

**Self-Assessment for Promoting Learner Autonomy:
A Case of a Japanese Summer Immersion Camp
for High School Students**

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Abstract

The present study investigates how high school students used and perceived self-assessment in a Japanese summer immersion camp, utilizing a learner autonomy framework (Holec, 1981). Through surveys and interviews, this study found that engagement in self-assessment positively impacts learner participation in their own learning, including learners' awareness of their own language ability and acquisitional needs, and learners' ability to manage their language learning and its procedures. This study also confirmed the benefits of self-assessment argued for in previous literature. Furthermore, this study identified some issues regarding the implementation of self-assessment in the program studied, such as the design of self-assessment instruments and the correspondence between the content of can-do statements and available resources and activities at the camp. Lastly, this paper discusses suggestions and implications for future self-assessment practice and research in language programs.

Keywords: self-assessment, can-do statements, autonomy, Japanese

Self-assessment has been discussed as a great pedagogical tool for promoting learner autonomy (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004; Dam & Legenhausen, 2011; Little, 1991; Oscarson, 1989). After the release of the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-do Statements Progress Indicators for Language Learners* in 2012, self-assessment has been receiving even more attention. The present study reports on the case of one Japanese language summer camp for high school students which has been using can-do statements for self-assessment. Documenting signs of learners' emerging autonomy, this case study illustrates that the use of self-assessment is helpful for inviting learner participation and promoting learner autonomy even if it is used for a relatively short period of time. The present study also identified some issues regarding the self-assessment instrument and the implementation of self-assessment in the program and discusses suggestions and implications for future self-assessment practice in second language/foreign language (L2) programs.

Learner Autonomy, Self-Assessment, and L2 Learning

The development of autonomy, which is defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3), has been an important goal in general education and language education (Little, 2007). Central features of autonomy are often discussed in two major categories: awareness of all relevant aspects of language learning and a capacity to control its procedures. According to Dam and Legenhausen (2011), autonomous L2 learners are aware of “their own linguistic competence; their acquisitional needs; preferred activities and ways of working; and social aspects of learning” (p. 123). In addition, autonomous learners have a capacity for setting goals and realistic plans, organizing learning procedures, and evaluating the effectiveness of procedures and products.

One approach to promote learner autonomy is the use of self-assessment for formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Carless, 2007; Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002; De Saint Léger, 2009). Formative self-assessment helps students better understand their learning objectives (Assessment Reform Group, 2002) and helps them make clearer plans to achieve goals (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2006). Furthermore, ongoing self-assessment provides students opportunities to reflect on their learning objectives, strategies, and outcomes, which allows them to make adjustments for further improvement. In this sense, such self-assessment can orient students' attention to the learning process (Oscarson, 1989).

Moreover, the notion of self-assessment challenges the dichotomy created in a conventional learning context where teachers are evaluators and learners are evaluatees. Having learners take the role of evaluator can create a more learner-centered learning environment (Little, 2005), which can encourage students to become more active participants in their own learning, further supporting learner autonomy (González, 2009; Holec, 1981; Sisamakris, 2006; Yılmaz & Akcan, 2012; Ziegler, 2014)..

Development of Self-Assessment Tools for L2 Learning

Self-assessment in L2 programs can be realized using a variety of techniques and materials, including diaries, reflective reports, global proficiency rating scales, can-do statements, and so forth. Among these, the use of can-do statements has been receiving increased attention since the introduction of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in 2001 (Little & Perclová, 2001) and LinguaFolio in 2003 (Van Houten, 2004, 2007), which was a US adaptation of the ELP. The can-do statements in the LinguaFolio were developed based on ACTFL's proficiency guidelines (Breiner-Sanders, Lowe, Miles, & Swender, 2000) and performance guidelines for K-12 learners (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages,

1998)¹. In 2006, Concordia Language Villages, the host organization of the Japanese summer camp in the present study, saw the pedagogical potential of the ELP and *LinguaFolio* and developed a portfolio with can-do statements called the Concordia language Visa (CLVisa) based on the ELP and *LinguaFolio* (Concordia Language Villages, n.d.-c, n.d.-b; Van Houten, 2007), with the goal of nurturing students' autonomy in L2 learning. The extent to which the CLVisa is used in each of its language programs varies. The Japanese program in the present study employed a simplified CLVisa, a folder in which the global proficiency scale (see Chen, 2017 for a sample) for the three modes of communications in the National Standards (1999) and the top ten communication skills (Concordia Language Villages, n.d.-d) were printed in a can-do format (e.g., "I can express and react to a variety of emotions and feelings giving detailed explanations."). Since the CLVisa was not language-specific, unlike most versions of the ELP, the Japanese program also employed a slightly more language-specific self-assessment checklist (see Appendix A), which was developed by the administrators of the Japanese program.

Review of Previous L2 Self-Assessment Research

According to Oscarson (1997), L2 self-assessment research has been conducted from two major perspectives: a) investigating methods and process of self-assessment to invite learner participation and to promote learner autonomy (Dam, 1995, 2006; Moeller et al., 2012; Poehner, 2012; Ziegler, 2014; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012), and b) investigating the validity and reliability of L2 learners' self-assessment in various contexts (e.g., Bachman & Palmer, 1989; Blanche, 1990; Blanche & Merino, 1989; Butler & Lee, 2006, 2010; Council of Europe, 2001; Harris, 1997; Janssen-van Dielen, 1989; Peirce, Swain,

¹ In 2012, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and ACTFL released the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-do Statements Progress Indicators for Language Learners and it was updated as the 2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements.

