

Building Fluency and Flexibility with the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test

TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test を通じての流暢さと適応性の向上

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1. Introduction

The TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test began in fiscal year 2006 with a mere 1,200 examinees; a number which has steadily grown to some 38,000 test takers for fiscal year 2017 (IIBC, 2018a). That said, most EFL students hearing “TOEIC” will more than likely conjure up notions limited to dissecting reading passages, listening to conversations, and completing fill-in-the-blank grammar questions. Of course, all of the above and more are part of the TOEIC Listening & Reading Test, an exam of much greater renown with nearly 2.5 million students, prospective employees, and corporate full-timers in Japan having sat down to the test during this most recent fiscal period (IIBC, 2018a).

Examinee numbers aside, these two exams are not without their similarities, as both feature content aimed more towards international communication and business contexts rather than tertiary academic matters, thus incorporating foundations of core vocabulary that overlap to the advantage of studious logophiles. Moreover, neither test demands specialized social or corporate knowledge (although it certainly comes as no disadvantage), preferring to challenge students’ strategic competence in addition to their linguistic knowledge. This is much more the case with the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test than its counterpart, as the just assessment of productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) indeed demands—many would argue—allowance for creative approaches to meeting communicative goals via a variety of sociolinguistically appropriate means. A closer look at the tasks making up both the spoken and written portions of the examination better demonstrates the focus on sound communication over rigid perfection.

Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 (IIBC, 2018c) outline the content of the TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test. Several aspects of these exams are equal parts refreshing and daunting from a pedagogical standpoint, including, for starters, the relatively realistic rapid response pace, the typing skills needed to keep up with said pace during the writing test, and the range in difficulty of challenge from task to task.

Task	Time	+Skills
Read a text aloud (2 questions)	45 sec. each (Prep: 30 sec.)	Reading
Describe a picture (1 question)	45 sec. (Prep: 30 sec.)	
Respond to questions (3 questions)	15-30 sec. each (Prep: none)	Listening and/or reading ⁽¹⁾
Respond to questions using information provided (3 questions)	15-30 sec. each (Prep: none)	Listening & reading
Propose a solution (1 question)	60 sec. (Prep: 30 sec.)	Listening
Express an opinion (1 question)	60 sec. (Prep: 15 sec.)	Listening and/or reading

(Table 1.1) An outline of the TOEIC Speaking Test tasks and the time allotted per task; the total test time is 20 minutes to answer 11 questions. ⁽¹⁾Questions in this section are simultaneously read aloud while shown on the computer screen; thus, students can technically answer these questions successfully by either just listening, just reading, or both. This differs from the fourth set of questions, where both skills are vital to answering the questions aptly.

Task	Time	+Skills
Write a sentence based on a picture (5 questions)	8 min. total	Typing
Respond to a written request (2 questions)	10 min. each	Reading & typing
Write an opinion essay (1 question)	30 min.	Reading & typing

(Table 1.2) An outline of the TOEIC Writing Test tasks and the time allotted per task; the total test time is 60 minutes to answer 8 questions.

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However, this paper will focus more on the optimistic half of the “refreshing and daunting” duo, as the test’s promotion and rewarding of student fluency, flexibility, and strategic competence through its savvy spectrum of challenges offers successful and struggling EFL students alike something several curricula are lacking: an accomplishable, authentic goal where, in addition to linguistic knowledge, consciousness of one’s strategic application of said knowledge proves equally vital.

To point, some questions, such as the third set of tasks on the speaking test, are so open-ended that answers constructed from simply the most rudimentary vocabulary—or for that matter, flowery, poetic replies crafted almost entirely for comedic effect—are both not only optional, but also capable of garnering full points, so long as said answer is fluent, understandable, and on topic. Furthermore, while other items (such as responding to written requests in the form of an e-mail on the writing test) require examinees to grasp the situation at hand and respond in a more prescribed manner, the contexts are likely to vary between formal customer service replies and friendly co-worker salutatory messages, dealing with a disgruntled online shopper and suggesting how to enjoy the urban nightlife to visiting colleagues. Here, gorgeous grammar without a socially flexible register may result in accurate yet awkward correspondence.

