

教師間の連携によるテクノロジーを活用した
英語授業の創造と実践

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Creation and Collaboration: A team approach to English language course design

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本報告書では、静岡文化芸術大学の英語科目の1つである「マルチメディア英語」における、教材作成と評価基準設定に関する英語教員間の共同取り組みについて述べる。具体的には、3年間をかけて開発した、オンラインコースマネジメントシステムを利用して、自主学習を促進させる補助教材の提供、小テストの実施、また、学生の授業出席や取り組み状況の管理、学期中に随時、成績フィードバックを行なった。また、教師が共同で授業を改善していくために、学生に対して授業の実施方法、教材、学習効果等に関するオンライン・アンケートを実施した。

本稿では、まず、本授業において、マネジメントシステムを使用する理論的根拠を提示する。次に、授業内容・教材の紹介、また、アンケート調査結果を統計データを用いて報告する。最後に、英語教員間で連携をして、効果的に授業開発・運営をしていくことの重要性と、それを援助するテクノロジー技術の有用性について述べる。

Abstract

This paper reports on a collaborative effort among three English language teachers to create materials and standards for an English language course at Shizuoka University of Art and Culture. The project, spanning three years, required the establishment of common syllabi, grading criteria, grading standards, a common set of materials and evaluation tools. By enlisting the latest technology, including an online course management system and supplemental websites, the team members were able to successfully implement the common syllabi. The instructors were able to administer quizzes, keep class records, monitor student performance, keep statistical data on course progress and measure student reaction to the implementation of the course materials. After introducing the rationale behind this approach to course development, a description of the course contents, statistics, and materials will be given. To conclude this report, results from action research on one aspect of this course will be presented.

Introduction

The first step to creating a sound curriculum is collaboration among teachers to create courses that serve the educational needs of students. The next step is to link those courses so that they build on each other and are connected in a meaningful way that is conducive to progress. The project described in this report is an attempt to add to the curriculum at Shizuoka University of Art and Culture at the course level. After detailing the benefits of using an online course management system for administrative functions, a description will be made of the supplementary materials created to aid in student learning. All supplementary materials are available online and can be viewed at the links provided in **Appendix A**.

To conclude this report, the authors will present some data from a preliminary study of the

course and its materials. This preliminary study measures student affective factors such as anxiety and confidence and examines how they can be attributed to challenges in speaking English. The study also surveys student experience with pronunciation practice in courses before the tertiary level. The data in this report will be limited to student perceptions of their English pronunciation and their experiences practicing pronunciation on their own. This report should reveal the necessity of using technology in all areas of course design; furthermore, it will show the importance of collaboration among teachers to create courses and develop a sound, relevant curriculum.

Course Management and Technology

In order to manage this Multi Media English course, the instructors enlisted a number of types of technology. The section below on

supplemental material details the use of mind mapping software and puzzle-making software to create course materials. Furthermore, two websites were created to provide students off-campus access to important course materials. However, the biggest tool in the technology tool shed used to build this course is a course management system (CMS). While there are a number of commercial and open source course management systems available on the market, the absence of funding and technical support have made those options unfeasible. The course management system used for this project is the result of a generous partnership with professors in the Department of Science and Engineering at Ritsumeikan University. The CMS is web-based and can be accessed anywhere there is an Internet connection. The CMS provided the instructors of this course with a number of excellent administrative functions. Some of these features are listed below.

- a grading database accessible to students and teachers
- an online quiz administration tool
- course record keeping functions
- course statistic keeping functions
- online syllabus, course policies, and schedule
- course email system
- online TOIEC exercises
- administration of course surveys

The grading database allowed instructors to input student grades on a weekly basis. Students could view their grades at any time and speak with the instructor about any concerns about their standing in the class. Instructors could view individual student grades, monitor class statistics and monitor statistics among courses taught by other instructors. Allowing students to monitor their weekly scores keeps

them apprised of their status in the course; allowing instructors to check statistics from other courses provides a good check on grading fairness and consistency. **Figure 1** shows the average grades for both classes.

