Student Nameplates for Classroom Management and Beyond

学級経営及び様々な用途に有益な 学生ネームプレートの活用法

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ABSTRACT

As educators, our common aim is to develop and refine our classroom practices for the betterment of the learners to whom we have been entrusted. The realization of this goal is dependent, in large part, on how effectively we can implement a combination of both classroom teaching practices and management techniques. While the significance of the former seems self-evident, the latter, and how the use (or lack) of such techniques can affect outcomes, may be less obvious. As such, educators who are unfamiliar with, or simply unaware of, the variety of classroom management options that are available may be missing a valuable opportunity to further develop their own teaching skills as well as to enhance their students' overall learning experience. To this end, this paper describes how, by implementing a single, yet versatile, classroom management tool, namely a student nameplate, teachers can acquire vital and ongoing information about their learners to help make more informed choices, organize groups effectively, and enhance teacher-student rapport. At the same time, the system provides a means for students to express their individuality, develop a personal study plan, reflect on their progress, and take on greater accountability in their own learning.

KEYWORDS: accountability, affective, self-expression, self-reflection, trust

要旨

教育者としての共通の目標は、我々に託された学習者の能力向上のために、ティーチング技法 をより発展させ、より洗練させることである。この目標を達成するには、いかに効果的にティ ーチング技法とマネジメント技法をうまく併用して実施していくかが重要である。前者のティ ーチング技法の重要性は明白である一方で、後者のマネジメント技法についてはあまり着目さ れていない。様々な授業のマネジメント方法に精通していない教育者や単にそれらになじみの ない教育者は、教育手法を開発することや学生が学習経験を積む貴重な機会を見逃してしまっ ている可能性もある。本稿では、教育者がどのようにして、マネジメント技法のツールでもあ る "ネームプレート"を活用しているのかを説明する。これは単純なツールではあるが、用途 が広く、教育者は学習者の現況を知ることにより、指導におけるより良い選択ができ、グルー プ活動を効果的に纏められ、さらに教員との信頼関係を築くことができる。また、学生は個性 を表現し、学習計画を立て、自分の進歩を振り返り、自らのライティングに責任を持つという スキルを発達させることにも役立つ。

1. INTRODUCTION

Success in the language classroom is dependent on a host of factors, not least of which is a teacher's ability to manage the class and the learner's ability to manage their own learning. A classroom management system which utilizes student nameplates can help teachers and students better cope with their individual management needs simultaneously with a single tool. In doing so, it places them on parallel paths toward achieving both their common and individual goals in the language classroom.

Even in their most basic form, nameplates help teachers identify students and learn their names (Abell, 2003; AlAamri, 2013; Heil, 1995). Beyond this basic function, however, when we consider how much of the hidden space (e.g., of an A4 sheet of paper) of such a nameplate is unused, the design reflects an inefficient use of resources, and its functions are limited. It follows then that, the more functional the design, the greater its potential. Clearly, this was realized by Kamibeppu, Kelly, and Fryckman (2003, p. 2), whose multi-purpose classroom management nameplate design incorporates innovations which, in addition to fulfilling the (above) basic requirement of any nameplate, enables students to keep track of their attendance and homework assignments, and provides space for them to enter the "course name, class day/time, name in kanji and romaji, address, e-mail, ID number, etc."

This paper discusses an alternative nameplate design that builds on the features proposed by Kamibeppu et al. (2003) by offering modifications to the 'Name & Photo', 'Attendance', 'Homework', and 'Student Information' sections of their nameplate. The author also goes beyond their design by incorporating three additional components, namely, 'About You', 'Assessment', and 'My Study Plan', thereby taking advantage of all the available space on both sides of the A-4 sheet of paper (see Appendices 1 and 2).

