

Helping Language Instructors Teach the Procedure Genre

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【Abstract】

Language learners are expected to write about a diverse range of genres (text types), but research shows that different genres make greatly varying language demands on them. By focusing on the reading and writing of procedural texts, this workshop examines one of the key genres commonly found in academic settings and wider society. The workshop helps teachers to learn about the purpose of the procedure, or ‘how to,’ text; furthermore, they will come to identify the language features and text structure associated with procedural writing. Through familiarizing themselves with the social functions and conventions of this kind of writing, teachers will take away practical ways to assist their learners in reading and writing English.

【Keywords】

Genre-Based Pedagogy, Procedure, Systemic Functional Linguistics

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1. Introduction

This paper describes a workshop which was conducted by the author on behalf of Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) in Kyrgyzstan. THT is a grassroots organisation founded in 2004 by members of the Himeji City Chapter of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT), and which now operates as a Special Interest Group (SIG) within JALT. The primary objective of THT is to aid fellow teachers and their students in Asia. On this occasion, a group of seven academics working as instructors and researchers in Japanese universities travelled to Central Asia as volunteers in September 2017. Their role was to set up and lead teaching seminars for local instructors consisting mainly of practical workshops in language education. While the local teachers can gain from attending a free professional development seminar, are spared having to travel far to the workshop sessions, are able to network with like-minded colleagues, and may discover new meaning in their chosen teaching careers through the seminars, the THT delegates profit from the chance to meet educators in new contexts, develop and share their ideas about teaching and areas of current interest in the field, hone their skills in presenting, gain insight into new research possibilities, and further their careers as recognized presenters on the international stage under the auspices of JALT.

A genre-based pedagogy derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is particularly useful for teachers, given that genres are bound up with the reading and writing of whole texts. The genre-based approach consists of explicit, staged instruction that is predictable, replicable and easily teachable, offers rich descriptions of language, and takes account of the social purpose of language as well as the intended audience of the genre. Instruction with a focus on meaning-making offers students the chance to improve and progress even in circumstances where resources and support are minimal. Ultimately, learners find out how to function effectively in the target language.

2. Workshop Task

Work in small groups.

Decide on a famous Kyrgyz recipe.

Write down the instructions in English for someone to cook it.

You have 10 minutes to complete the task!

2.1 Task Flow

Each group of approximately five members was given a whiteboard sheet and a marker pen. In the limited time available it was evidently challenging to complete the task satisfactorily. The focus was not on completion but on building knowledge about what had to be included and hence taught. Groups had to agree on the recipe, negotiate with one another regarding the essential elements of the schematic structure to include, and furthermore decide upon specific instructions and appropriate language for each part of the structure.

2.2 Task Follow Up

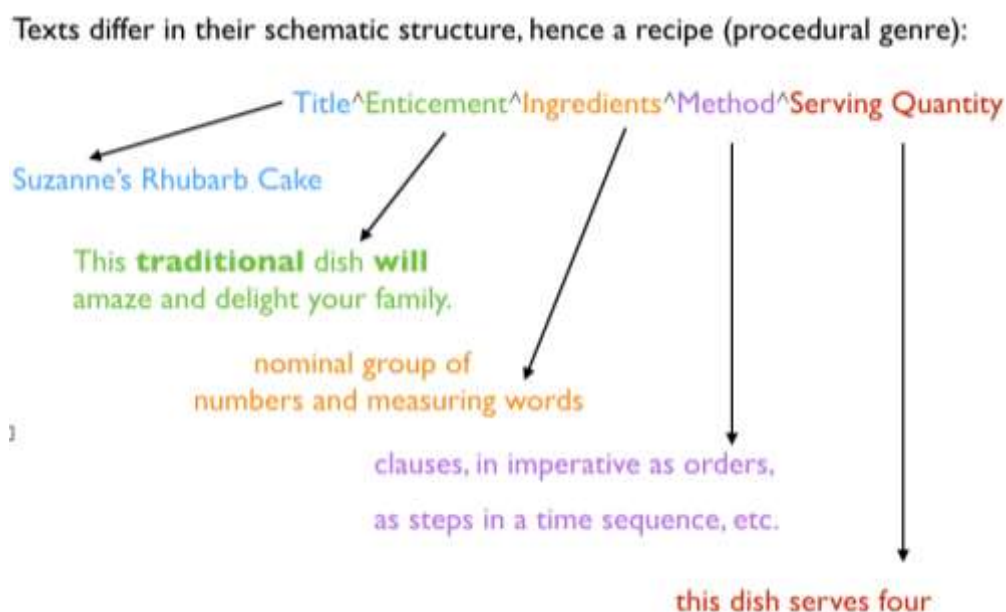
The groups displayed their poster-sized texts (i.e. recipes) by sticking them to the classroom walls. All participants rotated around the room to see for themselves *what* the others had done and *how* they had interpreted or approached the task. One member per group was then invited to explain the salient features of their text to all those assembled. The key question was whether an English-proficient visitor to Kyrgyzstan

