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# Basic Social Skills: The Characteristics of a Proactive Autonomous Language Learner

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## Abstract

This is a qualitative case study conducted over the course of approximately three years (2010-2012). The researchers interviewed two Japanese university students to gain an understanding of their university experience as it related to becoming proactive autonomous language learners. The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology have emphasized the need for Japanese university students to develop proactive autonomous behavior in order to be effective in the global economy. The present research study explores the experiences of Japanese university students and their journey to becoming proactive autonomous learners. The qualitative data from the interviews describes the changes which took place during their university experiences. Three themes are described including: direct instruction, public speaking activities, and examples of proactive autonomous behavior. Recommendations for further research are given.

**Keywords:** Proactive, Autonomy, Reactive, Self-Esteem, Public Speaking

## Introduction

The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has suggested developing basic social skills (METI, 2007). The basic social skills as described by METI include: the ability to take action, the ability to think, and the ability to work together in a team. The present research focuses on the first social skill the ability to take action and more specifically on "becoming proactive autonomous language learners."

In the present study, the first student describes the university experience in Japan and the changes which took place in her thinking and behavior while studying abroad in the United States. The interviews span a period of over approximately 3 years from the time she first entered the university until her graduation in March 2012. The second student, a junior describes the university experience from a non-study abroad perspective. She

also relates how she has taken charge of her language learning and describes the process by which she was able to take control of her studies. These two students were selected because they both exhibited proactive autonomous behavior.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

In the present study the researchers conducted a face-to-face semi-structured interview with the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interview was conducted in English but the interviewer clarified questions when necessary. Emails were also exchanged to clarify points in the interview. Interviews were conducted bi-annually with a final interview in the 3rd year. Consent was obtained to use the data for this research article. Pseudonyms were used in writing this article to keep the identity of the participants secure. A total of six interviews for each case study and twelve in total produced the source of the data for this research.

### Data Analysis

Grounded theory was used to understand the data collected in the face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2008). Grounded theory designs are qualitative procedures to produce a general explanation of a process, interaction or action. Interview transcripts were carefully analyzed and reoccurring themes were coded using QDA miner software. The figure below in the results section shows the main themes found in each case study. The three main themes which came from the data were: direct instruction, public speaking and examples of proactivity. Direct instruction refers to the direct and explicit explanation of the concept of being proactive autonomous learners whether it was given in Japanese or in English. Use of the word "shutaisei or shutaiteki" or proactive are included in this code. Also included in "direct instruction" is the idea whether discussed directly or indirectly in the students' experiences. Public speaking includes any experience described by the students including but not limited to: presentations, debates, speech contests, or oral reports.

The figure below shows the three main themes

	Theme 1 (Direct Instruction)	Theme 2 (Public Speaking)	Theme 3 (Example of Proactivity)
Interviews 1-2	2	0	2
Interviews 3-4	8	0	10
Interviews 5-6	7	6	13
Interviews 7-8	12	15	7
Interviews 9-10	6	10	4
Interviews 11-12	5	3	1
Total	40	34	37

Figure 1: Number of Occurrences of Themes

## Research Questions

The present study tries to answer the following research questions:

- 1) According to the students, how did they develop from reactive to proactive autonomous learning?
- 2) From the student perspective, how can instructors help students become more proactive autonomous learners?

Japanese businesses are looking for proactive graduates instead of passive or reactive individuals. According to METI (2006) Japanese hiring personnel see the ideal new candidate as someone who is proactive who doesn't need to be told what to do on every little detail. The following case studies will explore the process by which two Japanese university students became more proactive autonomous language learners. We will then compare and contrast the two cases, review the literature and discuss the results.

### Case Study 1

Hiroko, the first participant is from rural Yamaguchi prefecture in Japan. She decided to enter university "Y" in the Kansai area known for their study abroad programs. As Hiroko started her freshman year she experienced many of the challenges of living away from her family for the first time and working part-time to support her educational goals. As a freshman she was invited to join clubs, a common activity to develop Japanese social skills.