The CMS also gives a breakdown of grading for the various class activities. Having this feature allows teachers to see student results on quizzes in comparison with other classes. It also allows them to see if they are grading their students on in-class tasks using similar standards. Variables between classes will always occur depending on the department of the students, year of the students and level of motivation; however, **Figure 2** reveals a fairly consistent grading pattern between two different classes of students, taught by two different teachers.

Not only does the course management system allow teachers to monitor student progress and class statistics, but also teachers can administer course surveys quite efficiently. By administering online surveys, valuable resources (paper, envelopes, toner, electricity) and staff time are saved. The surveys are conducted online; results are calculated immediately and teachers can receive feedback on their courses by the last day of classes. Furthermore, teachers can, once again, view their survey results in relation to other sections of the same course. This is a valuable function for course development and materials design.

Figure 3 and **Figure 4** are screen shots of results of the surveys conducted at the end of the spring 2009 semester. The data is encouraging because it shows similar student responses from both classes, despite having very different students enrolled in each section.

Figure 4 illustrates the importance of collaboration. By working together, teachers were able to create materials that were at an appropriate level for all students.

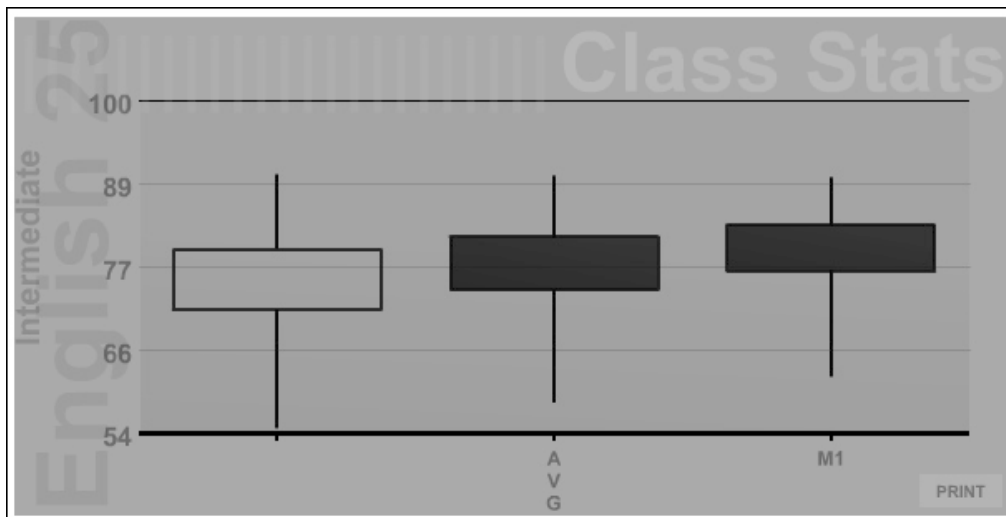


Figure 1. Teachers can monitor class averages and compare them with other classes

