

Teaching Business in English Reading Class

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Many colleges and universities throughout Japan in fields ranging from architecture to zoology include English reading components where students simultaneously study about their field and English reading. Business is no exception. English reading offers business students a world of knowledge. Students will probably find some of this knowledge interesting, some helpful, and some irrelevant. This paper examines some of the knowledge in English business reading from American perspectives and what this knowledge can mean for Japanese students for a career in business.

Small business

In *What Losing Taught Me About Winning: The Ultimate Guide For Success In Small And Home Based Businesses*, Fran Tarkenton tells us that one third of all households in the United State have been or are involved in their own small businesses. He argues the advantages of being your own boss, setting your own schedule, vacationing when you like, and profiting from your own hard work. Being self-employed is not something many students in Japan consider. Today most students think of getting a job at a company, preferably one with status. Reading Tarkenton or a selection can expand student thinking and the possibilities that self-employment holds. Not that long ago Microsoft was a small business. American interest in small business is also a recent development. Students in Japan should consider if small businesses are part of the future for Japan and if they might want to consider small business as part of their own future.

In *Growing A Business*, Paul Hawken discusses where entrepreneurial ideas come from. He explains that most successful new business people do not start out knowing what they want to do. Hawken sees that their businesses develop from their involvement in an occupation, leisure pursuit, or other diversion. The involvement can enable them to provide something missing in the world. Students interested in small business can take Hawken's idea, examine themselves and their interests, and contemplate moving forward with a small business. Students can also be aware and investigate small businesses to learn how they developed.

Love in business, especially small business, is essential. Hawken includes people starting businesses based on doing what they love, but that is not his sole criteria. Love is important from two aspects: what the small business person loves to do and what clients love. Harry Beckwith addresses the same topic in *What Clients Love: A*

Field Guide to Growing Your Business. Beckwith looks at Federal Express and other extraordinary successes as answering the question of what would people love. Beckwith writes that many of these successes never benchmarked, never studied critical success factors, and never asked prospects what they might want. Customers do not usually think about completely new concepts. Students are probably more likely to think of improvements, but not to be aware of thinking in completely new directions. Thinking about what people would love gave us the Walkman, Federal Express, and many other completely new products. Students need to learn how to think in new directions and how to stimulate their creativity. While Americans study business, we often look to literature and the liberal arts to stimulate creativity.

Marketing

Once students have a business and a product or service, they need to market and sell it. Henry Ford said, “Nothing happens until somebody sells something.” Ford was thinking of sales and students probably are too. Instead, they should be thinking of marketing. In *Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*, Harvey B. Mackay explains that marketing is not the art of selling. Mackay provides a new perspective, going beyond convincing the prospective customer to buy and instead to create conditions so buyers will convince themselves to buy. Mackay believes the most convincing evidence is hard evidence that others want the same thing.

The student’s task is providing that evidence. Jay Conrad Levinson and Charles Rubin present one option in *Guerilla Marketing: Online Weapons*: publicity. They explain that publicity is the best advertising because real articles published in the media present readers with more credibility than paid advertisements. A single third party endorsement in the form of a favorable article in a magazine or newspaper can provide a business with more than thousands of dollars spent on advertising in the same publication. Levinson and Rubin explain how business people can do this work themselves, saving thousands of dollars.

Whether students are thinking of a career with their own business or big business, they need to understand that money does not solve all problems. Whether students are thinking of marketing or other areas, creative economical solutions to business problems help businesses and people to grow and develop. Students will face this demand for creativity again and again in their business careers. From the American perspective, Japanese students need to focus on how they can meet this demand for creativity.

One part of such growth and development, essential for marketing, is positioning. Jack Trout explains positioning with Steve Rivkin in *The New Positioning: The Latest on the World’s #1 Business Strategy*. They argue that the best names connect directly with a product benefit or a best selling proposition. Pairing the name and the need

starts the positioning process, which continues every time anyone hears or says the name. Eventually, they conclude that the name and position will become almost one; the business can own a category in the mind. DieHard, the long lasting tenacious battery, is an example. Positioning is a challenge worth working toward as it offers great results.

