



A Strategy to Motivate Students to Improve Their Presentation Skills

Koji Fujiwara

Yamagata University

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International Forum on The First-Year Experience

Agenda

1. Yamagata University (YU) & Our FYE Program
2. **A Simple Idea** to Motivate Students to Improve Their Presentation Skills
3. Conclusions

**Yamagata University
&
Our FYE Program**

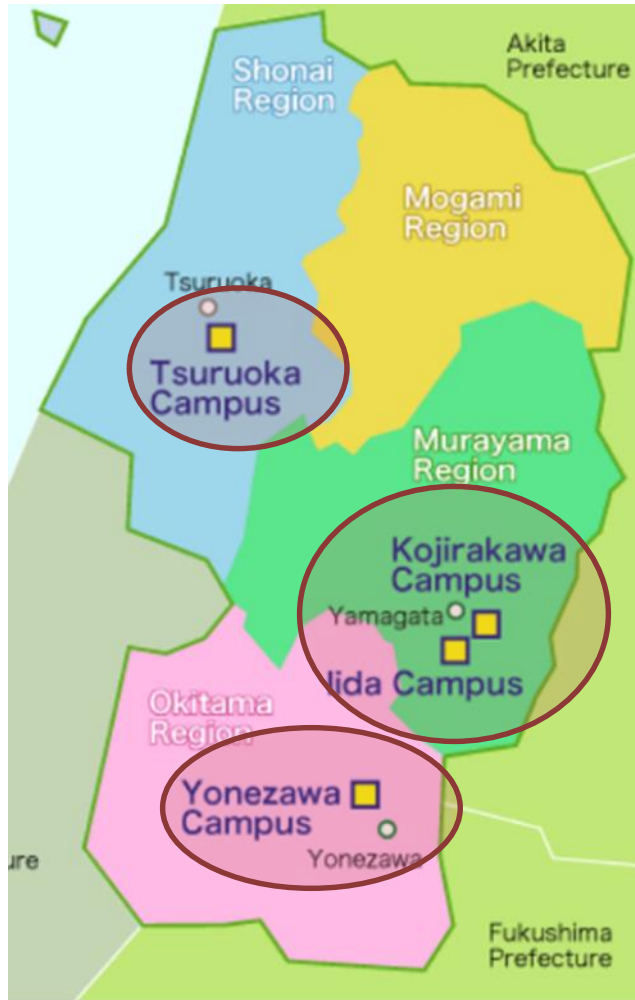


Where is Yamagata, Japan?



- Direct Distance from Tokyo: 190 miles
 - 3 hours by bullet train
 - 45 minutes by airplane

Yamagata University (YU)



■ Type: National University

- Year Founded: 1878
- Multi-Campus (4 campuses)
 - Kojirakawa Campus (K)
 - Iida Campus (I)
 - Yonezawa Campus (Y)
 - Tsuruoka Campus (T)

■ Six Colleges:

- Agriculture (T)
- Education, Arts and Science (K)
- Engineering (Y)
- Literature and Social Science (K)
- Medicine (I)
- Sciences (K)

- Kojirakawa Campus – Tsuruoka Campus: 60 miles
- Kojirakawa Campus – Yonezawa Campus: 30 miles

Yamagata University (YU)

■ Degree Programs

- Undergraduate: **22**
 - Master: **19**
 - Doctorate: **10**
- } **Same Tuition**
\$4,800/year

■ **2019-2020** FT Enrollment & FT Faculty/Staff

- Degree-seeking UG: **7,501**
 - Male: 64%
- **Degree-seeking, new freshmen: 1,740** ←
- Male: 65%; In-state: 23%
- Degree-seeking Grad: **1,278**
 - Male: 77%
- Faculty & Staff: **800+** & **300+**, respectively

Key Characteristics of H.E. in Japan

- The academic year begins in **April** and ends the following March.
- Students **must decide on their major** when they apply for **admission**.
 - **Can't change the major** after enrollment
 - No double or more majors
 - No pre- program (e.g., Pre-Med, Pre-Vet, etc.)
 - Almost **impossible** to
 - **Transfer** to another university
 - Have **flexible study plan**
- **High expectation to graduate in four years**

FYE Program at YU

- The FYE course at YU was **completely redesigned** in 2017.

- New Course Goals
 1. To promote further development of **student success skills** such as basic research, group work, presentation and report writing.
 2. To help students gain **confidence** at new environment. (i.e, **learn from experience**)

- Characteristics
 - 2 semester credits (meet 15 times, 100 min./class)
 - 25 students per class (randomly assigned)
 - **Mandatory** for ALL new first-year students

Why did we redesign the course?

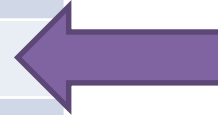
- Problems in the past:
within the same FYE course,
 - ① **Wide Variation in Class Size**
 - Smallest: 13 per class
 - Largest: 125 per class
 - ② **Different Learning Outcomes**
 - It depended on the “person” who taught the course.
 - ③ **Different Evaluation Criteria**
 - Absolute vs. Relative
 - Hard vs. Easy-A
 - Range of FYE Section Ave. GPA: **2.2 – 4.0**

Course Outlines (1st Half, Weeks 1-7)

- Students learned and experienced the **four core student success skills** through the class activities.
- Students were assigned to each **working group (5 students/group)**, and tackled the topic for discussion.
 - Topic: A cashier gave you an **extra 30 cents** back in change. What do you do?
i.e., **Pocket the change vs. Return the change**
- Each group drew a conclusion and spent **3 weeks** to prepare the **group presentation**.

