Stage 1 Japanese Continuers

Assessment Type 4: Investigation

Part B: Reflective Response in English

After undertaking this investigative task, my knowledge on school life in Japan has expanded to a great extent, which has in turn extended my Japanese conversational skills. When my teacher announced that our topic was school life for the investigative task, my initial preconception of a Japanese school was depressing – endless studying, conscientious students and strict ruthless teachers. However, surprisingly and thankfully, what I found was completely different. Exploring school life in Japan had definitely helped me to challenge stereotypes commonly held about school life in Japan. Turns out, students do experience fun and not all of them do their homework and listen in class. Consequently, these findings allowed me to distinguish the differences and similarities between Australian and Japanese schools.

Interpretation and Reflection

Thoughtful reflection on own learning

A group of students from our sister school in Japan were visiting so we decided, to interview the students as our primary source for this task. Questions raised in my head regarding appropriate interview questions for the Japanese students. I wanted to use questions that would benefit my investigative task, hence many of my questions were verifying whether the common stereotypes were true or not. For example, “Do you have homework every day?” and “How long do you do homework for?”

From analysing the answers the Japanese students provided, my outlook and perspective on Japanese students and their school life has changed. I had thought that Japanese students were all academic and liked challenging subjects, such as mathematics, chemistry, biology, et cetera. However, from the interviews, I learnt that the favourite subjects of most of the students from our sister school is physical education. It was then that I realised that my beliefs about Japanese students had arisen from stereotypes. What I didn’t understand was how these common stereotypes on school life in Japan came about. This particular thought made me ponder and consider the factors which contributed to forming these stereotypes. In my opinion, because Japan is well-known for its advanced technology and an abundance of anime displaying Japanese students excelling at school, people seem convinced that all Japanese students are smart and hardworking.

Interpretation and Reflection

In-depth reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts.

Interpretation and Reflection

Insightful reflection on how own values, beliefs, ideas and practices in relation to those represented in texts.

During the interviews with the Japanese students, not only did I learn about their school, but the interview also gave me an insight into the different personalities of the students. I had been oblivious to the reality that Japanese students were just like any ordinary students in Australia. I had expected the Japanese students to tell me that they study regularly and for long periods of time. However, I was surprised by the fact that their study hours did not exceed 1 to 2 hours and that a handful of them slept in class. This information about students being left to sleep in class was surprising to hear, however, this was completely normal for the Japanese. This is not the case in Australia where sleeping in class is not acceptable and in all honesty is a sign of rudeness to the teachers. This made me wonder about the relationships between students and teachers in Japan. Surely after an episode of sleeping in class, the teacher will not help them at all. The Japanese students told me that the relationship between a teacher and student in Japan is very formal and distant with the teachers calling their students by their surnames. Whereas, in an Australian classroom setting, the students and teachers are able to establish a better relationship, due to the teachers’ use of first names. This could mean that obtaining support from teachers in a Japanese classroom is difficult and may explain why many committed students in Japan go to ‘juku’ or cram school for additional support and learning.

Secondary sources were also used to assist with my research and helped me to expand my knowledge of the Japanese schooling system and school life. What particularly intrigued me was the food that Japanese students eat at school. For lunch, many students bring a ‘bento’, which is a Japanese packed lunch, consisting of items such as rice, vegetables and sashimi or any kind of meat. In Australia we would be more likely to have a sandwich and a piece of fruit. I wondered why there were such differences and through my research I have concluded that there is one factor which makes Australian and Japanese schools different: culture. Our cultural differences influence the way in which students learn, teachers teach and our behavior. This idea made me appreciate the differences that we have and in the process, I began to develop a strong interest in foreign schools.

Interpretation and Reflection

Thoughtful reflection on own learning

My new appreciation of school life in Japan demonstrates the change in my beliefs which were based on commonly held stereotypes held about Japanese schools. What I leant by undertaking this task surprised me, as I was oblivious to the reality that Japanese students were just like any student in Australia. My findings have motivated me to one day experience school life in Japan by becoming an international exchange student. The completion of the investigative task was an eye-opening experience as it taught me to accept and understand the differences between Japanese and Australian schools.

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Additional Comments

**Ideas**

* Response is logically sequenced and demonstrates **comprehensive** evidence of planning and preparation.
* Content is **consistently** relevant to context, purpose, audience and topic.