& Hart, 1993; Ross, 1998). The present study takes the first perspective.

Effective implementation of self-assessment, reflection, and goal-setting activities seems difficult without student and teacher buy-in. Some studies have examined L2 self-assessment from the teachers' and/or students' points of view (Bullock, 2011; Cote Parra, 2009; Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, & Crowley, 2011; Kato, 2009; Little, 2002; Sahinkarakas, Yumru, & Inozu, 2010; Schärer, 2000; Ziegler, 2014). These studies report that students and teachers who experienced L2 self-assessment and related activities generally had positive attitudes towards these activities. These studies argue that engagement in self-assessment activities empowers learners in their L2 learning process so that they can take charge of their own learning. However, many studies relied on teachers' observation of self-assessment activities (Bullock, 2011; Cote Parra, 2009; Faez et al., 2011; Sahinkarakas et al., 2010) rather than learners' accounts (Kato, 2009; Schärer, 2000; Ziegler, 2014). The process of self-assessment and emerging features of learner autonomy are not necessarily easily quantified or observable from outside perspectives, so it is essential to qualitatively examine learners' voices regarding their experience with L2 self-assessment (Dam & Legenhausen, 2011), taking their individual differences into account, such as proficiency levels and previous experience with self-assessment (Little, 2005; Oscarson, 1997). Moreover, autonomy is a multidimensional construct (Benson, 2011); it may take different forms depending on the setting and other contextual factors. Therefore, the development of learner autonomy should be examined in diverse contexts. In particular, no self-assessment study has been conducted with high-school-level learners of Japanese. The present study attempts to fill this gap by asking the following research questions: How do high-school-level learners of Japanese use and perceive self-assessment in the summer camp? How

does the use of self-assessment invite learner participation in their own L2 learning?

Methodology

Context

The data were collected during a 4-week Japanese summer immersion camp organized by Concordia Language Villages in 2014. This program implemented self-assessment to help students “set goals concerning what they want to be able to understand and communicate” (Concordia Language Villages, n.d.-b) and used can-do statements “[t]o help students understand the dimensions of each level of proficiency” and “the types of tasks they must accomplish to be proficient at the various levels” (Concordia Language Villages, n.d.-a).

On Day 1, students received a brief introduction to the can-do lists. They were instructed to look at them inside and outside of class and were asked to use them to gauge their own language ability on their own throughout the four-week program. At the beginning, middle, and end of the program, students rated themselves using the can-do statements as a program-wide activity. At the end of Week 2, students were instructed to write a reflection on their L2 learning and then set goals for the second half of the program based on the reflection and self-assessment. Self-assessment was a part of a student portfolio which constituted 5% of their final grade. The researcher was an outside observer and was not affiliated with the program in the present study. The researcher’s goal was to understand how self-assessment was used in this program, without any intervention. Therefore, the researcher was not involved in any decision making related to the self-assessment instruments or related activities.

Participants

A total of 24 out of 37 enrolled students (65%) volunteered to participate in this study, including eight males and sixteen females. Students' ages ranged from 14 to 18 ($M = 15.8$). Fourteen students (58%) had attended the program before. The students were separated into four language levels from Level 1 (least proficient) to Level 4 (most proficient) based on the results of a placement test developed by the program. Of the participants, there were 8 students in Level 1 (33%), 2 students in Level 2 (8%), 4 students in Level 3 (17%) and 10 students in Level 4 (42%). In the background survey, students were asked about their self-evaluation experience in previous foreign language classes or any other subject classes. Students answered these items on a 5-point Likert scale: never (-2 points), rarely (-1 point), sometimes (0 point), often (1 point), and always (2 points). Their responses are summarized in Table 1, which shows means, standard deviations, and the number of responses for each category. About half of the students reported that they had some prior experience in using self-assessment. Yet, the amount of self-assessment experience was generally limited in foreign language classes ($M = -0.50$, $SD = 1.06$) and in other subjects ($M = -0.13$, $SD = 0.99$).

Table 1: *Students' Previous Experience with Self-Assessment*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Often	Freq- uently	Some- times	Rare- ly	Never
In FL class	-0.50	1.0 6	0	4	10	4	6
In other subjects	-0.13	0.9 9	2	3	10	8	1

Note. $N = 24$, FL = foreign language. Survey items were on a 5-point Likert scale: never (-2), rarely (-1), sometimes (0), frequently (1), and always (2).

Instruments and Procedure

The present study triangulated data sources and methods using student surveys and interviews, class/program observation, and document analysis. Table 2 summarizes the schedule and types of instruments used.

Table 2: *Summary of the Schedule and Instruments*

Timeline	
Day 1	Background Information Survey
End of Week 2	Student Self-Assessment 1 Semi-Structured Interview 1
End of Week 4	Student Self-Assessment 2 Semi-Structured Interview 2 Exit Survey

The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews one-on-one with each of the participants at the ends of Weeks 2 and 4. The researcher asked if and how students used self-assessment in the program and how students perceived self-assessment in the program. Interviews were audio recorded and then later transcribed for content analysis. Since the researcher was an outsider, she worked as a classroom volunteer to gain an emic perspective and conducted observations throughout the four weeks. The exit survey was designed to examine general trends in students' use and perception of self-assessment. Survey items were on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never (-2 points) to always (2 points) for the frequency of self-assessment (see Appendix B) and from strongly disagree (-2 points) to strongly agree (2 points) for students' perception (see Appendix C). The internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha was .903 for students' use (Items 1–17) and .752 for students' perception (Items 18–29).