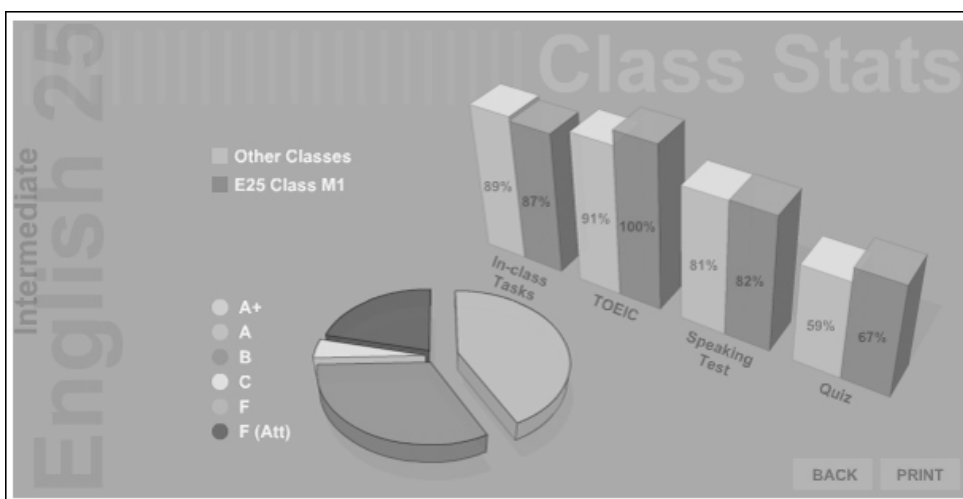


Figure 2. Grading breakdown between two different classes

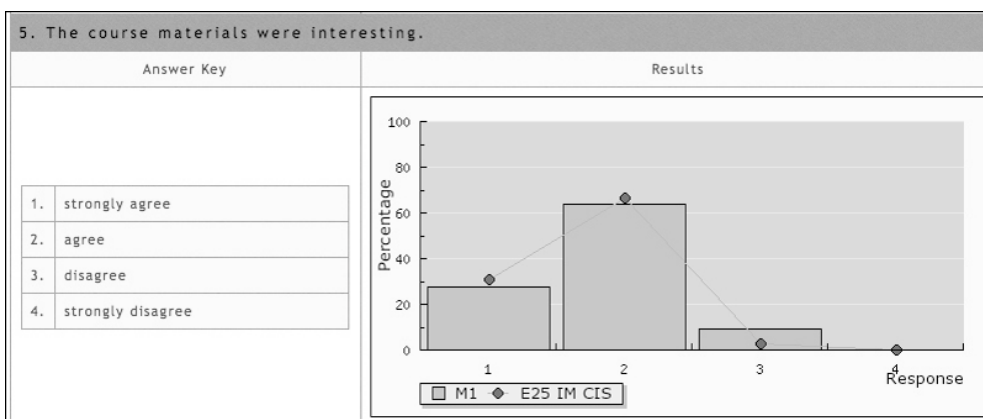


Figure 3. Results from both classes were almost identical

Evidence that students in the course accepted the use of this CMS can be seen in **Figure 5**. Survey results revealed that students from both

classes liked being able to view their grades and statistics online.

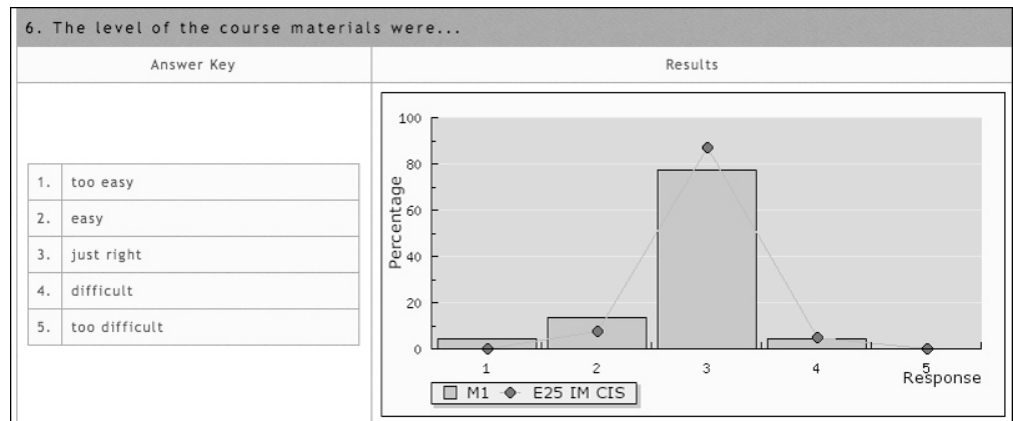


Figure 4. Both classes found the materials "just right"

