

## The Initial Findings of Using Writing Portfolio among the First-Year Undergraduate Students: The Effectiveness of “Process-oriented” Approaches to Writing

ODA Reiko\*

### 大学初年次ライティング・ポートフォリオ実践における初期段階の知見： プロセス重視のアプローチの有効性

小 田 玲 子\*

#### Abstract

The writing instructions intended for the first-year students in the colleges in Japan have been drawing academic attention these days and the know-how is being piled up. I have been one of these practitioners of the new writing practices for four years. The know-how and the experiences during these four years rightly attest the needs for further refinements of this practice. I hope to offer an insight from a different angle the culture of revision (not the ordinary improvements of the carelessly written papers) which, in my view, has barely been academically treated in Japan. By this method, the students have been drawn to a “chorus of opinions” by their teachers and by their peer. The importance of the leavens, figuratively, makes it possible for the students to experience “walking around” their topics reflectively. To assure this process of revision, the leavens must be interesting, as the process of revision and inquiry constitutes the “heart-beat of learning.” Finally, to assure this process of revision and inquiry, the writing portfolio can be put to good use. It will enable the students to record how they thought, inquired, and made conclusions.

---

\* e-mail : wilbur-rk@e-mail.jp

## 要 旨

日本の大学初年次教育においてライティング指導が注目され、実践も始まっている。筆者の4年間の実践から、この分野の萌芽期に見出される課題を提示する。それらのうち最も重要な課題は、日本の作文教育、ひいては学習風土にはなかった「改訂（推敲ではない）」文化の創造である。学生たちは、自分のはじめの文章作品が仲間や指導者のコメントやさまざまなほかの見方（触媒）に触れることによって、自分の見方に「折れ曲がり」を経験する。意外性のある「触媒」に出合う段階に時間をかけ、そのなかでゆっくりと紡ぎ出される「改訂」のプロセスは、学生たちに“学びの鼓動”をもたらす。「触媒」「改訂」を何度も繰り返し、その全プロセスをそのまま可視化するポートフォリオが有効である。

A proverbial wisdom goes that “the whole is not the collection of the parts”. This can also be applied to the classroom instruction of writing at college level and at the school of nursing level. The teaching of writing has long been a closed area in the entire landscape of education, and the “closed” nature has shut the meaningful conversations among all sorts of pedagogy experts who have something to say about the thinking process and the importance of creating the students’ own ideas. Here comes the problem of the “parts” being scattered around, with no “whole” in sight. This article tries to clarify some of the major problems arising from this lack of meaningful conversations between the writing instructors and the pedagogy experts. I will heavily draw on my private conversations with an American educator Denny Palmer Wolf whose groundbreaking research on the importance of “revision” as “leaven” and the use of portfolio in the classroom will be discussed.

### 1. The Core of the Problem

I had analyzed the significant impacts that the popular media outlets may have on the thinking process of the learners, thus depriving them of time to think deeply. (Oda, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2012a, 2012b).

The writing instruction in Japan has a long history. The history of writing instruction under the name of “*tsuzurikata*” (or jotting down on paper what you’ve observed) has been around since the 1910s, and this was a well-established practice in the 1950s, and it still enjoys a fair number of followers. This is evident not only from the membership of the various academic societies such as Japanese Teaching Society, but also from the number of books published on the writing instructions. And one of the most popular one in the 1990s

is *Writing As You See Things* by Haruo Kamijou. By contrast, there has been little scholarly treatment from the “thinking” side to look at how writing instructions get students’ thinking started. Take the writing “portfolio” for an example. The use of “writing portfolio” in the classrooms has rarely been academically treated by Japanese educators. It is meaningful to examine why the writing portfolio has been ignored by the writing teachers in Japan.

I hope to see this problem from unconventional angles. That is, I hope to attribute the lack of understanding on the effectiveness of portfolio to the cultural differences between the American settings and those of Japan. I can offer at least two perspectives. One is that the writing teachers in Japan are generally reluctant to use anything that is systematically arranged on the calendar-year-basis, to say nothing of using anything that systematically treats the “process of revising” as a legitimate learning endeavor. The other is that the teachers’ culture, particularly that of the writing teachers, is so model-oriented that it is practically infeasible to let students keep their writing memos, drafts, outlines, notes, drawings, photographs, and other artifacts as an important process of learning. After all, however, these artifacts constitutes the core of the portfolio culture I will discuss.