Results

Exit Survey

Students' reported use of self-assessment. Items 1–17 of the exit survey investigated the frequency of self-assessment. The results are presented in Table 3 (see Appendix B). It shows survey items, means (M), standard deviations (SD), and the number of responses for each category: never (NV), rarely (RA), sometimes (SO), frequently (FR), and always (AL). A larger mean indicates more frequent use of self-assessment and a larger standard deviation indicates more individual variation. An overall mean for the use of self-assessment in the camp was -0.18 ($SD = 1.32$). This suggests that students generally used self-assessment only occasionally, although there was considerable variation between individuals. Items 1–8 asked if students evaluated their own Japanese skills during the program. Items 1–6 had moderately high means and Items 7 and 8 had moderately low means. This suggests that most students engaged in self-evaluation occasionally inside and outside of class at some point after learning activities. Items 9–15 asked if students referred to the can-do checklists or added their own can-do statements, and Items 16–17 asked how they used self-assessment. Relatively low means for Items 9–17 suggest that students occasionally used self-assessment to set learning goals and to modify their learning strategies.

Students' perceptions of self-assessment. Items 18–29 of the exit survey were related to students' perception of self-assessment. The results are presented in Table 4 (see Appendix C). It shows survey items, means (M), standard deviations (SD), and the number of responses of strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (NT), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). A larger mean indicates more positive perception of self-assessment. The overall mean for the perception of self-assessment in the camp was 0.41 ($SD = 1.11$). This suggests that students generally had positive perceptions of self-

assessment although considerable variation between individuals existed. Items 18-23 were about students' emotional reaction towards self-assessment. Items 18, 19, and 23 were negatively worded and had low means; Items 20-22 were positively worded and had moderately high means. These suggest that students had relatively positive perceptions towards self-assessment and that they felt that they had some control over their L2 learning in this program, although a considerable variation between individuals existed. Items 24-27 were about the students' perceived difficulty of self-assessment. Low means with large standard deviations suggest that students generally did not find self-assessment difficult; yet again, there was substantial variation. Item 28 was about the effect of self-assessment for goal setting. A positive mean with a large standard deviation indicates that the self-assessment activity helped some students identify skills to be improved, although substantial individual variation was evident. Item 29 was about students' perception of L2 self-assessment tools. It had a low mean, suggesting that students generally did not perceive self-assessment as a useful tool for L2 learning, although their opinions varied substantially among individuals.

Correlations. To examine the relationship between students use of self-assessment in general (Items 1-17) and their perception of self-assessment (Items 18-29), a Spearman's rank-order correlation was calculated using mean scores for the two constructs for each student as shown in Figure 1. (Scores for Items 8, 18, 19, and 23-27 were inverted to calculate the means since they were negatively worded.) The two constructs had a moderately positive linear relationship, $r_s(22) = .431, p = .04$, indicating that a positive perception of self-assessment was moderately associated with a student's more frequent evaluation of their own language skills.

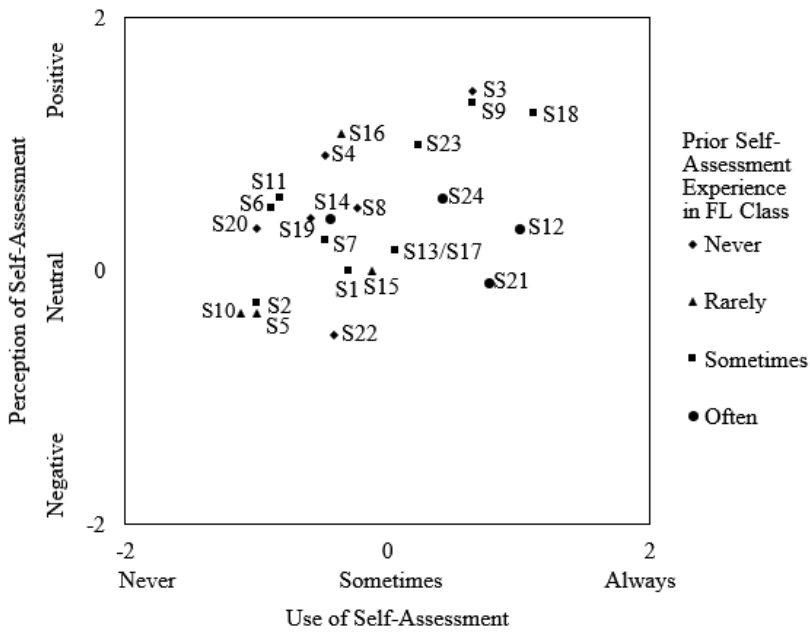


Figure 1. Scatterplot of students’ use and perception of L2 self-assessment.

Next, the relationship between the target constructs of the exit survey and the students’ individual factors (i.e., class level, and prior self-assessment experience in foreign language and other subjects) were examined. Table 5 shows Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients. A moderately positive linear relationship was found between students’ use of self-assessment in the camp and their prior experience with self-assessment in foreign language class, $r_s(21) = .477, p = .03$. This suggests that students who had used self-assessment in their foreign language class prior to the camp tended to use self-assessment more frequently in the camp. No other statistically significant correlation was found.