Throughout high school she described her attitude as passive and following her peers in order to maintain harmony in her relationships with her classmates. For the first time in her life as she was entering her freshman year she decided to go against the group and leave the track and field club. Instead she started to work part-time in order to travel abroad. She wanted to work for a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to plant trees in the Philippines. At the university she attended classes taught by both Japanese and foreign instructors. The courses taught by foreign instructors included presentations and discussions in the courses while many of the Japanese courses were lecture-based courses. At the end of her sophomore year she had earned enough money from her part-time job to take a trip to the Philippines.

In the Philippines she discovered poverty for the first time. Hiroko made friends with graduate students in the Philippines. She had long conversations spanning all night long with her new friends and discovered a different world. Her friends explained the economic difficulties in Filipino society but showed that the economic conditions did not define them individually. In spite of the hardships they face everyday Hiroko discovered positive attitudes and happy faces in her trip to the Philippines. She soon returned to Japan and readjusted her goal to become a volunteer to help people in developing countries. Hiroko talked about becoming a JOCV and working for the Japanese International Cooperation Agency but no concrete long term goal was in mind.

Hiroko applied to the study abroad exchange program at university "Y" and was accepted for a one year program. She went to a large university in mid-western United States. While there she took courses in sociology and public speaking. Many of the challenges which face foreign students hit Hiroko hard. She had never spoken in public. She was homesick and had difficulty communicating in English. Her roommate was a strong goal driven African-American woman. This roommate was not particularly excited to have a scared passive roommate and almost from the beginning ignored Hiroko. Instead whenever Hiroko saw her roommate she saw a hard working driven individual. This roommate wanted to quickly finish her undergraduate studies in order to enter graduate school. This roommate was highly engaged in her studies and had little time to chat with Hiroko. The roommate wanted to become a Chemical Engineer and she took all the necessary science courses to get into a top-level graduate program. Hiroko had never seen anyone study so hard in her life. One day Hiroko and her roommate clashed and she found out about her roommate's background. Her roommate was born and raised in the United States but her

parents were from Africa. The importance of education was drilled in her consciousness at a very young age. Hiroko's roommate knew her goals and she was actively pursuing her goal every day. Hiroko was surprised at how focused her roommate was to reach her goal. She was also surprised to see the difference in their view of the world. Her roommate was always working hard. Hiroko up to this point wanted to enjoy life and have fun with her friends in Japan and in America. Hiroko was raised during the Relaxed Education period. This was a period in Japan where the Japanese educational system tried to move away from the, study at all costs, culture of Japanese secondary schools. Hiroko was not rich but like many Japanese families her parents paid for her education and she enjoyed spending time with her friends. Hiroko's university time was initially a time to make friends and enjoy life before entering the workforce. Hiroko did not see the world like her roommate until she began reflecting on what was important to her in her life.

During Hiroko's study abroad experience the following semester she had to make an emergency trip back to Japan. Her father had passed away. This was a life changing event where she realized the fragile nature of life. Hiroko reflected on her life and re-examined her objectives in life. When she returned to studying abroad she took charge and took steps to make everything count. She studied harder and actively participated in study sessions and discussions. She described this part of her life as "taking control of her thoughts because life is too short to let others run your life for you." After Hiroko's experience studying abroad she had a concrete goal to become an English teacher. As of this printing she has reached her goal and is currently teaching high school students in western Japan.

### **Case Study 2**

Etsumi, the second participant is from Oita prefecture in Japan. She also attended university "Y." Like Hiroko she came from a very rural area of Japan and wanted to enjoy a relaxing four years and make friends attending university. She explained "like many girls her age her interests were in fashion, movies and music." Little did she know about the world and little interest did she have in finding out about the world. Etsumi was nonetheless very studious and enjoyed her courses. She liked presentations and she learned a great deal in preparing presentations about current events. Through discussions with senior mentors she discovered about the educational programs in Finland. She was inspired by this mentor and she decided to look into studying abroad in Finland. Many of her courses were language courses but courses in elementary education and media interested her the most. She decided to narrow her goals and become an elementary school instructor.

In her Media English class Etsumi discovered a TV drama called “LOST.” This was a story about a group of passengers who mysteriously end up on what seems to be a deserted island. The story is filled with mysteries and discussions about the story questioning aspects of the story helped improve her critical thinking skills. According to Etsumi she had never had so much fun working her brain so hard. Etsumi was also raised during the “Relaxed Education” period. She never thought school was a place to do much more than socialize. In her university courses she learned to enjoy thinking and learning through critical reading and discussions.