Course Calendar (1st Half, Weeks 1-7)

| Week | Agenda/Topic |
|------|--|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Syllabus Review |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Work• Basic Research |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Discussion• Logical/Critical Thinking |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation Part 1 |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation Part 2 |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Presentation |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report Writing |

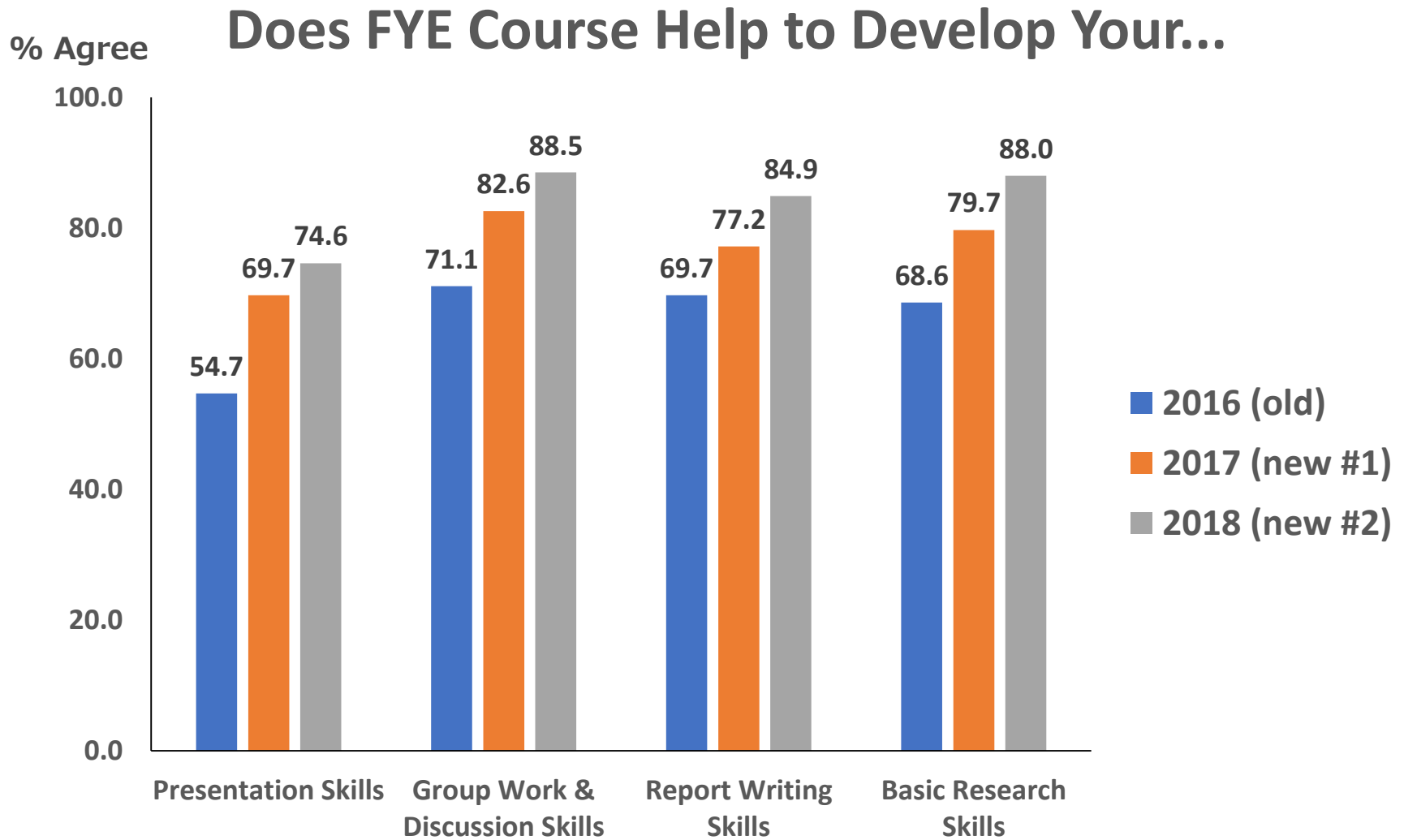


Reinforcement: 2nd Half (Weeks 8-15)

The group worked on another topic.

- i.e., What is your career plan?

Survey Results: Four Core Learning Skills



A Simple Idea to Motivate Students to Improve Their Presentation Skills



What did we do? (1)

■ Two FYE faculty

- took FYE at universities **outside of Japan**
- have been testing out a new teaching method to motivate students to improve their presentation skills in the **2019 FYE course (April – August 2019)**

■ What did we do?

- They let their students talk at a **different classroom** with **unknown/unfamiliar classmates and faculty.**

What is the idea behind it?

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- 5 weeks had passed.
- Built classroom/group community.
- Relaxing (good thing!)
- But, lack a feeling of tension...

What if the students were told to go to different classroom to do their presentation?

Students' Responses

- **Before the presentation**
 - Surprised
 - Puzzled
 - Tensed

- **After the presentation, students showed good understandings of the importance for:**
 - planning for a smooth delivery
 - creating easy-to-understand slides
 - focusing on audience value

Week 14: Presentation #2 @ 2nd Half

- We asked students to do **individual presentation**.
- **Assessment Results**
 - Our students showed that they learned from experience.
 - They knew their audience.
 - They created a clear, easy-to-understand slides.
 - They practiced a lot!
 - They controlled their nerves.

Conclusions



Conclusions

- **Changing students' learning environment may work to promote their motivation.**
- **However, this method requires collaboration among FTE faculty members.**
- **We will develop a rubric for the assessment of students' presentation skill and use it in FYE 2020 class.**

THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

藤原 宏司 | Koji Fujiwara, Ph.D.

kfujiwara@cc.yamagata-u.ac.jp

