Student Perceptions of Topic Selection and Impact on EFL Writing Fluency

Eric HIRATA
Jeremiah HALL

Abstract

This paper partially replicates Bonzo's 2008 study, which found a significant increase in writing fluency when students control writing topic selection. The authors collected six timed-writing samples from 52 participants. For three samples, the participants selected the writing topics. For the other three samples, the authors selected the writing topics. The authors transcribed the writing samples and used text analysis software to calculate the total word count and the total unique word count for each sample. The fluency index employed in Bonzo's 2008 study was then used and a paired samples *t*-test was performed in SPSS to measure how topic choice influenced writing fluency. The authors found a statistically significant increase in student writing fluency when students selected their own topics. Pre- and post-study surveys, in addition to post-writing surveys, were used to gather learner preferences on topic selection and the writing activities. The writing fluency index employed by Bonzo and in this study has serious limitations; however, instructors may find this paper useful when considering topic choices in their writing courses.

Introduction

A primary goal of foreign language teachers and learners is the development of fluency. Brumfit (1984) characterizes fluency as showing continuity, coherence, context-sensitivity, and creativity in language. Learners often indicate that they would like to become more fluent in their target language and that it is the responsibility of teachers to develop this aspect of language. Teachers can promote and develop fluency in students by encouraging them to make mistakes, providing opportunities for students to use language, developing activities that focus on getting a message across, not assessing students for accuracy but for fluency, and openly speaking with students about fluency (Brown, 1996). In other words, fluency is an important consideration in any EFL course. As one of Nation's (2001) four strands of a well-balanced language course, fluency occurs when learners are not working with new language but becoming more capable with the language they already possess.

In relation to writing, fluency is how comfortable a second language writer is with producing language (Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998) as well as the rate and length of output (Lennon, 1990). Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) adapted Lennon's measure of oral fluency of words per minute into writing fluency by measuring the number of words or structural units produced by a writer in a set time period. One way to determine this is through quick writing, timed writing, or continuous writing, where a writer will write about a topic for a set amount of time. Elbow (1998) noted the importance of timed writing and characterized some of the general guidelines with a ten-minute limit a writer selected topic, and no feedback or editing by anyone, including the writer. This type of writing meets the criteria that Nation (2001) established for developing fluency which are activities that involve familiarity, meaning focus, pressure, and language processing.

This study is a partial replication of Bonzo's (2008) study of 81 students studying German as a foreign language at an American university. Bonzo

analyzed the 10-minute timed writing samples to determine the role of topic selection in writing fluency and found that there was a significant increase in fluency when students selected their own topics. Further studies by Cohen (2013), Dickinson (2014), Sponseller & Wilkins (2015), and Ottoson & Crane (2017) have all confirmed these results while Retting-Miki and Sholdt's (2014) study showed that students' fluency was higher when they wrote about teacher-selected topics. This current study seeks to determine the impact of topic selection on EFL student writing fluency while also examining learner preference on topic selection.

Methods

Participants

This study was conducted at a private university in central Japan with 52 participants (N= 52) who were second-year English majors in the Department of British and American Studies. Classes were grouped by student number, not ability, so all four classes were comprised of students with mixed English levels. Participants met once a week in a 90-minute compulsory second year writing course and came from four different classes taught by two different instructors. Instructor A taught Class 1 (n=13) and Class 2 (n=10) and Instructor B taught Class 3 (n=15) and Class 4 (n=14).

Procedures

Before starting this study, all participants were given a consent form in Japanese and English, explaining that their participation was voluntary. Only participants who signed the consent form and completed all of the writing assignments were included in this study.

In each of six weeks, participants completed a ten-minute timed writing activity on either a teacher-selected topic or a student-selected topic. Before this study, participants in all four classes had been doing timed writing on topics as

a form of brainstorming and were, therefore, already familiar with the format. Participants did the timed writing in pencil and were told to cross out mistakes rather than erase them. Unlike the original Bonzo (2008) study, participants were not allowed to use dictionaries or smartphones. To avoid potentially influencing the results, no feedback was given on the writing, though students were informed that their instructors would carefully read each sample for analysis. The writing was transcribed into an electronic format verbatim by both of the researchers.