from abroad could follow the recipe and succeed in cooking the dish unaided. The answer was that it would be virtually impossible to cook a tasty dish as intended by the writers without refining the texts they had composed, and problematic for language students to follow and replicate the genre in their classes without a clearer indication of the function of the texts. That was what the participants moved on to tackle next.

3. The Procedure Genre

The participants were asked to look at a slide (showing a recipe for a rhubarb cake) in order to try and make sense of it. What kind of text was it? What was the purpose? Who was the audience? Though the slide was neither labeled as a recipe nor identified as a procedural text, answers to the questions were elicited from participants. Likewise, students in a language class can be guided to answers through elicitation and setting up the activity by first having them discuss what they already know about familiar texts, in this case Kyrgyz recipes. Making connections between prior, existing knowledge and new understanding is a fruitful objective. Participants were shown a graphic (Figure 1) adapted from Eggins (2004) to link with the rhubarb cake recipe which identifies a procedural text according to its textual functions. The graphic is reproduced here with colour highlighting added for clarity.

Figure 1. Text Function. Adapted from Eggins (2004)



3.1 Preliminary Discussion

A number of questions arose in relation to the representation of the procedural text in Figure 1. What exactly is the text? How do we identify this particular genre? Would all first language (L1) English speakers acknowledge it as a specific genre serving a social function (Wennerstrom, 2003)? In the case of the recipe, it can certainly satisfy the main criteria of having a structure unique to the genre, of having language that differentiates it from other genres, and having the social purpose of imparting knowledge to others about how to prepare and successfully cook a tasty dish without

ever having cooked it before. The limitations of established instruction are easily witnessed here, for students cannot reasonably be expected to write a recipe merely by practicing the writing of a different genre, such as a science report, but that is frequently what they are asked to do. Students are understandably confused by, for example, a TOEFL Test essay when they fail to understand which text type it involves and how they are supposed to interpret it and then construct their own. Thus for the sake of language learners, it is incumbent upon the instructor to teach the different text types through having learners read them (modeling with explicit instruction), pull them apart (deconstruction), and reassemble them (construction).