Most importantly, both sections of the test move quickly, but not so quickly as to feel unrealistic. In fact, the minimal preparation time (sometimes zero) allowed for most speaking tasks and the tight timeframes allotted for lengthy writing tasks better resemble the realities of daily conversations and work deadline demands. In addition to aptly mirroring such realities though, urging students not to dwell on perfection, but rather to move forward with communication (albeit strategically, not haphazardly) and learn tolerance for the ambiguity that arises without ready access to dictionaries or other reference tools, could serve as a much-needed catalyst for many EFL students’ growth. Through well-crafted classroom practice in preparation for such a test, students stand to benefit not only linguistically, but cognitively and affectively as well; particularly as regards strategic competence, willingness to communicate in both the L1 and L2, and self-assessment of L2 proficiency.

Such potential benefits are of great interest to EFL educators working in Japan, where academics and laypeople alike (and even students themselves at times) opine on the seemingly ever-present spotlight issues of students’ communicative anxiety in English, as well as their questionable conversational proficiency (Cutrone, 2009; Tsuboya-Newell, 2017). Efforts to measure and ultimately bolster L2 communicative competence, however, require more than simple focus on linguistic

proficiency. Relying solely on receptive skill (i.e. listening & reading) assessment to chart growth or decline of said competence will only paint a partial picture. Also, regardless of which of the always-evolving definitions of communicative competence we adopt for creating a more all-encompassing methodology for English education (Hymes, 1972; Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007), explicit practice in building strategic competence through both receptive and production skill practice in the classroom—helping students better cope with the inevitable ambiguities of (first and) second language communication—can offer additional invaluable gains: specifically, a greater willingness to communicate, reduced anxiety, and a higher self-assessment of individual ability (Macintyre et al., 1998; Dewaele & Ip, 2013).

With the aforementioned aims in mind, the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test was adopted as an optional challenge available to motivated International Cultural Studies sophomores in the Morioka Junior College Department at Iwate Prefectural University in 2016. As of summer, 2018, three different groups have taken the test, and what follows is a report and brief analysis of the results.

A deeper look into and critique of the specific pedagogical practices adopted for the purposes of strengthening students’ strategic competence in preparation for the test is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. That said, some important concepts at the heart of preparatory lessons deserving of a quick mention include maximizing the power of simple vocabulary, discussing how professional interpreters and translators process familiar and ambiguous language, L1 and L2 rephrasing training, and reframing the context of the university classroom as that of a corporate context.

To what extent, if any, the aforementioned activities—in tandem with more easily relatable test-centered language practice—helped or hindered each individual student in getting ready for the test, therefore, remains a matter of speculation without a prearranged framework for quantitative or qualitative analysis. Nevertheless, the impetus behind introducing the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test in particular to these students, whose communicative competence has more often than not been judged primarily on standardized receptive skill measurements, underlies the overarching hope of having students recognize that the English in their heads, comingling with their native lexicon, is a tool of great potential consequence with the right mindset and a worthwhile outlet.

2. Annual Student Recruitment and Preparation

The initial 2016 examinee group consisted of nine students who took part in sometimes weekly, sometimes biweekly

independent study sessions over a 15-week period to prepare for the exam. The Morioka Junior College Department agreed to cover the examination fee for students who regularly attended these sessions. Recruitment began just before the beginning of final semester for sophomores at Morioka Junior College, and any students, regardless of English ability or grades in compulsory English classes, interested in taking the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test could sign up.

The fall-winter semester is a hectic time for most junior college sophomores. Only a year and a half removed from high school, the sudden demands of job hunting or four-year university transfer exams on top of classes and part-time work leave little room in their weekly schedules. Preparatory study sessions, therefore, had to take place in the evening after regular classes, and although more than nine students showed interest at first, several unfortunately bowed out due to scheduling constraints or fear of becoming overwhelmed.

This preliminary group took the test in mid-February, 2017, following the completion of final exams. Taking advantage of the IP (Institutional Program) testing option, laptops and accompanying materials were sent to Iwate Prefectural University, saving students from having to make the trek to a nationally centralized urban testing center and also allowing instructors to decide a student-friendly examination date and time. Additionally, a TOEIC representative visited campus on our scheduled testing day to help with setting up for and proctoring this initial run of the test.