By contrast, the writing instructors in the U.S. have tried to combine the “process” side of education with that of production side. Although there has been no historic record to verify the combining efforts, there has been a significant effort to address this problem as seen in the continuously published journal, *Journal of Engineering Education*, which stressed the need to combine the writing instructions with the academic subjects of engineering majors. On top of this, the need to combine the writing instructions and the thinking process in the individual academic domains have been under intense research by their own practitioners, perhaps for more than a hundred years.

In fact, the *Journal of Engineering Education* met its one hundredth anniversary in October 2011. Writing and thinking, in spite of the distinctive norms in their own rights, can walk toward the same directions if there are meaningful conversations. It is on this premise that I will offer a following analysis on the possibility of “bridging” the gap, thus creating a common ground on which the practitioners on both sides can exchange honest discussions.

## 2. Diversity as a Spice of Life

Under a good writing instruction, a writing assignment can be felt as an experience, or even as a journey into one’s identity. Although this does not happen frequently, this

does happen. When does this happen and how? These are the questions writing teachers cannot ignore. I have taught in two different settings, one is at a university for science majors (Kogakuin University in Tokyo) and the other at a school of nursing science in Chiba Prefecture. The “culture” is quite distinctive: the students at the science-related university are mostly interested in mechanical things, and the students at the school of nursing science are mostly interested in the way people behave and feel.

In other words, the students of the science-related university are potential engineers whose professional requirements are scientific, and the students of nursing science are required to help people in the various types of sufferings. It is true that there is little room for ambiguity in the mentality of engineers, while the thinking of the students of the school of nursing are deeply imbedded in the way people behave and feel. We can see a totally different sets of values between these two groups of people. These two groups of people seem to exist in isolation from each other, but they have at least one thing in common.

They can be avid learners if they are provided the right “leaven” at the right time. Of course I have collected enough number of stories in which these students stopped being an active learners in their junior high or senior high school days. These students, however, regain the vigor to learn as soon as they encounter a right kind of leaven. Here is an example of how a student’s own ideas and her visions suddenly emerged and this experience encouraged this student to pursue more challenging topics.

#### Assignment Background

Observe your most beloved creatures (animals) as closely as possible.

Describe its strong interests, unique value systems, the way it meets people, and the places of being.

Date; June, 2012/11/01

Time; two weeks

Strong interests; my dog is so obsessed with the sound and sight of a mailman (delivery person) that she can recognize the coming of a mailman way ahead of us.

This student concluded, in a two week interval, that a dog may have a different type of sensory faculty and that this is because the dog does not have the verbal means of communication. Being true or false is not as important as the thickness of observations this student made. Never in her life has she felt that a dog is better equipped with the faculty to know the sounds, smells, sights, and the feelings. This finding led her to pursue the issues of how animals feel joy, anger, and sorrow. Although far from being a scientific treatment, this observation brought her to the joy of thinking and having her own ideas.

I make it sure that the students can be provided a fair amount of leavens in their writing assignments. To achieve this, I hold an informal book club meeting from time to time. A student, before writing this essay, had joined a book club where we read *Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World* by Vicki Myron. I suppose that she had been imagining that the sensory faculty of dogs and cats are probably different from those of ours. The longer she spent thinking about this matter, the more diverse her understanding on the animals' cognition became. I think this was a remarkable achievement.

At this point, I should admit that the same thing did not happen in the science-related university. I can only conclude at this moment that the choice of books in my book club at this university was not appropriate. What motivates the science majors might be different from the one that motivated the students of the school of nursing science.

Leaven must be prepared in a diverse form, so that the students may find their starting points of inquiry. The following is a list of leaven I usually provide to the students of the school of nursing science.

#### Writing Assignment

Choose an area of your intense interests

- (1) sounds
- (2) food and taste
- (3) softness and hardness of things
- (4) air
- (5) wind and light
- (6) colors
- (7) words and phrases people utter
- (8) designs of things such as houses, hospitals, train depots, and so on
- (9) write a one-page episode on an item chosen from the above.

Several years' experiences have already shown that the students had not encountered what I call "quality leaven" during their school days. Worse, some of them have had traumatic experiences with the writing classes or even with writing teachers, or both in high school. I cannot help making a conclusion that the writing instructions in the junior high schools and senior high schools are not built on the principle of "diversity" which should be the cornerstone of good writing instructions.

