

Guidance for Group Discussion

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1. Introduction

The number of applicants for civil servants, which includes school teachers, is increasing because of the recession in Japan. But, it is not easy for the applicants to become teachers because the number of children is not increasing. Moreover, a change has made it difficult for them to make their dreams come true: Teacher Employment Examinations (TEEs) have placed great importance on the personalities of examinees as well as the grades of written examinations. The reason for this change is that current teachers face many problems at chalkface such as bullying, school non-attendance, disruption of class, school violence, delinquency, and a decline in scholastic ability, and consequently they are expected to have abilities to manage these problems. Since examiners can not judge whether an examinee has the qualities which a teacher needs only from the grade of written examinations, they observe the examinee carefully in an essay examination, an interview, and a group discussion. In this paper, we shall focus upon 'group discussion' on the grounds that it is considerably difficult for the examinees to prepare for this examination. We shall show one guidance for group discussions given to university students in 2009.

2. Interviews in TEEs

Interviews have lately attracted considerable attention because the personality of examinees has been regarded as important in TEEs. In fact, interviews have been introduced into TEEs in most prefectures in Japan. By observing what an examinee says and does in an interview, examiners judge whether the examinee has the qualities a teacher needs: he/she is expected to understand the importance of the teaching profession, to declare his/her determination to become a teacher, to be sensible, to be emotionally stable, to be ambitious, to work well with others, to have leadership ability, and to take such steps as an occasion demands.

There are several types of interviews. For example, Onuki (2009) classifies them into five types; individual interview, group interview, group discussion, micro-teaching, and role-playing. 'Individual interview' is a meeting in which one examinee is questioned by two or three examiners. In 'group interview' examinees are questioned by two or three examiners. In 'group discussion' examinees talk about a specific topic to exchange ideas or to reach a decision, and two or three examiners observe them. In 'micro-teaching' an examinee gives a lesson for about ten or fifteen

minutes. In ‘role-playing’ an examinee acts out or performs a particular role in accordance with the perceived expectations of society as regards the teacher’s behavior in a particular context. For example, he/she is expected to say or do something to the student who does not come into the classroom and chats with his/her friends after the opening bell rings. Among these five interviews, we will survey ‘individual interview’ and ‘group discussion’ which have been introduced in Ibaraki Prefecture.

2.1. Individual Interview

After passing the preliminary examination, an applicant for a junior high school teacher of English takes a vocational aptitude test, an essay examination, an individual interview, and a group discussion. Let us look at ‘individual interview’ which was regarded as the most important in Ibaraki TEE as shown in Table 1. In the individual interview, an examinee introduces himself/herself in three minutes, and answers several questions asked by three examiners in about thirty minutes. Some of the questions are shown below.

Table 1: The Allotment of Points in Ibaraki TEE (2009)

Individual Interview	Group Discussion	Essay Examination	Total
240 points	120 points	160 points	520 points

Questions (2008-2009)

- What are your reasons for being a junior high school teacher?
- Tell us your image of the ideal teacher.
- Tell us your image of the ideal class.
- What are you worried in becoming a teacher?
- What is the most important in being a teacher?
- What impressed you the most in your university life?
- Tell us an impressive lesson of Moral Education.
- How do you develop your strong points in teaching?
- How do you make good use of your hobbies and specialties in your lessons?
- (to an examinee who works at a cram school) What is the difference between teaching at a school and at a cram school?
- How do you balance four activities such as listening, speaking, reading, writing in your English lessons?
- What do you do to get rid of stress?
- When you are asked to be in charge of a club against your wishes, what will you do?
- What is the most important for team-teaching with ALTs or with school volunteers?
- How do you deal with parents who complain about your class management?

- How do you deal with students who do not come to school?
- How do you deal with students who do not like studying English?
- What do you do when a student goes out from the classroom during your lesson? How long do you look for the student? What do you make the other students do then?
- What do you do when students disrupt your lesson?
- How do you foresee something unusual in your class?
- How do you deal with bullying in your class?