Table 5: *Spearman's Correlation between the Survey Responses and Individual Factors*

Individual Factors	Use of SA			Perception of SA		
	r_s	p	N	r_s	p	N
Class Level	.300	.164	23	.031	.887	24
SA Experience in FL Class	.477*	.032	23	-.008	.970	24
SA Experience in Other Subjects	.226	.300	23	-.065	.763	24

Note. SA = self-assessment, FL = foreign language.

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Student Interview Responses

Perception of self-assessment. The results of the exit survey indicated that students generally had positive perceptions of self-assessment tools and activities at the camp. Students' interview responses were generally consistent with the survey results. For instance, 15 out of 24 students (62.5%) mentioned that they felt motivated, encouraged, confident, and/or accomplished by conducting self-assessment in the camp, as illustrated in the following quotes. Note, the student ID number and interview number are presented in the parentheses (e.g., S3-1 means Student 3 in Interview 1).

I feel like it's nice to have. It's a confidence booster, right?
(S3-1)

((Being asked what he felt when he self-assessed his Japanese skills)) I thought that I'd improved a lot. Not as much as I wanted to, but I'm happy that I improved it (S4-2).

At the first one, I could do nothing, now I'm like, oh wow! I can do some of these! ... It was pretty cool (S6-2).

My feelings were good. I was thinking you know that how much I've improved (S9-2).

((Being asked about feeling towards self-assessment)) In the beginning of the program, I thought this would be kind of like more difficult than actually was. Like by able to do it. It gave me confidence from the beginning to the end of the session. (S12-2)

I think self-evaluation is like really helpful, and can be pretty encouraging. ... you kinda comparing yourself to other people. But this, it's nice not have to think about it, like more of as competition. It's kinda like I wanna beat myself so that's less stressful. (S14-2)

I didn't find it discouraging, I don't know. It was kind of nice to see that I did feel more confident (S19-2).

If there is something that I've never learned before [in the list], I might be curious and oh! I wanna learn this (S24-1).

Some students also mentioned that they felt that they were in control of their learning by conducting self-assessment. These students pointed out that it was good not to solely rely on the teachers' assessments, as illustrated in the following quotes:

I think it's nice to see where you are at yourself, without having somebody telling you this is where you belong (S3-2).

It's quite interesting. Because typically my teacher evaluates for me on where I improved. But there might be some cases where I feel like I did great in it, but the teacher doesn't feel like I haven't (S9-1).

One difference between the survey results and the interview responses was students' perception about the usefulness of self-

assessment for L2 learning. When they were asked if self-assessment helped them learn Japanese at the camp, many students responded positively during the interviews, unlike in the exit survey.

I think so. Yeah. [(Being asked in what way it helped him.)] I think it was, um, encouraging to see some of the checks starting to move over to the right side as the weeks went on (S1-2).

I think it helped to see the progress and maybe set a few goals. So yeah. It was helpful (S5-1).

Cause this [can-do checklist] has things that I didn't even think to learn (S24-1).

I think it's a really good skill to be able to evaluate yourself. ... I like to see where I've gotten with things. ... You just wanna see where you at and be able to focus on specific area and instead of just being like oh! I have to study everything. No, you don't. You have to study like, you have to focus, at least focus on a couple of things (S21-2).

[(Being asked how she felt about self-evaluating herself)] I still think it's a really good thing. I liked how many tools we were given to do that. ... some of the goal-settings that we did during the weekend and there's also this [(the CLVisa folder)]. It made it [(self-assessment)] easy to do that, cause it's not natural thing often, or at least. I do it, but I'm not aware of it. So like, this kinda helped me go, oh yes, this is what I'm thinking, and it kinda helped me put it into categories (S23-2).

I think it was really useful doing this [(self-assessment)]. Oh! I CAN do this. Or I haven't thought about this in a while. ... I really didn't think about emotions. I'm like oh! I should

probably think about this more. Maybe try to use them more when I'm talking (S24-2).

These comments suggest that students perceived that L2 self-assessment was a useful tool to organize their thoughts, track their progress, and to set their next learning goals. However, close analysis of student responses revealed that not all students interpreted Exit Survey Item 33 in the way the researcher intended, as the following responses for the same question illustrate:

Help to learn? Not exactly. But to assess what I need to work on, yes (S2-2).

Maybe in a sort of self-confidence way. But not necessarily learning Japanese from it. But like a way to boost motivation to learn Japanese (S3-2).

[P]ersonally, I don't think that it helps that much because it doesn't have any learning things in it to really specify like vocabulary. It didn't teach me anything. It's just showing my progress. ... At the beginning, I thought it would help me a little bit more. But I guess, it's just for a reference. For some people it might work better, but it's just, I don't see it as specifically helpful (S7-2).

I don't think they helped me. I mean, they helped me see what I still need to learn. Like how far I've come and how far I need to go. Because I looked back what I've done halfway though. When I looked at my, oh I know, when I was doing my final, and I realized that there was something that I checked for kind of or maybe. And I was just like, no, I really don't know this. So, I probably wanna look into that and learn it (S10-2).