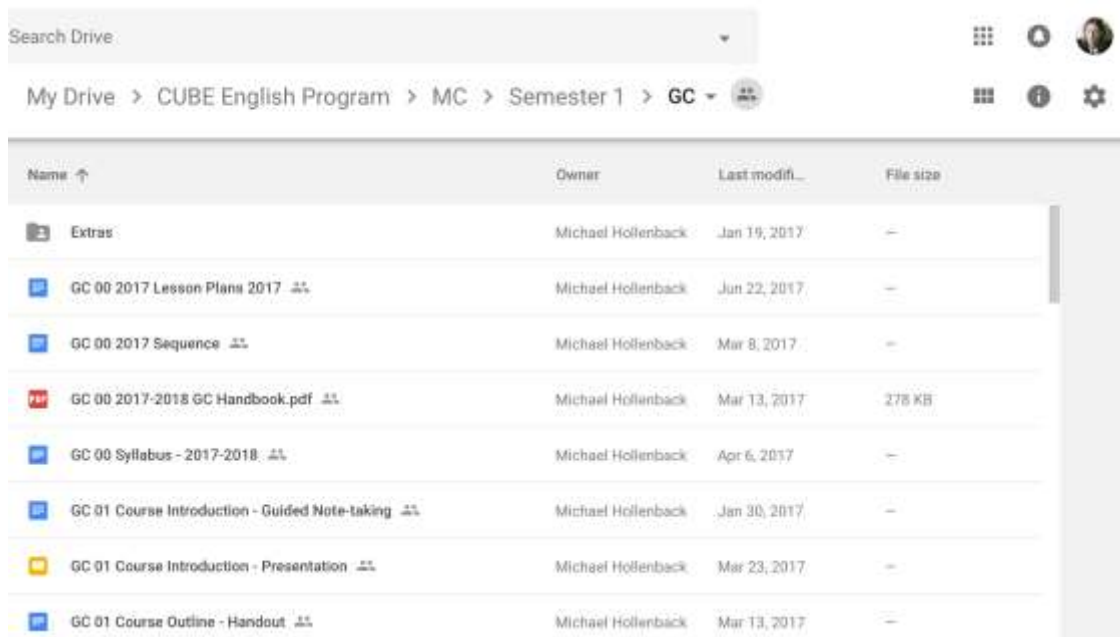
3.2 SFL Theory

An awareness of the context of a text, or its register, is extremely useful for guiding students towards a critical view of what they read, whether it be a procedure or other text type. Some key terms were defined to aid understanding. The word 'mode' is used to describe *symbolic* aspects, those that might include whether the text is written or spoken, or is situated on the phone or face-to-face, or is perhaps trying to teach the audience (reader or listener) something or alternatively persuade them round to a point of view. This would always depend on the context as each text has its own discrete purpose. The word 'tenor' describes *who* is involved in the text, and might include whether that person relates to their audience as company president, or partner, or sibling, or else if their age or status puts them in a higher or lower rank. Finally, the word 'field' describes *what* is taking place or the participants are engaged in, such as whether the conversation is about engineering, which would be discussed in a technical way, or else is about our hobbies, which would be referred to with less dense or less formal language. Armed with this information, the participants were able to reconsider what is meant by a recipe, with its rather formal list of ingredients and set of instructions in sequence making it stand out from other text types.

3.3 Course Design

Participants were shown a screen shot (Figure 2) setting out where a procedure might fit into their course planning. A starting point could be organizing materials on Google Drive so that all instructors involved in teaching the procedure have access to and share relevant files. The information below describes the current (2017) state of the first year, first semester course called Global Challenges (GC) taught in the English management program in the Japanese university where the author works:

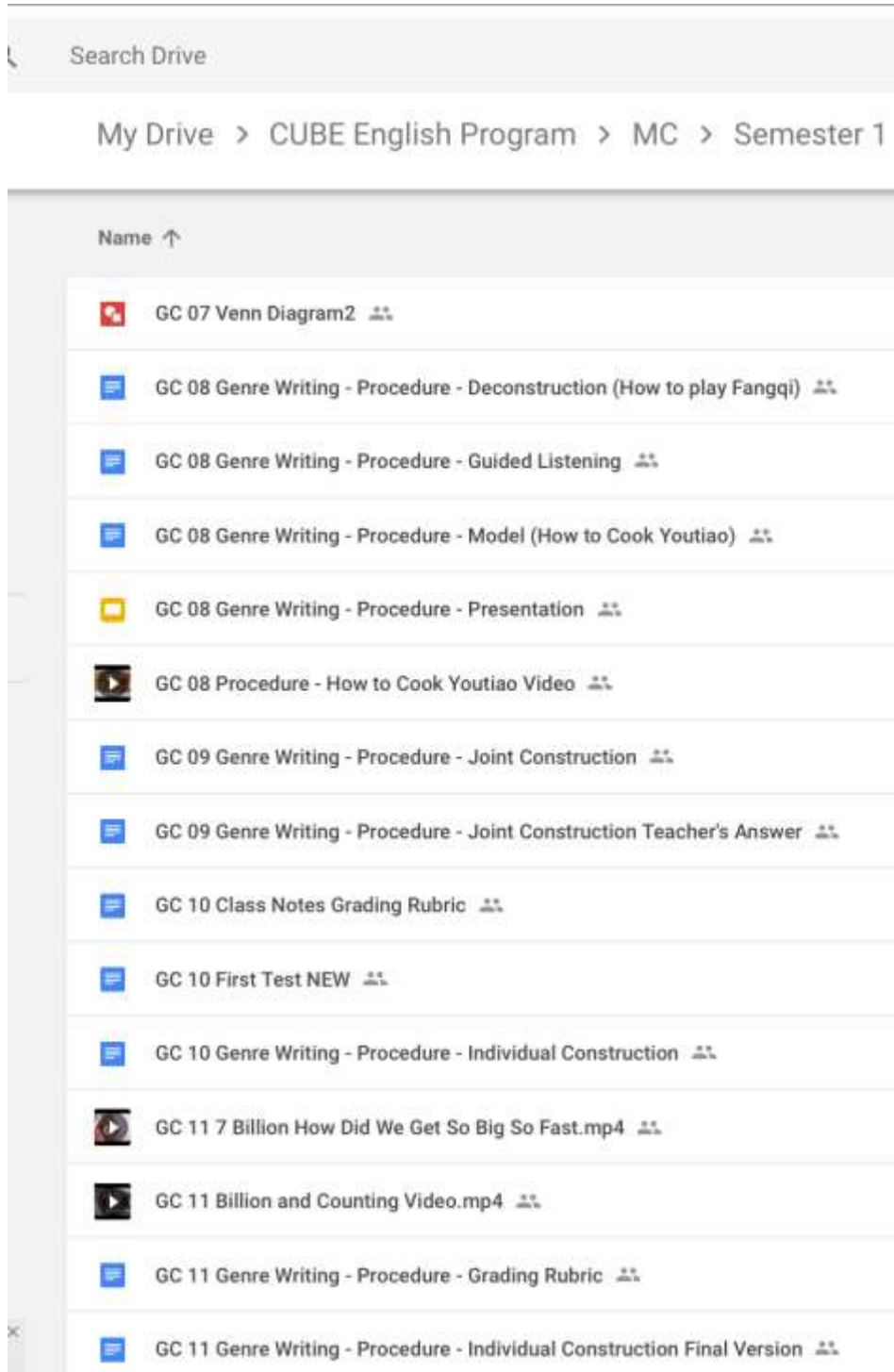
*Figure 2. CUBE English Program ~
Semester 1 course ~ Global Challenges ~ Day 01 materials*



Name	Owner	Last modified	File size
Extras	Michael Hollenback	Jan 19, 2017	—
GC 00 2017 Lesson Plans 2017	Michael Hollenback	Jun 22, 2017	—
GC 00 2017 Sequence	Michael Hollenback	Mar 8, 2017	—
GC 00 2017-2018 GC Handbook.pdf	Michael Hollenback	Mar 13, 2017	278 KB
GC 00 Syllabus - 2017-2018	Michael Hollenback	Apr 6, 2017	—
GC 01 Course Introduction - Guided Note-taking	Michael Hollenback	Jan 30, 2017	—
GC 01 Course Introduction - Presentation	Michael Hollenback	Mar 23, 2017	—
GC 01 Course Outline - Handout	Michael Hollenback	Mar 13, 2017	—

In Figure 2, files beginning with *GC 00* can be seen to refer to lesson plans, the sequence of the course, the handbook and the syllabus. These are files that instructors would use as a resource throughout the course. Materials used in specific classes are numbered sequentially: it follows that *GC 01* is Day 1 of the GC course, which takes place twice a week for 15 weeks, for a total of 30 class meetings. Teaching the procedure starts on Day 8 of the course (see *GC 08* in Figure 3, below). For explicit genre-based pedagogy to be effective, it requires instruction to be staged in the correct order. Participants were asked how students feel when a syllabus is based around new topics introduced each class, as is often the case when relying on commercial textbooks or when a course design lacks clear outcomes. Predictably, both the participants and their students tend to find this situation challenging and frustrating. Being asked to write about topics fails to help in developing functional knowledge of the organization of whole texts, without which second language (L2) learners struggle. Participants were encouraged to see that when supported by the right signposts, learners can be guided by genre-based pedagogy to find their way through unfamiliar texts. The procedure is introduced by tapping into background knowledge; then it is modeled and deconstructed in *GC 08*; jointly constructed in *GC 09*; individually constructed in *GC 10*; peer reviewed in *GC 11*; and submitted for evaluation by the teacher in *GC 12*:

*Figure 3. CUBE English Program ~
Global Challenges ~ Staging of Procedure*



As can be seen above in Figure 3, there are more than ten files related to the teaching of just this one text type. Participants were asked to consider the situation in their classrooms, and whether there was a tendency to teach reading and writing in an unstructured way before moving swiftly to the next topic. To familiarize students with a genre requires a systematic approach that sets them up for success.

The text modeled in Figure 4 (below) is based on a Chinese recipe, which students learn to cook by following the 'how to' instructions. This connects real world knowledge of an unfamiliar culture relevant to Global Challenges content (China) with the interest of learning to cook a new dish *from* instructions while learning *about* instructions:

*Figure 4. CUBE English Program ~
Global Challenges ~ Procedure ~ Guided Listening*

Genre Writing - Procedure - Model
Guided Listening Activity

What food is being cooked?

What materials do you need?

How do you make the dish?

Why do we write procedures?

The purpose of a procedure is to give directions on how to do something or how to make something.

When do we write procedures?

Recipes, instruction manuals, 'How To' books or guides, science experiments.

How do we write procedures?

- **Goal** - What is it that you're going to make or do.
- **Materials** - List of what you need including how much / how many.
- **Instructions** - Step by step instructions on what to do.

What language features do we see in a procedure?

- Ordering words to list the steps
- Action verbs in the imperative (mix, blend, run, cut, turn ...)
- Details including:
 - Time (for 20 minutes / for 3 hours)
 - Extent (until it is hot / until it turns purple)
 - Means (with a hammer / with a screwdriver)
 - Manner (slowly / gently / quickly)
 - Place (on the top / in the center / on the back)
 - Reason (to make the sauce / for drying / to open it)

Participants played the role of students as they filled in the guided listening handout (Figure 4). After completion, they worked in pairs to connect the instructional points on the handout to the recipes which their groups produced at the beginning of the workshop session. The Kyrgyz teaching context, where students are raised speaking two or more languages, differs considerably from the Japanese one where students generally grow up monolingual with a rudimentary grasp of English gleaned from exam-orientated school study. The guided listening helps students while they watch a video and listen. This kind of activity is helpful for incoming college students fresh from high school, adjusting to university life, who have never been taught using the genre-based approach before, and who tend to be more at ease with structured rather than open-ended tasks.

To check understanding, participants were given a deconstructed text based on Derewianka (1996) which models the text structure and language features of a procedure:

Figure 5. CUBE English Program ~ Global Challenges ~ Procedure ~ Model Text

Genre Writing - Procedure - Model

Text Parts	Language Features
Goal: How to make Youtiao	
Materials: 1 ½ cups of flour 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil materials 3 teaspoons of baking powder ½ teaspoon of sugar ¼ teaspoon of salt ½ cup of water	measured specific materials
Instructions: First, mix the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt action verbs in a bowl. Then, pour the oil and water into the mixture. of: Then, knead the dough with your hands gently for 3-5 minutes. Next, let the dough rest in a covered bowl for 1 hour. After that, roll the dough into 5 cm x 10 cm long strips. Then, fold the strip and twist it tightly. extend Then, pull the strip until it is 15 cm long. Next, deep fry each strip in oil until it is light brown. place Finally, turn the strip with chopsticks to cook the other side.	imperative Ordering Phrases - time - means - reason - - manner -



Figure 5 above sets out a procedural text, based on the guided listening, of the type that participants tried to create in their first workshop task, but with annotations labeling the key parts. The column on the left indicates the structure of a procedure and its functions. The column on the right indicates language features specific to this genre.