In her International Studies course she had to give presentations every week. This was Etsumi’s first time speaking in public in front of an audience. The course included self-assessment, peer assessment, and instructor assessment. Students were asked to record their presentations before the in-class presentations giving them a chance to watch themselves and correct mistakes. According to Etsumi this exercise of recording and reviewing presentations helped her become reflective and more self-aware. As she reflected on her presentations, her assignments and her course work she connected these activities to how this will help her become a more effective elementary school instructor. Etsumi decided to form a study group with other students. The study group would be free to everyone at university “Y.” They would have no barriers between age and year in school. The study group would be a place open to study and ask questions between older and younger students. Etsumi described how she wanted to give students an opportunity to reflect on their learning through discussions. As of the last interview with Etsumi the study group has enjoyed bi-weekly sessions in the library for two years. The study group includes some of the top students at university “Y” and more students come every week. The group has expanded with each semester and looks to extend an invitation to all incoming freshmen.

In both cases the students were typical Japanese first year students trying to find their way in life. Both learners were accustomed to learning through a teacher-centered lecture format. Both entered university with similar backgrounds and similar assumptions about university life. In the case of Hiroko there was a point when choices had to be made independently of her friends. For Etsumi, speaking in public helped her to think and reflect deeper into her education. For both Etsumi and Hiroko their Japanese educational backgrounds in Junior High and High School did not allow many opportunities to choose their path in language learning. They also had little time to reflect on their language learning. Their first experience in public speaking was in English. Both students reported shyness

entering university and slowly maturing and gaining confidence. Public speaking helped them improve not only their English skills but also raise their self-esteem. Recording and assessing presentations and speeches helped them become more self-aware and conscious.

## Literature Review

The following section will review the literature on proactive behavior and learner autonomy as it relates to being proactive. The ability to think independently is closely tied to proactive behavior because the behavior is essentially the thought in motion. As Covey (1989) states:

Your life doesn't just "happen." Whether you know it or not, it is carefully designed by you. The choices, after all, are yours. You choose happiness. You choose sadness. You choose decisiveness. You choose ambivalence. You choose success. You choose failure. You choose courage. You choose fear. Just remember that every moment, every situation, provides a new choice. And in doing so, it gives you a perfect opportunity to do things differently to produce more positive results.

According to Covey (1989) proactive people recognize that they are "response-able." They don't blame genetics, circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. They know they choose their behavior. Reactive people, on the other hand, are often affected by their physical environment. They find external sources to blame for their behavior. If the weather is good, they feel good. If it isn't, it affects their attitude and performance, and they blame the weather. All of these external forces act as stimuli that we respond to. Between the stimulus and the response is your greatest power you have the freedom to choose your response. One of the most important things you choose is what you say. Your language is a good indicator of how you see yourself. A proactive person uses proactive language—I can, I will, I prefer, etc. A reactive person uses reactive language—I can't, I have to, if only. Reactive people believe they are not responsible for what they say and do—they have no choice

Learner autonomy is connected to being proactive. According to Holec (1981) learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning. The development of learner autonomy in language learning includes: learner involvement, learner reflection and target language use (Little, 1998). Students who engage, reflect and use the target language are by this definition autonomous. There are differing levels of autonomy at different times by

different students and autonomy in one subject does not equate to being autonomous in other subjects because students are limited to what they can engage in by what they are able to do. What does it mean to be a proactive autonomous learner?

### **Examples of Proactive Autonomous Students**

Proactive autonomous students think ahead. They say to themselves, “what can I do to reach objective ‘Y.’” When trouble hits they do not react but reason and make choices based on what is available. They do not change course just because there are a few bumps in the road to success. The proactive student takes control, thinks ahead and takes responsibility for their learning.

### **Examples of Reactive Autonomous Students**

The reactive autonomous student goes with the flow. When he or she receives an assignment he dreads having to do it because it is painful and undesirable but "reacts" to do the assignment. If there is distraction he or she blames the distraction for not being able to complete the assignment. The reactive student may choose to do the assignment but this does not equate to taking control or responsibility for their learning. The reactive student does not have a plan of attack. As a result they are always reacting and playing catch up.