These responses suggest that Item 33 was ambiguous to students. Some students may have interpreted ‘a useful tool for my Japanese learning’ as ‘a useful tool to learn Japanese vocabulary, grammar, and so on.’ This ambiguity may have lowered Item 33’s mean score. Thus, the quantitative result related to Item 33 needs to be interpreted with caution.

Although most students had a positive perception of self-assessment at the camp, some students shared some issues and concerns. The first concern was related to the accuracy of their self-assessment. During the interviews, six students (25.0%) shared that they were concerned about the accuracy of their self-assessment, as shown in the following:

My opinion on assessing myself, like I know I can be, like I’m gonna be biased when I judge myself. So, I find it very hard to self-assess. But when I tried it as unbiased as I can, I feel like I could be more than I am at the moment. So, I kinda feel bad about myself (S2-2).

Because people are like yeah, I’m improving, it could also be misleading in a sense because you might think more of your ability than what it actually is. So, that’s why you need, might need another opinion to be in there (S3-1).

I was reading over it ((the can-do statements)) and I thought back over everything that I’ve done. And when we were going over the entire grid, I thought back on it, and sometimes I can’t quite remember if I really actually do know this on the top of my head or not (S9-1).

I find it difficult because I know that I cannot possibly be unbiased about myself. So, I tried to do it the best I can. But I usually prefer to have others evaluate me, because it’s just

makes (it) so that I don't cheat myself or make myself seem better, or just think I'm doing the that at least (S11-1).

Tend to evaluate myself lower than I actually am (S16-2).

These comments suggest that students may be more aware of the issue of potential bias in self-assessment than teachers think (Bullock, 2011).

The second issue was related to the correspondence between the content of can-do statements and the available resources and activities at the camp. One student mentioned that she could not assess whether she had the ability to do some of the things listed in the checklist because she could not try those activities in the camp, as the following quote illustrates:

I think [it] was a little hard. I can understand the story lines of television shows, movies, and podcasts. But I haven't tried to really do that yet (S22-2).

The third concern was the effectiveness of self-assessment during the short language program, especially for more proficient learners, as the following quote illustrates:

I guess within the four weeks, I don't know if I've really improved enough to like put like new things like say I was at this checkbox and now I am at this checkbox. I haven't really learned enough to do that (S22-2).

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Use of self-assessment. The results of the exit survey found considerable individual differences regarding the use of self-assessment in the camp. In addition, the use of self-assessment and one's previous experience with self-assessment in foreign language showed a moderate positive correlation. Students' interview responses were generally consistent with these results. For instance, students with prior experience with L2 self-assessment were aware of potential benefits of self-assessment earlier on. At the end of Week 2, many of these students mentioned that self-assessment could inform them of what they should work on more, as the following quotes illustrate:

Maybe kind of. But like the self-evaluation is very helpful. I can now see where I fall under and now I see what I need to work on, my reading and writing. So, now I know what I need to work on with this kind of chart (S2-1).

I could see my progress and see where I need to progress into (S12-1).

I feel like it does show you where you need to improve and kinda like motivate you (S14-1).

I think it could be a very good asset, then you look at what you really need to work on. Then when you realized that then you come back and oh! Instead of focusing on this, which I know I'm good at, I should probably focus on this because I know what I need more work on that (S21-1).

I know I'm in somewhere here. ... This is like my goal. So, I'm able to track where I am on here. I like that a lot (S23-1).

Students with more L2 self-assessment experience tended to report that they checked their Japanese level at the beginning of the program, conducted self-assessment to track their progress, set goals,

and adjusted their learning strategies based on what they found through L2 self-assessment. A similar report was also made by Student 3 who reported that he often engaged in self-assessment in other subjects, but not in foreign language class.

I just tried to look at it when I have time. And then I haven't had that much time yet, so I just kinda marked off some of them. ... When I get time, I just kinda look over them and check them to see where I am at. ... During free time and study hall if I have time (S21-1).

[(Being asked how she used the CLVisa folder during the second half of the program)] I filled out the rest and then I looked at what I had. And I incorporated in into my goals. And I look at my goal sheet every once a while and see what I still need to work on. And then I look back and see if I could check anything else to check off. ... So, I check it every once a while and see what my goals should change to be. ... I did it like 3 or 4 times [during the last two weeks] (S21-2).

I think whenever I first got here, they were asking like what place you think you are at? I think I like looked through them and see which like color scale I would be at. (S3-1).

After the halfway through, they told us about the goal setting and stuff. A few times during week 3 during the nap time, instead of taking a nap, I opened it up and glanced. ... I would look at the boxes to see maybe where I was going at (S3-2).

Really like looking where you at helped me like know what I should work on an improve to help like maybe like even out, instead of having speaking and a listening really high and even out the writing and reading parts (S3-2).

These responses demonstrate that students with previous self-assessment experience had an awareness of the benefits of self-assessment from early in the program. They started to take advantage of the information from self-assessment and actually set up or adjusted their goals during the second half of the program.

In contrast, students with less L2 self-assessment experience tended to be less aware of the benefits of self-assessment, especially at the beginning of the program. At the end of Week 2, only a few of these students seemed to be aware that self-assessment using the can-do statements could be useful to find out what they should work on.

They definitely help encourage me. I guess they also help for goal-setting, which would help you learn (S1-1).

[T]he whole checklist thing really gives you a point of where to work from here. So, you know this, and the next thing you need to work on is this thing. So, you are good at this, but you can be better, so you need to work on this to get better. So, the whole having a checklist thing really does show you want you really need to get to (S16-1).