By observing these questions, we notice that they are classified into two types. The questions shown in the first half are the ones which are general, and often asked in interviews. On the contrary, the questions shown in the latter half are practical. Examinees should answer these questions concretely and practically. Let us take the last question for example. We show three examples of the answers to this question:

Answer A: Human relationships in classes often cause bullying. It is important for teachers to enrich the homeroom activities. I'd like to build a heart-warming class in which students can understand each other.

Answer B: Victims of bullying often have many problems. I'd like to create a good circumstance in which students can consult me whenever they want to.

Answer C: I will get right to the fact as soon as possible by individually questioning both bullies and victims of bullying. After that, I will talk with bullies to make them understand how cruelly they have treated the victims and how sad the victims must have been. I will also talk to the victims not to be worried alone and to consult teachers whenever they want to.

Miyagi (2008) points out that each answer has some problems. The answer A shows that the answerer does not take the problem of bullying seriously enough because he/she thinks of bullying as the problem only in class. In addition, he/she should concretely show how he/she enriches homeroom activities. As for the answer B, the answerer is evaluated highly because he/she regards educational counseling as important. He/She, however, should have a sense of impending crisis and take steps to immediately solve the problem. He/She also needs to concretely show what he/she does to create a good circumstance in which students can consult him/her. The answer C is evaluated highly because the answerer considers the problem from the both points of view, of the bullies and of the victims. In addition, he/she shows what he/she concretely and realistically does. He/She, however, needs to deal with the problem with the cooperation of other teachers since bullying is a problem of the whole school, not just in class. We see that examinees should answer the questions not with generalizations, but with concrete and realistic means. It may be worth mentioning, in

passing, that they need to prepare more than one answer. In fact, an examinee who passed in Ibaraki TEE (2009) was asked after she answered, "What do you do if your means does not go well?" by an examiner. This reflects contemporary social conditions in which teachers should repeat trial and error for their students every day and every year.

2.2. Group Discussion

We next look at 'group discussion' in Ibaraki TEE. In the group discussion, eight examinees sit in a circle and talk about a given subject to exchange ideas and to reach a decision in forty-five minutes. Three examiners observe examinees and judge whether each examinee has the qualities a teacher needs. Some of the subjects are shown below. By observing these subjects, we notice that they have adapted to meet the needs of the times. This means that examinees should give concrete solutions which are consistent with reality. Moreover, they need to prepare more than one solution to get ready for the situation in which the solution is proposed by other examinees.

Subjects (2008-2009)

- Many children today are not good at communicating with others well. How do you lead them?
- Many children today have no confidence. What do you do to make them gain confidence?
- Many children today cannot have a good relationship with others. How do you lead them?

Group discussion is considerably peculiar on the grounds that an examinee can not carry out this task only by himself/herself, in other words, he/she can be successful in this examination with the other seven examinees' cooperation. In this sense, the other seven examinees are both foes and people of the same persuasion for him/her. In fact, the examinee who passed Ibaraki TEE (2009) said that it was very effective and successful for her to become friends with the other examinees and to make arrangements with them in advance. In an individual interview, an examinee can express his/her opinion as he/she likes, without any interruption. In a group discussion, however, he/she is likely not to be able to express his/her opinion as he/she likes. It would be even more appropriate to say that it is not sufficient for him/her to express his/her opinion in a group discussion. This means that he/she is also expected to listen to other opinions, to exchange opinions with others, to adjust the orbit of discussion, to help other examinees, to arrange the opinions, and to reach a decision on the subject. To put it another way, he/she would be judged whether he/she can behave

suitably for the occasion, have a good relationship with others, communicate with others, and have good leadership ability. We can say that it is more difficult for examinees to show off their abilities or strong points in group discussions than in individual interviews.

3. Guidance for Group Discussion

We now come to the point at which we observe the guidance for group discussions. We take the class *Teaching of English II* given to the students from Ibaraki University for example. The purpose of this course is to deepen the knowledge of teaching English by considering several educational problems, and to put the knowledge to practical use. To attain this purpose, students write papers on several assignments shown in Table 2, express their opinions in front of their classmates, and comment on other opinions. After deepening the knowledge of teaching English, they learn what to say and do in a group discussion.