### 3. The Culture of "Revision"

Assuming that the gap between the conversations between the writing teachers and the pedagogy experts are possible, I have been using tools for the conversations: one is purely philosophical and the other is methodological. The former is the "culture of revision" which covers all sorts of re-writing, drafts, handwritten notes, letters from a teacher and a classmate, and others. The latter is the "portfolio culture" which sometimes covers a whole academic year. In my writing classes, it sometimes happened that the students continued to use the portfolio formats even after their class instructions ended. These tools, when combined thoughtfully, proved to be an effective step toward achieving my initial purposes in writing instructions; to bridge the gap.

Let me elaborate on how these tools work. At first, I hope to analyze the relevance of using these two tools in the classroom. I quote from Donald Graves (1992) who laid the foundations for the culture of revision and portfolio in the classrooms from the elementary school to college. The following is a list of principles that would help students be engaged in learning.

1. Involve the students.
2. Help the staff keep portfolio of their own.
3. Broaden the purpose of portfolio.
4. Keep instructional opportunities open.
5. Reexamine issues in comparability.
6. Study the effect of school policy on portfolio practice.
7. Enlist the ingenuity of teachers. (p.3)

I will mention some of these principles later, but I will explain that the two-layer approach, one with the culture of revision and the other with the culture of portfolio, are highly relevant in analyzing the interconnectedness between engineering education and college writing.

For instance, these principles are related, more or less, to broadening the intellectual perspectives of the college students. When the perspectives are broadened, the intellectual vistas of the students are open to the things around us that exist in isolation from each other. These seemingly unrelated things are, then, connected in the students' inner lenses. This is a crucial step toward creativity. No one can deny the importance of creativity for the engineering students, but very few educators in the department of engineering seem to embrace this view. In other words, the issue of creativity is regarded as something that suddenly sets in mystically.

Is the fostering of creativity arbitrary? Isn't there a systematic way to let students hone their creativity? These questions will guide my future research activities. Here, I would like to show a road ahead. The following is an excerpt from one of the contributors to the *Portfolio Portraits* which Donald Graves edited.

David was another student who helped me enlarge my ideas about portfolio. In his letter, David wrote that if I was to really consider his writing in the same way he did, I needed to know that he was a visual thinker and that the descriptive writing he had worked on during the semester, like our short in-class exercises in natural objects such as shells and other descriptive narratives, represented the writing he valued most in his portfolio. (Chiseri-Strater, p.63)

It is important that the portfolio culture was already in good use in college writing courses in the early 1990s in the U.S. Please note the word "descriptive writing" in the quotation above. This student is a science major, and his essays are descriptive in that the visual details are the core of the essay. The portfolio culture brought in a culture of "diversity" in the sense that students' writing should cover visual experiences, as shown here, space-related thinking as we observe a building, a room, town planning, and so forth. The objects of writing are no longer limited to what we call "topics." The portfolio culture has made it possible for students to collect artifacts of their own choice when they write "the reason why I collected this item." The portfolio culture has broadened the way "thinking" is perceived. Thinking process used to be purely introspective. Although the portfolio practice was still at the budding stage in the early 1990s, it is obvious that it was a bud for growth.

In this context, I think it would be useful to connect the assignment design with pedagogy. As mentioned above, a science major in a college may exhibit a high level of writing competency, simply because that student was an avid observer of the things around him or her. The issues surrounding the assignment design was first brought up by John C. Bean. In *Engaging Ideas*, Mr. Bean implied the effectiveness of connecting one's experiences with mathematical concepts as a writing assignment.

Think of example out of your own personal experience to illustrate the uses of vector algebra. You might consider such experiences as swimming in a river with a steady current, walking across the deck of a moving boat, crossing the wake while water-skiing, cutting diagonally across a vacant lot while friends walk around the lot, or watching a car

trying to beat a moving train to a railroad crossing. Use one or more of these experiences to explain to a friend what vector algebra is all about. Use both words and diagrams. (Bean 1996, p.123)

Bean stressed the connection between “thinking (exploratory thinking)” with writing assignment, and he looked at the student’s work from the standpoint of “revision”. He and other researchers in the 1990s understood that “thinking” is a cycle of revision, and as such, the students produce several draft essays before they submit a paper. I think the following words are worth quoting in this context.