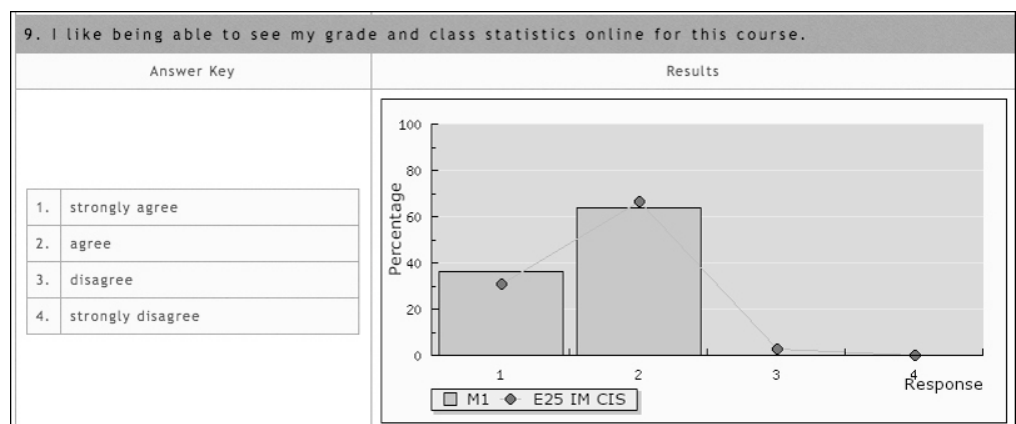


Figure 5. Students embraced the technology introduced in this course

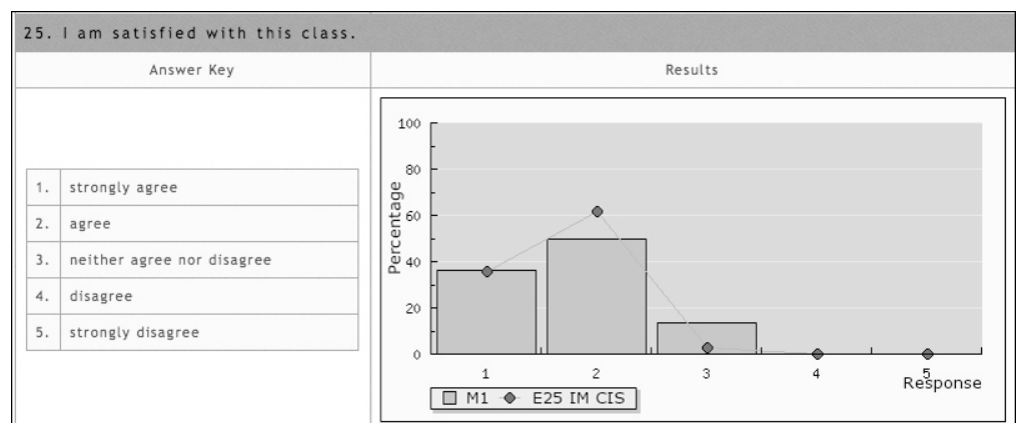


Figure 6. This collaborative course garnered a high rate of student satisfaction

Not only did the use of this technology help teachers manage the administrative side of this course, but it also helped students monitor their progress on a weekly basis. **Figure 6** displays the survey results from students asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the course.

While the course management system was a major feature of the course, a wide range of supplemental materials were also created to make the course a fulfilling educational experience for students enrolled in Multi Media English. The materials are described below.

Supplemental Materials

The core materials for this course consist of a software program called Native World. The program is installed on the university's servers and can be accessed in the university's language laboratory. Students are registered in a database and enrolled in a particular class at the start of the semester. The software program tracks student progress and also keeps track of the amount of time students spend performing exercises. Reports can be issued to student or teacher by accessing the program. Students can access the software outside of class hours if the language lab is available. Recent interest in computer assisted language learning has led to more teachers using the language lab for their courses. As a result, student access to the software is almost entirely limited to class hours.

One of the goals for this course is to give students speaking practice in the context of using daily English. The theme of this course is preparation for a trip abroad. Students use Native World software to practice skits and learn vocabulary. Voice recognition software is used to give students feedback on their speaking tasks.

To give the students greater access to language learning materials and to compensate for limited language laboratory access, the instructors of this course created a number of

online supplementary materials for the students to access outside of the language laboratory on their own time. The materials included previewing pronunciation activities to give students instruction in the vocal anatomy and allow them practice with problematic English sounds before performing tasks in class.

