Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings Between JTEs and AETs

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Team teaching (TT) between a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) and an assistant English teacher (AET) has difficulties due to differences in terms of status (teacher-in-charge versus assistant), linguistic proficiency (nonnative versus native speaker), and cultural proficiency (cultural native versus cultural nonnative). In addition, many problems are caused by intercultural miscommunication (Tajino & Walker, 1998). The purpose of this study was to examine TT relationships by focusing on cross-cultural misunderstandings through interviews with 8 JTEs and 7 AETs as well as class observations of 8 TT pairs. The results show that the AETs and JTEs encountered enormous cross-cultural differences inside and outside the classroom. They struggled with differences in teaching styles and philosophies, student discipline, and teacher images, which are influenced by socio-cultural norms. As for differences outside the classroom, the JTEs' sacrificial professionalism clashed with the AETs' professionalism, which was influenced by their individualistic cultural values.

日本人英語教諭（JTE）と英語指導助手（AET）のティームティーチング（TT）は、職業上の身分(主教師対助手)、英語力(ノンネイティブ対ネイティブ)、地元文化の熟達度(文化的ネイティブ対文化的ノンネイティブ)などの違いにより様々な困難を抱えているが、異文化間ミスコミュニケーションもその一因であると言う。本研究は8名のJTEと7名のAETへのインタビューと8組のTTペアの授業観察を通して、異文化による誤解に焦点を置き、TTの教師間関係を探ることを主目的とする。調査の結果、AETとJTEは教室の内外で様々な異文化の違いに遭遇していることが判明した。授業スタイルや教育哲学、生徒への指導法などの相違に苦闘しており、これらの違いは社会文化的概念に影響を受けていることが分かった。教室外での相違に関しては、JTEの犠牲的職業意識が個人主義的文化に影響されたAETの職業意識と激しく衝突している様子などが報告された。

TEAM TEACHING (TT) between a JTE (Japanese Teacher of English) and an AET (Assistant English Teacher) may bring about tremendous difficulties because the problems involve various issues such as power-sharing between native speakers (NSs) and nonnative speakers (NNSs), different teacher beliefs and philosophies, and personality mismatching in team formation. Some of the misunderstandings are caused by cultural differences. The purpose of this study was to investigate TT relationships by focusing on cross-cultural issues through interviews with eight JTEs and seven AETs as well as class observations of eight TT pairs.

Literature Review

Power-Sharing in TT

Due to the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of team teachers, power issues are complex. JTEs' have feelings of inferiority regarding their English competence, caused by their low proficiency in oral English (Kamhi-Stein, 1999; McConnell, 2000; Miyazato, 2006; Tajino & Walker, 1998). This occasionally results in their belief in the native speaker fallacy—that NSs of English are automatically the best teachers of the language (Phillipson, 1992). On the other hand, JTEs have longer teaching experience, while AETs are often recent college graduates with little experience (Tajino & Tajino, 2000; Uehara & Hoogenboom, 2009). This also means that JTEs have more knowledge about the local language, culture, society, education, learners, and school life than AETs. In addition, as short-term teaching assistants in the Japanese educational system, AETs lack political power (Mahoney, 2004; McConnell, 2000).

Cultural Influences on Team-Teaching Relationships

Various differences between Japan and English-speaking countries are reported based on concepts such as the individualism-collectivism dichotomy (Gudykunst & Kim, 1998). Hall (1976) pointed out two types of human communication: high-context communication, in which things are left unsaid and the culture is meant to furnish the explanation, and low-context communication, in which "the mass of information is vested in the explicit code" (p. 70). He defined Japan as a high-context country and the U.S. as having a low-context communication style. Gudykunst and Kim (1998) explained that individualistic cultures, such as many western countries, perceive directness as effective while collectivistic cultures, such as Japan, prefer indirectness.

Kobayashi (1994) analyzed cross-cultural issues in TT settings through the concepts of individualism vs. group harmony. She said direct refusals by AETs, for instance, sound cold to JTEs, who give priority to others' feelings and group harmony. Ochiai (2000) maintained that many AETs perceived difficulties as cross-cultural differences, while JTEs did not. This means that AETs, as a foreign minority in Japan, are more likely to perceive cultural issues as the cause of problems, but JTEs, who live in their mother country, perceive these differences as personality traits.

Differences in culture also affect teacher beliefs and classroom management. According to McConnell (2000), in JET orientations and seminars, AETs have been trained to "see as ideal the student as active learner; the teacher as facilitator . . . and classes that are marked by liveliness and spontaneity" (p. 213). In contrast, secondary education in Japan still emphasizes memorization and repetition in teacher-centered lectures. Gorsuch (1999) also pointed to the priority JTEs place on students' success on entrance examinations, which makes them continue teaching traditions that emphasize knowledge transmission.

JTEs' Lack of Overseas Experience

The number of JTEs with extensive overseas experience is still small. The National Center for Teacher Development provided overseas training opportunities for 15 JTEs for 12 months each and 85 JTEs for 6 months each in 2003 (MEXT, 2003). However, 12-month overseas training was abolished in 2007, as was 6-month training in 2010 (MEXT, 2013). Instead, a new 2-month training is now offered to only 30 JTEs. Compared to 10 years ago, fewer JTEs are being given the opportunity for even the shorter-term overseas training.

Horwitz (1996) argued that few NNS teachers have had extended stays in a target language community and, therefore,

their language abilities often exceed their degree of acculturation. She further maintained that NNS teachers who have stayed for only a short time in the target country show a negative attitude toward target language use in the classroom, since they have passed through only the beginning phases of cultural adaptation. It can be assumed that JTEs' lack of extensive cross-cultural or overseas experience might contribute to cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Method

In addition to class observations of eight TT pairs, individual interviews with eight JTEs and seven AETs were conducted to investigate issues of cross-cultural communication difficulties. I visited seven junior and senior high schools in the Tokyo area. Interviews with the JTEs were conducted in Japanese and with the AETs in English. All interviews were conducted in a private room to protect privacy and encourage the expression of honest opinions. The interview time ranged from 10 minutes to 100 minutes, depending on the interviewees' schedules. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. I translated all the Japanese interview and observation data into English. The JTEs and the AETs are identified by number in order to preserve anonymity.

Interview Responses and Class Observations

In this section, interview and observation data are summarized from two perspectives: issues inside and outside the classroom.

Issues in the Classroom

Teacher Images: Control-Conscious JTEs vs. Friendly AETs

The AETs were good at creating a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, while the JTEs presented themselves as serious, authoritarian teachers. Three AETs let the students call them by their first names combined with the Japanese honorific title *sensei* (teacher). The AETs also tried to produce laughter from the students. For example, students laughed when AET3 used exaggerated gestures:

> I guess that the Japanese students burst into loud, unexpected laughter when they saw gaps in their image of teachers as an authoritarian figure and as just a human being. (AET3, 7 Mar 2002)

In contrast, JTE3 said,

> I wouldn't do such things like an actor or even comedian although I respected [AET3]'s efforts. You know I would like to protect my pride as a teacher. (7 Mar 2002)

My observations confirm this pressure on JTEs to be authoritative or knowledgeable about every matter. In one TT class, the game "Hangman" did not work because JTE5 was unable to understand the English directions that AET4 gave in class, despite having said he knew the game. In general, the JTEs' image seemed to be influenced by societal expectations toward teachers while the AETs, who were foreign assistants, were free from these expectations.