However, more students commented on the potential benefits of self-assessment at the end of Week 4.

I think it helped to see the progress and maybe set a few goals. So yeah. It was helpful (S5-2).

They helped me to see what I still need to learn. Like how far I've come and how far I need to go. Because I looked back what I've done halfway through, when I looked at my, oh I know, when I was doing my final, and I realized that there were somethings that I checked for kind of or maybe. And I was just like, no I really don't know this. So, I probably wanna look into that and learn it (S10-2).

Several students with less experience with L2 self-assessment reported that they checked their L2 levels and tracked their learning progress occasionally using can-do lists.

I looked at a few of them [(the can-do statements)], but I didn't really look at them in like great detail (S6-1).

I looked at it a few times. I looked at it at the beginning. I like to look at it 'cause I can measure where I am each time I learn (S4-1).

I have looked at it occasionally just to, a bit of wondering thing about what I can do. But I haven't really used it aside from that. I actually didn't [check off anything] yet (S11-1).

I did look through them. I didn't check anything off, but I was trying to place myself like, I wasn't sure where it was like I put myself (S19-1).

However, only one of these students reported that he actually set goals or adjusted his learning strategies based on the information he obtained from self-assessment at the end of Week 2.

I'm really goal-oriented. So, I set goals in myself. Making small goals. Like 3 rows of hiragana. And there was for katakana, like separate goals. ... so I use this to set my goals. Each week, I look and go oh I did what goal and check that off. (S4-1).

These responses suggest that a link between self-assessment and goal-setting may have not been established for most students with less experience with L2 self-assessment, although the lack of responses regarding goal-setting alone may not be adequate evidence of their inability to utilize self-assessment for goal-setting. Nonetheless, the interview responses suggest that students with limited L2 self-

assessment experience tend to have lower awareness of the benefits of self-assessment.

Some students with very limited L2 self-assessment experience reported that they did not closely look at the list at the end of Week 2. Even at the end of Week 4, two of these students reported that they hardly looked at the checklist. Nevertheless, at the end of Week 4, a few students reported that they used the can-do lists to track their progress, as the following quote demonstrates:

I would look at the skills there and trying to look at how I improved (S1-2).

Furthermore, two students reported that they set goals using the can-do lists at the end of Week 4.

I think I looked at, you know, mainly the checks that were in the review column [in the language specific checklist] and trying to make those goals to work on, in the next two weeks (S1-2).

I looked over them [the top ten communication skills], but I didn't really color them because I wasn't sure we were supposed to or not. ... So, I kinda read them, I was like, I wanna maybe try to get to maybe 2ish. So, the just keep that in mind to work with (daily). After like the first week or something, I was like oh I think I should make some goals, 'cause I should have a purpose. So, tried to get to as many of the boxes to 2s as I can (S5-2).

These interview responses show that students initially did not think of or use self-assessment, even as a progress tracker, unlike other students. However, as they engaged in the program-wide self-assessment, reflection, and goal-setting activity, they started to notice that self-assessment could

inform them of their learning progress. Moreover, they seemed to start setting goals based on the results of their self-assessment. Although their engagement with self-assessment was lower compared to that of students with more L2 self-assessment experience, their interview responses provide supporting evidence that self-assessment may help invite students as an active participant in their own learning.

Discussion

Overall, considerable individual differences were observed in students' use of self-assessment in the Japanese program in the present study. This was likely because students in this program were simply handed the self-assessment instruments, and how and how they used those tools often, was mostly left up to them. The frequency of self-evaluation and the extent to which students used self-assessment seems closely related to their level of familiarity with self-assessment coming into the program. Students who reported some previous experience with self-assessment had higher awareness of their own language ability, acquisitional needs, and possible learning strategies. They were more capable of taking the initiative to use self-assessment for progress tracking, goal-setting, and the adjustment of learning strategies. In contrast, students who had limited self-assessment experience and lower awareness about L2 learning in general did not use self-assessment for progress tracking and goal-setting as often as those with more self-assessment experience. This suggests that learners' awareness of relevant aspects of L2 learning, including awareness of their own language ability and acquisitional needs, are critical prerequisites for the capability of managing their L2 learning and its procedures, just as Dam and Legenhausen (2011) argue. The results are also consistent with the claim that learners need to be trained in using self-assessment to use it effectively (Little, 2005; Oscarson, 1997; Stiggins, 2001).

The awareness level of students with limited self-assessment experience was not as high as those with more experience, so they were not as ready to take control of their L2 learning. However, as they engaged in the program-wide self-assessment and goal-setting activities, more of them started to pay attention to their level of language ability and acquisitional needs, with many using self-assessment for progress tracking and goal-setting. For instance, some students initially used self-assessment primarily for progress tracking. During the second half of the program, their awareness of acquisitional needs became higher and more of them started to set up learning goals based on self-assessment. Other students hardly assessed their own Japanese skill at the beginning of the program. However, some of them started to do so to keep track of the level of their language ability and learning progress. This indicates that self-assessment helps raise learners' awareness of their language ability. A few students even used self-assessment to set up goals; this is evidence that self-assessment helps increase learners' awareness of acquisitional needs. Despite wide variation between individuals, these results demonstrate that self-assessment can positively impact learner participation and promote autonomy even during a relatively short period of time and even when little self-assessment training is offered to students.