A story is another way to obtain great results. Claude C. Hopkins, the father of modern advertising techniques, explains in *My Life in Advertising* that every ad should tell a complete story. The ad should include every fact and argument of value so prospective customers can read every convincing fact at the same time. Hopkins believes that readers will only read an ad once, just as they will only read a newspaper once.

While many of these ideas are part of Japanese business education, just as they are part of American business education, students are probably unaware of these ideas. Hopkins' idea of every ad telling a complete story may be the most novel to students. He also understands how to tell the story as he looks at the facts, creating a compelling narrative and capturing consumer attention. Again, the creativity requirement appears.

Moving from the theoretical back to the practical in *301 Great Management Ideas from America's Most Innovative Small Companies*, Brokaw (1995) presents the work of integrated direct marketing consultant and author Ernan Roman. Roman explains that successful competition requires going beyond traditional marketing and sales efforts to combining marketing information in a single package. He suggests combining every direct mail piece with an 800 phone number in the package and following the mail piece up with a carefully timed phone call. According to Roman, combining these marketing channels can boost the response rate to between 5% and 18%. Students can learn the importance of these methods and of combining them.

As part of marketing, Elliott Ettenberg explains in *The Next Economy* that successful marketers go beyond selling to consumers to delighting customers. Using his approach, successful marketers develop long-term and highly profitable relationships, continuously reinforcing them. Ettenberg discusses these customer-driven marketers focusing on the quality of their relationships with their customers, customers who are more than simply consumers. Here again, we return to what people love. Success in many areas of business will return to this area of love, a key point for students. Love leads to better business whether the business is products people love or relationships. As big as the field of business is, students will keep returning to some key points regardless of what they do. They will need to focus on key points that pose the greatest challenge for them such as love, creativity, and faith.

Successful business includes other items like faith that go beyond the basic mechanics of business. In *How The Cadillac Got Its Fins*, Jack Mingo tells the oft-

repeated story of Post-its from the marketing perspective. At 3M, everyone in-house was addicted to the products, even the marketing department. Still, the marketing department could not understand why anybody would buy glorified scratch paper for a dollar a package. The 3M marketing department conducted a four-city test market, without samples. Unsurprisingly, the Post-its failed the test. The true-believers at 3M did not concede defeat. Manager Geoff Nicholson in 3M's Commercial Tape Division lab believed in the Post-it. He went out one year later and repeated the test with free samples. The rest is history. For successful business, you have to believe. Students need to understand that true business simply goes beyond working for a company. Business is pouring your heart and soul into what you do. Business is passion.

As Tom Peters tells us in *The Pursuit of Wow!*, passion is essential. Peters suggests using word of mouth to communicate product and service excellence. Passion is necessary to start the word of mouth process so consumers tell others about the product or service excellence. He recommends giving the product or service away through tastings for salad dressing, tryouts for software, and test drives for cars. Peters explains that people need to try the product to be happy with it. You can convey your passion by doing so, concluding that passion is contagious and spreads from person-to-person, mouth-to-mouth.

Marketing is an essential area for students to learn to enter the business world. Business requires that students learn the art, an art where love, faith, and passion can be essential.

Service

While service and marketing are often viewed as different areas, great service creates great marketing. In *The Service Edge: 101 Companies That Profit from Customer Care*, Ron Zemke with Dick Schaaf presents the extraordinary service at Nordstrom's. They write about the growing number of Nordy stories. A sales associate in Seattle ironed a customer's newly-bought shirt so the customer could wear the shirt back to a meeting. Another customer brought back a pair of shoes he had bought the year before and asked if the shoes could be repaired. He was given a new free pair. In cold climates, Nordstrom employees sometimes go out and warm up a customer's car while the customer finishes shopping. Other Nordstrom employees have smiled and gift-wrapped items from rival stores together with Nordstrom purchases.

Students probably understand what great service is and how important it is, but many students may not understand where great service comes from. First, companies need to embrace the spirit of service and create a culture that values and promotes service. Some companies do this through systems such as McDonalds and some through autonomy such as Nordstrom and 3M. Systems and autonomy will be discussed in the next two sections.