Following this initial trial run, in the fall of 2017 the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test was incorporated as the focal point of an existing credit-bearing elective class: Business English. Doing away with the need for less-than-ideal evening study sessions, students met every Thursday from 2:40 p.m. to 4:10 p.m. for 15 total classes. Following the completion of the semester, the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test—once again utilizing the IP testing option—was given shortly after the completion of final exams in early February 2018 on campus. Once again, the students did not need to pay to take the test, as long as they earned a passing grade in the class.

Recruitment of this group worked as it had in late 2016; however, again, a total of only nine students ended up taking the test in the end. As mentioned above, the sudden accumulation of responsibilities and expectations heaped on sophomores during their final semester can cause quite a strain, and as occurred in 2016, several students who started off eager to challenge themselves sooner or later decided against spending already scarce time on the class.

Furthermore, now that the Business English course was tailored to preparing students for the TOEIC Speaking &

Writing Test, and because students additionally earned credit towards graduation for completing said class, prospective examinees in the 2017 group had a variety of mandatory assignments, which were only optional for the first group of examinees. The course load most certainly made the decision to opt out of taking Business English easier for the more stressed out, busier students.

A final matter of note as pertains to this second testing group, in the fall-winter semester of academic year 2016, as part of mandatory, comprehensive English classes, freshmen students began working with WordEngine (<https://www.wordengine.jp>), a vocabulary study program (done online or via mobile app) that individually tailors each user's practice regimen to their proficiency level and language needs. While WordEngine offers a number of vocabulary courses (TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) students were advised to select the TOEIC vocabulary course. This suggestion stems from the fact that many students aiming to transfer to four-year universities, as well as students looking for employment in positions where English skills are desired, end up taking the TOEIC Listening & Reading Test at least once at some point during their two-year tenure. Thus, the students in this second group who took the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test had 15 weeks of WordEngine-based TOEIC vocabulary study as first-year students. Whatever, if any, effect this had on this particular group remains without more than mere anecdotal evidence, yet the fact is worth mentioning not only because the 2018 group would work with WordEngine as freshman for two full semesters, but considering how WordEngine might have a more beneficial impact on future TOEIC Speaking & Writing groups beginning in academic year 2019 deserves attention moving forward.

With the most recent 2018 group, several nagging recruitment and preparation hindrances were addressed, helping the examinee total more than double to 19 students.

Of greatest concern proved shifting Business English from the sophomore fall-winter semester to the spring-summer semester. Most second-year students begin confronting the realities of job hunting and university transfers in the spring-summer semester; however, the strain is nowhere near that of their final semester. With more leeway to devote time both in class and outside the classroom to meeting the expectations of Business English (the former no different at one 90-minute session per week; the latter heavily weighted towards building a writing portfolio), the vast majority of initially-motivated students stuck with the class until the end.

Another crucial change involved securing a computer lab for Business English class time, an environmental upgrade from the standard classroom. First of all, this gave students more

opportunities to practice in a fashion resembling that of the actual testing conditions (e.g. typing as opposed to handwriting). Secondly, the room itself had computers stationed five to a table, with nine tables in total spread out like islands, and the positioning of the computers was such that instead of students all facing seated towards a blackboard or projector screen, students sat in a U-shape ideal for group conversation and brainstorming. Finally, the dearth of technological tools on hand offered a multitude of new and streamlined possibilities, such as allowing students to record and immediately listen to themselves, or others, speaking. Said recordings could then be submitted to mutual cloud storage for peer-to-peer feedback; the same goes for writing assignments.

The IP version of the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test took place during finals week in early August 2018. Although 22 students actually participated in the preparatory course, students who failed to meet the assignment, attendance, and attitudinal benchmarks outlined in the syllabus were “fired” in the 12th week (in keeping with the businesslike context of the course) and disallowed from taking the examination. As with previous years, students were made aware on numerous occasions that the test cost would be covered by Morioka Junior College, thus students promised at the beginning of the course to actively volunteer, cooperate with all classmates, come well prepared for each lesson, and communicate exclusively in English unless otherwise specified (as some activities did call for using Japanese).