Table 2: Assignments in ‘Teaching of English II’

No.	Content	Assignment
1	Purpose of English Education	<i>International Understanding</i> should be introduced not only into English lessons but also into other lessons such as in social studies. What type of <i>International Understanding</i> could be introduced only in English lessons?
2	Objective of Teaching English	Four skills of English (listening, speaking, reading, writing) would not be developed independently. How are they related to each other?
3	Factors of Learners	What is the difference between teaching English to primary school and to junior high school students?
4	Teaching Practice	What do junior high school students think of lessons given by student-teachers? How do they evaluate their lessons?
5	Writing	How do you make use of dictionaries in writing activities?
6	Vocabulary	How do you memorize English words effectively?
7	Speaking	We often lose our nerve when we speak English in front of the audience. How do you overcome this mental pressure?
8	Reading	Some people insist that the <i>Reading Aloud</i> activity is not necessary in English lessons. How would you object to this?
9	Roles of Teachers	What are the merits and demerits of Japanese teachers of English and Assistant Language Teachers?
10	Preparation for Lessons	How does the <i>Oral Introduction</i> influence the learning attitudes of students?
11	Lesson Plan	What type of games do you introduce into your lessons in order for students to use English as a tool for communication?

Tsuchiya and Hirono (2000)

3.1. Valuation Basis

Students need to understand the valuation basis of a group discussion to be highly evaluated by examiners. Onuki (2009) shows six valuation bases:

- Judgement: to understand a given subject well, to form a fair judgement, and to judge his/her situation properly.
- Cooperation: to express his/her opinion democratically, not self-righteously, and to listen to the other opinions or objections.
- Expression: to express his/her opinion effectively, with proper expressions or episodes.
- Contribution: to make a major contribution toward facilitating proceedings to reach a decision.
- Leadership: to take initiative in facilitating proceedings to reach a decision and to conduct other members to a decision through mutual agreement.
- Inventiveness: to make plan for a successful group discussion, to express his/her opinion intentionally, and to be attentive to other members.

Students have already learned two valuation bases without knowing it. They have taken the class *Teaching of English I* in the previous year. The purpose of this lesson is to understand the fundamentals of teaching of English. In this lesson, they have written papers on teaching of English and expressed their opinions in front of their classmates. In addition, in the first half of the class *Teaching of English II*, they have written papers, expressed their opinions, and commented on their classmates' opinions to deepen the knowledge on teaching of English. We see that they have learned how to form a fair judgement on the subjects (Judgement) and to express their opinions effectively and properly (Expression) through these activities.

3.2. Guidance Manual

After understanding an outline of the valuation basis of group discussions, students practice putting their knowledge to practical use. We come up with various ideas to make the guidance effective as shown in Table 3. Firstly, we consider the number of discussants and the time of a discussion on the grounds that it must be difficult for them to have a discussion with eight members in forty-five minutes, in the same way as in TEE at the beginning. We set three stages. In the first stage, four students discuss a subject in fifteen minutes. In the second stage, the number of students increases to six, and the time increases to twenty-five minutes. And in the last stage, they discuss in the same way as in TEE. Students experience at least one discussion in each stage. Secondly, we consider the subjects they talk about. We assign two subjects in the first and second stages: one is familiar for them because they had already written papers on this subject. The other is new for them because it is important for them to broaden their knowledge. The subject for the third stage is the

one which was actually prepared for Ibaraki TEE in 2009.

Table 3: Guidance for Group Discussion

stage	number of discussants	time	Subject	
1 st	4	15'	Roles of Teachers	What are the merits and demerits of Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) and Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs)?
			Varieties of English	English has several varieties. How far do you teach these to junior high school students?
2 nd	6	25'	Purpose of English Education	What type of International Understanding could be introduced only into English lessons?
			Evaluation	How do you evaluate students' communicative competence?
3 rd	8	45'	Many children today have no confidence. What do you do to make them gain confidence?	

Thirdly, we consider the valuation basis. We focus upon Judgement, Positivity, Cooperation, and Contribution as shown in Table 4 because covering all the valuation bases shown by Onuki (2009) is too heavy a burden for the students. Students grade their classmates and themselves according to three ranks for each valuation basis.