By creating a number of assignments on which students have to write drafts, the teacher can ensure representative coverage of main course concepts. Students’ abandoned drafts constitute the exploratory writing for the course. The revised essays plus the drafts of the unrevised essays are submitted in a portfolio toward the end of the term. (Bean 1996, p.114)

Here, I cannot help mentioning the need to broaden the writing assignments in the direction which Professor Bean suggests in the classroom instructions. At the Kogakuin University’s Department of Global Engineering, I have tried to broaden the assignment design so that the students could encounter a variety of “leaven” that could enhance the students’ visual awareness and engineering prowess at the same time. At the early stage of the assignment design, I listed the following areas.

1. Places I Find Most Congenial

These include a train station, a public library, a coffee shop, an office building, a school house, etc.

2. Books I Find Most Inspiring

These include *The Anatomy of Illness* by Norman Cousins, *Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World* by Vicki Myron, *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom.

3. Tools and Machines I am Interested In

These include a bicycle, a watch, a bakery oven, an air conditioner, etc.

4. The School Experiences I Find Most Interesting

These include a tennis club, an aircraft club, “Basketball (Soccer, Music Band, etc.) is my Life” etc.

#### 5. The Most Teaching Lesson I Had in My Life

These include “a true friend I met when I was suffering school bullying” “a cat that ties our family member” etc.

The students in my writing class are supposed to submit the first draft essay, the second one, and the final product. These essays are commented on but not scored. This structure has produced a couple of insights into the nature of the writing course in the university settings in general. It is too early to generalize, but it seems to me that one of the insights is connectedness to the assignment structure and creativity among students.

The deeper I go into the issue of creativity and the broadening of perspectives of the engineering students, the more difficult it becomes to bridge the gap between the logic-dominated culture of the engineering department and the writing instructions. This is a schism that no quick fix can bridge. An essential question is that “are creativity and logic water and oil?” This question is long overdue.

The engineering education in Japan has been one of the causes of the manufacturing industry’s strength in Japan. In fact, the Kogakuin University is the oldest private institution in Japan on engineering and the founders of this university established the curriculum from purely technological viewpoints. As far as the university’s archives go, there has been no “writing instruction” at the curriculum level at least until the early 1980s. It was in the early 2000s that the “writing course” was introduced for the first and the second year students. This writing course, however, was only available for the university’s Global Engineering Department, probably because this department takes “think clearly” requirements seriously.

#### 4. Looking Back at Writing Across Curriculum

The ability to write clearly and logically reminds me of the pedagogical trends in the U.S. in the 1980s in the form of “writing across the curriculum”. According to Carol Rutz (2009), the origins of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) credit the late professor Harriet Sheridan of Carleton College, in Minnesota. Professor Sheridan pioneered the so-called faculty workshops where the pedagogy was the focus. At Carleton College, writing was not a separate subject; it was a training across the curriculum. Revisions and conferences were required in this outstanding liberal arts college. The students enjoyed the luxury of creating their own ideas by the face-to-face conferences that guaranteed the process of thinking.

Carleton College utilized this tradition to institutionalize the Writing Portfolio in

2001. I had an opportunity to see how it works. According to Ms. Rutz, there was a debate on the merits of portfolio assessment. The reasons that the faculty “expressed reluctance to read and evaluate the student papers outside of their fields” are deep-rooted in the cultural background of each academic departments. Ms. Rutz concludes whether the Carleton approach to faculty development and assessment makes sense on other campuses is of great concern to them.

The effectiveness of the “writing across the curriculum” remains to be seen at the moment, but I have heard that the core of the discussions lies in the inter-departmental differences in the way the faculty members regard writing. Each department has its own peculiar sets of standards by which the professors judge the quality of research papers, term papers, and even the dissertations. Nowhere did the pedagogical viewpoints find its inroads into the science departments’ curriculum. In addition to this pedagogical problem, there has been another one. The writing teachers had their own rationale to support writing course in the science-related departments.

The writing teachers who support the so-called constructionist view on learning think that writing instruction is only effective when the student writers can be given ample opportunities to get their ideas expressed, questioned, challenged, strengthened, criticized, and eventually revised. The question is how these pedagogical activities fit into the thinking of the science and engineering educators. Is it an established practice in the realm of engineering education to appreciate a kind of messiness that involves these process-oriented activities? I will pursue this issue in the following section.