2. THE SEVEN COMPONENTS OF THE NAMEPLATE

2.1 Name & Photo

According to Savignon (1997), providing opportunities in which language learners are free to make personal choices, and which give them freedom to express their individuality is essential to building a successful language learning environment. It is a vital aspect of good language teaching practices that Savignon has termed 'My Language is Me'. This section of the nameplate (see Figure 1) presents learners with such opportunities. Students should, therefore, be given the freedom to choose the name they wish to use in class-be it their actual first name, nickname, or even an imaginary (English) name. This same level of autonomy should be extended to students regarding the photo they attach and how (or if) they wish to design this section.

The author concurs with Kamibeppu et al. (2003), that the end result of this process of free expression is not merely a collection of individuals' names, but more importantly, windows which reveal insights into the personalities behind the names. Moreover, this component enables teachers to refer to students by their individual names from the outset, even in large classes. From a classroom management perspective, this is significant as "referring to students by their name...builds rapport and stops discipline problems before they occur" (Mclean, 2012, p. 310).

Figure 1 The 'Name & Photo' component of the student nameplate



Note: *Students write their (in-class) name and attach their photo in the space provided.

2.2 Attendance

The method by which the author uses the nameplates to take class attendance is similar to the one described by Kamibeppu et al., (2003). First, students receive their nameplates oneby-one from the teacher at the beginning of each lesson. Students then enter the class date in the grey cell (see Figure 2) along with the symbol 'O' below it to record their attendance. If a student enters late, they must approach the teacher to obtain their nameplate. Before handing the nameplate to the student, the teacher (not the student) enters the date and the symbol 'L' (Late), and if the teacher so chooses, how many minutes the students was late. This places the onus on the student to inform the teacher of their tardiness, thereby eliminating the possibility of students challenging the teacher about the time they entered. For students who are absent, the teacher enters the date and the symbol 'A' (Absent) on their nameplates during the lesson. Perhaps most notably, this section eliminates the need for students to ask the teacher about the number of lates or absences they have accumulated during the course - placing greater accountability and responsibility on the student (Kamibeppu et al., 2003).

In the empty box below their attendance, students have space to write brief comments to the teacher at the end of each lesson. To date, the range of comments received by the author has been extensive. Some of the more typical comments include: *"Today's nice lesson and useful"* (feedback about lesson); *"Difficult todays test."* (feedback about assessment); *"This unit looks a little difficult and interesting."* (feedback about materials); *"I'm sic(k)"* (feedback about physical well-being); *"I think you shouldn't smoke."* (advice); *"I'm happy."* (affective feedback); *"What's something you need to do this year?"* (recycling key language structures covered in class); *"I love soccer. My position is defense."* (sharing information); *"Did you watched soccer game yesterday?"* (initiating small-talk). Visual learners, on the other hand, often prefer to express their thoughts and emotions with pictures or diagrams.

Teachers have options when it comes to responding to students' comments, that is, either verbally, for example face-to-face, as they are handing out nameplates or with written responses (on the nameplates), which they do outside of class. In a way, it is almost like having a class Twitter[®] account, albeit a paper version, which enables brief, yet meaningful, exchanges between the teacher and individual students on an ongoing basis.

As a side note, teachers may wish to consider whether to make the writing of daily comments a course requirement or something that students can engage in voluntarily. Additionally, because one of the aims of this section is to promote greater learner selfexpression based on the tenets of 'My Language is Me' (Savignon, 1997), grammar correction should be avoided unless it is requested by the student.

Figure 2

Atte	endanc	e		0	= Prese	ent	L = Late	•	A = Abs	sent				19/19
120	9 /24	1	10/1	19/4	10/8	10/11	10/15	10/18	10/22	10/25	10129	11/1	11/5	11/15
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The 'Attendance' component of the student nameplate

Note: *Students use this to record their attendance and to exchange comments with the teacher. **The above student sample also contains comments by the author.

2.3 Homework

The homework section in the nameplate presented by Kamibeppu et al., (2003) is useful in that students "are constantly reminded by the blank spots next to homework assignments about what has not been done, and what needs to be done" (p. 3). Building on this novel concept, the author has incorporated a feature, namely, a grading scale as seen in Figure 3, which provides greater functionality and added benefits. Thus, in addition to having a complete record of homework that either has or has not been completed, the teacher can also keep track of how well it was completed by entering one of the symbols 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'X' in the students' nameplates. This serves as a helpful reminder to students that the teacher is monitoring, not only whether or not they have completed their homework, but also the quality of their work.