After the transcription, an online text analyzer at UsingEnglish.com (King & Flynn, 2002-2017), provided the total word count and total unique word count for each sample, and these were used to calculate the fluency measure using the same fluency index employed the in Bonzo (2008) study. This will be discussed in more detail in the Data Analysis Section.

Research Questions

As this study is a partial replication of Bonzo (2008), it looks to confirm his findings of the impact of topic selection on student writing fluency. Additionally, student perception of the timed writing activities and their perceived value in improving student writing ability were explored.

Research Question 1:

        What impact does topic selection have on writing fluency?

Research Question 2:

        What are student preferences regarding topic selection?

Research Question 3:

        What impression do students have of the timed writing activity?

Pre-study Questionnaire and Participant Background Questionnaire

On the first day of the study, participants were asked to fill out a background questionnaire regarding their experience with English. These questions included

how long they had studied English, where they had studied, and if they had studied abroad in an English language program. Participants were also asked to complete a pre-study questionnaire (see Appendix 1) in order to discover student perceptions of their writing ability as well as their impressions of timed writings in general. The questionnaire included four questions on a five-point Likert scale as well as space for participants to share additional thoughts they had about writing in English.

Writing Samples and Post-activity Questionnaire

Every week, participants were assigned either a teacher-selected or student-selected topic. Table 1 presents the order, condition, and topic for each timed writing. The topics alternated every week so that odd number weeks were teacher-selected topics and even numbered weeks were student-selected topics. Before the beginning of each timed writing, the participants were reminded not to use dictionaries and erasers and were told of the topic. Upon completion of each timed writing, participants completed a post-activity questionnaire with five questions on a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix 2) which asked about the ease of doing the timed writings as well as their perceptions of writing about the topic.

Table 1

Design of the Study

Week	Condition	Topic
1	Assigned	Life After Graduation
2	Self	Free Topic
3	Assigned	My Friends
4	Self	Free Topic
5	Assigned	Free Time
6	Self	Free Topic

Note. Assigned = teacher-selected topics; Self = student-selected topics

Post-study Questionnaire

At the end of the final timed writing activity, a final post-study questionnaire (see Appendix 3) was completed by all of the participants to determine their feelings on the study. The questionnaire consisted of six questions on a five-point Likert scale as well as two open ended questions asking why students felt their writing was better or worse when they chose the topic as well as their opinion on if they would prefer to continue the ten minute timed writings.

Data Analysis

The students composed all of the timed writings by hand, so first the researchers transcribed each of the hand-written samples into Microsoft Word documents organized by student and assignment. This enabled the researchers to analyze the samples with the online text analysis software at Using English.com (King & Flynn, 2002-2017) to more easily quantify the total number of words, or tokens, and the total number of unique words (unique tokens) for each sample.

In calculating these totals, all words were counted as tokens, including Romanized Japanese words, though the total of unique tokens was adjusted in the case of misspellings or typos. Contractions were counted as single tokens. Hyphenated words were counted as unique tokens, though not if inconsistently used. Erroneously combined words were adjusted for in the same way by counting them as unique tokens when used consistently, though subtracted from the unique token count when used inconsistently. Abbreviations were also counted as unique tokens only if used consistently. Possessive nouns were also counted as unique tokens from the nouns themselves and numbers were counted as single tokens, though not when presented as a range (i.e. 10-15 was counted as a single token). Typos, whether introduced in the original handwritten sample or introduced during transcription, were either corrected in the transcription (in cases of transcription error) or adjusted for in the total token counts. For example,

if a student had written "agood", the researchers subtracted one token from the unique tokens count and added one token to the total token count. Erroneously combined words were adjusted for in the same way by counting them as unique tokens when used consistently, though subtracted from the unique token count when used inconsistently.