Expression

* Observes text type conventions.
* Presents information and ideas logically and coherently.

Performance Standards for Stage 1 Locally Assessed Languages at Continuers Level

|  | Ideas | Expression | | Interpretation and Reflection |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | *Relevance*  Responses are consistently relevant to context, purpose, audience, and topic.  Responses consistently convey the appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions.  Responses successfully create the desired impact and interest, and engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Depth and breadth in the treatment of ideas, information, or opinions on familiar topics.  Effective elaboration of ideas and support of opinions.  Comprehensive evidence of planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Familiar vocabulary and sentence structures are used with a high degree of accuracy in familiar contexts.  Some errors when trying to use more complex structures, but errors do not usually impede meaning.  Effective use of a range of cohesive devices to connect ideas.  Expression consistently appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Fluent expression and effective use of intonation and stress, with mostly accurate pronunciation.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Information and ideas are organised logically and coherently.  Conventions of the text type are observed. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation*  Interaction is sustained on familiar topics with minimal input from the interlocutor. Interest and enthusiasm for the topic of conversation are conveyed highly effectively.  Use of a number of communication strategies to maintain interaction (e.g. using new vocabulary encountered during interaction, asking for repetition, affirming, self-correcting).  Responses to open-ended questions on familiar topics are quick, confident, and fluent. There may be some hesitation when dealing with unfamiliar topics. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Thoughtful interpretation of texts containing familiar and unfamiliar language and content on a range of familiar topics.  Conclusions are drawn about purpose, audience, message (argument) of the text, and justified with evidence from the text.  Concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text are identified and explained with clarity and insight.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  The functions of particular linguistic and cultural features in the text are explained clearly.  Ways in which stylistic features used for effect in the text (e.g. register, tone, textual features/organisation) are explained clearly.  *Reflection*  In-depth reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts.  Insightful reflection on own values, beliefs, ideas, and practices in relation to those represented in texts.  Thoughtful reflection on own learning. |
| B | *Relevance*  Responses are mostly relevant to context, purpose, audience, and topic.  Responses mostly convey the appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions.  Responses generally create the desired impact and interest, and engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Breadth and some depth in the treatment of ideas, information, or opinions on familiar topics.  Generally effective elaboration of ideas, and some support of opinions.  Sound planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Familiar vocabulary and sentence structures are used with a sound degree of accuracy in familiar contexts.  Errors made when more complex structures are attempted may sometimes impede meaning.  Use of simple cohesive devices to link ideas.  Expression is mostly appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Some degree of fluency. Responses are hesitant when dealing with unfamiliar contexts. Reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Mostly coherent organisation of information and ideas.  Most conventions of the text type are observed. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation*  Use of well-rehearsed language to maintain an interaction on familiar topics. Some reliance on input from the interlocutor to maintain interaction. Interest in the topic is conveyed effectively.  Use of a number of communication strategies to maintain interaction (e.g. responding to correction by the interlocutor, using prepared phrases to indicate lack of comprehension and ask for support).  Some fluency in responding to questions on familiar topics. Occasional silences because of lack of comprehension and time required to process more complex language. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Key ideas represented in texts containing familiar language and familiar content are identified and explained.  Some conclusions are drawn about purpose, audience, message (argument) of the text, and supported with some relevant examples from the text.  Concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text are generally identified and explained with some clarity.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  The functions of particular linguistic features in the text are identified and described. Cultural features in the text are recognised and described (e.g. idiom, rhetoric, expressions).  Stylistic features in the text are identified (e.g. register, tone, textual features/organisation).  *Reflection*  Some depth in reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts.  Some depth in reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented in texts.  Some depth in reflection on own learning. |