Providing students with a detailed record of their homework enables them to monitor their progress and manage their learning more effectively. Needless to say, for teachers, the very same data serves as a valuable resource when calculating students' final grades.

Figure 3

The 'Homework' component of the student nameplate



Note: *Completed homework is signed and graded by the teacher.

2.4 Student Information

In this section (see 'Student Information' in Appendix 1), students provide their full name (in English and in Japanese) and student number to assist the teacher with administrative duties. Students also write the name of their supervisor (or their homeroom teacher, seminar teacher, advisor, etc.) to give the teacher greater options if or when issues arise. For example, a teacher can choose whether to address a problem with a student directly or take a less intrusive approach by contacting the student's supervisor in private to gain new perspectives on the relevant issues before proceeding further.

In addition to the above information, teachers may also wish to include space for students to provide their (university) e-mail address or (mobile) phone number. Although this can give teachers added flexibility when dealing with (certain) classroom management problems, it is important for them to first consider the privacy policies of the individual institutions to which the belong in order to determine the appropriateness of requesting such additional information.

2.5 About You

According to Savignon (1997), learner attitude has, perhaps, the single biggest impact on language learning outcomes. Thus, she strongly advocates for teachers to involve learners in the "affective as well as the cognitive aspects of language learning" (p. 181). Therefore, 'About You' (see Figure 4) is a needs analysis tool designed to involve students in both the affective and cognitive aspects of their own learning.

From a learner's perspective, the tool presents an opportunity to express their individuality in greater depth. It also makes explicit to students that their personal background, interests, feelings, opinions, and needs are pertinent to and valued by their teacher. Moreover, because evidence suggests that "high anxiety can inhibit motivation" (Agawa & Ueda, 2013, p. 11) in learners, and that, for some learners, the source of their anxiety arises from the actions of the teacher (Andrade & Williams, 2008), 'About You' provides a (confidential) means for students to share their private concerns or individual requests with the teacher. Having such information helps teachers address the needs of the class on a more personal level and reduces the risk of conflicts arising down the track.

From a pedagogical perspective, this section promotes a goal-setting mindset and places greater accountability on students from the outset. Moreover, it serves to remind students, albeit indirectly, that affective factors and their ability to identify and deal with them effectively, can influence learning outcomes. In turn, the information teachers acquire from students in this section can be summarized and shared (without referring to individual names) with the whole class during subsequent class meetings. Thus, by raising students' awareness of the class dynamics, they can gain a better sense of how their own personality, language skills, and specific needs fit in with the rest of the class and how, based on the information, the teacher plans to proceed.

Equally, teachers can use 'About You' to raise the level of transparency in the class by sharing their own personal background, interests, (course) goals, teacher concerns, and requests to students with the whole class. Ultimately, this mutual exchange of personal information and greater transparency helps to create a more social environment in which people are the primary focus, rather than the titles (or roles) attached to them. This, particularly in a new class, can be reassuring for students.

Figure 4

The 'About You' component of the student nameplate

About You

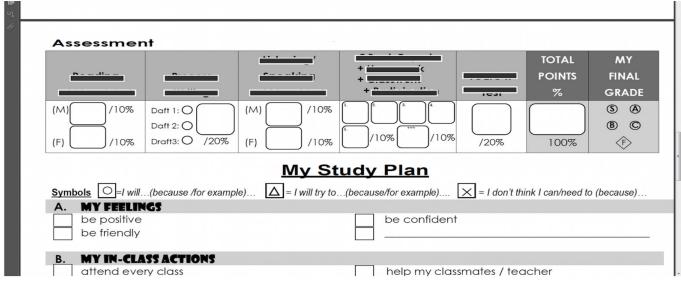
-	Cool' The
1.	What is your hometown? Where do you live now?
2.	What are your hobbies? Running and watch movies
з.	How important (useful) is English to you? 1 2 3 5 Example: my dream use English. Waw. That's great.
4.	What is your English level? Listening: 0,000 0 5 Speaking: 0,0000 0 8 Reading: 0,0000 0 Writing: 0,0000 0
5.	What is your English goal? Listening: 1 2 3 4 5 speaking: 1 2 3 4 9 Reading: 1 2 3 4 5 writing: 1 2 3 4 5
6.	Other goals for this class? Make friends A nice goal!
7.	Concerns about this class: TOIEC test 8 Let's try together :
8.	Requests to the teacher: Plane help me () Yes, I will. Plano ade me for extra help
and the second second	any time.