Table 4: Self-Evaluation

Judgement	Can you understand a given subject well? Can you form a fair judgement? Can you judge your situation properly?	A · B · C
Positivity	Can you discuss a subject positively? Can you listen to other opinions?	A · B · C
Cooperation	Can you express your opinion democratically? Can you be attentive to other members?	A · B · C
Contribution	Can you make a major contribution toward facilitating proceedings to reach a decision or conducting other members to a decision through mutual agreement?	A · B · C

3.3. Observation on Group Discussions

By observing some discussions, we see that they learned how to carry out group discussions step by step. Let us observe a discussion in the first stage. In this discussion, four students discussed the introduction of varieties of English into English classes in fifteen minutes. They discussed in Japanese and Table 5 roughly shows what the students said in this discussion.

Table 5: Outline of Discussion (Stage 1)

A Short Pause	
A-1	Today English is used in many countries. People use English in their own ways, so English has several varieties. I think teachers should teach at least American English, British English, and Canadian English because they are the major varieties.
B-1	The <i>Course of Study</i> says that the Standard English should be taught. I think teachers should teach only American English.
C-1	I'd like to teach American English, British English, and Canadian English because students may listen to various styles of English in the near future.
D-1	I'm afraid that students have trouble with learning a lot when they learn the varieties of English. I think teachers should teach only American English.
C-2	As you know, Canadian English and New Zealand English are introduced into TOEIC. This means that learning only American English is not enough today.
A-2	I took the TOEIC the other day, and I actually listened to New Zealand English. It was hard for me to listen to because of the fricatives. It is not too difficult for high school students to learn New Zealand English, but it is a little difficult for junior high school students to learn it. What would you say on this matter, Miss D?
D-2	Several countries are introduced in the English textbooks. Teachers can show some examples of the varieties of English to suit the occasion.
B-2	It is good for students to experience the varieties of English, not to learn.
C-3	Yes. I think experiencing the varieties of English motivates students to learn English.
A-3	To sum up, which English do we teach to junior high school students?
A Short Pause	
C-4	I think ... we should teach American English, and ... also British English.
D-3	Students will be influenced by English which they learn first. The first step is very important. I think we should not teach too many varieties.
A-4	Writing activities are regarded as important especially in high schools. It is necessary to focus on training listening skills. It is important for students to listen to various forms of English.
B-3	Students are now expected to communicate with others by using English. So, they should understand various forms of English.
A Short Pause	
Time's Up	

By observing this discussion, we see that students did not know how to carry the discussion forward. Firstly, they didn't have any clues to help them start discussing until student A started speaking (A-1). Student A is evaluated high in 'Contribution' because she acted as a trigger of this discussion. Once the discussion started, students gradually expressed their opinions. Student B quoted *the Course of Study* (B-1), student C referred to TOEIC (C-2), and student D expressed her opinion in actuality (D-2, 3). They are evaluated high in 'Judgement' and 'Positivity' because they based

their opinions upon actual fact. What they have learned in previous lessons might cause them to be successful in expressing their opinions effectively. They, however, are not evaluated high in 'Contribution': they could express their own opinions, but they did not try to draw a decision. The opinions in this discussion were roughly divided into two: students A and C said that teachers should teach some varieties of English, and students B and D said that teachers should teach only American English. And the two sides remained as far apart as ever, although student A challenged to adjust the difference of opinions (A-3). After the discussion, four students graded themselves according to three ranks for each valuation basis as shown in Table 6. This table shows that they were fully aware of their present conditions. They felt it difficult to facilitate proceedings to reach a decision. In addition, they admitted that they had difficulty in expressing their own opinions concisely and in deciding what to say while listening to other opinions.

Table 6: Self-Evaluation (Stage 1)

	A	B	C
Judgement	1	3	0
Positivity	1	3	0
Cooperation	2	2	0
Contribution	0	3	1

We next observe a discussion at the second stage. In this discussion, six students discussed how to evaluate students' communicative competence in twenty-five minutes. The outline of the discussion is shown in Table 7.

