Interests d.) Showing you are listening e.) Getting time to think f.) Asking to them to repeat what has been said g.) Shadowing h.) Follow-up questions i.) Agreement and disagreement

Many students learned to use conversation strategies and were able to use them to keep a conversation. Since I introduced most of the conversation strategies in the previous year, they already got used to them at the beginning of April.

In Chart 6, the students had a positive perception in using conversation strategies. Based on Chart 7, the result showed that they were confident in using the conversation strategies they learned, but I found out that they were struggling with making follow-up questions. They need to review some of the conversation strategies.

Chart 6 Chart 7



Source: survey-question 10 (n=20) (July and December) Source: survey-question 11 (n=20) (July and December)

Sentence 10: Conversation strategies are necessary in conversation.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

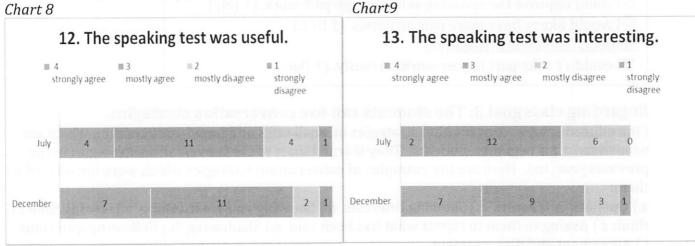
Sentence 11: I was able to use conversation strategies.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Students' comments

- OI was able to learn conversation strategies through the speaking test. (1 July)
- \bigcirc \blacktriangledown It was difficult to use appropriate conversation strategies to what my partner had said but it was useful. (1 July)

Regarding class goal 4: The students have appropriate assessments, including performance tests and fun essay writing activities to have them participate in class actively and to appreciate the importance of the class.



Source: Survey-question 12 (n=20) (July and December)

Source: Survey-question 13 (n=20)

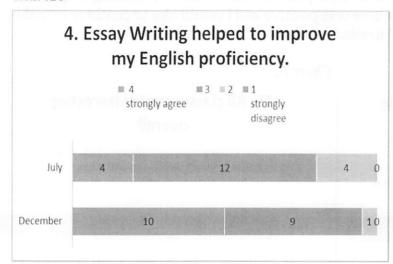
Sentence 12: The speaking test was useful.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Sentence 13: The speaking test was interesting.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Chart10



Source: Survey-question 4 (n=20) (July and December)

Sentence 4: Essay writing helped to improve my English proficiency.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

I gave three speaking tests and four fun essay writing activities through a whole year. The results in Chart 8 and 9 show the students thought that the speaking test was useful and interesting. In December, more students thought that through fun essay writing activities, they could improve their English proficiency. What they do in class should match what they are assessed in. In this way, speaking tests and fun essay writing activities are necessary.

(Students' comments: Speaking tests)

- ⊚The speaking test was good and fun. (1, July /1, December)
- OI could improve my English through the speaking test. (1, July)
- OI was able to learn conversation strategies through the speaking test. (1, July)
- ▼ ②It was difficult to use appropriate conversation strategies to what my partner had said. Making eye-contact was difficult, too. But I would like to be able to use them. (1, July) (Students' comments: Fun essay writings)
- OI enjoyed fun essay writing very much. (2, July / 2, Dec.)
- ◎I enjoyed drawing a picture with essay writing. (1, Dec.)
- OIt was fun that I wrote about what I wanted to say by using the dictionary. (1, July)

Regarding class goal 6: The students have a positive attitude in learning English.

The students' overall reception to this course was positive and I would like to continue to make classes interesting to meet the students' needs.





Source: Survey-question 14(n=20) (July and December)

Source: Survey-question 15(n=20) (July and December)

Sentence 14: All classes were understandable overall.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

Sentence 15: All classes were interesting overall.

4: strongly agree; 3: mostly agree; 2: mostly disagree; 1: strongly disagree

According to Chart 11, all classes that I facilitated were understandable for most of the students. In December, the result of the survey in number 15 (Chart 12) showed that more students thought all classes were interesting. I tried to introduce more various activities based on the topics in the second semester and included more fun elements in order to motivate the students in learning English. Considering the fact that most of them had had a negative image about English; only five students chose this course as a first choice and the others chose this course as a second, third, or fourth choice, this number is assessable and communicative language teaching was very effective in motivating the students.