Student Discipline: Mild JTEs vs. Strict AETs

Cultural variation concerning teachers' attitudes toward student discipline was also reported. In spite of the JTEs' authoritarian

image, many of the AETs complained that the JTEs were less strict toward latecomers, sleepers, and chatters than the AETs would have been. JTE4 explained:

> Japanese teachers don't want to spoil the friendly class atmosphere as a whole by scolding a few students. After being scolded, the class becomes quieter as an indication of their regret and apology or even resentment of teachers. . . . Besides, students' talking wouldn't stop . . . . so we considered scolding as useless. (12 Mar 2002)

However, AET3 interpreted the JTEs' passive attitude differently:

> The JTE said that it is better to let sleepers sleep in class rather than to be bothered by their chatting. I interpret this out of *tatemae* and *honne*, a double standard: sleepers are accepted because they don't disturb others or the teacher. Similarly, wearing jewelry against school rules is overlooked as long as it is hidden. The act of hiding shows the students' awareness of their position. JTEs accept this act, but I cannot do so since rules are rules and sleeping is a sign of rejection and of disrespect to teachers in the West. (AET3, 7 Mar 2002)

Moreover, two AETs revealed their hesitation to take initiative in student discipline because of their status as assistants. The AETs negatively perceived the Japanese students' learning attitude but could not correct their misbehavior because of their lack of political power.

Teaching Styles: JTEs' Lectures vs. AETs' Group Activities

AET2 commented that English classes in Japan were mostly conducted in lecture style and pointed out the formal seating arrangement. AET6 showed surprise at Japanese students' tolerance of the traditional teaching style. In fact, the students in one of the more competitive high schools in the district were not keen on group activities. Even when the team teachers encouraged the students to work in groups, they worked on their own and did not share their answers.

Several JTEs advocated their traditional teaching and negatively perceived the AETs' preference for group activities. They said that due to the emphasis on passing entrance examinations, they considered group activities to be just a time to play, not for serious study, especially in competitive high schools.

Perceived Evaluation Standards: Strict JTEs vs. Lenient AETs

AET6 mentioned the JTEs' strict evaluation of students:

> In general, I guess Japanese people are less likely to say, "OK. You didn't do so well, but you'll do better next time." . . . the American approach is more lenient, more congratulatory, even though you've done poorly. (AET6, 15 October 2003)

I observed this when AET6 asked the class about the results of the mid-term exam. Many students answered, "not good," and AET6 encouraged them: "You have another chance at the end of the term." In contrast, JTE7 said in Japanese afterwards, "The thought of 'I have another chance' will not improve you. Work harder next time." AET6 further commented that Japanese teachers have a higher evaluation scale:

> I notice here that . . . the average is at 60 or lower. Compared to an American scale, this is much harsher. In America . . . 80 percent would be average. (AET6, 15 Oct 2003)

AET7 showed her surprise when the names of the students who scored higher points on the midterm exam were announced in class:

> Maybe I would announce top scores, but I don't think I would say the names . . . . it feels like, I am kind of singling those students out and saying, "Look, these students are better than the rest of you" . . . maybe they think that will somehow motivate the other students. (AET7, 15 Dec 2003)

Issues Outside the Classroom

The following three issues are about cultural struggles outside the classroom: professionalism, cultural dynamics of *enryo* and *sasshi*, and cross-cultural experiences.

Professionalism

Several JTEs mentioned a lack of professionalism among AETs. JTE7 said:

> Some AETs said, "The class is over, so why do I have to be at school?" . . . Young university graduates often lack a sense of professionalism and regard this job as half leisure. (17 Dec 2003)

JTE3 complained that AETs do not understand the Japanese sense of professionalism, that teachers should have a mission of doing things only for the sake of students. JTE1 remarked about AETs' unwillingness to do extra work:

> AETs don't want to sacrifice their vacation time for student club activities and school duties. I feel they lack a sense of professionalism. Besides, they have good working conditions. Most of them are only new university graduates in their early 20s, but they get paid about 300,000 yen per month plus housing allowances. (JTE1, 27 Feb 2002)

In fact, quite a few JTEs criticized the AETs' light workload, while the JTEs had heavy responsibilities. JTE8's workload included various administrative tasks and coaching club activities:

> I stay at school from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Right now I have to help with the English speech contest, so I stay at school until 8 or 9 . . . . I just don't have enough time to sleep. I have two small children and I feel that I'm sacrificing my family life. (JTE8, 28 Oct 2003)

Three JTEs also referred to the JTEs' role as AET caretakers in and outside the school. JTE2 said,

> For example, we sometimes need to do things such as taking them to the hospital when they are sick, cleaning their apartment before and after they move, etc. . . . We think it's not fair for only us to have the additional duty of taking care of AETs. (15 Mar 2002)

In contrast, the AETs had much easier work schedules. AET6 said,

> I have no obligation to attend staff meetings or do extra administrative work. I just need to stay at school from 8:20 to 4:20. (10 Nov 2003)

The JTEs, who had a sacrificial sense of duty, perceived the AETs' work motivation as lower than their own. However, AET1 objected:

> JTEs' overworked conditions make them feel jealous about AETs and their irritation became targeted at us. Japanese society requires JTEs to devote their lives to students, sac-

> rificing their own families, private time, and even health. I don't believe the professionalism of the AETs should be based on the sacrifices. I think the differing interpretations of professionalism are indication of difference in societal and cultural expectations. (AET1, 27 Feb 2002)

AET3 presented a similar idea:

> If the unwillingness of AETs to make these sacrifices is interpreted as lack of professionalism, things will never be solved. (AET3, 7 Mar 2002)

It is apparent that the JTEs' busy schedules, which presumably reflect a societal expectation towards native teachers in Japan, result in their sacrificial professionalism. Using this standard, the JTEs tended to view the AETs' work attitude critically.

Japanese Cultural Dynamics—Enryo *and* Sasshi

The two major Japanese norms of *enryo* and *sasshi* seemed to be obstacles to communication. *Enryo-sasshi* communication has been called the predominant mode of Japanese communication (Ishii, 1984), and Bowers (1988) regarded enryo and sasshi as signs of maturity that are highly valued in Japanese culture. Enryo means "thoughtful consideration in the literal sense of the two characters with which it is written *en*, distant, and *ryo*, consideration" (Doi, 1973, p. 38). Sasshi means empathizing with and making allowances for others (Nishida, 1979).

The JTEs' enryo was observed in different ways. For instance, even the JTEs with high communicative English abilities took a passive role in TT classes, doing assisting work and classroom chores. The JTEs seemed to be passive about giving direct opinions as well. AET3 said that the JTEs seldom gave negative opinions about their TT classes and when they did, it was done so subtly that it was hard for the AETs to understand.

Furthermore, sasshi was not interpreted correctly by the AETs or they were unaware of it. JTE2 told a story about misunderstandings with AET2:

> At the beginning of TT with [AET2], I did all the preparation, because I did not want to burden her. She had just . . . started her career as a new AET. But I came to notice her bored face in class and I first interpreted this as a lack in work motivation. After a while, I found out that she actually had a desire for teaching and planning more actively and that my actions, which I thought considerate, just demotivated her. (JTE 2, 15 Mar 2002)

Thus, enryo and sasshi can be transmitted correctly in the Japanese culture, which has more collectivistic and indirect features, but the AETs misinterpreted the acts negatively based on their individualistic and direct cultural standards. Furthermore, the AETs' preference for being treated as independent individuals was apparent. JTE6 said,

> AETs do not like to be told to do something without discussing the reasons for that. AETs tend to see things with reasons and need to be convinced, while JTEs do things with feelings. In other words, AETs want to be treated as independent colleagues, not obedient subordinates. (20 Oct 2003)

AET4 also related an anecdote illustrating the Japanese teachers' tendency to treat him as a helpless foreigner:

> One time I asked for a key to enter a room, and the Japanese teacher insisted on going to the room with me . . . . He kindly showed how to open it with the key. But it was just a regular simple key, you know. . . . Assisting and depending on each other can be welcomed in Japan for har-

> monious relationships, but I almost felt that the JTE was going through all the trouble not because of kindness, but because he considered me a helpless guest from overseas. . . . I am incapable of being a responsible colleague. (AET4, 12 Mar 2002)

This episode indicates that the JTE's warm consideration for and interest in the AET were interpreted negatively as an insult or the treatment of a subordinate. The Japanese indirect communication style supported by the preference for mutual dependence was negatively evaluated due to the AET's value of being treated as an equal independent individual.