In keeping with a replication of Bonzo's 2008 study, fluency was also defined in the same way as a ratio of total unique tokens to the total token count. As Bonzo pointed out, though, such a ratio gives a percentage, which causes problems when comparing writing samples with similar ratios but very different token counts. Bonzo used a more accurate token ratio developed by Carroll (1967) and used by Arthur (1979) to help adjust for this weakness, where fluency (F) equals the total unique token count (U) divided by the square root of twice the total token count (T): $F = U/\sqrt{2T}$. While the authors do not consider this token ratio to adequately measure writing fluency, the researchers applied the same measure to maintain the integrity of the replication study.

After collecting the data from the online text analyzer online text analyzer at UsingEnglish.com (King & Flynn, 2002-2017), the researchers organized the data into a Microsoft Exel file, where they calculated the writing fluency for each writing sample. This data was then imported from Microsoft Exel into Microsoft SPSS. To check if there was a linear relationship between the fluency rates by condition, the authors created a scatterplot to illustrate the fluency rates, as presented in Figure 1. The fluency rates of the teacher-selected topics (Assigned) were placed on the *x*-axis of the scatterplot and the fluency rates of the student-selected topics (Self) were placed on the *y*-axis.

The scatterplot shows a positive, though not tightly linear correlation between conditions. A Shapiro-Wilk test for normality returned ps > .05 for both conditions (Assigned p = .24; Self p = .53), suggesting that that data are normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality tests the null hypothesis that the sample distribution is the same as a normal distribution, so if p < .05 we would
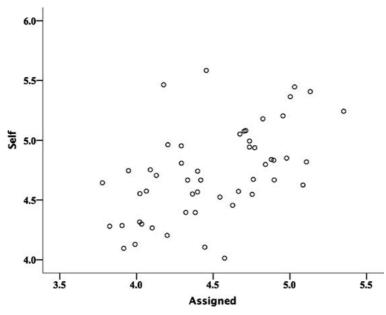
***Figure 1*. Scatterplot of fluency measure by condition.**

reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis that the data are
not normally distributed. As the *p*-values are above .05, the null hypothesis that
the data are normally distributed could not be rejected (Larson-Hall, 2016). This,
along with analysis of the descriptive statistics (Table 2) and visual inspection
of the box chart (Figure 2), suggest that the data are very close to normally
distributed.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to quantify the strength of the

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Fluency Measure by Condition

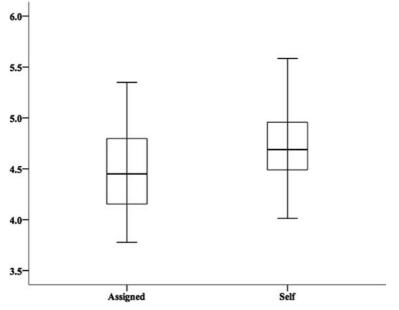|	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Var	Skew	*SES*	Kurt	*SEK*
Assigned	52	4.50	0.40	0.16	0.05	0.33	-0.98	0.65
Self	52	4.73	0.38	0.15	0.26	0.33	-0.41	0.65

Note. Assigned = teacher-selected topics; Self = student-selected topics

positive relationship between the conditions. In the Self condition (*M*=4.73) students appeared to write more fluently than in the Assigned condition (*M*=4.50), with a difference favoring the Self condition by 0.23. On average, students given the choice to select their own topics for the timed writing assignments seemed able to write more fluently. The researchers computed effect size using Cohen's *d* because Dunlap, Cortina, Vaslow, and Burke (1996) have shown that computing the effect size directly from *t* in a paired-samples *t*-test can cause an overestimation of the population effect size.