## **5. “Revising is the Heartbeat of Learning” — D. P. Wolf**

In the education circle in Japan, a term “the culture of revision” has barely been vocal, partly because it may convey a connotation that the process of learning is not suitable for measuring, let alone being worth evaluating. In fact, the education circle’s tenet has always been numerically-oriented, as if saying that there is no other dependable way of measuring the quality of students’ work. Such being the background, there has been no substantial efforts in the education circle in Japan to assess the learning process as a legitimate learning endeavor, even among the writing teachers, to say nothing of among the science educators.

The culture of revision has been one of the treasures in this study of writing in the engineering department. Why, then, has this culture remained unstudied in Japan by educational researchers in general and by researchers of engineering education in particular? The timing is not yet mature to give a decisive comment at this time, but I feel like presenting a

preliminary answer. It seems to me that maintaining the culture of revision is relevant to all of the subjects in schools. There has been a consistent understanding among educators that science and engineering education must be conducted in a clear-cut way, and these educators might say that any revision is a sign of weakness. This is a misconception that must be corrected. The following quotation is from "Assessment as an Episode of Learning" by Denny Palmer Wolf written in the early 1990s.

.....assessment is not a post hoc event that occurs once the thinking has quit. Without the discontents, dance—or writing, or science— becomes smug and still. (p.216)

But some version of this capacity for self-monitoring and some version of this chorus of opinions is essential to the gradual achievement of good work in any field. As Lampert (1990) suggested, "mathematics develops as a process of 'conscious guessing' about relationships among quantities and shapes, with proof following a zig-zag path starting with conjectures and moving to the examination of premises through the use of counter-examples and refutations." (p.30) Thus, even in fields like mathematics, if we want students to be able to pursue this "zig-zag path," we have to consider just which assessment practices will protect, nudge, and inform that long course of work. (p.216)

According to this view of Professor Wolf, mathematical thinking and analytical consciousness is far from being a classroom routine; students' imagination and logical association may be given a wing of flight outside the classrooms. Professor Wolf, in an interview with the *Education Leadership* (October, 1994) deftly stated this working of mathematic and scientific mind, as follows.

When kids cross the threshold of school, those languages suddenly narrow tremendously" as does "the range of things we ask them to do."

Sustained student performance was the "beating heart of learning."

In this view, again, it is a prerequisite for the nurturing of the mathematic and analytical mind to get beyond the threshold of classroom, looking into the core of a given mathematical problem from unconventional vistas. Mathematicians and engineers, too, are engaged, in Wolf's view, sustained inquiry, or "heartbeat of learning." Wolf stressed that the "sustained interests" are particularly relevant for visual artists, music makers, and creative writers. Visual artists, architects, and to some extent, mechanical engineers must hone their visual ability to see the structure of a piece of machinery. In their professional life, mechanical

engineers cannot help making revisions on the requirements from the clients who may insist on artistic standards.

## 6. The ability to Think Visually

The importance of the visual thinking for the students of engineering must not be underestimated. The ability to think visually is known to be closely related to one's creativity. To think visually, one must have a keen sense to the details, whether they are about the movements of objects, for instance, about the movements of passengers in a train station, about the size of available space in a bakery, or the position of a solar panel on the roof of a building.

The ability to see visually is also related to one's sense of space. One of the "trade jargons" of the students of engineering is dimensional awareness of the space, whether the space is within a piece of machinery or in a building. There has been a fair amount of studies regarding the connectedness of the visual thinking and creativity, but the most obvious studies have been made by cognitive scientists including Denny Palmer Wolf who have tried to see how we see objects. Here is an example.

You bring insight to it the second time that you didn't the first time. And then you backtrack and do a little more research. As you keep coming back, you gain almost a three-dimensional—even four-dimensional—sense of the object, because you are bringing more and more to your observation with each bit of added information. (Dana Balick 1999, p.156)

What is meant by "added information" tells us a lot. Engineers' creativity starts to blossom when information begins to form in a new configuration. That is to say, a static objects begins to be understood as a moving object, or as time progresses, as a three or four dimensional object, and this is when creativity sets in. As a cognitive scientist, Prof. Wolf is fond of quoting similar episodes in which sudden spurt of creativity visits a creative writer, an architect, a song-writer, and so forth. I have put an emphasis on the visual thinking and its consequential fruit of creativity. The following is a writing assignment I put forth to the first year students in the department of Global Engineering in the university where I teach.