Cross-Cultural Experiences: JTEs as Native Insiders vs. AETs as Cultural Outsiders

AET7 said that her foreign appearance attracted people's attention outside the school, which made her realize that she was a minority in the rural community. AETs are also minorities linguistically and culturally. AET5 said,

> Japanese people are kind, but I feel some distance. . . . they won't accept me in their family-knit circle. (20 Oct 2003)

AET7 confessed to her isolation in the school:

> Every once in a while, when I hear all the other JTEs talking in Japanese and . . . I wish I knew what they were saying, I feel sometimes left out. (AET7, 10 Nov 2003)

As a result, some AETs came to perceive themselves as temporary sojourners to avoid isolation as a cultural minority. AET5 and AET6 used the phrase "I'm not Japanese" several times when they discussed cultural differences. AET5 said,

> After 6 months, I started to realize that I'm here to represent my culture, not to become Japanese. . . . I'm happy being an American. . . . I don't feel any need to leave my culture. (AET5, 20 Oct 2003)

AET3 elaborated on his frustrated feelings, pointing out the JTEs' lack of cross-cultural experience:

> Besides, there are only a few foreigners here, so we are watched for curiosity for 24 hours by Japanese. . . . They don't understand our difficult situation, because most of them have never been abroad. (AET3, 7 Mar 2002)

Among the eight JTEs, only two of them had more than 6 months of overseas experience. Moreover, the JTEs reported that they did not notice any major cross-cultural misunderstandings with the AETs. The fact that the JTEs had encountered new AETs every 2 or 3 years seemed to lessen their focus on cross-cultural issues. JTE1 said,

> We've gotten overall information about the characters and inclinations of Americans through our TT experience over the years. . . . Now I can anticipate what type of person my new partner is after teaching several classes with him/her. (27 Feb 2002)

In contrast, most AETs have had no extensive contact with Japanese people and have to work with multiple JTEs all at once. Presumably, the JTEs' extensive contact with AETs has increased their knowledge about AETs, but not given them an understanding of the AETs' feelings and difficulties as cultural minorities. This may result in the JTEs' understanding of these cultural differences as individual personality differences.

Discussion

The interviews showed that the JTEs accepted the status differences while the AETs preferred more equality between teachers and students. The JTEs' authoritarian figure, lecture-style teaching, and strict evaluation standards were all affected by the Japanese cultural norm of accepting status differences between teachers and students. The expectation that the JTEs be respectable knowledge providers helped to create their perfectionist image.

In contrast, the AETs valued active learners, the teacher role as a facilitator, and interesting classes, which indicated more closeness or equality between students and teachers. However, their classroom actions were criticized by the JTEs due to the responsibility of preparing students for entrance exams. The JTEs questioned the validity of the AETs' fun classes with group activities and were skeptical of students' actual educational development in TT classes, which has contributed to a loss of legitimacy vis-à-vis team teaching (Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004). Cross-cultural discrepancies in teacher beliefs, which are influenced by socio-cultural norms, seem to make it difficult to change pedagogical principles in TT settings.

Student discipline was the most controversial issue. In spite of the JTEs' authoritarian image, their mild attitude to student discipline was severely criticized by the AETs. Miyahara (2004) remarked that the JTEs show a "disciplined" teacher image on one hand and closeness and intimacy with students on the other as Japanese cultural practice (p. 132). As one JTE stated, JTEs need to treat the class as a whole because of the large class size and overlook individual misbehavior in class in order to save time and energy. However, the most possible interpretation might be that the JTEs' discipline style is the result of their support of educational egalitarianism in which they avoid direct confrontation with students because they are reacting to a history of a militaristic style of education (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

Nonetheless, differences outside the classroom are more complicated and subtle. For instance, understandings of professionalism were different, an indication of different societal and cultural expectations toward teachers and education. It turned out that the JTEs felt an enormous pressure to make sacrificial devotion to students, which obliged them to bear a heavy workload. This seemed to lead to the JTEs' envy of the AETs, who were free from the same societal pressure. The JTEs' sacrificial professionalism, which was accepted as common sense in the Japanese collectivistic culture, clashed with the AETs' different perceptions of professionalism, influenced by a western individualistic culture. Without understanding the AETs' different interpretation of professionalism and using their own standards, the JTEs had a low evaluation of the AETs' work attitude.

As for the JTEs' enryo and sasshi, Bowers (1988) observed that those values create difficulty in classroom communication in English teaching settings in Japan. However, the JTEs' enryo can also be seen as a power issue between NSs and NNSs. JTE2 tried to convince himself to become AET2's assistant because of the students, in spite of the fact that the AET's official status was only that of an assistant. Due to NS language superiority and high sociopolitical image, the Japanese students and the JTEs themselves tended to believe in the native speaker fallacy. The AETs' socio-cultural power, which is derived from Japanese society's support of the supremacy of NS English and its speakers (Butler, 2005; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004), also induces Japanese people's special treatment of AETs as exotic guests from overseas, which was not appreciated by the AETs. As was seen in AET4's anecdote about the room key, the AET's sense of independence was infringed upon by the JTE, who might have regarded dependence on one another as cooperation for creating harmonious relationships.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Further Study

TT is challenging for teachers because of the complexity of TT relationships. Although many other issues such as power-sharing between AETs and JTEs were involved in the TT relationships, cross-cultural misunderstandings contributed to the complexity.

The major limitation of this study is that I collected the data 10 years ago and JTE-AET relationships may have changed over the years. However, my audience at the JALT2012 conference agreed with and supported the results of this study, probably because fundamental cultural norms and inclinations rarely change in a decade or so, and therefore, the intercultural and interpersonal relationships between JTEs and AETs have not changed much. Nonetheless, for further research, more recent data should be collected in order to assure the validity of my assumptions.

It is recommended that local boards of education provide on-the-job training programs on intercultural communication and conflict solution for both parties, AETs and JTEs, to reduce unnecessary conflicts. Although efforts to improve the problems have already been made by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) by offering JET seminars and publications as well as a counseling service for AETs called "JET Line" (CLAIR, 2013), there are still difficulties for both parties. It is also suggested that JTEs and even Japanese teachers in other subjects should be given the opportunity of extensive overseas experiences, which would provide JTEs the experience of being a linguistic and cultural minority as well as help increase their self-confidence in their communicative English abilities. Even if AETs come to Japan with a full sense of their international exchange duties, they will not get psychological support from people of the local culture. Having JTEs with overseas experience and more encounters with different cross-cultural values might lead to a better understanding of AETs' struggles in adapting to Japanese culture as foreigners and outsiders, which could thus help to build positive TT relationships.

Bio Data

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Exploring Taiwanese Primary English Education: Teachers' Concerns and Students' Perceptions

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Taiwan officially started elementary school English education from Grade 5 in 2001 and from Grade 3 in 2005, and it is known as one of the countries neighboring Japan that exert strenuous efforts to promote English education. This study was conducted to investigate how elementary school teachers and their students perceived English education in an elementary school in Hsinchu, a major city in Taiwan. The researchers observed Grade 5 and 6 classes and interviewed a total of 24 students and 4 of their Taiwanese and foreign teachers. The results showed that the teachers had intense enthusiasm about grammar teaching and strong concerns about connecting the English education in elementary school with that of junior high school. Students, however, revealed that they had difficulties in acquiring English skills such as spelling and grammar knowledge while they found learning English to be important for their futures.