| C | *Relevance*  Responses are generally relevant to the topic and purpose, with some relevance to context and audience.  Responses generally convey simple ideas and opinions, with generally appropriate information.  Responses generally create some interest and partly engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Some variety in the treatment of information and simple ideas or opinions on familiar topics.  Simple sentences usually containing one idea are used with some effectiveness to convey meaning and support an opinion.  Competent planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Use of familiar vocabulary and sentence structures and well-rehearsed language to convey meaning. Structure often based on word order derived from English when attempts are made to elaborate.  Accuracy tends to be variable with some quite basic errors. Generally accurate when using formulaic expressions and rehearsed patterns.  Often relies on one or two cohesive devices to link ideas.  Expression generally appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Some hesitancy in responding. Pronunciation and information are understandable.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Generally coherent organisation of information and ideas.  Some of the conventions of the text type are observed (e.g. can use rehearsed salutations). | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation*  Use of well-rehearsed language to maintain an interaction by responding to simple questions on familiar topics. Reliance on the interlocutor to take the lead and maintain interaction. Some interest in the topic is conveyed.  Often relies on the interlocutor’s sentence patterns to respond. Partial understanding of questions may lead to a response that is not relevant.  Responses may be hesitant and fluency is often confined to learnt material. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Identifies and explains some relevant information from texts on familiar topics containing predictable and familiar language structures.  Competent understanding of context, purpose, and audience, supported with isolated examples from the text.  Main concepts, ideas, and one or more perspectives in the text are identified, with some explanation.  Analysis of the Language in Texts  Particular linguistic and cultural features of the text are identified.  Particular stylistic features are identified.  *Reflection*  Some reflection on, with mostly description of, cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas represented or expressed in texts.  Some reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented in texts.  Some reflection on learning experiences. |
| D | *Relevance*  Responses partially relevant to the topic and purpose.  Responses convey some basic information that may be appropriate.  Responses include one or more elements of interest that may engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Some basic treatment of information or ideas relating to simple aspects of familiar topics.  Simple sentences are used with partial effectiveness to convey an idea or opinion. Sentences may be short or incomplete.  Some planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Reliance on learnt structures and formulaic expressions to convey meaning. Learnt vocabulary and structures are recombined to create simple sentences on very familiar topics.  The language produced contains frequent errors and only partially communicates what is intended. Responses may resemble literal translations from first language.  A cohesive device may be used, with some effectiveness.  Expression occasionally appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Frequent hesitancy in responding. Pronunciation may impede meaning.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Responses tend to be a series of loosely connected sentences.  Inconsistent use of limited conventions of the text type. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation*  Routin­e courtesy phrases and basic structures are used to respond to simple questions on familiar topics. Interaction is maintained by input from the interlocutor. Some interest in the topic may be conveyed.  Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and there are frequent pauses, repetition, and inaccuracies.  Repetition, rephrasing of questions, and a slowed rate of speech are required for comprehension. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Keywords and some supporting detail are identified in texts dealing with familiar situations.  Some basic understanding of context, purpose, and/or audience.  Identification of one or more concepts or ideas, with specific information in the text transcribed rather than interpreted.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  One or more basic linguistic and/or cultural features of the text are identified.  One or more stylistic features are identified.  *Reflection*  One or more familiar aspects of cultures, values, beliefs, ideas, or practices represented or expressed in texts are identified.  One or more of own values, beliefs, practices, or ideas in relation to those represented in texts are described.  Learning experiences are recounted. |
| E | *Relevance*  Responses have limited relevance to the topic and purpose.  Responses attempt to convey some basic information, with limited appropriateness.  Responses attempt to include an element of interest.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Attempted treatment of simple information relating to one or more aspects of familiar topics.  Responses are brief and often rely on a keyword to attempt to convey basic meaning.  Attempted planning or preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with use of single words and set formulaic expressions, to convey basic information relating to familiar topics.  High incidence of basic errors that impede meaning, with evidence of the influence of syntax of English and/or other languages.  Attempted use of a cohesive device, with limited effectiveness.  Relies heavily on the dictionary. Incorrect or inappropriate selection of words impedes meaning.  Limited appropriateness of expression.  Always or mostly hesitant in responding. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first or different language and impedes meaning.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Responses are disjointed.  Attempted use of one or more conventions of the text type. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation*  Relies on interlocutor to assist with communication breakdowns to complete sentences or to interpret intended meanings.  Mostly single words are used to respond. Frequent misunderstandings of simple questions.  Frequent long pauses to process questions. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Isolated items of information are identified in texts on familiar topics containing simple language.  Identification of a context, purpose, or audience.  Understanding of information is limited to occasional isolated words (e.g. borrowed words, high-frequency social conventions).  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  Attempted identification of a basic linguistic feature of the text.  Attempted identification of a stylistic feature.  *Reflection*  One or more formulaic cultural expressions are identified.  One or more of own values, beliefs, practices, or ideas are identified.  Learning experiences are listed. |