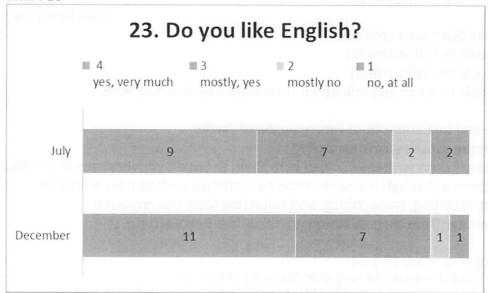
Students' comments (Positive)

- ©The games and quizzes were interesting. (4, December)
- ©The word game was interesting. I can remember them in a fun way. (2, December)
- OIt was fun. (6, December)
- OI enjoyed all activities. (2, December)
- OListening to songs was fun. (2, December)
- OI enjoyed more than the first semester, because we had more fun elements in class. (2, December)
- OI was able to use English better, which was fun. (2, December)

Students' comments (Negative)

- ▼I would like to have more fun such as playing games and I would not like to 'study' English. (1, July)
- ▼I would like to practice a daily conversation rather than a speaking test. (1, July)
- ▼I would like to have some changes in a learning process. We repeat a similar procedure such as writing and speaking. (1, July)

Chart 13

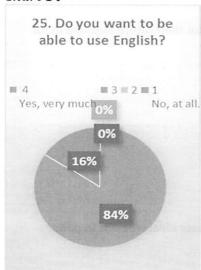


Source: Survey-question 23(n=20) (July and Dec.)

Question 23: Do you like English?

4: yes, very much; 3: mostly yes; 2: mostly no; 1: no, at all

Chart 14



The number of the students who like English very much increased from 9 in July to 11 out of 20 in December. The number of the students who don't like English decreased from July to December. I would like to see my students enjoy learning English. Learning English can be challenging and difficult, but according to Chart 14, all of them want to be able to use English. I would like to be an English teacher who can meet students' expectations and that they would want to be able to use English in some parts of their lives.

Source: Survey-question 25(n=20) (Dec.)

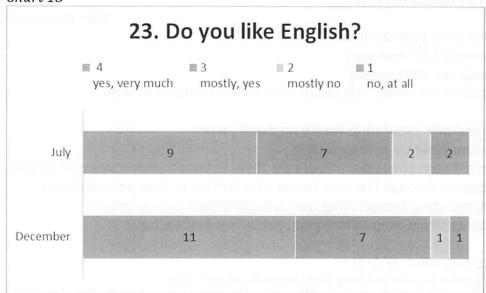
Question 25: Do you want to be able to use English? 4: yes, very much; 3: mostly yes; 2: mostly no; 1: no, at all

Conclusion:

The result of the survey shows that communicative language teaching seems to have been very effective with this particular group of students. Yet, this research was conducted only over 10 months and only with 20 participants and it is too early to make a firm conclusion. The questionnaire was conducted twice in July and December. I need to get more data for a longer period of time using different instruments.

The result from the students was positive overall; but I need to continue to examine how communicative language is effective in students who are learning English. I would like to continue to use communicative writing in class and introduce various activities based on the topics and include more fun elements in order to motivate the students in learning English. I would like to introduce more conversation strategies so that they can talk longer. I would like to provide scaffold writing and speaking activities so that they can write more and talk longer and build communicative competence.



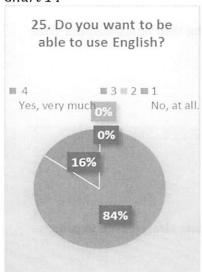


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From AR Report for the month of November Lesson Plan: My Future Husband/Wife

Yuka Saruwatari

- 1. Level: Senior high school third year students
- 2. Class size: An elective course (20 students)
- 3. Textbook: Talk a Lot book one (EFL press)
- 4. Goal: Students will be able to write and talk about their future husband or wife.
- 5. Objectives:
 - (1) Students will write and talk about their future husband /wife.
 - (2) They will have a communicative writing activity.
 - (2) They will learn conversation strategies which help them to have a conversation in English.
 - (3) They will be autonomous through learners-centered activities such as peer editing in writing, self-evaluation, recoding, transcribing, and reflecting their conversation.
 - (4) They will learn grammar from their common mistakes in a newsletter.
- 6. Procedure:
 - (1) Day one: OListening to a song. (P.1-3)

We have decided to listen to a song at the beginning of each class.

I asked them to take turns and bring a CD or any gadgets that has songs in it. One of the students introduced a song called 'My Future Husband' by Meghan Trainor. The lyrics were very interesting. I thought I could expand a lesson based on the song.

•Personalization (1) (P.4) (input)

The students chose if they agreed or disagreed with 20 conditions husband, in the song, for their future.