Learners need to be explicitly taught using models like this to help them deconstruct texts written by others as well as compose texts of the same type for themselves.

3.4 Lesson Plan and Sequencing Tasks

Participants were directed to the lesson plan (Figure 6, below) which demonstrates how the guided listening activity (Figure 4) and the deconstructed model text (Figure 5) fit into a lesson plan and unit of work:

Figure 6. CUBE English Program ~
 Global Challenges ~ Day 08 Lesson Plan

Global Challenges / Day 08 / Spring 2017	
Topic: Procedure Genre Writing	Lesson Title: What is a Procedure?
Content Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about what the Procedure Genre is, how it is used, and what information should be included in it Language Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about what language should be used for the Procedure Genre, and how this affects the text 	
Board Work: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure Genre - Introduction & Model Procedure Genre - Deconstruction 	
Summary of Tasks / Activities (approx. time required): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Procedure Genre stage 1: Modelling (45 min)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Watch video GC 08 How to Cook Youtiao and have students complete the upper parts of GC 08 Procedure Guided Listening. This is a chance for them to create a Procedure text without realizing what they are doing. This will come in handy later for the explanation of Procedure Genre. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple viewings of the video might be necessary as some of the information goes by quickly Go over GC 08 Procedure Presentation and have students take Cornell Notes about the features and language which distinguishes the Procedure Genre. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that it is clear that the students are not only responsible for this information for when they write their own Procedure, but it will also be included on the first test. Examine the model text GC 08 How to Cook Youtiao Model <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work through line by line to familiarise students with text structure and language features. Students should be taking notes about this genre. <i>Procedure Genre Stage 2: Deconstruction (30 min)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Break down text GC 08 - How to Play Fangqi - Deconstruction Using their notes as a guide, students are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Label the different parts of the Procedure Highlight any imperative verbs / 2nd (or 3rd) person participants / time ordering phrases / or phrases of: time, means, reason, extent, manner, place, This should be started in class to familiarize students with how to deconstruct the text, but finished for homework as there might not be enough time to complete. 	
Materials / Equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GC 08 How to Cook Youtiao GC 08 Guided Listening GC 08 How to Cook Youtiao model GC 08 Procedure Presentation 	
Take Home Tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish annotating GC 08 - How to Play Fangqi - Deconstruction for the parts and language of the Procedure Genre Test # 1 in two classes 	

Detailed lesson plans help teachers in a program know how to teach the materials and achieve course outcomes. For the purposes of the Kyrgyz workshop, they also allow participants to share what they have learnt with their colleagues when they return to their schools. One point that arose from the discussion of the lesson plans was that the participants rarely shared what they were doing with their colleagues.

Furthermore, because they were busy they tended to create plans for the day, rather than planning them out in advance before the beginning of the semester. This made it hard for them to match weekly classes with course goals and outcomes. It was noted that genre-based instruction would help instructors to plan out pedagogical stages and work through them sequentially.

Naturally, this one workshop session did not provide much time to cover the entire teaching cycle in depth. Participants took away with them three additional handouts, listed here as joint construction (Figure 7), grading rubric (Figure 8) and individual construction task (Figure 9). For the joint construction, Japanese students are given a recipe for a dish with which all of them are familiar, Japanese curry:

*Figure 7. CUBE English Program ~
Global Challenges ~ Procedure ~ Joint Construction*

Genre Writing - Procedure - Joint Construction
How to Make Japanese Curry

Ingredients

1 box / oil / onions / 3 / water / 2 / curry sauce mix / 3 ½ cups / potatoes / ½ lb / carrots / 2 / 1 Tbsp /

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Instructions

fry onions for 8 minutes. / Add water to the pot. / cook for 45 minutes / Cut vegetables / from the pot. / so the mix dissolves. / Stir well / In the same pot, / Heat oil and / Remove meat / Let it simmer / Pour the curry over rice. / into bite-sized pieces. / cook meat in a pot / Add carrots and potatoes, then cooked meat. / Cover the pot and / until the meat becomes tender. / Remove from heat and / for 10-15 minutes. / add curry sauce mix. / until the meat is brown. /
--