### **Reactive Autonomy versus Proactive Autonomy**

Littlewood (1999) describes autonomy in a continuum from reactive to proactive autonomy. Reactive autonomy is where the instructor creates the syllabus and designs the course but allows students to react and make choices in their language learning activities. Proactive autonomy goes further where the students take on the responsibility for the direction of the course and the process by which they will attain a set goal. Reactive autonomy can be a way to help students become proactive in their learning. A sudden jump from the teacher-centered language class to a proactive autonomous language course could lead to confusion and refusal to make choices. A more gradual approach would include explicit direct instruction on autonomy (Nakata, 2007). An opportunity to exercise proactive autonomous behavior through public speaking is ideal as well as providing examples of proactive behavior in order to give students a way to model proactive autonomous language learning.

### **How this Study Fits**

Kanzaka (2007) describes two students both who studied abroad. Both students moved from reactive autonomy to proactive autonomy after receiving explicit instruction from their instructor. One student followed the instructors advice to listen to material at her

present ability and made adjustments before going to study abroad. Another student did not follow the instructors advice to study more vocabulary but found out as she studied abroad the need to learn more vocabulary to be able to communicate effectively. Both students after their experiences studying abroad became more proactive in their language learning. They were able to set their own goals and attain those goals, making choices about their language learning. Similarly, in the present study there are two students who started in a teacher-centered learning environment. Both students developed from reactive to proactive autonomous learning. Cotterall (2004) points out that a greater understanding of the developmental process towards proactive autonomous learning requires accumulating a significant number of individual accounts. The present study provides researchers with two such accounts.

## Discussion of the Results

In the present study there were examples of students who moved from reactive autonomous learning to proactive autonomous learning. In the first case, Hiroko had an example of a proactive learner (her roommate), public speaking activities and a life changing event which changed her perspective. Similarly in the second case, Etsumi moved from passive learning to active learning by taking courses taught by foreign faculty giving presentations in Media English courses. Both students describe a gradual change in their thinking and behavior, but in the case of Hiroko there was a life changing event which moved her into hyper-drive towards proactive autonomous learning. In most cases the student moves from teacher-centered instruction to reactive autonomous learning to proactive learning. Proactive autonomous learners are not novice learners. They already have the tools to learn and understand what it takes to become successful language learners. The place of the instructor for Hiroko and Etsumi started in a teacher-centered format but as their ability to communicate increased and their goals and priorities became concrete the role of the instructor moved to facilitating language learning rather than direct instruction. Although many instructors may see East Asian culture as an impediment to autonomous learning, East Asian culture can be used as a stepping stone to move students from reactive autonomous learning to proactive autonomous learning. Activities such as public speaking, debates, and discussions help students to not only communicate but also develop cognitive and personality skills. Once students have gained experience in public speaking they are

able to gain confidence in their ability to communicate. With the ability to communicate formed but not perfected students are able to move to develop cognitively reflecting on their performance (Littlewood, 1999).

Being proactive requires a change in worldview. As Mezirow (1991) explains transformative learning can be sudden caused by life changing events or gradual. In Hiroko's case there was a life changing event but she was already gradually changing as she experienced a different language and culture. Hiroko had been working on her communication skills and learned of critical thinking. She was influenced by her highly motivated roommate. It is hard to say whether she wouldn't have ended up as proactive as she is now because of the lack of a quantitative measure for proactivity. This qualitative study describes her experience and her claim that she did indeed become more proactive after her father's passing and studying abroad in the United States.

For Etsumi, the changes were more gradual but because the changes were gradual there is more detail to report. She explains that key examples of proactive behavior from mentors and activities such as public speaking and study groups helped her become more reflective and proactive. According to Covey (1989) there are four endowments to being proactive: self-awareness, conscience, creative imagination, and independent will. Self-awareness is the understanding that you do have a choice between stimulus and response. Conscience is the ability to consult your inner compass to decide what is right for you. Creative Imagination is the ability to visualize alternative responses much like meta-cognition. Independent will is the freedom to choose your own unique response. Nurturing these four endowments will ultimately lead to being more proactive. Public speaking is an activity which develops each of these endowments. In the case of Hiroko and Etsumi public speaking allowed them to face their fears and make choices in spite of their fears. Greater reflection helped both Etsumi and Hiroko to set goals. Learning English helped them to exercise meta-cognition and visualize responses. Finally, there are choices which had to be made independently of their parents and friends.