台湾は2001年に小学校5年生より導入した英語教育を2005年には小学校3年生からに引き下げるなど、英語教育を精力的に推し進めている隣国の一つである。この研究は、小学校英語教育において日本に先駆けている台湾で、小学校教員および児童が英語教育をどのように捉えているのかを調査したものである。調査校は台湾の主要都市のひとつである新竹市の市街地にある小学校で、5, 6年生の授業観察に加えて、24人の児童と4人の台湾人および外国人教員へのインタビューを行った。得られたデータの分析の結果、教師は中学への接続および文法指導が非常に重要であると感じていた。また、児童は、英語は将来役に立つと考えている一方で、綴りをはじめとするスキル中心の授業に困難を感じていることが強くうかがわれた。

Taiwan is one of the countries neighboring Japan that exert strenuous efforts to promote elementary school English education. According to the 9-Year Joint Curriculum Plan announced by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan in 2000, English education for students in grades 5 and 6 was to start in 2001. However, many cities and prefectures started English education before 2001, and in several urban cities such as Taipei, Hsinchu, and Taichung the students started learning English in grade 1. In order to narrow the gap between regions, the government decided to change its starting year to grade 3 in 2003, and the decision was implemented in 2005. Nevertheless, Taiwanese elementary school English education still has regional gaps: Some cities teach English starting in grade 1, and in Taipei city, students in grades 5 and 6 have three 40-minute classes per week at present.

The objectives of the English curriculum for Grades 1-9 are as follows:

1. improve students' basic communicative competence in reading, writing, speaking, and listening;

2. prepare students to make effective use of English language and knowledge;
3. choose topics relevant to students' daily lives, needs, and interests;
4. help develop students' autonomy in learning English;
5. address cross-cultural issues (e.g., social customs);
6. incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening into class activities; and
7. incorporate the use of technology in classes. (Su, 2006, p. 267)

In contrast to the curriculum of Foreign Language Activities, which was introduced into the core curriculum in Japan in 2011, the curriculum of Taiwanese English education is highly skill based; for instance, at the end of grade 6 children must have acquired at least 300 English words for oral communication and must be able to write 180 words as productive vocabulary. Skills students need to acquire are described in detail in the form of can-do statements covering the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and encompassing 9 years of English education.

To meet these goals, the teachers must be highly proficient in English; the government requires a TOEFL score of higher than 213 in the CBT (i.e., PBT: 550; iBT: 79-80). The Taiwanese Ministry of Education also makes efforts to establish a special teaching curriculum for fostering the skills of elementary school English teachers in a short period of time and to provide financial support for in-service teachers' training. The government also sends selected teachers abroad to participate in English seminars and professional development programs (MEXT, 2005). Furthermore, foreign teachers, who are native speakers of English with a teacher's license obtained in their native countries, are hired to supplement the number of English teachers, especially in rural areas (Beh, 2007). They are employed to support Taiwanese English teachers by co-teaching with them as well as by creating teaching materials.

The purpose of this study was to examine how elementary school teachers and their students perceive English education in Taiwan and to gain insights from Taiwanese English education.

For this study we used the theoretical framework of language teacher cognition constructed by Borg (2006). Based on the literature both in general and language education, Borg claimed that language teacher cognition is shaped by learning through schooling and professional coursework as well as classroom practice, which as a whole impacts language teaching. It is, therefore, of great importance to investigate what cognitions lie behind teachers' English language instruction.

Beh (2006) maintained that there were three factors that contributed to the implementation of elementary school English education in Taiwan: (a) neighboring countries' lowering of the age at which English was introduced, (b) growing demand of the society to start English education at public schools, and (c) increased interest in global competition. In this study we were especially concerned with the second factor, which might affect classroom practice as a contextual factor.

Literature Review

Research studies about Taiwanese teachers' perceptions regarding elementary school English education in Taiwan have revealed the teachers' need for high English proficiency. Butler (2004), for example, conducted comparative case studies on elementary school teachers' current and desired English proficiencies in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Self-accessing their English proficiency levels on a 5-level scale, Taiwanese teachers rated their current English proficiencies higher than did the teachers from the other two nations, and this was also the case with their desired levels of English proficiency. With regard to the teach-

ers' perceptions about the goals of elementary school English education, Taiwanese teachers tended to feel that acquiring the written language was as important as acquiring oral skills, which Butler claimed is also the government policy for language teaching in Taiwan.

Another study (Su, 2006) showed that while Taiwanese teachers are positive about the implementation of English in elementary schools, they face difficulties in planning lessons due to the constraints of large class sizes and mixed proficiency levels, as well as having to cope with parental overreaction and high expectations for their children's English learning. In reality, according to Chen's (2011) survey held in the central part of Taiwan, parental expectation is so high that 73.2% of the parents send their children to cram schools. Three major reasons for this are: (a) they want their children to take a more advanced EFL program in the cram school; (b) they are anxious about their children's falling behind in school; and (c) it is the "fashion." As for the students, they agree that English is a useful tool for them to pursue a better life in the future (Chen, 2011).

These studies show that both teachers and parents are enthusiastic about English education, but few studies have examined teachers' and students' perceptions from a teacher-cognition perspective. As knowing how teachers perceive English education is essential to understand why they choose particular teaching styles, we investigated what beliefs the teachers had about English education. We also investigated students' perceptions about the English instruction they were receiving. Studies have shown that if students like their English lessons, they are more motivated to study. Kunimoto (2005) conducted a study on the psychological factors of elementary school students learning English and found that the more the students liked English learning, the higher their willingness to communicate became. Through the use of a questionnaire, Fuchigami (2009) also demonstrated how the like or dislike of English activities among grade 6 students influenced their perceived achievement and their motivation in English when they were in grade 7. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) examined demotivators of Japanese high school students learning English and found that test scores, learning contents, and materials were the students' demotivating factors. Sakai and Kikuchi suggested that lessons that focused on grammar, lessons that used textbooks that included long or difficult passages, and low test scores were all perceived as strongly demotivating, especially for less motivated learners.

Since teachers in the school we investigated engaged in co-teaching just as is done in Japan, we also examined how they collaborated in planning and administering lessons. The research questions addressed are:

1. What do elementary English teachers believe about elementary school English education in Taiwan, and how do the students perceive learning English?
2. What do teachers think about co-teaching between a foreign teacher and a Taiwanese teacher? More specifically, do they have any problems?

The Study

Site

The study was conducted at a public elementary school in Hsinchu city, Taiwan, in March 2012. In this school, grades 1 and 2 have one English class per week, which is team-taught by a Taiwanese teacher and a foreign teacher. Grades 3 through 6 have two English classes per week, one of which is team-taught and the other taught only by a Taiwanese teacher (see Table 1). It is important to note here that the Taiwanese teachers we interviewed were English teachers and they did not teach other subjects at the school. In other schools in Taiwan, homeroom teachers teach all subjects including English. The school in

our study used textbooks provided by the Hsinchu municipal government.