Other materials for the course included vocabulary review puzzles that aided students in retaining key words presented in the course units; the puzzles were also instrumental in helping students prepare for quizzes. Another component created to aid students prepare for the quizzes and the final speaking test in this course includes a number of mind maps of the content introduced in the units. The maps, created with mind mapping software, sought to help students make connections among elements in the different units and also to review course content in a non-linear way. All supplemental materials are housed on websites created and maintained by the authors of this paper. See **Figures 7** and **8** for screen shots of two types of supplementary materials. Course materials can be viewed on www.suacpals.com and www.suacletters.com.

Fostering Action research

Having built this repository of supplementary materials over three years, it is important to measure the efficacy of the materials and students' experience using them in the course. Space limitations prevent more in-depth analysis of the data gathered from our studies; however, some findings will be presented in the context of this collaborative project. Instructors involved in action research projects realize that the larger the survey sample, the more valid their results. By working together on the same materials and course standards, the creators of this course were able to elicit and combine responses from both of their classes to gather a larger pool of data for this study.

The study conducted for this spring 2009

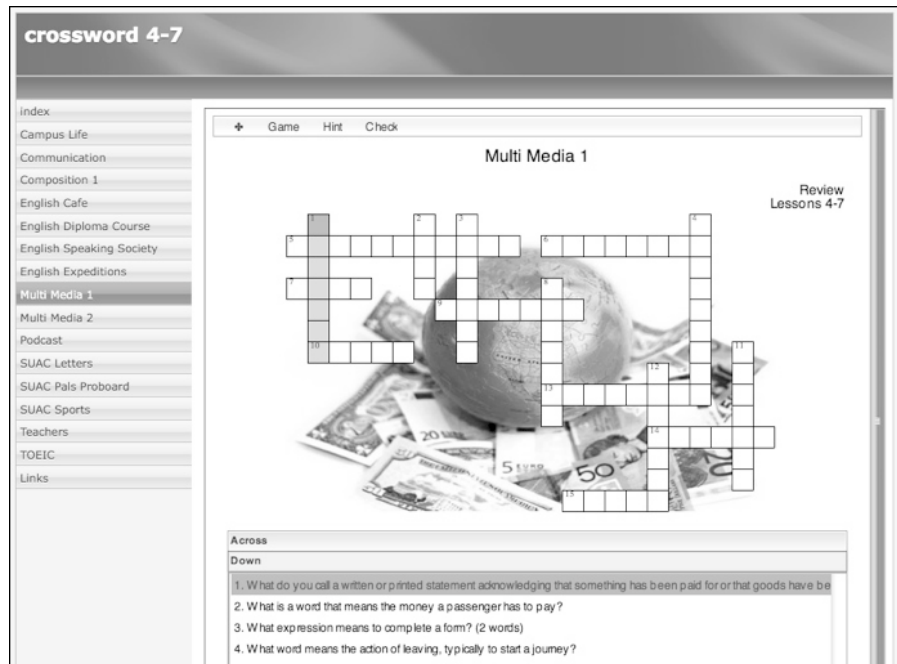


Figure 7. Crossword puzzles created for fun vocabulary review

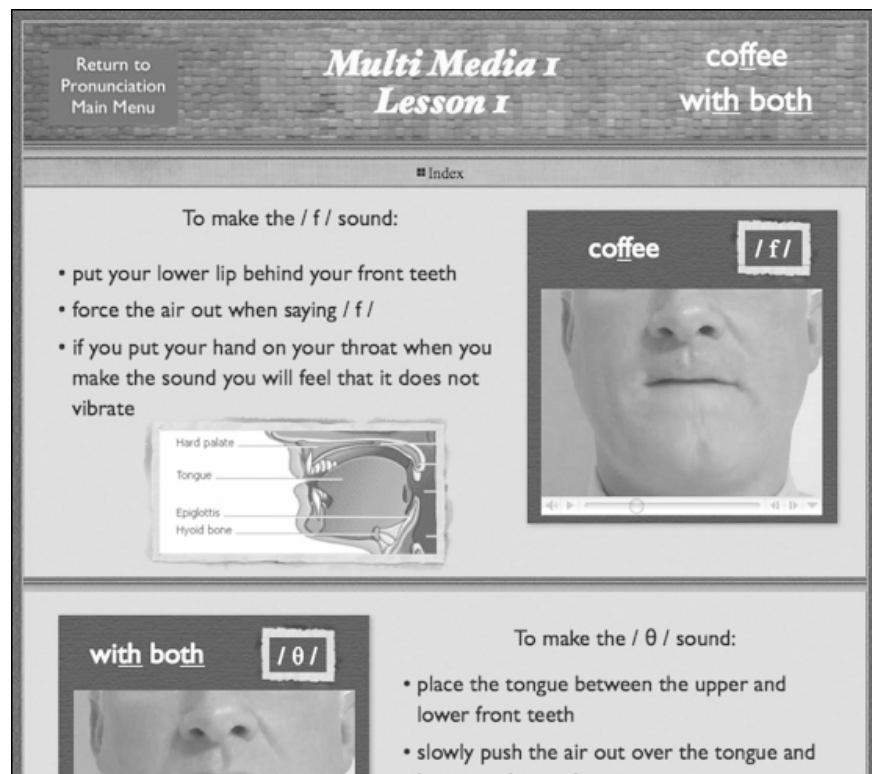


Figure 8. Pronunciation activities foster autonomous learning

semester Multi Media English course at SUAC was designed to answer the following research questions: 1) How do students feel about their pronunciation?, 2) Do students know how to make English sounds?, 3) What type of English pronunciation practice have they had? Some of the data gathered lies beyond the purview of this paper, so