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The joint construction is a stage in which the whole class works together on making one shared text from the components or hints. Students can compose at their desks, and then share their work on the whiteboard or screen as appropriate. It enables the teacher to call on individual students and small groups to check understanding, and to make certain that all members of the class have fully grasped the textual features and language before they go on to composing their individual procedural texts. It completes

the learning cycle by moving from a guided listening activity (Figure 4), to a model text (Figure 5), to a text deconstruction where the students have to break down the instructions for a Chinese game called fangqi, describing the text structure and language parts. With the Japanese curry as a jointly constructed text, the teacher can ascertain that the genre is understood by the whole class. Before writing their own original procedural text, students check the grading criteria on which assessment will be based:

Figure 8. CUBE English Program ~ Global Challenges ~ Procedure ~ Grading Rubric

Genre Writing - Procedure - Grading Rubric

Name _____ Student #: _____

Reviewer Name: _____

What are we looking for in a procedure?	1	2	3	4	5
Clear Goal that gives us a simple target					
Materials clearly listed with amounts / quantities					
Ordered Instructions					
Action Verbs in the Imperative (e.g. mix, turn, fill, cut)					
Phrases of: Time (for 15 minutes) and Place (in a box)					
Phrases of: Means (with a hammer) and Manner (quickly)					
Phrases of: Extent (until it is warm) and Reason (to dry it)					
Paper has been edited well					

Comments

Total _____ / 40

The grading rubric in Figure 8 allows students to check that they know what must go into a procedure, to see how this text differs from other text types, and to carry out a peer review of texts composed by their classmates with a degree of confidence. Equipped with this understanding, students are better prepared for when they compose their own procedures (Figure 9):

Figure 9. CUBE English Program ~

Genre Writing - Procedure - Individual Construction

Directions:

- Explain the aim or goal of your procedure.
- List materials as well as the amount needed.
- Write clear instructions with action verbs in the imperative and necessary details.

Goal _____

Materials

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instructions _____

Global Challenges ~ Procedure ~ Individual Construction

3.5 Wrap-Up and Reflection

Participants were encouraged to observe that even the individual construction task (Figure 9), nominally a culminating exercise, was in itself a scaffolded learning activity with an instructional aim which still offered some directions and help on the page. After completion of the learning cycle described in the workshop, it could be predicted with a fair degree of confidence that students who write a procedure later on without this support (in class *GC11*) would succeed in it. Conversely, had they been set free to write a procedure by themselves with any of the stages of instruction missing, they would be likely to fail. Essentially, without explicit staged instruction only students already familiar with the procedure genre before the teaching intervention takes place could be expected to cope. Thus, the hope is that the level of scaffolding outlined in this workshop, and an awareness of the necessity for that support, would be enough for students who are new to the procedure to gain confidence in it, even when instructed by language teachers who are novices in genre-based pedagogy.

4. Conclusion

By the end of the workshop, the participants had explored the reading and writing of a recipe in detail as an example of a procedural text. In some of the activities, such as working together to make their own Kyrgyz recipe and in the guided listening, they had taken on the role of language teachers or learners themselves. In others, they had learnt about specific instructional stages and discussed how they might integrate them into their own language teaching. Working with their background knowledge, the workshop had demonstrated different versions of procedural texts (how to follow recipes to cook dishes, how to play a game) and offered an annotated model giving clear pointers on a method of breaking down the procedure. Supported by this information, participants should be able to create their own materials more suited to the content and diverse contexts of their own classes. The handouts that were distributed ought to allow the participants to share what they learnt with their colleagues, notably in relation to key stages that are often neglected such as setting up a joint construction, defining assessment criteria, and enabling peer feedback based on the assessment rubric, which taken together culminate in the individual task. The aim, as stated at the outset, is for language teachers in Asia (and beyond) to be better able to help their students with reading and writing English, and to that end genre-based pedagogy offers great promise.

【References】

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Acknowledgements: the author wishes to express his sincere gratitude to colleagues Michael Hollenback and Ryan Richardson for help in designing the Global Challenges course and creating the instructional materials, several of which are included as figures in this paper