A Writing Assignment:

Choose a place (a house, a school, a library, a station, an office building, a hospital,

a bakery shop, a coffee shop, a factory, a park, a stadium, a shopping mall, a convenience store, a promenade, a parking lot, and so forth) and describe how its designer (an architect, an interior designer) perceived the convenience and safety of the potential users of the place.

For instance, why did the planner of a parking lot locate it at the left side of a supermarket? Please pose an initial question, and write what you have noticed.

## 7. Can Creativity Be Taught by Writing Teachers?

The reason I use the format above is that I hope to let the students understand that engineering creativity is something that these students had not imagined before. The students have barely been given the opportunity to pursue their creativity fostered in their high school days. I have collected a number of interviews on the students high school experiences in which they stated that there was simply not enough time to pursue their visual thinking, to say nothing of deepening genuine interests. No educators would disagree that creativity is just another name of intelligence. It would be useful to quote a study in the U.S. in the early 1970s on the use of thoughtfulness. Rexford Brown (1991) argued in the following fashion.

Unlike the Japanese, who believe that performance is related to how hard one works, Americans tend to believe that performance is related to intelligence, and that intelligence is primarily a product of genetic inheritance. The bell-shaped curve of intelligence distribution seems to guarantee that only a small percentage of students will be intelligent enough to be interested or engaged in such abstract operations as problem solving and critical thinking. (p. 240)

This view is, of course, not an iron-solid statement on the nature of intelligence; there are quite a number of scholars who argue in the opposite directions. This view, however, has been so widespread in the education circles in the U.S. and elsewhere (including Japan) that the critical thinking (whose objectives cannot be achieved without challenging, questioning, criticizing and revising one's own ideas) has been treated something as an luxury item in education. I feel that the root of the negligence toward the "culture of revision" is simply the inability of educators to see the world outside the school.

Students who are actively engaged in learning can read, write, do research, and attend meetings, outside the school settings. They are constantly revising an old idea and old knowledge. The meaningful revision, which is the bread and butter of writing educa-

tion, takes place when the students are actively engaged in “what counts most” in their lives. Such a thing could be an automobile, trains, medical equipment, bar-code tools, mobile phones, bakery ovens, or anything.

The early 2000s was a critical moment in the history of education in Japan in the sense that quite a number of educators began to use the term portfolio, although this term’s educational effectiveness was barely examined, to say nothing of studying its educational relevance to engineering education. What I can offer in this article as the first-hand observation on the use of portfolio is that I had contacts with the early practitioners in the U.S. who were using portfolio in the writing instructions and they had given me a set of insights into the possibility of blending academic subjects (history, drawing, math, painting, music, and so forth) with the writing instructions. In defining problems, it is important to see the connections among the factors. It is, however, a long-term process to make connections among seemingly unrelated things.

In the engineering education in the U.S., the early 2000s saw the emergence of studies under the title of “reflective thinking” “reflection-in action” “reflective writing in the curricula” and “knowledge integration within and across the courses.” (Eliot&Turns, 2011) The word “professional identity” or simply “identity” was heavily used in that article in their article.

Needless to say, the word “identity” has a long history of use in the world of psychology. The fact that engineering educators began to use this term may indicate a subtle shift in the engineering education toward something cognitive or introspective. Assuming that psychology was originally a science to understand one’s mood, emotions, and behaviors, it is noteworthy that a certain aspect of psychology made its inroad into the realm of very objective science of mechanical engineering.

The encounter of “sense-making” with mechanical engineering is interesting, because the study of engineering education suddenly began to bear the terms such as “reflection” “possible selves” and “who I am.” As a writing teacher, I have long relied on the idea that “reflection” is the core of the writing instruction. Reflection cannot effectively work unless we teachers prepare “quality questions” that embrace significant opportunities for the students to experience reflective processes. As a writing teacher, what I value most is two-fold: the quality of questions (leaven, metaphorically) and the quality of feedback. In fact, I always write a brief comment on each essay of the students. The writers of the above-mentioned article notes that “we continuously construct and refine identity narratives by reconciling our own experience with feedback from family, peers, institutions, and society at large” and that this route of communication leads to the awareness among the students

of “what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming.” (Eliot&Turns, 2011 p.632, 633)

Returning to the question that “Can creativity be taught by the writing teachers?,” I might hold a reservation in giving a clear-cut answer, but at the same time I must point out it is possible under certain conditions. Figuring out these conditions will be the future topic of my inquiry.