Table 1. English Classes

Characteristics	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-6
Number of classes per week	one 40-minute class	two 40-minute classes
Teaching styles	Co-teaching (a Taiwanese teacher and a native speaker of English)	Co-teaching (a Taiwanese teacher and a native speaker of English) Solo teaching (a Taiwanese teacher)
Textbooks	Provided by the Hsinchu municipal government	

Participants

Four teachers, 12 students in grade 5, and 12 students in grade 6 participated in the semi-structured interviews. As is summarized in Table 2, Teacher A and Teacher P were Taiwanese, and Teacher T and Teacher J were foreign teachers who had teacher's licenses from their home countries. Taiwanese Teacher A started teaching English in the school under study in 2007, whereas Teacher P had completed an MA in TESOL in the UK. Teacher T was the only male foreign teacher in the school. He was born in the Philippines and moved to Canada with his family when he was in elementary school. Teacher J first started teaching English at a cram school in Taiwan soon after she graduated from college in South Africa. She had been teaching in this school for 3 1/2 years.

Table 2. Demographic Data of the Teachers

Identifier	Sex	Teaching experience	Nationality
Teacher A	Female	5 years	Taiwan
Teacher P	Female	11 years	Taiwan
Teacher T	Male	10 years	Canada
Teacher J	Female	3.5 years	South Africa

Six students were chosen, based on the Taiwanese teachers' assessment, from the upper and lower levels in each grade; that is, we had 12 top students and 12 bottom students from grades 5 and 6 combined. This was to balance out the students' English levels in the study and also to investigate if differences in students' English levels had any influence on their perceptions. We interviewed 12 students each in 2 days. The interviews took 10 minutes per student.

Method

Triangulation was used to collect the data, that is, by class observation, field notes, and semi-structured interviews both with teachers and students. We observed nine classes from grade 1 to grade 6 that amounted to 360 minutes, but we analyzed only two 40-minute lessons from grades 5 and 6 as we focused on these two grades in this study. We conducted the student interviews separately, with Taiwanese speakers as interpreters. One interpreter was a teacher from the school, who interpreted between English and Chinese, and the other was a fluent speaker of Japanese who interpreted between Japanese and Chinese. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and summarized into graphs.

Results

Class Observations

A grade 6 class conducted by Teacher P and Teacher T included routines, that is, asking about the date, the weather, and feelings; pattern practice; grammar explanation on prepositions and *be-verb* past tense; comprehension check by translating English into Chinese, and a lot of repetition drills of words and phrases the teachers introduced. A grade 5 class conducted by Teacher A and Teacher J was a review lesson of words, sounds, and spellings through playing games. This game-based lesson seemed as if it was conducted just for fun, but from the teachers' point of view, it was also for reminding students of what they had learned.

The Taiwanese teachers maintained rather formal and strict attitudes, whereas the foreign teachers appeared easygoing and made the classroom atmosphere pleasant. The students learned English through games and language activities, after they were taught grammar and new vocabulary explicitly. In the classes, foreign teachers almost always spoke English. Taiwanese teachers mostly spoke English, too, even when they introduced grammar items, but they also added detailed explanations in Chinese. While the foreign teachers mainly spoke, the Taiwanese teachers led and controlled the co-taught lessons.

Teachers' Perceptions

Bridging the Gap Between Elementary School and Junior High School

Teacher P, teaching grade 6 classes, was quite conscious about connecting English education at elementary school with that of junior high school. She believed that explicit grammar teaching and tests for checking comprehension were indispensable, and in fact her lessons were aimed at students' acquisition of English skills such as producing sentences and spelling words correctly. She was not satisfied with the *fun* ways of teaching, such as through games, that the government suggested. Teacher P said,

> Now they want us to play games to entertain the students . . . to have a happier atmosphere in class. Just don't want the kids feel bored or feel stressed. But I don't think they can learn a lot in that kind of way.

Teachers also struggled with the proficiency gaps among the students, and Teacher A was annoyed at the impolite manners of advanced level students. She said,

> Those rich parents, they let their kids start their English learning from when they are in kindergarten or something like that. So those kids, they think that, "My English is great, and teacher, what you taught us is too easy. So, I don't want to listen to you." Some students are so good, and some students almost know nothing. So those students won't listen to you, and they're kind of rude. That really bothers us.

However, even though teachers knew that many of the students had already learned the material at cram schools, they had no choice but to teach starting with the basics if there were students who had not gone to a cram school.

Co-Teaching

All four teachers were quite positive about co-teaching between a Taiwanese teacher and a foreign teacher, but in different ways. Teacher P (Taiwanese) talked about the parents: "Parents are happy because their children can have a chance to hear native English speakers' pronunciation." Teacher A (Taiwanese) pointed out the skill of classroom management: "Lessons without a Taiwanese teacher will not work because some children

might not behave themselves if they are taught only by a foreign teacher." Teacher T (foreign teacher) referred to the languages: "It is a waste of time if I take 3-5 minutes to explain something which can be explained in a second by a Taiwanese teacher in Chinese." All the teachers agreed that using the students' native language provided effective support, especially for slow learners and those who did not attend cram school.

The Taiwanese teachers and the foreign teachers seemed to be cooperating well in their jobs. The Taiwanese teachers made the syllabus based on the textbooks while the foreign teachers made the lesson plans and played the main role when they co-taught. Taiwanese teachers planned their solo lessons, but they had discussions with the foreign teachers about what should be covered in each lesson.

Students' Perceptions

The first question to the students was whether they liked English or not (Figure 1). Students were asked to respond on a scale of 1-5, 5 being *strongly agree*, and 1 being *strongly disagree*. The results showed that only a little more than half of the students (54%) liked English. This percentage is rather low and we speculated that this could be because students were referring to English as a subject rather than as a class when asked if they liked English. Some grade 6 students often mentioned they liked English because their foreign teacher was "funny" and that they enjoyed playing games during the classes. Their responses might indicate that some students who responded *strongly agree* or *agree* did not like English as a subject but liked English as a class. In fact, among the students who neither liked nor disliked English (10 responses), some said they liked games, but they did not like taking tests, memorizing the words, or learning to spell them correctly. Indeed many more students may have responded more positively if we had asked if they liked English as a class. We should have clarified this point.

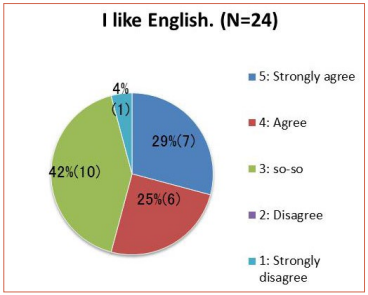

Figure 1. Students' Like or Dislike of English Learning

The second question was if they thought learning English was important (Figure 2). About 80% of the students responded that learning English was important. Some students mentioned that English was a tool for communicating with foreigners, and others said that it would be useful in their future. Some students responded that learning English was important because their parents said so. Another student, who rated it as a 3, said that English was necessary when speaking with a foreigner, but not with Taiwanese people.

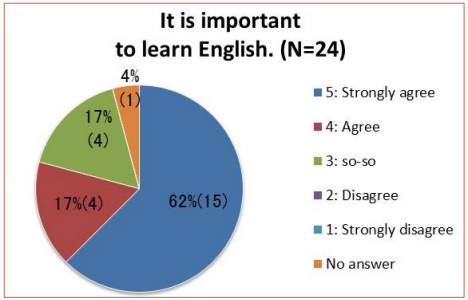

Figure 2. Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Learning English

Figure 3 shows how much the students understood what their teachers were saying. More than half of the students answered that they understood 80% or more.