Results for the test typically arrive in three to four weeks. The August 2018 group, receiving their results before the beginning of their final sophomore semester, had the opportunity to include their scores on their resumes while still in university, adding a foreign language certification espousing productive international communication skills where many often only show TOEIC Listening & Reading Test results or other receptive skills-based qualifications. While without a doubt a boon for those seeking employment soon after graduation, junior college students looking to transfer to (more often than not) English or humanities departments in four-year universities arguably gain the most during this anxiety-inducing transition coming on the crest of adulthood.

Before the trial run of the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test took place in February 2017 at Morioka Junior College, estimating how students might score on such an exam was up in the air. Nonetheless, with potential linguistic, cognitive, and professional benefits abounding, students aimed to achieve IIBC’s proposed scores representing the expected skill levels of new company employees: a score of 90 in speaking and a score of 80 in writing (IIBC, 2018b). Both the speaking and

writing portions of the test have a maximum score of 200 points, adding up to an overall maximum score of 400 possible points. What follows is a breakdown of the speaking, writing, and overall scores for the three groups who attempted the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test from 2017-2018.

3. Test Results

Students who take the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test each receive a personalized score sheet with multiple speaking and writing assessments. For speaking, students receive a speaking test score out of 200, a speaking proficiency level ranking between 1-8 (with 8 being the highest), a pronunciation level ranking between 1-3 (with 3 being the highest), an intonation and stress ranking between 1-3 (again, with 3 being the highest), and explanations of all of the above-mentioned rankings. As for writing, students receive a writing test score out of 200, a writing proficiency level ranking between 1-9, and a description of said level ranking.

The aforementioned goal upon the test’s inception at Morioka Junior College of 90 points on the speaking test equates to a level 4 proficiency level. Of the 37 total students who have taken the test thus far, 13 students have earned a level 4 proficiency level, 24 students have earned a level 5 proficiency level or higher (with level 6 being the highest to date), and no one has ranked below level 4. Additionally, all but two students have scored 90 points or higher (with 140 being the highest to date). For a breakdown of each group’s speaking scores, see Table 2.1, Table 3.1, and Table 4.1.

The breakdown of pronunciation level rankings and intonation and stress level rankings can be found in Table 2.2, Table 3.2, and Table 4.2. To summarize, just two out of the 37 total students to take the test have managed a level 3 (the highest) pronunciation level ranking, while only a single student has earned a level 3 intonation and stress level ranking. That said, the majority of students each year have ranked in at level 2 for both categories, together with a few level 1 scores scattered about in each examination group.

Turning to the writing test, the initial goal of 80 points similarly equates to a level 4 proficiency level. Of the 37 total students who have taken the test, not only have all of the students ranked higher than level 4, 35 of the examinees have earned a level 6 proficiency level or higher (with level 8 being the highest to date). The highest test score yet achieved stands at 170 out of a possible 200 points, and the overall average score for the three testing groups calculates to a highly respectable 136.8 points—a score teetering on the edge of a level 7 proficiency level. Table 2.3, Table 3.3, and Table 4.3 include the writing test results for each examinee.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y1-1	130	6
Y1-2	130	6
Y1-3	120	5
Y1-4	110	5
Y1-5	110	5
Y1-6	110	5
Y1-7	100	4
Y1-8	90	4
Y1-9	90	4
Average = 110.0		

(Table 2.1) Speaking scores & proficiency levels for Feb. 2017.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y2-1	80	4
Y2-2	100	4
Y2-3	110	5
Y2-4	100	4
Y2-5	120	5
Y2-6	100	4
Y2-7	110	5
Y2-8	90	4
Y2-9	90	4
Average = 100.0		

(Table 3.1) Speaking scores & proficiency levels for Feb. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Intonation & Stress</i>
Y1-1	2	2
Y1-2	3	3
Y1-3	2	2
Y1-4	2	2
Y1-5	2	2
Y1-6	2	2
Y1-7	2	1
Y1-8	1	1
Y1-9	2	2

(Table 2.2) Pronunciation & intonation/stress scores for Feb. 2017.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Intonation & Stress</i>
Y2-1	2	1
Y2-2	2	2
Y2-3	2	2
Y2-4	2	2
Y2-5	2	1
Y2-6	2	2
Y2-7	2	2
Y2-8	2	2
Y2-9	1	2