•Personalization (Pair work) ② (P.5) (input)

The students shared their ideas in pairs with 20 conditions for their future husband in the song.

- OBrainstorming: My future husband/ wife
- (2) Day two: OListening to the song again and fill in the blanks

oListening activity (p. 6) (input)

Yuka's ideal husband and Nikki's ideal future husband

- OInformation Gap Activity (p.7 and 8) (input)
- OBrainstorming: My future husband/wife
- oFrist Draft (p.8 and 9)
- (3) Day three: OListening to the song

OArashi's ideal wife (Pair work) (Input)

The students read each member's ideal wife and identify whose ideal wife it is in pairs.

- •First draft (p.9 and 10)
- Peer editing (p. 10)
- (4) Day four: OListening to the song

OSharing common mistakes and their conditions for future husband/wife.

(p. 11)

- oSecond Draft (p.12)
- (5) Day five OListening to the song

•Timed conversation in pairs (p.13)

Students had a talk based on the second draft with a partner for 3 minutes. They changed their partners 4 times and they were expected to talk without looking at the script in the end.

oRecording & Transcription (feedback) -Self Reflection

At the fourth time of having a conversation with a partner, they recorded their talk. After that, they listened to the recording and transcribed the conversation and reflect what were good and what has to be improved.

(5) Day six: •Fun Essay Writing

They drew a picture of future husband or wife and wrote about conditions about him/her.

) No.() Name ()Dear future (husband My Partner's Name (OF and every night?毎晩、毎晩、キレイ/かっこいいっ Conditions for your future husband or wife Agree Can't Disagree てほうべき? そう思う そう思わない 未来のだんな様、お嫁さんへの条件... decide 12. After every fight, should s/he just apologize? いえない ケンカのときには相手が聞るべき? 1. Do you want to have a date with him/her? 13. You never wrong? デートに行きたい? あなたが思い(間違ってる)わけなんてない? 2. Shouldn't s/he forget every anniversary? 14. Should s/he make time for you? 記念日は忘れてはいけない? あなたのために時間を作るべき? 3. Should s/he buy groceries? スーパーにいくべき? 15. Mustn't s/he leave you lonely? 4. Should s/he buy what s/he needs? 寂しい思いはさせてはならない? 自分に必要なものは自分で買うべき? 16. You'll never see his/her family more than 5. If s/he'll treat you right yours?あなたの歌族より、彼・彼女の歌族と会う方が多 (彼が/彼女が)があなたをちゃんととあつかってくれるなら いなんて絶対無理? Will you be the perfect wife · husband? 17. You'll be sleeping on the left side of the bed? あなたは完璧な(典さま/だんな様)でいる? You'll decide which side of bed you sleep? 6. Should s/he work from 9 to 5? ベッドでは左側で寝るわ(どちら例で寝るか白分が決める)? 彼・彼女はフルタイムで仕事すべき? 18. Should s/he just be a classy guy/lady 7. Should you work from 9 to 5, too? 紳士/淑女でいるべき? あなたもフルタイムで仕事する? 19. Should s/he buy you a ring(something) 招給 8. Should s/he be home and baking apple (何か)を買ってくれなきゃだめ? ples(cooking)?アップルパイでも焼きながら(料理などして). うち 20. S/he had better love you right? にいるべき? あなたのこと、ちゃんと愛した方がいい?(そうしないと大変な 9. Must s/he know how to treat you like a lady/a ことになる?) gentleman?レディ・抑士として扱ってくれなきゃダメ? Listening Activity: Yuka's ideal husband 10. Even when you are acting crazy. should s/he tell you everything's airight? Here's a few things my husband needs to know if he wants to あなたがおかしなことやってても「いいんだよ」って回っ be my one and only all my life. てくれなきゃイヤ? 1 He always must be (11. Should s/he tell you are beautiful/cool each).) No.() Name (4 He should () for me. ⑤ He can't forget (). 6 He should (). ② He should (). Here's a few things my future wife needs to know if she wants to be my one and only all my life. 1) She always must be (gentle).優しい ② She should be a good (cook 3 She should be a good (house keeper). She should be (home and wait for me). 5 She can't forget (every anniversary 6 She should take care of (our children). The should be (beautiful). My future wife, better love me right. You listen to Ayano's conditions for her future husband. Listen to Ayano and Fill in the blanks. 1 He always must say ()every day.

).

).