Results

Effect of Topic Selection on Writing Fluency

The researchers ran a paired samples *t*-test with bootstrapping in Microsoft SPSS and on average students seemed to write more fluently when they chose

Figure 2. **Boxplot of fluency measure data distributions. Assigned = teacher-selected topics; Self = student-selected topic**

their own writing topics ($M = 4.73$, $SE = 0.05$) than when the teachers assigned the writing topics ($M = 4.5$, $SE = 0.06$). The difference, -0.23, BCa 95% CI [-0.34, -0.13] was significant $t(51) = -4.51$, $p = .001$, and represented a small-sized effect, $d = 0.58$. Cohen's d was calculated using pooled SD and interpreted following Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) guidelines for interpreting effect sizes of paired samples mean differences in L2 research.

Pre-study Questionnaire

Prior to beginning the study, each participant was asked to complete a background questionnaire and a pre-study questionnaire that consisted of four items on a five-point Likert scale. The items were presented in both English and Japanese and were used to measure student perceptions of short writing activities before participating in the study. No items were reverse scored, so a mean of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and a mean of 5 represents "Strongly Agree," with 3 representing a "Neutral" response. All participants completed each item of the survey, with a total of 52 responses for each item.

On average, the participants did not feel it was easy to keep writing for a full 10 minutes in English ($M=2.77$) or that it was easy to put their ideas into English sentences prior to the study ($M=2.44$). The participants also seemed to agree that they lacked sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas when writing in English ($M=3.67$) and that it is difficult for them to think of things to write about in English ($M=3.71$). Table 3 provides the items, means and standard deviations for the pre-study questionnaire.

Post-activity Questionnaires

After each timed writing activity, students were requested to complete a short post activity questionnaire to individually measure student perceptions of each writing activity. Each post activity questionnaire consisted of five items on a Likert scale. The items were presented in both English and Japanese. No items

were reverse scored, so a mean of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and a mean of 5 represents "Strongly Agree," with 3 representing a "Neutral" response. All participants completed each item of the survey, with a total of 52 responses for each item. The items, means and standard deviations for each writing topic can be found in Appendix 4. Table 4 provides the grand means and standard deviations for each item on the post-activity questionnaire, organized by condition.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Pre-study Questionnaire

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*
It is easy to keep writing for a full 10 minutes in English.	52	2.77	0.92
I do not know the right English vocabulary to express my ideas when writing in English.	52	3.67	0.90
It is difficult to think of things to write about in English.	52	3.71	0.78
It is easy to put my ideas into English sentences.	52	2.44	0.80

Table 4

Grand Means and Standard Deviations for Post-activity Questionnaires by Condition

Item	*n*	Assigned		Self	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
It was easy to keep writing for a full 10 minutes in English.	52	3.14	0.90	3.49	0.75
I didn't know the right English vocabulary to express my ideas about this topic.	52	3.15	0.68	3.11	0.66
This topic is something I often think about outside this class.	52	3.32	0.69	3.59	0.73
It was difficult to think of things related to this topic to write about.	52	2.71	0.69	2.58	0.68
It was easy to put my ideas about this topic into English sentences.	52	2.82	0.60	2.99	0.71

Note. Assigned = teacher-selected topics; Self = student-selected topics

The grand mean for the post-activity surveys was markedly lower when students were asked if it was easier to keep writing for 10 minutes on teacher-selected topics (*M*=3.14) than on student-selected topics (*M*=3.49). The students also seemed to indicate that it was a little less difficult to put their ideas into English sentences when they chose their own topics (*M*=2.99) when compared to writing on teacher-selected topics (*M*=2.82).

There was only a slight difference between the grand means in how students perceived their vocabulary recall for teacher-selected topics (*M*=3.15) and student-selected topics (*M*=3.11). This seems to suggest that students only perceived a little more difficulty in recalling vocabulary for teacher-selected topics than student-selected topics. If student perception of difficulty recalling vocabulary specific to the writing topic correlates with actual difficulty, this would appear to contradict the fluency measure assumption that recalling unique tokens should be easier and take less time as writing fluency increases.