(Table 3.2) Pronunciation & intonation/stress scores for Feb. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Writing Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y1-1	160	7
Y1-2	170	8
Y1-3	120	6
Y1-4	140	7
Y1-5	150	7
Y1-6	130	6
Y1-7	130	6
Y1-8	130	6
Y1-9	90	5
Average = 135.6		

(Table 2.3) Writing scores & proficiency levels for Feb. 2017.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Writing Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y2-1	150	7
Y2-2	150	7
Y2-3	120	6
Y2-4	130	6
Y2-5	150	7
Y2-6	140	7
Y2-7	120	6
Y2-8	130	6
Y2-9	160	7
Average = 138.9		

(Table 3.3) Writing scores & proficiency levels for Feb. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking + Writing</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Y1-2	300	1
Y1-1	290	2
Y1-5	260	3
Y1-4	250	4
Y1-3	240	5
Y1-6	240	
Y1-7	230	6
Y1-8	220	7
Y1-9	180	8

(Table 2.4) Ranking of overall student scores for Feb. 2017.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking + Writing</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Y2-5	270	1
Y2-2	250	2
Y2-9	250	
Y2-6	240	3
Y2-1	230	4
Y2-3	230	
Y2-4	230	
Y2-7	230	5
Y2-8	220	

(Table 3.4) Ranking of overall student scores for Feb. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y3-1	120	5
Y3-2	120	5
Y3-3	140	6
Y3-4	110	5
Y3-5	130	6
Y3-6	110	5
Y3-7	110	5
Y3-8	130	6
Y3-9	90	4
Y3-10	110	5
Y3-11	130	6
Y3-12	140	6
Y3-13	100	4
Y3-14	100	4
Y3-15	110	5
Y3-16	110	5
Y3-17	120	5
Y3-18	120	5
Y3-19	80	4
Average = 114.7		

(Table 4.1) Speaking scores & proficiency levels for Aug. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Writing Score</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Y3-1	130	6
Y3-2	130	6
Y3-3	130	6
Y3-4	130	6
Y3-5	150	7
Y3-6	160	7
Y3-7	100	5
Y3-8	130	6
Y3-9	140	7
Y3-10	130	6
Y3-11	130	6
Y3-12	160	7
Y3-13	130	6
Y3-14	120	6
Y3-15	160	7
Y3-16	140	7
Y3-17	130	6
Y3-18	150	7
Y3-19	140	7
Average = 136.3		

(Table 4.3) Writing scores & proficiency levels for Aug. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Intonation & Stress</i>
Y3-1	1	2
Y3-2	2	2
Y3-3	2	2
Y3-4	2	2
Y3-5	2	2
Y3-6	2	2
Y3-7	1	2
Y3-8	2	2
Y3-9	1	1
Y3-10	2	2
Y3-11	2	2
Y3-12	3	2
Y3-13	1	1
Y3-14	2	2
Y3-15	2	2
Y3-16	2	2
Y3-17	2	2
Y3-18	2	2
Y3-19	2	2

(Table 4.2) Pronunciation & intonation/stress scores for Aug. 2018.

<i>Student</i>	<i>Speaking + Writing</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Y3-12	300	1
Y3-5	280	2
Y3-3	270	3
Y3-6	270	
Y3-15	270	
Y3-18	270	
Y3-8	260	4
Y3-11	260	
Y3-1	250	5
Y3-2	250	
Y3-16	250	
Y3-17	250	
Y3-4	240	6
Y3-10	240	
Y3-9	230	7
Y3-13	230	
Y3-14	220	8
Y3-19	220	
Y3-7	210	9

(Table 4.4) Rank of overall student scores for Aug. 2018.

According to IIBC (2017, 2018c), a score of 130 points and above on the speaking test demonstrates an examinee’s qualification to travel overseas on business as a representative of one’s workplace. Similarly, a score of 140 points and above on the writing test carries that same description as well. Bold figures demarcated in gray in the preceding tables represent this elite classification. Total scores out of 400 possible points for each of the three testing groups on the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test are outlined in Table 2.4, Table 3.4, and Table 4.4. Here, bold figures in gray highlight students with total scores of at least 270.