The present research is in line with Littlewood's (1999) description of the continuum and progression to proactive autonomous learning. Initially both Hiroko and Etsumi sought to learn English for communicative purposes but as their goals became clearer they slowly moved towards a more proactive system of language learning. There was more focus on cognitive and personality development because there was greater purpose in learning English.

**1) According to the students, how did they develop from reactive to proactive autonomous language learners?**

Public speaking is difficult and initially there is a lack of confidence because of the fear of failure. Over time as public speaking becomes natural students describe a change in the way they view themselves. The students in the case studies stated the improvement of their self-image or their self-esteem. They credited not only the presentations but the feedback they received from the instructors after their presentations. An honest evaluation of their performance is what helped them to improve not only their public speaking skills but also their level of confidence and their self-esteem. Public speaking is a communicative activity charged with cognitive exercise. Debates can be a way to move students from communicative focused language learning to cognitive focused language learning. Littlewood (1999) argues that communicative activities are reactive autonomous activities while communicative, cognitive, and personality development is for proactive autonomous learning. In the present study Hiroko and Etsumi both experienced communicative activities initially and slowly moved onto more communicative, cognitive and personality activities especially in the form of public speaking. The process is gradual in most cases but can be sudden with life changing events. In the present study we saw examples of gradual change as well as one with sudden change.

**2) From the students' perspectives, how can instructors help students become more proactive autonomous language learners?**

Proactive autonomous instructors have the ability to lead proactive autonomous students. Students who have their semester course explained in detail have the chance to make choices and plan out their schedule. Proactive students have to think ahead and instructors can help by giving them a heads up on what will take place in each session. A detailed course schedule can help students plan ahead and be more proactive autonomous learners.

Students need to make choices and take responsibility for their learning in order to become more proactive. Language instructors can promote proactive autonomous learning by explicitly and implicitly sharing knowledge and experience on how to learn language (Nakata, 2007). Self-confidence is gained as students take steps to reach their goals. Concrete goals with a plan to reach them can help students gain the confidence they need to make more choices. Both Hiroko and Etsumi described their early language learning experience as having no choice on how they learned with direct instruction giving no time for questions.

As they progressed reaching a point where they were able to communicate in English they moved on to discussions and presentations where cognitive and personality were developed. As Littlewood (1999) described, students may move from reactive to proactive autonomous language learning by going from cooperative to collaborative activities. In order for students to make this change from reactive to proactive autonomy, instructors must allow students to make choices, set goals, reflect and take control of their learning. In the next section the results of the interviews are summarized. The results are descriptive and attempts to explain the developmental process of moving from reactive autonomous learning to proactive autonomous learning. There is no claim of cause and effect but this is an attempt to collect and describe a small sample in order to accumulate a number of accounts for the bigger picture (Cotterall, 2004).

### **Summary of Results**

The summary of the results describes the three main themes found in the data collected during the face-to-face interviews. The themes include: direct instruction, public speaking, and examples of proactive autonomous learning.

#### **Direct Instruction (Instructors must be proactive and explain how to become proactive explicitly)**

Being proactive begins by skill building and is grounded over time as a habit. A habit requires more than practice but a change in ones view of the world. In the present research we explored the lives of two students whose views of the world changed by learning English and interacting with native English speakers.

Educators need to become aware of the basic social skills, have those social skills themselves, explicitly show these social skills in person and know how to nurture students so that they can obtain those skills. In other words proactive instructors should show how to be proactive autonomous learners, explain how to be proactive, and have experience in helping students become more proactive. Explicit instruction is necessary as well as an opportunity to apply that knowledge to developing those basic social skills. Students learn by modeling behavior. Proactive autonomous teachers can lead students to move from reactive language learning to proactive language learning. As students take proactive action taking the initiative they become more proactive and the next choice becomes easier to become more proactive. Proactive classmates can help those who tend to be reactive (Vygotsky, 1925). In the end students must make the choice to become proactive and take control. Instructors can provide an environment of proactivity and model proactive behavior

to nurture proactive students but the final choice is theirs to make.

**Public Speaking (Public speaking gave students the opportunity to freely express their thoughts and feelings with their peers.)**

Both students participated in public speaking in their study of the English language. Public speaking activities according to the students provided opportunities for students to express their thoughts and feelings in public. In addition before presentations, debates, or discussions students described how they reflected on and reviewed their speeches before the actual presentation of the speech.