Systems

Carl Sewell and Paul B. Brown tell the story of the systems for McDonald's and their French fries in *Customers For Life: How to Turn that One-Time Buyer into a Lifetime Customer*. Their favorite story about systems was about McDonald's and their French fries. McDonald's first started trying to serve the perfect French fry every time in an era when there were not any national standards for potatoes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture did not even have a grading system. Nobody knew how hot the grease should be to fry the potato, how to keep the temperature constant during cooking or how to store the potatoes to stop them from spoiling.

When McDonald's finally finished, they had contributed to establishing the Department of Agriculture's quality standards. They knew what soil the potatoes should be grown in to achieve the desired consistency. McDonald's even created their own frying equipment so the potatoes would be cooked the same way every time.

In *Grinding It Out*, Ray Kroc, with Robert Anderson, discusses the systems he created so all McDonald's could offer the same quality and service. In many ways, Kroc was a pioneer in fast food who changed the way Americans live after seeing the first McDonald's in 1954. Kroc's systems enabled McDonald's to grow and prosper. Students need to consider when systems are best and when autonomy is.

Autonomy

The Nordstrom Employee Handbook once embraced autonomy alone. This was the entire handbook (Spector and McCarthy, pp. 15-16, 1995):

WELCOME TO NORDSTROM

We're glad to have you with our Company. Our number one goal is to provide outstanding customer service. Set both your personal and professional goals high. We have great confidence in your ability to achieve them.

Nordstrom Rules: Rule #1: Use good judgment in all situations. There will be no additional rules.

Please feel free to ask your department manager, store manager, or division general manager any question at any time.

According to Wikipedia (2010), Nordstrom has now added details as their operations have changed since the earlier handbook. Still, Nordstrom employees have substantial autonomy. This autonomy enables them to provide their extraordinary services.

Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman Jr. also examine autonomy in *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. Looking at 3M,

they see an innovative company providing autonomy to encourage inventors and entrepreneurs to be creative and let their imagination fly. 3M encourages practical risk taking and supports employees trying. 3M understands that you need to generate a reasonable number of mistakes to be successful. Most students in Japan, business and otherwise, are probably more comfortable following systems than creating them, and more comfortable creating systems than being autonomous. Japanese society does not encourage autonomy and business is no exception, but business students need to understand and embrace autonomy to learn how to create new ideas and move forward. Students also learn to need the value of making mistakes. Creativity will produce mistakes. To embrace creativity, we must embrace mistakes.

Vision

Working toward a vision is another way that many companies reach success. Visions reach beyond simply making money and increasing market share. A vision helps people to move together toward a common goal. In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter M. Senge discusses building a shared vision. Senge sees that some leadership successfully inspires organizations by creating a shared picture of the future the organization seeks. He has difficulty thinking of an organization that has achieved greatness without a genuinely shared goal, values, and mission. Senge refers to IBM with service, Polaroid with instant photography, Ford with transportation and Apple with computing power. IBM, Polaroid, Ford and Apple used these visions to enable their employees to work together and successfully advance. Business students need to understand this need for a vision and how to think about creating visions.

Jim Collins approaches this same topic by looking at core values. In *How The Mighty Fall And Why Some Companies Never Give In*, he discusses the importance of never giving up the core purpose or core values of the company. The core purpose or core values are what are behind the vision that Senge refers to. For Collins, only the core purpose or core values are absolute. Tactics can be changed, failed business ideas eliminated, and large long-term operations shuttered. Collins sees the idea of building a strong company as constant even if building demands evolving into entirely different activities, even those with zero overlap with what the company currently does. He argues about never conceding defeat in the principles that define your corporate culture. Without your core values success is difficult to find. Students need to understand that while businesses need to make money, making money is insufficient to be great. A core purpose and core values are necessary.