We see that students gradually improved themselves in carrying out the discussion. Student E contributed to starting the discussion by tossing out an idea, a conversation test with ALTs, for others to think about (E-1). What has to be noticed is that students did not only express their opinions in this discussion. They raised the problems regards the conversation test: students G, H, and I showed the problems in how to carry out the test (G-1, 3, H-3, I-1), and students F, H, and J pointed out the problems in how to evaluate students (F-2, H-1, J-1). Students G and H proposed the solutions to the problems (G-2, H-2). Students E and G contributed to conducting other members to a decision (E-3, H-4) although this discussion seemed to break off rather weakly. We notice that students I and J hesitated to express their opinions. One of the reasons is that the number of discussants was increasing to six. In fact, student J said that she was absorbed in listening to others and she had lost her timing of talking. She was so anxious to express her opinions that she incorporated too many ideas into one statement (J-1). Student I said that she could not get her ideas into shape because this

Table 7: Outline of Discussion (Stage 2)

E-1	Let's talk about how to evaluate students' communicative competence. I think a conversation test with an ALT is effective. Do you have something to say in connection with this, Miss F?
F-1	I think so, too. When I was a junior high school student, I took a conversation test with an ALT. It was a very hard but a valuable experience for me.
G-1	I think a conversation test has a problem. Some students will be so nervous and can not talk with the ALT fluently. It is better for them to have the opportunity to choose either an ALT or a JTE as an examiner.
F-2	I'm afraid that the valuation basis is blurred between an ALT and a JTE.
G-2	I think it is necessary for the ALT and the JTE to talk and reach an understanding.
F-3	Do you have any comment to make about this, Mr. H?
H-1	When we evaluate someone, we must take an objective view. It is difficult to take an objective view in a conversation test. And we must consider the students' personalities. Some students don't like to talk. But this doesn't mean that they can't speak English well. What else do we need to pay attention to?
I-1	I think it is hard for teachers to secure time for the test. It takes such a long time. Can we ask other teachers to cooperate?
F-4	Maybe we can't. Teachers are very busy.
I-2	Can we spend several days on the test?
H-2	Yes, we can. And how about a group interview? I experienced it when I was a high school student. Eight students answered the questions by taking turns.
J-1	It is difficult to grade communicative competence. And, I think communicative competence does not mean only conversational skill. It also includes letters, e-mails, body language...
G-3	The question is how to define 'communication'. In this sense, we can evaluate a student's communicative competence with writing examinations. Can we use presentations and speeches?
E-2	Speeches are a good way for the students to get used to talk in public.
H-3	The problem is that presentations and speeches are one-way activities. Communication must be a two-way activity. It is better to have a question and answer session after the presentation and speech.
G-4	Question and answer session...that sounds good.
E-3	We can conclude that we have several ways to evaluate student's communicative competence, and we need to choose some ways depending on the situation.
H-4	Oh, yes. It's about time to conclude this discussion. Would you like to say something. Mr. G?
G-5	We need to understand that communication is a two-way activity.
H-5	Yes. Anyone else?
J-2	We also need to be careful in evaluating the students.
Time's Up	

subject was hard for her to handle. She recognized that she should have extensive knowledge of the subject. Student E said that she became passive after triggering this discussion because she felt relieved to accomplish this great undertaking. She understood that she should maintain her attention throughout the discussion. They graded themselves for each valuation basis as shown in Table 8. They evaluated themselves low in ‘Contribution’ as before. They said that they did not know what they should do to conduct other members to a decision, to relate their opinions to other opinions, and to express their opinions on unfamiliar subjects.