Final Post Study Questionnaire

After completing the study, participants were asked to complete a final questionnaire that consisted of six items on a Likert scale. The items were presented in both English and Japanese and were used to measure student perceptions of the short writing activities after participating in the study. No items were reverse scored, so a mean of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and a mean of 5 represents "Strongly Agree," with 3 representing a "Neutral" response. All participants completed each item of the survey, with a total of 52 responses for each item.

On average, the participants felt rather positive about the experience, indicating that they would like to continue doing timed writing activities in their classes (*M*=3.38), but that they only slightly enjoyed the writing activities (*M*=3.19). They indicated that they perceived an improvement in their writing after completing the six timed writing activities, responding that it became easier to write for 10 minutes (*M*=3.49) and that their ability to write for 10 minutes

improved after completing the study (*M*=3.29). Interestingly enough, while participant writing fluency scores showed a significant correlation in favor of student-selected writing topics, students indicated that they preferred writing about teacher-selected topics (*M*=3.56) and that they seemed almost neutral to choosing their own writing topics (*M*=3.04). These results corroborate those of Ottoson and Crane (2017), who also found that students preferred to write about teacher-selected topics but that they wrote more fluently when choosing their own topics. Table 5 provides the means and standard deviations for the final post-study questionnaire.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Final Post-study Questionnaire

Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*
It became easier to write for 10 minutes after doing the activity at least 6 times.	52	3.49	1.00
I prefer writing about a teacher-selected topic.	52	3.56	0.87
I prefer choosing my own topic to write about.	52	3.04	0.91
My ability to write for 10 minutes improved by the 6th writing.	52	3.29	0.96
I enjoyed writing for 10 minutes.	52	3.19	0.97
I would like to continue doing timed writing activities in this or other classes.	52	3.38	0.87

Potential Problems

In the final questionnaire, students indicated that they preferred to write on teacher-selected topics, but the grand mean for the post-activity surveys was markedly lower when students were asked if it was easier to keep writing for 10 minutes on teacher-selected topics (*M*=3.14) than on student-selected topics (*M*=3.49). The students also seemed to indicate that it was easier to put their ideas into English sentences when they chose their own topics (*M*=2.99) when compared to writing on teacher-selected topics (*M*=2.82). While these results

seem to conflict with the students' preference to write on teacher-selected topics, perhaps this has to do with the additional challenges associated with thinking about topics on which to write or, perhaps, students perceived the additional challenge to writing on teacher-selected topics as a preferable means of improving their writing. These differences may also be attributed to the Japanese EFL environment and the traditional teacher-student roles within this context. If students feel more comfortable in a teacher-centered learning environment, writing on student-selected topics may, understandably, be less preferable.

While students seemed to write more fluently on student-selected topics and showed a preference for writing on teacher-selected topics, corroborating the findings in Ottoson & Crane (2017), it must be remembered that both of these studies rely on a fluency measure that is not widely accepted in L2 research. Another concern is that both of these studies were conducted in the Japanese EFL context, as were similar studies conducted by Cohen (2013), Dickinson (2014), and Sponseller & Wilkins (2015). It would be desirable for this study to be replicated in multiple L2 contexts with a more rigorous measure of writing fluency to see if the positive correlation between student-selected topics and writing fluency can be rigorously demonstrated over a variety of EFL contexts and if differing contexts demonstrates differences in student preferences.

Conclusion

The authors embarked on this partial replication of Bonzo's 2008 study for the purpose of professional development. In addition to gaining exposure to quantitative analysis, the replication brought up concerns with how writing fluency is being defined and measured in the original study. The authors feel that a token-ratio formula is an inadequate measure of fluency and that the results of this study are very limited in usefulness for making decisions about topic selection in the writing classroom. The authors do feel that granting students more latitude in topic selection is a more student-centered approach to instruction. However, the

survey results indicate that students prefer a more teacher-centered approach, with the instructor selecting the topics. This may be due to the authors' specific teaching context, but it is certainly worth considering explaining to students the reasoning behind the topic selection choices made by the instructor. Along the same lines, explaining the reasoning behind having students select their own topics may be beneficial. However, instructors should be very cautious about making claims that writing fluency increases when students have control over topic choice. Replication in additional L2 contexts with a more rigorous writing fluency measure is needed to confirm what appears to be a positive correlation between writing fluency and student-selected writing topics.