Process

In *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*, Michael Hammer and James Champy examine the importance of process. They look at people

who think companies in trouble would recover with the right services and products for their times. Hammer and Champy reject that view, explaining that products have limited life spans and even the best products become obsolete. They look not to products, but to processes that create products that bring success. Hammer and Champy believe that winners make good products, not that good products make winners. Students may tend to look more toward good products when they need to be looking at good processes.

Jim Collins and Jerry I. Porras explore process and simplify it to trying a variety of options and keeping those that work. In *Built To Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, they provide the example of Wal-Mart's famous people greeters. Wal-Mart had no grand plan or strategy. A store manager was having trouble with shoplifting, so he tried putting a friendly people greeter by the front door to greet shoppers coming and leaving. The greeter made honest people feel welcome while informing potential shoplifters that they would be seen if they tried to leave with stolen merchandise. The greeter proved effective, eventually becoming a standard practice in stores across America and another competitive business advantage for Wal-Mart.

Students need to understand the value of process and that process can be as complicated as the system at McDonald's or as simple as just trying many new things and seeing what works. Trying these many new things requires creativity. The Japanese system has been criticized for not fostering creativity and business students and teachers need to work together to foster creativity.

The human element

Students with their eyes on business need to consider the human element. In *How to Win Friends & Influence People*, Dale Carnegie presents the all-important law of human conduct. Carnegie believes obeying that law will almost always keep us out of trouble, bringing us countless friends and constant happiness. This is Carnegie's law: *Always make the other person feel important*. He believes that the human desire to feel important is what differentiates us from animals and is responsible for civilization itself. Students need to understand that while we may work with businesses and companies, we are working with people who have desires and weaknesses. Treating them right is one of the secrets to doing well at business.

Many books have come out since Carnegie's, addressing how to work effectively with people and how to manage yourself. Reading and understanding these books is not a difficult task. Many of them provide excellent advice. In *Eat That Frog*, Brian Tracy discusses action orientation, telling us that this is the behavior most consistently observed for people who are paid more and promoted faster. To do well at business, or anything else, he concludes that we need to focus on our major tasks,

working steadily and single-mindedly until we complete them. While this is not new information to most students, many Japanese students live in a culture which leaves tasks to the last minute. Students need to learn to apply this knowledge to change how they act.

In *The Articulate Executive: Learn To Look, Act, and Sound Like A Leader*, Granville N. Toogood discusses communication, another piece of the human element. He argues that we need to speak effectively to be leaders, that we must be able to share our knowledge, information, and visions with others. Students need to understand the value of communication and practice. Everyone in business needs to be able to speak effectively. The problem is for people without strong speaking skills to improve their skills. Improving speaking and changing how to act is a challenge for many people.

In *First, Break All The Rules*, Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman provide what they believe is the revolutionary insight common to great managers:

(p. 67)

People don't change that much.

Don't waste time trying to put in what was left out.

Try to draw out what was left in.

That is hard enough.

Some will agree with Buckingham and Coffman, while others believe that people, in general, can change. While many buy business books, including self-improvement books, many fail to read them. Others do. Some people change; some don't. Where business students and teachers stand on this issue will radically change how they approach this issue of change. Those who believe in change will work to change while those who believe in working to draw out will do that. This issue is deserving of careful attention and discussion.

The final piece of the human element that I would like to discuss in this paper is workplace happiness. In *The Customer Comes Second*, Hal F. Rosenbluth and Diane McFerrin Peters discuss focusing on the people who work for the company, placing customers second. They believe that people concerned about job security and other workplace issues will not concentrate on the customer, but will worry about themselves. Rosenbluth and Peters discuss trying to create a climate where the company cares for employees, enabling them to focus solely on clients. These two authors believe doing so makes everybody win. The Japanese employment system used to do this for a significant percentage of employees. That number is quickly shrinking. Students probably consider this issue when they think of employment; they will also need to think of this if they become employers.

Change

In business, change is almost always a constant. Companies, products, markets, economies and technology change. Business students need to constantly watch change and change. Technology changes, especially changes with disruptive technology, are major influences in business. In *The Innovator's Dilemma*, Clayton M. Christensen looks at approaching disruptive technology as a marketing challenge. He explains that the most successful companies were those that built or found a market with product competition that favored the disruptive attributes of the product.