Table 8: Self-Evaluation (Stage 2)

	A	B	C
Judgement	4	2	0
Positivity	4	2	0
Cooperation	1	4	1
Contribution	1	5	0

Let us observe a discussion in the last stage. Eight students discussed what they do to make children gain confidence in forty-five minutes. The outline of the discussion is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Outline of Discussion (Stage 3)

K-1	Before discussing what we should do to make students gain confidence, I'd like to talk about the students who have little of confidence. That will be a good starting point for our discussion. These students tend to have little knowledge and experience. They need to experience a lot. And if their effort is recognized by teachers, students will gain confidence.
L-1	I think so, too. Teachers also need to know what activity students are poor at, for example, listening, speaking, reading, or writing. If they don't know it, they can't help their students effectively.
M-1	After accomplishing something, students can obtain satisfaction. When they can obtain satisfaction, they can gain confidence. Teachers need to prepare several activities in which students accomplish something. I think pair work and group work are useful because they can accomplish the task easily with few members. I'd like to use evaluation cards to let the students evaluate themselves. With the evaluation cards, students and teachers can also recognize what the students do or try to do in a lesson.
N-1	With the evaluation cards, students can also understand what they should do next. I agree that teachers should help their students experience a lot. In addition, I think teachers need to praise their students. When teachers praise their students for their effort, students will gain confidence.
O-1	I think teachers also need to create a class in which students do not hesitate to make mistakes.

P-1	It is difficult for teachers to praise students who make mistakes or get poor grades on tests. How do you make them gain confidence?
N-2	If a student makes a mistake, the teacher will explain it again. It is a good chance for all students to listen to the explanation again. Teachers and other students should thank the student who makes a mistake.
M-2	It is called as Pygmalion Effect. When a teacher praises a student, other students approve of the student.
L-2	I think it is hard to praise students who make mistakes. Junior high school students arrive at the age of puberty. It is natural for them to be ashamed of making mistakes, especially in Japan.
Q-1	Teachers need to consider how to praise. It is impolite to praise students for trivial matters.
R-1	Let's try to think about how to evaluate students with concrete examples. Students learn four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. And few are poor at all skills. It is important for teachers to prepare several lessons and activities in which students can experience, improve these skills, and gain confidence. What do you think?
L-3	Among the four skills, I focus most upon speaking. Speaking is special because speaking skill is easily evaluated by others.
R-2	Definitely. Speaking is a very attractive activity.
M-3	Students are now expected to use English to send out a message. Students can practice sending their message in pair work easily. My high school teacher said that students love to talk with friends.
R-3	Students also enjoy writing letters to friends.
M-4	Yes, they do. But when they write letters, they need the knowledge of grammar. I'd like to give this special guidance at the end of the term.
P-2	I think it's important for teachers to help their students like learning English. To attain this aim, teachers need to introduce various activities into lessons, for example, listening to music, reading books, and talking with ALTs. When students like learning English, they will gain confidence.
K-2	I think it is useful to praise students visually. When I give stickers to students, I put them on the front cover of their notebooks.
P-3	I have a question to Miss M. I'm interested in your guidance for grammar. How do you prepare this guidance?
M-5	I prepare worksheets for several levels. Students choose the levels they want to try.
P-4	It is good for students to choose the levels by themselves.
M-6	What activities do you want to try, Mr. R?
R-4	I'd like to introduce listening to music, writing about their favorite things, reading picture books... and so on. How about you, Miss Q?
Q-2	I'd like to praise students as often as possible. I don't know what to do with lethargic students.
R-5	You need to understand the reasons.
Q-3	I'm teaching English at a cram school. Many students are lethargic ... I'd like to help them.
L-4	It's useful for them to try something they are interested in. For example, listening to music and writing letters. It's also useful that students teach other students.

R-6	Oh, yes. I experienced it when I was a primary school student. When my homeroom teacher asked me to teach my friend, I was very proud and happy. It was good for me because I learned again while teaching my friend.
O-2	We can say that teachers need to observe their students carefully to help them effectively.
K-3	I'm teaching at a cram school, too. And there are some lethargic students. They have various problems. They want to relate to others.
P-5	They want to be recognized by others. When they are praised, they feel to be recognized. So teachers should praise students as often as possible.
M-7	I think they need to be interested in something. Teachers should introduce several activities they are likely to be interested in. For example, movies and music.
K-4	It is better that these activities are related to learning English.
L-5	Of course. It is time to conclude this discussion. What do you think are the most important problems we have to deal with?
P-6	Teachers have to help students gain confidence.
M-8	There are several ways as we have observed today.
L-6	We should observe students carefully and choose the way which is effective for them.
Time's Up	