the discussion of the survey results will be limited to research questions 1 and 3. In particular, the researchers were interested in learning how students rated their pronunciation before and after taking the course. The authors of this study also sought to understand what, if any, independent pronunciation practice the students had done prior to enrolling in Multi Media English 1; they also measured this factor at the end of the course to determine whether or not classroom practices and materials had a positive influence on autonomous learning in the area of pronunciation.

The project required the administration of two surveys: a preliminary survey conducted at the beginning of the semester before students started participating in language learning activities, and a follow-up survey taken after a full semester of course work. The survey

sample consisted mainly of first-year students; however, since this is an elective course, upperclassmen were also enrolled in the Multi Media English course. Students from all faculties at SUAC could sign up for the course. The survey sample consists of students enrolled in courses taught by two of the authors.

Surveys were conducted using an online survey program that allowed instant collation of results. Seventy-nine students answered the survey questions. For the purpose of this report, results from two questions will be presented. Experience teaching previous sections of this course helped the instructors learn that one of the reasons students enroll in this particular English course is to improve English pronunciation by performing exercises on the language laboratory computers. To determine whether or not students perceived an improvement in their level of English pronunciation as a result of taking the course, the survey asked the students to rate their pronunciation at the start of the course and at the end of the fourteen-week semester. See **Chart 1** for a presentation of the data.

The pre-survey results indicate that students

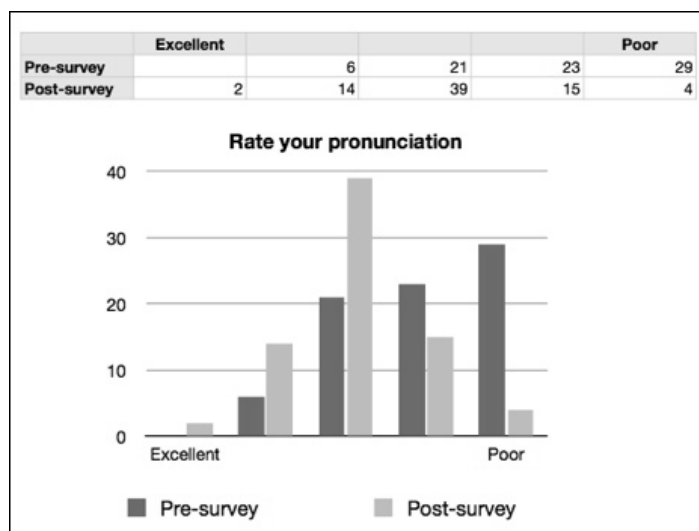


Chart 1. Students rated their pronunciation at the beginning and end of the course