Students may find looking at Xerox helpful. In the early 1970s, Xerox PARC pioneered the personal computer, creating the Alto, the first personal computer. The mouse and many other computer firsts came from the Xerox research center, but Xerox never successfully moved beyond their research, out of the lab and into the market. Christensen looks at history and sees that companies that let the disruptive technologies out of their labs to create a commercial base and move upmarket are more successful. Working to improve the disruptive technologies until they are ready for mainstream markets is much less successful. New technologies are keys that make the difference. Students need to embrace these keys, remembering the opportunities that companies such as Xerox missed.

Management Theory

In *The Witch Doctors*, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge examine the state of management theory, seeing that the fundamental tenets still need to be established. They see that management theory already has its founding fathers including Alfred Sloan and Peter Drucker. Micklethwait and Wooldridge argue that management theory has also examined momentous subjects such as globalization, the nature of work, and the changing structure of companies, providing ideas that work in spite of the youth of management theory. They conclude that every management theory has a coherent position of sorts, but that finding the position can demand reading through what they call an enormous amount of waffle. Reading is essential for business students. Many of the best English business books are translated into Japanese as are many of the most popular. Business students have to become avid readers, to examine management theory and find useful information and hints. To do so, the students need to learn to read through and extract the useful from the useless. Doing such extraction requires reading and thoughtful consideration of the reading.

Social considerations

As the last English reading discussed in this paper, I would like to look at a publication from outside the Western world: Muhammad Yunus's *Banker to the Poor*:

Micro-lending and the battle against world poverty. Yunus looks disapprovingly at economic theory only depicting the entrepreneur as a profit maximizer and at countries like the United States where corporate law requires profit maximization. He argues that the social dimension in entrepreneurial thinking has been completely bypassed. Yunus correctly writes that this absence of the social dimension is not a good starting point for social science and society. He believes that social considerations should be allowed to come into play for the overall social good, even if the considerations have a minimal role in the investment decision. Yunus concludes that through generating appropriate social values our social considerations can be fostered. Many Americans agree with Yunus and we can find businesses such as Ben and Jerry's that do have social missions. Ben and Jerry's was acquired by Unilever, a conglomerate with a much weaker commitment. The future may see Ben and Jerry's social missions weakened. We also have investors and purchasers in the United States who are influenced by social contributions that benefit people and the environment. Still, this process has only begun in the United States. We have a long journey ahead. Japan is also moving down this road. Students need to think of where Japan is and how they can, should, and want to bring Japan further down that road.

Conclusion

English business reading from the United States and the West contains knowledge that can help business students in Japan. Looking at these readings from American perspectives, we see a world beyond that of numbers and products. We see a world of business that demands love, faith, passion, and creativity to achieve greatness. To truly help our students achieve greatness, we need to open this world to them and facilitate their stepping into it.

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英文講読の授業における経営学教育

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My Life in Advertising (Hopkins著) のような古典的ビジネス著書から、*What Clients Love: A Field Guide to Growing Your Business* (Beckwith著) のような現代的ビジネス著書を英語で読むことは、日本の経営学専攻の学生に新しい世界の知識とケーススタディの機会を与える。本論文では、日本国外における出来事を認識させるために、このような読書が、日本で経営学を勉強している日本人学生に与える潜在的な効果について、アメリカ人の立場から考察している。ビジネス関連の著書を読むことは、彼らが日本のビジネス情勢における未来の可能性について創造することを促進するであろう。28冊の本やウェブサイトから得られるビジネス関連の知識を提示することが、経営学専攻の学生に、仕事の世界や同僚との仕事を理解させるのにどのように役に立つのかについても本論分では模索している。愛、信念、情熱そして創造力はビジネスに必要な不可欠なものである。縦割りのビジネス社会を超えて、このようなビジネスの英知を学ぶことは、新しい手法への認識力を高めるであろう。日本の学生は、未来に向けて自己を高め、日本の経済を高めるためにもこのような知識と意識が必要である。