We notice that they have considerably improved themselves in carrying out the discussion. They could relate other opinions to their own opinions and develop the discussion, as if they built a wall by piling up concrete blocks. For example, students L and M agreed with student K (K-1) and showed concrete examples in which teachers helped their students experience a lot (L-1, M-1). When the participants had fully expressed their opinions, students N and R contributed to changing the subject: student N pointed out that it was important for teachers to praise their students (N-1), and student R suggested that they should show some examples in which they evaluated their students (R-1). Student M took an active part in this discussion by giving several realistic examples (M-1, 3, 4, 5). We, however, notice that forty-five minutes were too long for them to keep discussing a particular subject. They persisted in expressing two opinions, 'to help students experience a lot' and 'to evaluate properly and praise them.' The argument went round and round in a circle without setting anywhere. In this discussion, students O and Q hesitated to express their opinions. As student Q said, this subject seemed to be hard for them to discuss because they should understand the actual situation of children and give several good means of helping the children. Student O said that she was overwhelmed by other members because she lacked experience in participating in discussions. This means that practice effectively helps students improve. Eight students graded themselves for each valuation basis as shown in Table 10. We see that they still do not have confidence in 'Cooperation' and

‘Contribution’. It seems to be no simple matter to acquire these abilities. They also said that it was hard for them to express their opinions on unfamiliar subjects, to deal with the objections, and to understand and fill their roles in the discussion.

Table 10: Self-Evaluation (Stage 3)

	A	B	C
Judgement	6	2	0
Positivity	6	2	0
Cooperation	1	7	0
Contribution	1	7	0

4. Conclusion

This paper is intended as an observation of the guidance for group discussions given to university students. It is because Teacher Employment Examinations (TEEs) have placed great importance on group discussions that we have focused upon this subject. School teachers now face many problems at chalkface and they need to have abilities to manage these problems. Examinees are observed in group discussions and judged whether they have the qualities which teachers need, because examiners can not judge the personalities of examinees only from the grade of written examinations. It is not easy for examinees to prepare for group discussions because they can not practice alone. This means that we should take measures to assist them.

In the guidance which we observed in this paper, students firstly learned the valuation basis of a group discussion. Secondly, they practiced putting the knowledge to practical use. Three stages were prepared for them: in the first stage, they discussed a subject with four members for fifteen minutes. In the second stage, they discussed with six members for twenty-five minutes. And in the last stage, they discussed with eight members for forty-five minutes, the same way as in TEE. After the discussions, students graded themselves according to three ranks for four valuation bases, Judgement, Positivity, Cooperation, and Contribution. By observing some discussions, we see that students have gradually understood what they should say and do in group discussions.

Lastly, let me comment on the validity of this guidance. The students from *Teaching of English II* (2008) stated their thoughts on the guidance. Under this guidance, they could

- understand the difficulty of group discussions.
- experience being evaluated by others.
- cultivate an image of group discussions and prepare for an examination.

- learn from other members how to listen to other opinions, how to take up a subject, and how to facilitate our completing the discussion successfully.
- be aware of their own good and weak points.
- learn dos and don'ts by observing other members.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Ken O'keefe for reading the manuscript and making a number of helpful suggestions and comments.

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グループ・ディスカッションの指導

相 原 和 恵

いじめ、不登校、学級崩壊など学校現場での問題が絶えない現在、それらに対応できる教師を求めて、教員採用試験のポイントが筆記試験重視から人物重視へと移ってきている。筆記試験だけでなく、小論文、グループ・ディスカッション、個人面接などを通して、さまざまな角度から受験者を評価し、採用を決めようとする都道府県が増えているようである。受験者は採用試験に向けて周知な準備が必要であるが、グループ・ディスカッションは一人では十分な準備ができない点でネックとなりうる。相原は2008年度から茨城大学人文学部の「英語科教育法Ⅱ」で、グループ・ディスカッションに向けての指導を行っている。本論では、2009年度の指導を取り上げ、グループ・ディスカッションでは何が求められるかを示した。