Students in this program generally had favorable views of self-assessment, similar to the students in Schärer (2000), Little (2002), and Kato's (2009) studies. Most students did not find self-assessment difficult, but some students shared concerns related to the accuracy of their own self-evaluation. These responses show that students may be aware of potential bias in self-assessment. This issue needs to be investigated further in future studies. Some students with higher proficiency shared different reasons for their perceived difficulty in self-assessment. For instance, Student 22 mentioned that four weeks was not long enough to see her L2 development. Student

20 mentioned that as his proficiency level went up, it became harder to see improvements, and self-assessment no longer seemed appealing. These responses suggest that students with high proficiency may not be able to observe improvements within only four weeks due to the nature of higher-level target skills. This may be one of the reasons why some students thought self-assessment was difficult and not that useful. A similar finding is reported by Kato (2009): The majority of lower-level students found self-assessment useful, but less than half of advanced level students found it useful. This suggests that self-assessment practices may need differentiation depending on proficiency level.

One way to address the concerns raised by more proficient learners may be to provide more nuanced choices in responses for can-do statements, as some students mentioned in their interviews, such as including a) I want to learn, b) I can do it with some assistance, and c) I can do it on my own. Only one out of three self-assessment instruments used in the camp employed this type of format. The other two instruments only had one box to check for each can-do statement when the learner can do something without any assistance. However, if self-assessment is used in a short-term language program, all self-assessment instruments should offer more incremental checkboxes. Presenting learning progress on the continuum can allow learners to accurately keep track of learning that may take longer. The continuum can also emphasize that being able to do something with some assistance is also a step forward from having no idea about what to do. This improvement in self-assessment instruments is supported not only by learners, but also by a learning theory from a Vygotskian perspective: L2 development is understood as a transition from other-regulated to self-regulated functioning (Wertsch, 1985). Another way to address students' concerns are to customize the content of can-do statements so as to reflect available resources and activities at an individual camp. Lastly,

students in the present study received only a brief introduction to self-assessment, so the program's intention was probably not clearly communicated to students. If more scaffolding were provided to deepen students' understanding of the purpose and expected use of self-assessment, self-assessment may have had a more positive impact in the camp.

Limitations and Implications

The biggest limitation of the present study was the duration of the study, since the program was only four weeks long. A longitudinal study is needed in order to observe the effect of self-assessment on learner's autonomy in a comprehensive manner. The use of interviews was another limitation; it is possible that the interviews caused the students to reflect on the importance of the self-assessment more than if the researcher was not there doing the interviews. Thus, the researcher's participation in the study may have had a significant impact on students' actions and perceptions. However, if the fact that students talked about their use of self-assessment and learning progress created more opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, the researcher's intervention may not seem so negative. In fact, this is a recommended activity to guide and train students in the process of self-assessment and goal-setting (Harris, 1997; Oscarson, 1989; Poehner, 2012). Another issue is the limited type of qualitative data used to measure the development of learner autonomy. Future studies should consider a wider variety of qualitative data collection methods. Although the present research relies on interviews and observation in an attempt to access students' emic perspective of L2 self-assessment for feasibility's sake, other data collection methods such as diaries and/or thinking aloud may allow future research to investigate the development of learner autonomy more accurately. Furthermore, the way the researcher formulated interview questions may have affected what and how

participants responded to the questions; it is an enormous challenge to obtain truly emic perspectives using interviews. Another limitation was that the present research did not examine L2 self-assessment in relation to its accuracy and L2 proficiency difference, unlike Moeller et al. (2012) and Ziegler and Moeller's (2012) studies. Therefore, future studies should investigate the relationship between L2 self-assessment training, accuracy, and L2 learning by collecting more longitudinal data. The last limitation of the present study was the way the program implemented can-do statements for self-assessment, although this was out of the researcher's control. Many students in the program tended to check off can-do statements as they demonstrated the described ability; however, ACTFL (2017) strongly advises to not use can-do statements in this manner. Moreover, almost no scaffolding for self-assessment was provided to learners. This indicates the need for more teacher training and learner training (Little, 2002, 2009; Schärer, 2000).

Despite these limitations, educators can gain some insights from this program's experience in integrating self-assessment into their curriculums. This is particularly true for Japanese programs, as the Japanese program in this study is one of very few in the U.S. where self-assessment is implemented program-wide. A major contribution of this study is its documentation of students' experiences with and perception of self-assessment and their changes in participation in their own learning from multiple angles using both quantitative and qualitative means, instead of focusing on teachers' experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, by documenting what students actually said about L2 self-assessment, the present research helps other practitioners and researchers understand what to expect. Although the language learning experience in the four-week Japanese summer immersion program might be different from typical foreign language classroom learning experiences, the findings from this research still deepen our general understanding of L2 self-assessment

and its relation to learner autonomy and L2 learning. Findings from the present study can provide some clues on what to do to implement self-assessment more effectively in order to foster learner autonomy and facilitate language learning in the future.

Conclusion

The present study observed one Japanese summer immersion program for high school students and investigated how students used and perceived self-assessment. It found that engagement in self-assessment positively influenced learners' degree of participation in their own learning even within a relatively short amount of time. The positive changes in learner participation were observed even when extensive scaffolding for self-assessment was not provided to students. Furthermore, the present study confirmed some benefits of self-assessment argued for in previous literature.