2.6 Assessment

Typically, course syllabi contain a vast amount of information which students are expected to process and, it is hoped, retain. However, when students stop bringing their syllabus to class, they may easily lose sight of one of the key elements of the syllabus, namely, course assessment. To address this issue, the author has incorporated a section (see Figure 5) for recording key assessments in the nameplate. This provides students with a graphical representation that is succinct and easy to grasp at a glance. Moreover, the students have easy access to their results throughout the course. With this incoming supply of information at their fingertips, students are better able to assess their progress and, through self-reflection, take appropriate measures to ensure success. Ultimately, students can use the data, along with their homework and attendance information, to estimate their final grade with greater confidence.

Similar benefits apply to teachers as well. With just a glance, teachers can easily identify which of their students are excelling and which ones are struggling. Also, teachers who make their own nameplate can use this section to jot down key assessment dates and other relevant notes/reminders during the course. Finally, having all the assessment results of each student presented in this way makes the process of calculating students' final grades more straightforward and, ultimately, faster for teachers.

Figure 5



The 'Assessment' component of the student nameplate

2.7 My Study Plan

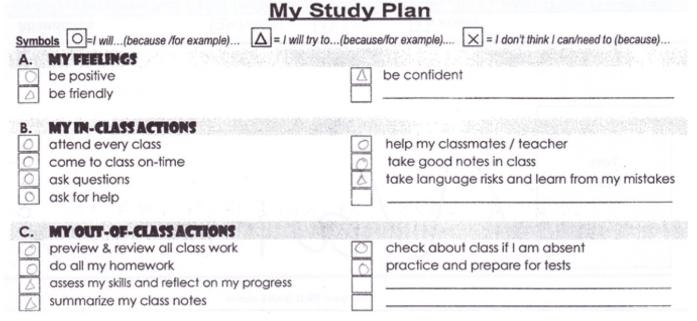
According to Richards (1997), a defining feature of good language learners (as opposed to less successful ones) is an awareness of and ownership over their own learning. Indeed, this notion is supported by Nunan's (2000) action research study which demonstrated that providing "opportunities for learners to reflect on the learning process, did lead to greater sensitivity to the learning process over time" (p. 143), and thus, he concludes that "language classrooms should have a dual focus, not only teaching language content but also on developing learning processes as well" (p.143). Naturally, we cannot simply assume that our students come to our classes with effective learning strategies already in place, or that they even recognize their significance.

To this end, the 'My Study Plan' component is designed to raise students' awareness of various affective and behavioral learning strategies. It also helps students to formulate a study plan that is conducive to their own specific needs, and then to implement, monitor, and evaluate their plan through a process of repeated self-reflection and self-reporting.

Specifically, 'My Study Plan' consists of three sections: A) My Feelings, B) My In-Class Actions, and C) My Out-of-Class Actions. First, students (regardless of their level) respond to each of the items in sections A, B, and C with one of the following symbols: O (I will...), Δ (I will try to...), or X (I don't think I can/need to...). They can also add their own items in each of the sections (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

The 'My Study Plan' component of the student nameplate



Note: *The above responses were made by a student in an intermediate level reading and writing class at the start of the course.

Next, students select items from the checklist of most relevance to them and write a short paragraph (under 50 words) (see Figure 7 & Appendix 2) in which they elaborate on and provide justification for the symbols they assigned to the items. After class, the teacher can read the information and respond with written comments accordingly.