4. Conclusion

After three runs of the TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test from February 2017 through August 2018, there remains no doubt that International Cultural Studies sophomores in the Morioka Junior College Department at Iwate Prefectural University can excel on what is a fast-paced, open-ended, challenging examination of productive English skills. A comparison of Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 will show that all three testing groups’ average scores on both the speaking and

writing portions of the exam not only eclipse national university student averages, but practically mirror the averages of newly hired employees (IIBC, 2018c).

This, once again, is the performance of second-year students in an International Cultural Studies department with a limited English curriculum, where the two mandatory English classes per semester are not divided into varying ability levels. What's more, Iwate Prefectural University as a whole hosts hardly any international students at all, with zero native English-speaking students that Morioka Junior College students have the opportunity to interact with on even a semi-regular basis. Finally, while plans for bolstering the available study abroad opportunities to English-speaking countries for Morioka Junior College students during their freshman and sophomore years have seen optimistic progression of late, even such an experience as this makes up but a mere three weeks (at most) of authentic English immersion overseas.

None of this is meant to paint a disheartening picture of the Department, nor should these examples reflect a lack of enthusiasm on the part of either the students, teachers, or staff. Rather, the takeaway here is quite positive: create the necessary conditions for motivated students to approach an attractive, authentic, and career-oriented goal, ideally incorporate the pursuit of said goal as part of students' already demanding average academic week, take an eclectic approach to improving not only linguistic competence but flexible strategic competence as well, and chances are you will see fluency, flexibility, and confidence blossom.

The students who made up the three groups in question were by no means absolute beginners at the start of this process; however, nor were they only the most stellar speakers cherry picked from their respective academic years. Whether judging these students anecdotally or in terms of receptive skills-based standardized testing, they more or less fit the profile of average Japanese university students, running the gambit from comparatively advanced to seemingly eternal false beginner. To add a dash of data to this remark, the sophomores from academic years 2016-2018 initially took TOEIC Bridge as freshmen during the Departmental orientation. The students who ended up taking the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test had TOEIC Bridge scores ranging from around 90-166. These scores' TOEIC Listening & Reading Test supposed equivalent scores (IIBC, 2018c) come out to between 230 (an inarguably low score for incoming freshmen; TOEIC L&R has a 990-point maximum) and the lower 600s (an impressive score for incoming freshmen, and often around where students hoping to transfer to four-year universities aim to score before the middle of their sophomore year).

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Average Speaking Score</i>	<i>Average Writing Score</i>
University Students 大学生	97.6	119.7
New Employees 新入社員	112.1	135.6
Employees working in International Divisions 海外部門	127.2	148.2
	<i>Score</i>	<i>Score</i>
Level to qualify for Overseas Business Trips 海外出張レベル	130+	140+
Level to qualify for Overseas Postings 海外赴任レベル	160+	170+

(Table 5.1) TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test average scores across the entirety of Japan for fiscal year 2016 and recommended minimum scores for participation in overseas business activities (IIBC, 2017, 2018c).

<i>Testing Year</i>	<i>Average Speaking Score</i>	<i>Average Writing Score</i>
February 2017 Test (1 st year; 9 students)	110.0	135.6
February 2018 Test (2 nd year; 9 students)	100.0	138.9
August 2018 Test (3 rd year; 19 students)	114.8	136.3

(Table 5.2) Average speaking and writing scores for each testing group at Morioka Junior College.

<i>Testing Year</i>	<i>Scores of 130+ on the Speaking Test</i>	<i>Scores of 140+ on the Writing Test</i>
February 2017 Test (1 st year; 9 students)	2 students (22%)	4 students (44%)
February 2018 Test (2 nd year; 9 students)	0 students (0%)	5 students (55%)
August 2018 Test (3 rd year; 19 students)	5 students (26%)	8 students (42%)

(Table 5.3) Number and percentage of students from each group who scored the minimum recommended speaking and writing score to qualify for participation in overseas business trips, as per IIBC standards.

These results offer a very optimistic outlook moving forward. With continued research into the teaching methodologies behind preparing future students for the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Test, the Morioka Junior College Department has no reason not to confidently forecast steady success in the coming years.

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