CEFR writing

Kaken-Project (since April 2019): Developing a CEFR-informed Mediation scheme (CEFR-MSfAW) for academic writing (composition) in World Englishes

“There are no native speakers of academic writing”

(A. Mauranen, 2012)

Alexander Imig
CEFR & LP SIG Forum
May 18, 2019
Outline

- Teaching/Researching writing at Chukyo (case study)
  - Description & Research 2018/2019
  - Some research insights
- Networking: Academic writing with the CEFR

Link for References (and more):

https://cefrjapan.net/kaken-4
The goal of the Communicative Writing Program is to prepare our students to write a 4,000 word, researched and documented according to APA conventions, graduation thesis in English in their fourth year. (no mention of CEFR-like business memos, letters/e-mails, agreements/contracts, note-taking, etc.)

First Year CW Classes
1 first year, first semester—
Students will write three 250-300 word type-written papers. One in each of the following rhetorical styles, on topics of the teacher’s or student’s choosing. There should be at least 2 teacher-marked rough drafts, in addition to the final draft for each paper. Drafts of peer-reviewed work should be in addition to the teacher-marked drafts. All drafts will be assembled and included in the portfolios.

Using these 3 genres:
• Self-Introduction
• Narrative (Ex: a narrative about a graded reader)
• Comparison and Contrast (Comparing 2 films, etc.)
Graduation Thesis Pilot Study : 2018-19 Academic year

• 4\textsuperscript{th} year writing (graduation class), taught by Prof. D’Angelo

• Class held each week in a dedicated PC classroom

• Uploaded their writing at end of each class to Chukyo ‘MANABO’ (Learn Management System) application -- Also required to do ‘Homework Upload’

• Information on homepage provided in 1\textsuperscript{st} week and updated regularly. Instructions for each week uploaded when needed
Graduation Thesis Pilot Study : 2018-19 Academic year

Gun Control table: Write 150~200 words, comment on classmates
**CEFR Writing Descriptors: Reports/Essays**

**Critical Thinking Connection:** We Prioritized Argument over accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>C1</strong></td>
<td>Can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B2,2</strong></td>
<td>Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. Can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B2,1</strong></td>
<td>Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B1,2</strong></td>
<td>Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest. Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.</td>
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Graduation Thesis Pilot Study: 2018-19 Academic year

- After Gun Control exercise, lesson on using Google Scholar (J & E), Chukyo library site: Looking for scholarly work vs. websites
- Shared CEFR report/essay writing descriptors, did not emphasize
- Work on developing 3 (or 4) Research Questions—the ‘driver’
- Develop outline, based on research questions—later T of Contents
- Writing in class and at home to lengthen paper
- Given two perspectives on their work
- Later addressed accuracy near completion of final version
Brainstorming ‘Research Questions’ (model)

(Topic) Gun Control in the USA:
Three concrete recommendations (topic, and a claim)

RQ1: What is the current state of gun possession, and gun-related problems, in the USA?

RQ2: What are the cultural and social causes of these problems?

RQ3: What type of measures have the least and most chance of being put into law, and why?

RQ4: What specific recommendations for new actions should be made?

In this case we have 4 research questions, but it is acceptable to have only 3. Two may be too few.....

*Having good research questions, (and answering them...) which you can modify slightly if you need, is crucial to writing a good graduation thesis!
Brainstorm ‘Research Questions’ (Student upload sample)

Women’s rights in Saudi Arabia

*Having good research questions, (and answering them...) which you can modify slightly if you need, is crucial to writing a good graduation thesis!

**RQ1:** What is the current state of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia?

**RQ2:** What are the cultural background of these problems? (historical information)

**RQ3:** What type of measures have the least and most chance of being put into law, and why?

**RQ4:** How is this process going to work in future?
1. Attracting the best students in Kachru’s 3 circles: Australia, Malaysia and Japan
2. English in China and communication: **Chinese English should be recognized**
3. Problems for Japanese learners of English: What **we** need the most now
4. Effect on cross-cultural children regarding language and culture
5. Green Card lottery: Its features and future
6. Wildlife in Japan: Achieving **well-balanced** Ecosystems
7. Fair Trade: To **capture the bright world**
8. ‘**Omotenashi**’ and ‘Hospitality’: Japan should deliver international level service
9. Evaluation of Physical Appearance: Influence of cultural differences
10. Australia as a Japanese tourist destination
11. What a real superhero is: Demand for heroes in films in the US and Japan
12. Overseas travel as a form of Investment: Effective mental and physical benefits
14. LGBT situation

**Kansô strategies & Mediated concept(s)**
● Further evaluation of our data and goals for 2019~20 CEFR-informed writing: (about) **Verbalizing ideas in a (coherent) text**

● There is a lot of writing research: Academic Literacies (UK) or Composition Studies (US), but they are not all EIL (English as International Language) or ELF related (see Russel et al 2009, Matsuda 2012).

● The CEFR is useful tool for teaching for teaching epistemic writing. And together with the other (assessment oriented parts) the CEFR offers a chance for collaboration in teaching and research.

● Research (& Action-Study): “**Developing a CEFR-informed Mediation scheme (CEFR-MSfAW) for Academic writing (Composition) in World Englishes**” (Kaken project since April 2019)

● Networking is essential
Conclusion

International writing research

● Further evaluation of our data and goals for 2019~20 CEFR-informed writing: (about) Verbalizing ideas in a (coherent) text

● The CEFR is a useful tool for teaching epistemic writing. And together with the other (assessment oriented parts) the CEFR offers a chance for collaboration in teaching and research.

● For generalizations a case study isn’t enough. But CEFR offers a framework for research (c.f. Littlermore 2012, as an example)

● More Information at

https://cefrjapan.net/kaken-4