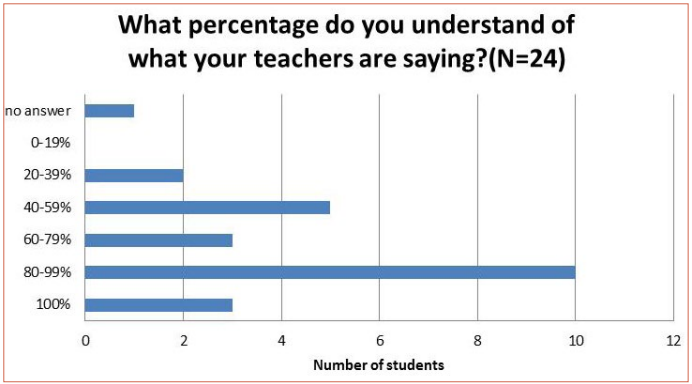

Figure 3. Students' Perceptions of Their Understanding of English

The next question was about their attendance at cram schools or English language schools (Figure 4). We asked this question to find out if our participants were attending English conversation schools because a high percentage of Taiwanese children are known to do so (Chen, 2011; Su, 2006). As it turns out, 71% of the students attended cram schools or English conversation schools. The length of classes varied depending on the school, but classes were usually 60 to 120 minutes.

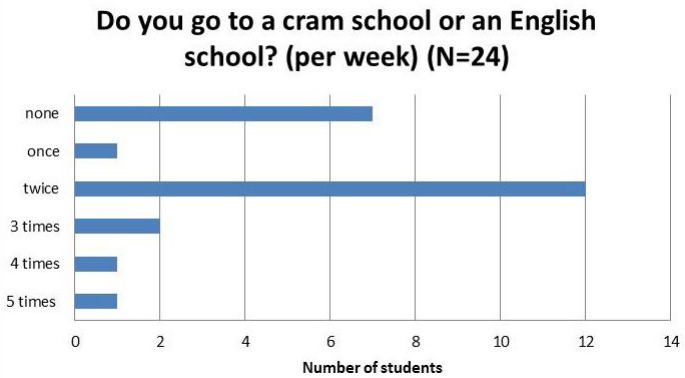

Figure 4. Frequency of Students' Cram School Attendance

Students' preferred teaching styles are shown in Figure 5. Eighty-eight percent of the students responded that they preferred co-teaching because Taiwanese teachers could help them in Chinese when they did not understand what teachers said in English. Another student said, "The more teachers we have, the more creative the lessons will be." Two students preferred classes taught only by a foreign teacher. One said that she could learn more in a foreign teacher's class, and the other said that a lesson without any Chinese would give her more chances to practice English conversation.

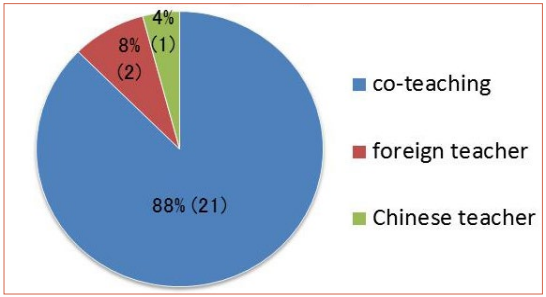

Figure 5. Students' Preferred Teaching Style (N = 24)

Discussion

The Taiwanese teachers considered that elementary school English education (ESEE) was not well connected to junior high school English education (JHEE) and that there was a huge level gap between the two. The elementary school English teachers knew what was taught in junior high schools and claimed there was a strong need to connect ESEE and JHEE by focusing on teaching English skills. They perceived that it was their responsibility to teach grammar and writing in order to alleviate the difficulties that their students might experience in learning English in junior high school.

The Taiwanese teachers mainly taught grammatical skills while the foreign teachers read stories and played games with students. The lessons were mainly taught in English, but Chinese was added where necessary and especially when details about grammar were explained.

While more than 80% of the students thought English was important to communicate with foreigners, only 54% of them responded that they liked English or English class. More than half of the students also answered they could understand more than 80% of what their teachers said, and about 70% of the students studied English in cram schools. While the high percentage of the students' understanding of lessons may be the result of vigorous lessons conducted by enthusiastic teachers, strong emphasis on skill-based teaching may be the reason why only about half of the students liked English, as skill-based lessons are usually followed by a test, which is a demotivator (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Teachers cannot ignore this rather low percentage of students who like English, as this influences their willingness to communicate (Kunimoto, 2005) and their perceived achievement (Fuchigami, 2009).

The teachers' strong emphasis on skills and intensive skill-based teaching comes from their strong belief that building English skills is a way to improve students' English ability. They insisted that no learning would take place without teaching grammar, reading, and writing. These teachers are highly proficient English teachers who themselves learned English as a foreign language and have been teaching English at elementary schools for more than 5 years. Just as they believed about teaching English in Taiwan, it may indeed be inevitable to teach grammar in Japan as well, if we want students to improve their English abilities. What is important is not to avoid teaching English skills altogether but to consider how much we can incorporate teaching English skills in elementary school, and more importantly, to devise how the skills can be taught to elementary school students. Teachers must devise ways of teaching (e.g., activities) that suit elementary school students' developmental level. This should also be remembered in Japan when we think of connecting English education in elementary school with that of junior high school.

In the co-teaching that we observed, each teacher played a complementary role, with the foreign teacher giving plentiful oral input and the Taiwanese teacher consolidating the lesson by supplementing it with grammatical explanations. Their co-taught lessons were well devised and well implemented.

Students were active in class, and as a whole the classes were impressive. This style of co-teaching is possible because the Taiwanese English teachers have high English proficiency with good communication skills. When we think about effective co-teaching, we once again are reminded about the importance of teacher training to cultivate teachers' English abilities and teaching skills.

Conclusion

This study investigated through class observations, field notes, and interviews how elementary school teachers and their students perceived English education in Taiwan. Through our study, we found that the Taiwanese teachers stress teaching English skills in elementary schools. This is because they perceive that it is their job to connect elementary school English education to that of junior high school and that the teaching of skills was paramount in doing so. In our experience, teacher cognition in Japan seems more like how junior high school English can expand the knowledge students have gained in elementary school, but the Taiwanese teachers' cognition was to bring up the level of elementary students to that of junior high school.

English is not an official subject in elementary school in Japan currently and is only a foreign language activity, but if it is introduced into the core curriculum, elementary schools may be expected to raise the level of their English education so that it will connect better to that of junior high school, as is being done in Taiwan. Making English an official subject in Japan may also require highly proficient English teachers: Teachers may have to teach English skills, and teaching those skills may indeed be necessary to cultivate students' English proficiency and communicative abilities. One may worry that teaching skills to elementary school children may cause them to dislike learning English; however, the current English education in Japan will not lead students to have high English proficiency as the curriculum is not developed and many teachers are not qualified as English teachers. We need to develop a sound curriculum as soon as possible and send proficient English teachers to elementary schools to better connect elementary English education to that of junior and senior high schools and to truly "cultivate Japanese with English abilities" (MEXT, 2003).

Limitations and Future Studies

There are some limitations in this research. First, since we were not able to speak Taiwanese, and some students wanted to speak English even though their proficiency in English was limited, there might have been some gaps between what the interviewees meant and what the interviewers perceived. Secondly, the research was conducted only in a single school, and research into more schools is needed if we are to generalize about English education in Taiwan.

Part of this study was based on students' perceptions. Although more than half of the students responded that they understood more than 80% of the lessons in English, we need more objective data to measure their English proficiency and whether the English education in Taiwan is truly effective. Also, only 54% of students responded that they liked English, but we need to investigate their likes and dislikes in relation to the skill-based teaching and the students' English levels. In addition, the current study covered teacher cognition and students' perceptions only in grades 5 and 6. Future research may employ a study on earlier English education (grades 1 through 4) to find out about teacher cognition about younger and lower English level students as this may also influence instruction and therefore students' likes and dislikes of English language learning.