Acknowledgments

References

Bonzo, J.D. (2008). To assign a topic or not: Observing fluency and complexity in intermediate foreign language writing. *Foreign Language Annals, 41* (4), 722-735.

Brown, J.D. (1996). Fluency development. In G. van Troyer (Ed.), *JALT '95: Curriculum and evaluation* (pp. 174-179). Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching.

Brumfit, C. (1984). *Communication methodology in language teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Cohen, J. (2013). The impact of topic selection on writing fluency: Making a case for freedom. *Journal of NELTA, 18* (1-2), 31-40.

Dickinson, P. (2014). The effect of topic-selection control on EFL writing fluency. *Journal of Niigata University of International and Informational Studies, 17*, 15-25.

Dunlap, W. P., Cortina, J. M., Vaslow, J. B., & Burke, M. J. (1996). Meta-analysis of experiments with matched groups or repeated measures designs. *Psychological Methods, 1* (2), 170-177.

Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Field, A.P. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (4th ed.). London, England: Sage.

King, A., & Flynn, R. (2002-2017). UsingEnglish.com: Text Content Analysis Tool [web-based computer software: available at https://www.usingenglish.com/resources/text-tatistics.php].

Larson-Hall, J. (2016). *A guide to doing statistics in second language research using SPSS and R* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lennon, P. (1990). Investigating fluency in EFL: A qualitative approach. *Language Learning 40* (3), 387-417.

Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ottoson, K.J., & Crane, P.A. (2017). Self-selected topics vs. teacher-selected topics: The impact on writing fluency. *Korea TESOL Journal 12* (2), 47-64.

Plonsky, L., & Oswald, F. L. (2014). How big is "big"? Interpreting effect sizes in L2 research. *Language Learning*, *64* (4), 878-912.

Rettig-Miki, E., & Sholdt, G.P. (2014). *I*mpact on L2 Writing Fluency of Topic Selection Method for a Timed Writing Activity. *Kobe University International Communication Center Bulletin*, 11, 55-71.

Sponseller, A. & Wilkins, M. (2015). Investigating the Impact of Topic Selection Control on Writing Fluency. *Hiroshima Studies in Language and Language Education*, *18*, 141-152.

Wolfe-Quintero, K., Inagaki, S., & Kim, H.Y. (1998). *Second language development in writing: Measures of fluency, accuracy, & complexity.* Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

Appendix 1

Free Writing: Pre-Study Questionnaire

ID:_____

Class:_____

Strongly Disagree 全くそう思わない	Disagree そう思わない	Neutral どちらでもない	Agree そう思う	Strongly Agree 非常にそう思う
1	2	3	4	5

1. It is easy to keep writing for the full 10 minutes. _____
   英語で10分間書き続けることは簡単だと思います。

2. I do not know the right English vocabulary to express my ideas
   when writing in English. _____
   英語で書く時自分の考えを表す適切な英語の語彙がわかりません。

3. It is difficult to think of things to write about in English. _____
   英語で文書を書く時、表現を思いつくことが難しいです。

4. It is easy to put my ideas into English sentences. _____
   自分の考えを英語の文章にすることは簡単です。

Share any additional thoughts on writing in English.
文章を書くことについて何か追加すべき考えや思いがあれば、英語で書いてください。

Appendix 2

Free Writing: Post-Activity Questionnaire

ID:_____

Class:_____

Topic(話題): _____

Strongly Disagree 全くそう思わない	Disagree そう思わない	Neutral どちらでもない	Agree そう思う	Strongly Agree 非常にそう思う
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1. It was easy to keep writing for the full 10 minutes. _____
   10分間をすべて使って書き続けることは簡単だった