Nunan (2000) explains the levels of implementation of autonomy. Learners move from awareness to involvement from involvement to intervention, from intervention to creation, from creation to transcendence. In the present study both students were made aware of proactive autonomous language learning explicitly through direct instruction. Involvement, intervention, and creation took place through the public speaking activities.

Benson (2001) explains further that there are six approaches which support the goal of autonomy. The six approaches are resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based, and teacher-based approaches. Dornyei (2001) argues increased learner involvement and changing teacher's role.

Both Hiroko and Etsumi increased their role as learners as they shouldered greater responsibility in public speaking activities. They set goals and took control of each step in their learning. Instead of waiting for the next presentation and waiting for the instructor to remind them of their next presentation, they both went ahead and prepared without being told. In addition, a change in the teacher's role as facilitator and an example of autonomous learning was seen in their language learning.

**Examples of Proactivity (Providing an example of proactivity helped students to become proactive themselves)**

Instructors can provide an environment of proactivity and model proactive behavior to nurture autonomy. An example of proactive behavior can inspire students to change from reactive autonomous learning to proactive autonomous learning. In the present study both students described examples in their life of proactive autonomous learning.

Hiroko found a roommate who was focused and determined to reach her goals as a Chemical Engineer. Etsumi also found someone, a senior mentor who inspired her to set goals to become an elementary school instructor. Instructors need to set an example of proactive autonomous learning, inspire students and help them set goals.

## Conclusion

Students who interact with proactive autonomous learners have an easier time of adjusting to becoming proactive learners themselves. Students who are explicitly taught and understand what it means to be proactive and reflect on their actions have a tendency of becoming more proactive. Public speaking and overcoming the fears associated with public discourse can help students reflect and gain confidence in their ability to communicate. This allows them to develop cognitively and also helps them to develop personality traits. To help students move from reactive autonomous learning to proactive autonomous learning instructors should guide students with reflective activities such as public speaking to move from communicative activities to communicative and cognitive activities in the target language. Instructors can help by allowing students to make choices and helping them think through their choices.

## Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should be conducted on the relationship between proactive autonomous behavior and each of the three themes listed in this research article. The present study described increased proactivity in the students when they had direct instruction in proactive behavior, participated in public speaking activities, and saw examples of proactive behavior. Future studies should look at other accounts of students developing proactive autonomous learning.

## APPENDIX A

The following questions were asked during the interview sessions:

1. What has been your experience in language learning? Please describe your experience thus far in Junior High and High School?
2. What do you think is the best way (ideal way) to learn a foreign language? What have you done to reach these ideals?
3. What does the ideal language classroom look like?
4. What does the ideal lesson look like?
5. What does the ideal teacher do/not do?
6. Who is responsible for your language learning?
7. Who is in control of your language learning? Your parents? Your teacher? Who?
8. What have you done to take greater responsibility in your language learning?
9. If you could make changes to your current habits in language learning what would they be?

10. Have you studied abroad? What was your experience in language learning abroad and how did it differ to your experience in Japan?

## APPENDIX B

### Basic Social Skills to become Effective Members of Society

	Abilities	Explanations
Action	Self-Starter (Being Pro-Active)	Be able to take the initiative without instruction and take on responsibility
	Peer-Motivator	Be able to move those around you to reach specific goals
	Doer	Creating your own goals, without fear of taking action and getting involved.
Thinking	Issue analysis	Analyzing the situation and making the subject and goals clear
	Planning	Making the process (steps) to the goal clear and preparing accordingly
	Creativity	Be able to synthesize and create new ideas
Teamwork	Explanation of Opinions	Be able to express your own opinion clearly and be able to have the listener comprehend the opinion
	Counseling	Be able to listen to people and ask appropriate questions to draw out opinions
	Flexibility	Understanding the differences of opinion and accepting the differences
	Understanding of Situations	Understanding the situation and your relationship with other people
	Discipline	Be able to keep promises and follow the basic rules of society
	Stress Management	Be able to manage stress and manage time.

Adapted from Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. (METI) (2004). Basic social skills. Retrieved April 10, 2011 from <http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/kisoryoku/index.htm>.

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