## REFERENCES

- Adler-Kassner, Linda.& Harrington Susanmarie, (2010). Responsibility and Composition's Future in the Twenty-first Century: Reframing "Accountability", *College Composition and Communication*, Vol.62, No.1, National Council of Teachers of English, pp.73-99.
- Balick, Dana, (1999). Learning from Artists : Working with Teachers from Other Disciplines. (pp.153-166). In D.P.Wolf.&Dana Balick (eds.). *Art Works! : Interdisciplinary Learning Powered by the Arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bean, John C., (1996). *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Brown, Rexford G., (1991). *The School of Thought: How the politics of literacy shape thinking in the classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publisher.
- Chiseri-Strater, Elizabeth, (1992). College Sophomores Reopen the Closed Portfolio. (pp.61-72). In Graves, Donald H., (Ed.). *Portfolio Portraits*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Duckworth, Elenor, (2001). *"Tell Me More": Listening to Learners Explain*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Eliot, Matt, & Turns, Jennifer, (2011). Constructing Professional Portfolios: Sense-Making and Professional Identity Development for Engineering Undergraduates. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 100 (4), pp. 630-653.
- Goldberg, Mark F., (1994). A Portrait of Dennie Palmer Wolf, *The Educational Leadership*, October 1994, Volume 52, Number 2, Reporting What Students Are Learning pp.56-58.
- Graves, Donald H., & Sunstein, Bonnie S., (eds.) (1992). *Portfolio Portraits*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Himley, Margaret, & Carini, Patricia F., (2000). *From Another Angle: Children's Strengths and School Standards*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (Japanese Language Edition (2004) translated by Reiko Oda et.al. Kyoto, Japan: Minerva-shobo.)
- Kamijo, Haruo, (1990). *Writing As You See Things*. (in Japanese), Tokyo, Japan: Gakuji-Shuppan.
- OECD (2005). *Formative Assessment: Improving Learning in Secondary Classrooms*. (Japanese Language Edition (2008) translated by Reiko Oda et.al. Tokyo, Japan: Akashi Shoten.)
- Oda, Reiko, (2003). *The Sound Bite: When We Stop Thinking and being Sensible*. (in Japanese),Tokyo, Japan: Toshindo.
- Oda, Reiko, (2008). Sound Bite : How The Media Deprives Us of Thinking Deeply.(pp.113-149). In S. Matsunaga (ed.), *The Power of Words* ( University of Tokyo Lecture Series) (in Japanese),Tokyo, Japan: Toshindo.
- Oda, Reiko, (2009). Media Literacy: Its Philosophy and Historical Background. (pp.119-144). In T. Tsuganesawa, H. Takeichi,& T. Watanabe (eds.), *Media Study and Journalism: Perspectives Toward 21th century* (in Japanese), Kyoto, Japan: Minerva-shobo.
- Oda, Reiko, (2012a). *College Writing Portfolio: Creating Your Ideas*. (in Japanese),Tokyo, Japan: Academeia Press.
- Oda, Reiko, (2012b). *Conditions under which the First-Year Undergraduate Students' Writing Portfolios*

- are Effective*. Presentation at the 123th National Society of Teaching Japanese Meeting (27,October), Toyama University, Toyama, Japan.
- Rutz, Carol, & Grawe, Nathan D., (2009). Pairing WAC and Quantitative Reasoning through Portfolio Assessment and Faculty Development, *Across the Disciplines: Journal of Language, Learning, and Academic Writing*, Vol.6
- Wigginton, Eliot, (ed.) (1972). *The Foxfire Book*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Wolf, Denny Palmer, (1992). Assessment as an Episode of Learning, In R. Bennett and W. Ward (eds.), *Construction Versus Choice in Cognitive Measurement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- Wolf, Denny Palmer, & Balick, Dana, (eds.) (1999). *Art Works! : Interdisciplinary Learning Powered by the Arts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

(おだ れいこ 本学非常勤講師)