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Revising English Education at the University Level

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In this paper I address some of the issues outlined by the Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry (METI) concerning the lack of "global human resources" in Japan. Two questions are addressed: *Is it necessary to teach English at the university level? and How can we use technology in the classroom to assist Japanese students?* I propose that by teaching skillsets using English as the communication medium, students will be able to learn how to use the language to communicate and collaborate, plus they will learn necessary skills that they can use once they enter the workforce. The technology issues are addressed so as to suggest ways to have students effectively collaborate using a learning management system (LMS) that simulates a working environment. Through these proposed teaching methods, Japanese students will be more prepared to be global human resources.

この論文で筆者は経済産業省が育成を推進している「グローバル人材」の日本での不足に関するいくつかの問題について述べる。主にふたつの疑問を取り上げる。「大学のレベルで、英語を教えるということが必要なのか?」そして「授業でどのようにテクノロジーを使えば日本人学生を支援することができるのか?」筆者は、ただ英語を教えるのではなく、コミュニケーション手段として英語を使うスキルを教えることによって、学生が意思伝達や共同作業に語学を使う方法を自ら学び、就職後に必要なスキルを学ぶことになるのだと提案する。テクノロジーの問題を述べるのは、作業環境をシミュレートするコース管理システム（LMS）を使って学生が効果的に共同作業する方法を提案するためである。ここで提案された教授法を通して、日本人学生はグローバル人材となるためのより効果的な準備ができるであろう。

The Japanese Ministry of Economics, Trade and Industry (METI, 2010) released a document in both Japanese and English outlining the problem of Japan's lack of "global human resources," global human resources being Japanese who can "be active in the global environment." In their document they outlined these issues:

1. Japanese enterprises are being overlooked in the world market.
2. Young Japanese people tend to stay in Japan.
3. Japanese universities require more globalization.
4. The largest problem in overseas development is "Human Resources."

English teachers in Japan, whether they are native speakers of English or nonnative speakers of English, have a significant presence in the classroom and although their focus is to teach English, they are in the best position to approach these issues. The Ministry of Education,

Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) have also addressed these issues (2011), particularly the fourth one. The first three issues outlined by METI will not be addressed in this paper, but in addressing the problem of the lack of human resources, some benefit may emanate to them. In this paper I will examine the relationship between teaching English at the university level and the concept of global human resources. To do this I first turn to the document issued by METI and how they defined global human resources.

Global Human Resources

METI (2010, p. 6) stated their definition of what global human resources can do. In this world where globalization is in progress, global human resources can:

- think independently;
- make themselves easily understood by their colleagues, business acquaintances, and customers having various backgrounds;
- overcome differences in values and characteristics arising from cultural and historical backgrounds;
- understand others and consider their standpoints;
- further take advantage of their differences to build synergy; and
- create new values.

Stemming from this definition of global human resources, three abilities have been proposed that identify skillsets that young Japanese need in order to be competitive in the global market and therefore become global human resources. They are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Abilities Commonly Required for Global Human Resources (METI, 2010, p. 7)

Abilities required	Details	
Communication ability in foreign language	Particularly English, which is widely used in the world	
Ability to understand and take advantage of different cultures	To take actions while being aware of the existence of differences in values and communication methods on the basis of diversified backgrounds and histories (= cultural differences)	
	Not to judge cultural differences as good or bad, but to be interested in and understand differences and take flexible actions	
	To recognize strengths of diverse people with cultural differences and to use such strengths for the creation of new values through a synergetic effect	
Fundamental competencies for working persons*	Ability to step forward (action) Ability to try patiently even after failure	Identity Ability to take actual actions Ability to work on others
	Ability to work in a team (teamwork) Ability to cooperate with diversified people in achieving a goal	Ability to provide information Flexibility Submission to discipline Ability to listen carefully Ability to understand situations Ability to control stress
	Ability to think well (thinking) Ability to ask questions and think well	Ability to find problems Ability to plan Ability to create

Note. * This is a concept proposed by METI, for common abilities required for a person to work with various people in the workplace or local society.

The abilities outlined in Table 1 provide an overall picture of what is needed to provide the students with the tools to become global human resources for Japan. To summarize, global human resources as outlined by METI should be able to communicate in a language such as English, be able to work in teams with people of different cultures, and to be able to come up with new ideas and know how to act on them in a global setting.

As EFL educators, we have inadvertently chosen to educate these future Japanese workers only in the first ability of being able to communicate in a foreign language, particularly English. Yet, I propose that this is not enough. Actually, I nominate that this is not what we should be teaching. When students enter university, they already have a basic knowledge of English, having studied at the junior high and high school levels. This can be used to the advantage of the teachers who are responsible for furthering their English education. At the university level, the mandates by both METI and MEXT should be carried out by English instructors who have a culturally rich background and the ability to assist young Japanese in all three skills listed in Table 1. To explain why I think this should be done, I will offer two questions to challenge the fundamentals of how and what we teach, to confront the mandate proposed by METI:

1. Is it necessary to teach English at the university level?
2. How can we use technology in the classroom to assist Japanese students?

Before moving on to these questions, I want to discuss the current situation of English in Japan.

English Education

English at the Junior High School and High School Levels

As teachers in Japan are aware, university entrance exams are a grueling experience for any high school student trying to enter university (Browne & Wada, 1998). Due to the high level of English required in university entrance exams, English curricula are designed to help the students prepare for them, and this is referred to as the "washback" effect (Bailey, 1999; Cook, 2013). Starting at the junior high school level and now even in elementary school, students are taught grammar and listening and there is very little focus on communicative abilities, a negative washback effect of the examination system (Bailey, 1999). Since there is no emphasis placed on communicative abilities in the university entrance exams, there is no emphasis placed on communicative abilities in the school curricula (Cook, 2013) and teachers may not feel comfortable teaching oral communication (Browne & Wada, 1998). Students have a minimum of 6 years of English, 3 years each in both junior high and high schools. Based on corpus studies of English textbooks used at the junior high and senior high school levels, Chujo (2004) determined that students should have the ability to pass the Practical English Proficiency Test (*Jitsuyō Eigo Ginō Kentei*, informally known as Eiken) Level 2 test by the end of high school, which is the equivalent of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) level B1 (Eiken, 2013). This may not be the case in all schools throughout Japan, but based on this information, it can be concluded that the curriculum and focus of the education towards the university tests, students have been exposed to a great deal of English and do have an understanding of English to some degree, although their communication skills are lacking (Cook, 2013; Lam, 2012).

Misplaced Focus of University English Education

To understand the English education situation at the university level, I made inquiries of various publishers about the current popular textbooks for 1st-year university classes. I will not disclose the names of any of the publishers that I spoke to, nor will I reveal textbook titles out of simple courtesy, but similar inquir-

ies can easily be made. In these discussions with the publishers, I was directed to textbooks that had topics to do with vacations, directions, things people eat, and health issues. The textbooks include sample conversations, vocabulary lists, listening and writing exercises, as well as various grammar points. There are other textbooks that cover various environmental topics with fact sheets and comprehension questions. Even from personal experience I have seen handouts that teachers provide their students that are no more than a junior high school level of past participle rote memorization and drills. I am not advocating that this kind of curriculum does not have its place in classrooms, but I am suggesting that in the university level classroom there should be a greater emphasis on exposing students to language that is more compatible with their career tracks, the language that they will be exposed to upon graduating and entering a global market (deBoer, 2011). Above all, they should be learning the skills they will need to use that language. At the university level, the walls of the classroom need to come down and there needs to be a seamless integration of study and exposure to the outside world (Resnick, 1987; van Lier, 1996).