Figure 7 Space for first paragraph of the 'My Study Plan' component

1. Want icult itte 10 5 0 dono great attitude! Iha 04

Note: *The student wrote the above paragraph at the start of the course.

**This student sample also contains comments by the author.

Then, midway through the course, students reflect on their (initial) study plan and write a second paragraph to discuss the effectiveness of their earlier choices and to revise their plan if necessary (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Space for second paragraph of the 'My Study Plan' component 2 been have hot That's excellent 0 9000 me

Note: *The student wrote the above paragraph halfway through the course. **This student sample also contains comments by the author.

Finally, at the end of the course, students write a third and final paragraph in which they evaluate and/or comment on the overall effectiveness of the learning choices they made throughout the course (see Figure 9).

Figure 9 Space for third paragraph of the 'My Study Plan' component

3. reading SET USP. which got. WITCH Thank ou. hand

Note: *The student wrote the above paragraph at the end of the course.

Ultimately, this process of self-direction, self-reflection, and self-evaluation of learning processes helps students become more effective managers of their own learning and places a greater sense of responsibility and accountability on them.

3. CHALLENGES

Thus far, the paper has focused primarily on the benefits of the nameplate system. It is important to remember, however, that a nameplate is merely a tool, and as with any tool, it is ineffective without appropriate human input. It follows, then, that the overall effectiveness of the nameplate system is dependent largely upon the actions of the user. This means, to maximize its potential, the system requires time, effort, and an ongoing commitment on the part of the user.

Even seemingly simple tasks, like handing out nameplates to students, opening individual nameplates to check and sign homework, and reading and responding to students' daily comments can substantially add to a teacher's workload. That said, as teachers' familiarity with the system grows over time, so too their ability to streamline and integrate the system into their own unique teaching contexts.

There is, however, one aspect of the system that is an ongoing concern. Regardless of the users' familiarity with the system, there is an inherent risk, however slight, of misplaced nameplates. Thus, without backing up (vital) information contained in the nameplates, a lost nameplate can mean the loss of irretrievable student data, perhaps permanently. To safeguard against this, teachers need to be: (a) vigilant by ensuring that students return their nameplates at the end of the every lesson; and (b) prudent by storing them in a secure case or container, and by keeping a backup file which contains, at the very least, a record of students' attendance, homework, and assessment results.

Undoubtedly, the above precautionary measures add further to a teacher's workload. Even so, the author does not view such extra demands on the user as a weaknesses of the system, but rather, as one of its strengths. To illustrate, in a four-year longitudinal study of schools in the Chicago area, Bryk and Schneider (2003) found that participants' willingness "to extend themselves beyond the formal requirements of a job definition" (p. 42), in other words, "to go the extra mile for the children" (p. 43), was one of the key elements present among school communities with high levels of relational trust. In turn, they found strong evidence that "schools with high relational trust were much more likely to demonstrate marked improvements in student learning" (p. 43). In this sense, the author regards any extra effort required to maintain the nameplate system, not as time lost, but rather, as time invested in the well-being of our students.

Regarding privacy issues, if a student appears reluctant to provide personal information, such as their contact details, teachers can try to reassure them that the information is solely for the teacher and will not be shared with other members of the class. They can also add that, once the double-sided A4 sheet of paper has been folded (twice) to complete the nameplate, the only parts visible to others are the 'Name & Photo' and 'Attendance' components (see Appendix 3). This feature of the design ensures that information that is meant to be private remains just that, private. If, however, despite the above reassurances, the student remains unwilling to provide the requested information,

then naturally, their position on the matter must be respected.

It is worth noting that the author has been using the nameplate system for more than ten years in a wide variety of English language courses (and levels) in Japanese universities. Despite some challenges along the way, there have been no instances of nameplates being misplaced permanently or of students refusing to fill-in all the required information.

4. CONCLUSION

As discussed above, the nameplate system offers a host of useful applications for the language classroom. It not only helps teachers manage their classes more effectively, but also enables students to express their individuality, engages them in the learning process, helps them better manage their own learning, and promotes greater learner accountability.