2. I didn't know the right English vocabulary to express my ideas
   about this topic. _____
   この話題について自分の考えを表す適切な英語の語彙がわからなかった

3. This topic is something I often think about outside this class. _____
   この話題は（この）授業時間外で私がいつも考えていることである

4. It was difficult to think of things related to this topic to write about. _____
   この話題に関連する事柄を書くために何かを思いつくことが難しかった

5. It was easy to put my ideas about this topic into English sentences. _____
   この話題に関する自分の考えを英語の文章にすることは簡単だった

Share any additional thoughts on writing about this topic in English.
この話題について文章を書くことについて何か追加すべき考えや思いがあれば、英語で書いてください。

Appendix 3

POST-STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please rate your abilities for each of the items below on a scale between 1 and 5. Circle your choice.

下記の項目に対して、１から５で自分の能力を評価して下さい。選んだものに丸をつけて下さい.

Strongly Disagree 全くそう思わない	Disagree そう思わない	Neutral どちらでもない	Agree そう思う	Strongly Agree 非常にそう思う		
1	2	3	4	5		
It became easier to write for 10 minutes after doing the activity at least 6 times. 少なくとも6回目になるころには、10分作文をすることが簡単（楽）になってきた。				1	2 3 4	5
I prefer writing about a teacher-selected topic. 教師が選んだトピックについて作文するほうが好ましい。				1	2 3 4	5
I prefer choosing my own topic to write about. 自分が選んだトピックについて作文するほうが好ましい。				1	2 3 4	5
My ability to write for 10 minutes improved by the 6th writing. 6回目に突入する頃には、10分間作文の能力が向上してきたように感じる。				1	2 3 4	5
I enjoyed writing for 10 minutes. 10分間作文を楽しんでいる。				1	2 3 4	5
I would like to continue doing timed writing activities in this or other classes. 10分間作文のような時間制限のある作文をこのクラスや他のクラスでも、今後続けていきたい。				1	2 3 4	5

Do you feel your writing was better when you chose the topic? If so, why? If not, why not?

あなた自身が選んだトピックのほうが、より良いライティングができると感じますか。そうなら、なぜだと思いますか。そう思わないなら、なぜそう思わないのですか。

How would you feel about continuing the 10 minute writings?

10分間ライティング（作文）を毎回続けていることに関してどう感じていますか。

Appendix 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Post-activity Questionnaires by Topic

	n	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6
Item 1	52	2.96 (1.12)	3.33 (1.13)	3.13 (1.16)	3.52 (1.06)	3.46 (0.96)	3.48 (1.08)
Item 2	52	3.08 (0.97)	3.25 (1.01)	3.13 (0.97)	3.08 (0.93)	3.17 (0.88)	3.08 (0.95)
Item 3	52	3.62 (1.05)	3.37 (0.97)	2.98 (1.15)	3.52 (1.15)	3.52 (1.08)	3.73 (0.97)
Item 4	52	2.85 (0.98)	2.48 (1.06)	2.81 (1.10)	2.44 (1.02)	2.63 (1.03)	2.67 (0.99)
Item 5	52	2.60 (0.89)	2.94 (0.80)	2.92 (0.90)	3.06 (0.96)	2.98 (0.94)	2.92 (0.84)

Note. Topics 1-3 were teacher-selected topics in the Assigned condition (1 = "Life After Graduation"; 2 = "My Friends"; 3 = "Free Time"). Topics 4-6 were student-selected topics in the Self condition.

Post-activity Questionnaire Items

Item #	Question
1	It was easy to keep writing for a full 10 minutes in English.
2	I didn't know the right English vocabulary to express my ideas about this topic.
3	This topic is something I often think about outside this class.
4	It was difficult to think of things related to this topic to write about.
5	It was easy to put my ideas about this topic into English sentences.