tended to rate their pronunciation poorly. Not one respondent considered their pronunciation 'excellent' and a large number of students checked poor. The post-course surveys were given at the end of a semester of fourteen weeks of activities including Native World tasks, supplementary pronunciation activities, assistance from the instructors and peer speaking activities. Deeper analysis has not been done to determine which of the above-mentioned variables contributed more to an improved perception of English pronunciation; however, the data reveals that the students felt a perceived improvement by the end of the course.

Another item of interest on the survey is the question related to learner autonomy and pronunciation. Since language pronunciation is such an individual matter, the authors sought to find out whether or not students had at-

tempted to practice pronunciation on their own; furthermore, the study also hoped to illustrate whether or not some of the teaching materials and methodologies presented in the course would lead students toward more autonomous learning. The results from this question are presented in **Chart 2**.

Post survey results indicate that some students who had not initially performed pronunciation practices on their own may have become more favorably disposed toward this practice. These are positive findings for teachers interested in student motivation and autonomous learning.

Due to time and space constraints, analysis of the other data gathered via these surveys will be analyzed at a later date and will be used to improve the course. Nonetheless, an initial examination of the data confirmed several assumptions held by the researchers and has

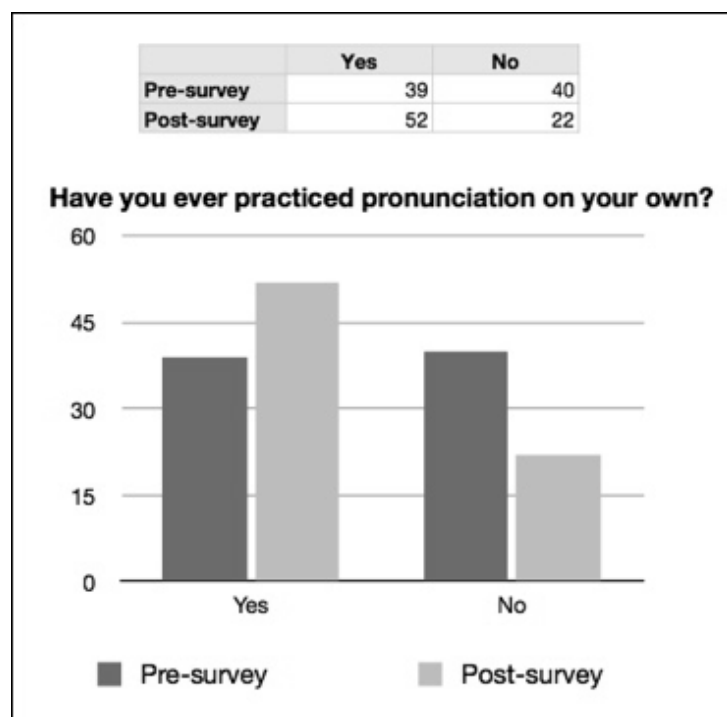


Chart 2. Changes in self-study pronunciation practices

helped inform the creation of supplemental materials and evaluation tools for this course.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this collaboration among English teachers helped achieve ends. By working together to set common course goals and standards, creating common course materials, and maintaining and monitoring fairness and consistency in grading, course goals were made more transparent and perhaps more achievable to the students. On the instructors' side, collaborating helped share the workload, foster collegiality, and contributed to an exchange of ideas that is a necessity to professional development.

It was essential to enlist technology to help achieve the goals of this project. Use of the course management system allowed teachers

and students to view course grading statistics, and monitor student progress; furthermore, students were able to view their status at any time of the semester. The supplemental websites used to house the online activities enabled students to continue their studies outside of the language laboratory. The results of this project should encourage more intradepartmental, and one hopes, interdepartmental collaboration on education projects and materials for students at Shizuoka University of Art and Culture.

Appendix A

Websites created to house the Multi Media 1 course materials

www.suacpals.com

www.suacletters.com