② He must be (

3 He must earn (

Class() No.() Name () [Useful Expressions] 使える数項 Dear future husband/wife(未来のダンナさま、奥さんへ) OHere's a few things s/he'll need to know if s/he wanna be my one and only all my life Brainstorming ここにいくつか条件があります。あなたが知っておくべき。もしあなたが私の唯一の大切な旦期さん、責さんになりたいなら OIf s/he wanna get that special loving'私に思いっきり愛してほしいなら Tell me I'm beautiful each and every night 毎段、毎段、キレイだねって且ってお 命令文(動詞の原形から始める)~してよね。 Don't 動詞原形 ~しないで。 OFuture husband, better love me right 未来のダンナさま、私のこと、ちゃんと受した方がいいわ ○ should すべき must ~しなければだめ can't ~してはいけない ○ I like a partner who… …な人が好き The First Writing Dear future husband/ wife (At least 80 **Dear future** words) husband/ wife)) No.() Name (Class() words (New vocabulary 調べた単語を含いておこう Peer editing (仲間同士で編集!)Questions and Comments (English or Japanese) good Please underline the part you think 'good' and draw 女.
(よいと思うところに線を引いて星マークをつける) more Please underline the part you think 'I want to know more' and wire 'more'. (もっと詳しく知りたいと思うところに線を引いて more と杏く) ? Please underline the part you think 'I don't understand well' and write '?' (よく意味が分からないところに線を引いて?を啓く)) Your comments and questions(コメントと質問) Editor 1 Name() Your comments and questions(コメントと質問) Editor 2 Name () Your comments and questions(コメントと質問) Editor 3 Name (

Class() No.() Name ()	
Newsletter My future husband/wife Classmates' Opinions (みんなの意見) & Common mistakes (よく)	アカタ コッ for a second writing You can add more detailed examples Or the reasons why you think so.
*My future husband *	① He always must be on my side.
1. He always should <u>smiling</u> . He should <u>be g</u> ood smile.	The always must be on my side. The should share housework,
	For example he should cook, clean the house, do laundry and so on.
2. He must <u>sleeping</u> together.	He should be good at cooking.
3. He should <u>be</u> a stable job.	I would like him to cook as much as I do.
4. He should <u>be</u> cook well.	He should have a stable job.
5. He should <u>be likes</u> children.	I hope he is a public servant, (公務員) so he doesn't lose a job.
	§ He can't forget my birthday.
*My future wife *	He doesn't give me flowers but I like to have a cake.
5. She shouldelegant.	He should take care of our children, too.
6. She shouldbeautiful	The should be taller than me.
7. I like a person who is serious at everything.	I hope he is more than 180 cm.
	He can't have an affair,
8. I like a person who thinks family is important.	because I want to trust 個領する him.
9. I like a person who likes children.	He doesn't have to be handsome but can't be ugly,
	because I see his face every day.
Class() No.() Name()	
Let's talk! Dear future husband/ wife Timed-conversation	on
1.Partner's name () 2.Partner's name (※1回目は違いたものを見ながら、2回目はときどき、3回目はできるだけ見ないで、4回目は全く見ないで会話しましょう。(録音) ②Conversation Strategies(会話技術) (1回目) Please check ♥: the Conversation Strategies(会話技術) I used: How ya doing? Terrific /Good/ Not bad Nice tailking with you! You, too! Me, too! / Really? I don't. 肯定文で (同意する・同意しない) Me, neither. / Really? I do. 否定文で (同意する・同意しない) Repeating (相手の言ったキーワードを繰り返す) Oh, really? Oh, yeah? I see. そうなの?へえ~ (相手の言ったことに興味を示す。) Sounds ~. ~そうだね。 Uh-huh. Mm-hmm. うん、うん。(相種) Pardon me? もう一度言ってくれる? Let me see. えーと (関をつなぐ) Follow-up questions. (迫如の質問をする)
3.Partner's name () 4.Partner's name (● OConversation Strategies(会話技術) (4回目) Please check ♥: the Conversation Strategies(会話技術) I used: How ya doing? Terrific / Good / Not bad Nice talking with you! You, too! Me, too! / Really? I don't. 肯定文で (同意する・同意しない) Me neither: / Really? I do. 否定文で (同意する・同意しない) Repeating (相手の言ったキーワードを繰り返す) Oh, really? Oh, yeah? I see. そうなの?へえ~ (相手の合ったことに興味を示す。) Sounds ~. ~そうだね。 Uh-huh. Mm-hmm. うん、うん。(相他) Pardon me? もう一度言ってくれる? Let me see. えーと (間をつなぐ) Follow-up questions. (追加の質問をする)

※綴りが間違ってもいいので英語で書き留めよう