Clearly, the benefits are extensive, and yet, the author believes that the nameplate system's most notable quality lies, not within the diverse functionality of its individual components, but rather, in the flexibility of the system as a whole. That is to say, the nameplate design presented in this paper is not set in stone. Instead, teachers are free to make modifications (minor or major) to the design or create original components and apply them as their needs dictate. Teachers may even wish to create digital versions of certain components and apply them to online tools for teaching such as a course management system. Albert Einstein once said, "Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere". In the end, we are only limited by our imaginations, so the range of possibilities and applications is essentially endless. Through a process of ongoing experimentation, teachers can create effective nameplates which compliment their individual teaching style and develop them over time to accommodate the ever changing needs of their students.

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APPENDIX 1

The front side of the (A4 size) sheet of paper containing five components

About You

bout														
. Wh	at is you	ur home	town?				W	here do	o you liv	e now				
. Wh	at are y	our hob	bies? _											
How	w impor	tant (use	eful) is E	inglish t	o you?	1 2 3	4 5 W	hy?						
. Wh	at is you	ur English	level?	Listenin	g: 1 2 (3 4 5 ;	peaking:	123	4 5 Re	ading: ①	234	(5) Writin	g: 1 2	345
. Wh	at is you	ur English	goal?	Listenin	g: 1 2	3 4 5	Speaking:	1 2 3	4 5 Re	ading: ①	234	5 Writi	ng: 1) 2)	3 4 5
. Oth	ner goal	is for this	class?											
. Co	ncerns	about t	his clas	s:										
. Red	quests t	o the te	acher:											
tuden	t Inform	nation												
. Yo	ur Nam	e (Romo	aji):											
		e (Kanji)												
		umber:												
		uperviso												
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Note: *After it is folded to make the nameplate, the sections 'About You', 'Student Information', and 'Homework' are hidden from view.

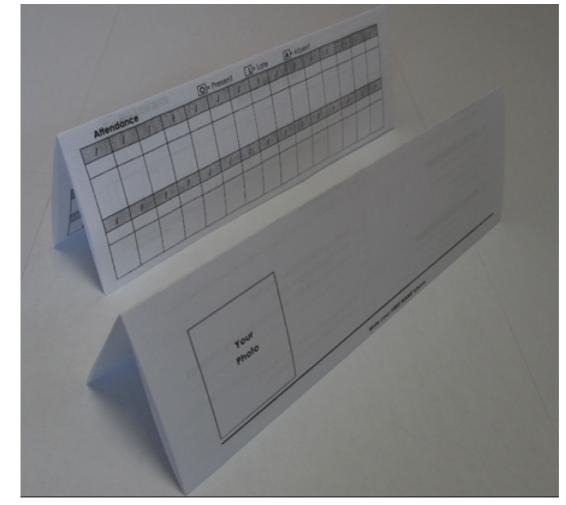
APPENDIX 2

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/10% Draft3: O /20% (F) /109	400
My S	Study Plan
	r to(because/for example) 🔀 = I don't think I can/need to (because)
A. MY FEELINGS	
be positive be friendly	be confident
B. MY IN-CLASS ACTIONS attend every class	help my classmates / teacher
come to class on-time	take good notes in class
ask questions ask for help	take language risks and learn from my mistak
C. MY OUT-OF-CLASS ACTIONS preview & review all class work	check about class if I am absent
do all my homework	practice and prepare for tests
assess my skills and reflect on my progress	read at least 5 Graded Readers
summarize my class notes	
1.	
2.	
2	
2.	
2.	
2.	
2.	

The reverse side of the (A4 size) sheet of paper containing two components

Note: *After it is folded to make the nameplate, all of the information on this side is hidden from view.

APPENDIX 3



Examples of two (blank) student nameplates after being folded

- Note: *While the nameplate is being used in class, only the 'Name & Photo' and 'Attendance' sections are visible to observers.
- **The nameplate in the foreground shows the side that would face the teacher, while the one in the background shows the student's eye view.