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Appendix A

Language-specific can-do checklist

Please check (✓) the columns that describe your skills and learning needs in Japanese.

	I want to learn this	I need to review this	I've mastered this
Surviving and Exploring			
I can introduce myself , exchange greetings , and ask and respond to "How are you?"			
I can ask people for things and give people things they request.			
I can express feelings (sadness, frustration, joy) and simple problems (I am tired, hungry, etc.), and react to others' feelings.			
I can talk with someone about things I like and dislike .			
I can give reasons for my likes and dislikes.			
I can ask and answer simple yes/no and " wh- " questions (who, what, where, when, why, how).			
I can read and write hiragana . (ひらがな)			
I can read and write katakana . (カタカナ)			
I can read and/or write some kanji (e.g. numbers, dates, days of the week).			
I can read and write many kanji (>50, including nouns, verbs, or adjectives)			
I can describe people, places, things, and activities at Mori no Ike in simple language.			
I can ask and give simple directions to different places.			
I can ask permission ("Can I...") and state rules at the village.			
I can carry on a simple conversation about...			
... things I am interested in .			
... daily life at home, or at Mori no Ike, or in Japan.			
...something in the past . (i.e. past tense: ~ました or ~た)			
I can talk with my friends using informal speech forms (plain/dictionary forms).			
Exploring and Engaging			
I can discuss problems and suggest possible solutions to resolve the problems.			
I can talk (write) about things that have happened , giving background information along with the sequence of events.			
I can talk (write) about things that could happen in the future, giving some explanations and details of the events.			
I can rephrase what has been said to make sure that I understand.			
I can use honorific language (keigo; honorific and humble forms).			
I can understand an in-depth conversation on a familiar topic.			
I can find the basic information I need when I look at things like ads, schedules, menus, phone books, and websites.			
I can understand short, simple readings on topics that I have talked about.			

Appendix B
Reported use of self-assessment

Table 3
Exit survey: Students' Reported Frequency of Self-Assessment Related Activities

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	NV	RA	SO	FR	AL
1. I evaluated my own Japanese speaking skills.	0.75	0.90	0	2	7	10	5
2. I evaluated my own Japanese listening skills.	0.88	0.99	0	3	4	10	7
3. I evaluated my own Japanese reading skills.	0.63	1.10	1	2	8	7	6
4. I evaluated my own Japanese writing skills.	0.71	1.00	0	3	7	8	6
5. I evaluated my own Japanese skills in class.	0.58	1.06	0	4	8	6	6
6. I evaluated my own Japanese skills outside of class.	0.58	1.18	1	3	8	5	7
7. I checked my Japanese skills immediately after a task or activity.	-0.71	1.33	8	8	4	1	3
8. I waited some time before I checked my Japanese skills.	-0.09	1.08	1	9	6	5	2
9. I referred to the can-do lists in class.	-1.08	0.88	9	9	5	1	0
10. I referred to the can-do lists outside of class.	-1.00	1.10	11	5	5	3	0
11. I referred to the can-do list to check my progress in speaking.	-0.83	1.01	7	9	5	3	0
12. I referred to the can-do list to check my progress in listening.	-0.79	1.02	7	8	6	3	0
13. I referred to the can-do list to check my progress in reading.	-0.96	1.00	9	7	6	2	0
14. I referred to the can-do list to check my progress in writing.	-0.92	0.97	8	8	6	2	0

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15. I added my original can-do statements to the list that was provided by the teacher.	-1.50	0.83	16	5	2	1	0
16. I set goals based on what I found from the self-evaluation of my Japanese skills.	0.33	1.27	1	8	2	8	5
17. I adjusted how to study based on what I found from the self-evaluation.	0.25	1.36	3	4	7	4	6
All Items	-0.18	1.32					

Note: The number of responses was 24 except Item 8 with one missing data. NV = never; RA = rarely; SO = sometimes; AL = always.

Appendix C
Perception of self-assessment

Table 4
Exit survey: Students' Perception of Self-Assessment

Items	M	SD	SD	D	NT	A	SA
18. Self-evaluation of my own Japanese skills was discouraging.	-1.08	1.02	11	6	5	2	0
19. Self-evaluating of my own Japanese skills was frustrating.	-0.92	1.14	10	5	7	1	1
20. Self-evaluation of my own Japanese skills made me feel confident.	0.46	0.98	1	1	12	6	4
21. Self-evaluating of my own Japanese skills made me feel accomplished.	0.46	1.06	2	1	8	10	3
22. I felt that I was in charge of my own learning at this camp.	0.71	1.04	0	4	5	9	6
23. I felt that my teacher controlled my learning at this camp.	0.17	0.87	1	3	12	7	1
24. Self-evaluation of my own speaking skills was difficult.	-0.13	1.03	2	7	8	6	1
25. Self-evaluation of my own listening skills was difficult.	-0.21	1.02	2	8	8	5	1
26. Self-evaluation of my own reading skills was difficult.	-0.38	1.01	2	11	6	4	1
27. Self-evaluation of my own writing skills was difficult.	-0.42	0.97	2	11	7	3	1
28. What I need to work on more to improve my Japanese became clear through self-evaluation of my own Japanese skills.	0.67	1.27	1	5	3	7	8
29. The can-do checklist was a useful tool for my Japanese learning.	-0.38	1.13	4	8	6	5	1
All items	0.41	1.11					

Note. N = 24. SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; NT = neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree.