Inappropriate Use of Technology

Although technology is being accepted into higher education for teaching purposes, there are a number of issues in higher education that are centered on the improper use of technology and the lack of the process both in learning and teaching in education (Conole, Smith, & White, 2007; Engeström & Sannino, 2012). There has been a move to improve teaching and learning in higher education since the introduction of computers (McConnell, 2000) and the rapid development of the technology certainly influences the way we teach and learn, as suggested by policy makers (DfES, 2005). However, the side effect of rapid development has not been a healthy one. Löfström, Kanerva, Tuuttila, Lehtinen and Nevgi (2006, p. 37) stated that the educational solutions should guide the selection of technology and software, but this is not normally the case because the management of the technology constantly lags behind the technological changes (Conole et al., 2007). So while the emergence of technology brings about excitement regarding the possibilities for its use in the classroom, purchasing the latest technology becomes more important than incorporating it effectively into education solutions to advance the capabilities for learning. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education stated that "technology should be the servant and not the master of instruction. It should not be adopted merely because it exists" (cited in Gentry, 1995, p. 3). From their perspective, new technology is a tool that should not stand in the way of students' learning, but should only be used as an accessory to allow them to do things that traditional technologies cannot offer (Laurillard, 2002). In a recent article, Brown, Castellano, Hughes and Worth (2013), introduced new technology into their classroom to measure the effectiveness of its implementation. The implementation itself seemed to have mixed reviews and although the authors may have meant well, the article focused little on the English education and the process of what the students were doing.

E-learning

Also, with the provision of e-learning, there seems to be little concern with design of e-learning courses (Conole, 2013; Laurillard, 2002; McConnell, 2006), and many courses online provide nothing more than reading material in the form of PDFs. Interaction between students is an important aspect of their development and that is a significant point underpinning networked collaborative e-learning (Banks, Lally, & McConnell, 2003). From the 1990s to the present, a vast array of technologies have emerged, and there was a shift from the focus of using technology as a tool for individual learning (using simple software packages) to one in which collaboration can occur through a

complex online learning management system (LMS) (Conole & Oliver, 2007; DfES, 2005) such as Moodle (Dougiamas, 2011). Activating students to collaborate does not happen automatically, so this requires advanced planning of courses and the roles of the individuals in the courses (Brooks, Nolan, & Gallagher, 2001; Laurillard, 2002). Despite the excellent advances of technology, the shift from textbooks and dedicated software packages to online collaboration has not happened because transferring textbooks to an online environment defeats the purpose of the technology. The implementation of technology should assist the process of education. As Stockwell, editor of the *JALT CALL Journal*, observed, "the learning process seems to come to a poor second to the affordances of the technology" (2010, p. 151). Engeström also commented that the process of learning or learning processes are pervasive throughout the literature yet there is no theoretical content behind this (Engeström & Sannino, 2012). In the second language learning environment, it seems that too much focus has been placed on the technology to facilitate language learning rather than on the process by which language is learned with technology used to assist. With this in mind, we should examine more of the process and how the process of learning can assist the mandate of METI.

Developing the Abilities Required for Global Human Resources

A Solution to the Problem: The ICT Contents Project

Students entering university potentially have an English ability that ranges from level 3 Eiken to level 2 Eiken. This is a good foundation to be able to build on, not necessarily to further increase vocabulary and grammar knowledge, but to teach the students the skills to use what they already have.

At Iwate University, we have implemented an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) program that is a potential solution to achieving the three abilities that METI has outlined for human global resources. I will outline the program briefly before detailing a segment of a course, which I will map against the abilities in Table 1.

Implementing ICT Contents

The ICT Contents project at Iwate University (deBoer, 2011) developed curriculum content packages that are based around the subjects of engineering, humanities, agriculture, and education. The packages consist of videos and quizzes. The videos are from different sources such as iTunesU, YouTube, and in-house student-created videos. The content of the videos was lexically analyzed using lextutor.ca (http://www.lextutor.ca) and from the resulting analysis, key words that were deemed academic or above the 1000 word level could be identified (Nation, 2001), as well as key phrases that were necessary for comprehension. Using these key words and phrases, questions were made that help students ascertain how the words or phrases are used in context. These questions were put into quizzes.

ICT Contents Into Courses

The videos and quizzes can then be implemented into courses inside an LMS, which in our case is Moodle (Dougiamas, 2011). The courses are designed to use the videos and quizzes to give students a starting point, then have them build on that to collaboratively produce posters, presentations, and reports. The syllabus is designed to put the onus on the students to learn and generate their own ideas and directions for their course work. Areas for collaboration are set up within the course space in Moodle and students can freely access the course using the Internet from any location at any time. In the following section I will outline a segment of a course to show how the students used the videos and the LMS to collaborate.

ICT Content Course Sample

Table 2 contains a 4-week excerpt from a course. The students used the videos as a starting point for information and vocabulary and then in groups they designed a PowerPoint presentation. The forums were used to share their scripts and slides with the group. Students in the groups provided feedback to each other to complete their presentations (deBoer & Townsend, 2013).

The students use the forums as a tool to collaborate; the focus of their communication is centered on the process of completing their presentation. In a recent publication, deBoer & Townsend (2012) showed how students can benefit from this type of classroom. There are guidelines when using the forums, for example students can use only English and they must communicate to the rest of their group any changes that were made to a slide or a script (deBoer & Townsend, 2013) rather than just upload a document without any explanation at all.

Technical Vocabulary

For some teachers, teaching English around a chemistry- or engineering-based curriculum would be difficult. Most of the words and phrases are academic or scientific as much of the content is centered on these contexts. In some literature the consensus is that it is not the English teacher's job to teach technical words (Cowan, 1974; Higgins, 1966) and others have noted that the "knowledge of the scientific language has given way to skill in maximizing restricted linguistic resources and the teacher's role has become more obviously that of an orchestrator of group activity" (Swales, 1984). Strevens (1973) points out that it is not necessarily the students who have trouble with technical words because it is their scientific field, rather, it may be the teacher who has difficulty. Removing responsibility from the teacher of having to teach the technical knowledge and putting the responsibility on the students to learn the technical language would

Table 2. Course Excerpt: The Process of Creating a Presentation

Lesson	Content	Details
1 face-to-face	Video and quiz package	Students watch the video and attempt the quiz and work in assigned groups to discuss the content and the vocabulary in the video. The teacher walks around the classroom and answers any questions the students may have.
1 (homework) on-line	Presentation preparation	Students use a forum in the LMS to begin discussing their presentation. The presentation information stems from the video and quiz, but also from other information students have sourced.
2 face-to-face	Script preparation	The class time is used to discuss the presentation scripts. The teacher circulates around the classroom answering questions and helping students with their English if necessary.
2 (homework) on-line	Presentation slides and script work	Students use the online forum to upload their slides and script and share them with the rest of their group.
3 face-to-face	Peer and teacher feedback on their presentations	During this face-to-face time, students take turns presenting to other groups and they can receive feedback on both their slides and their script.
3 (homework) on-line	Slide and script editing	Students use the online forum to help each other edit slides and their script based on the feedback they received.
4 face-to-face	Presentation	Students present to the class.

seem the most logical conclusion. The ICT Contents platform provides this arena for the students.

Creating a Strategy

Building an effective collaborative tool-mediated learning environment can be attributed to a simple rule. In Moodle, creating a course requires inputting resources and activities. (Resources are items that students see; activities are what students do.) Reducing the number of resources and increasing the number of activities puts more onus on the students to search for their own resources (Conole, 2007). This provides effective learning opportunities for the students (Vygotsky, 1926/1997). Building collaborative groups encourages the students to help and learn from each other (McConnell, 2000, 2006; Stahl, 2006; Vygotsky, 1930s/1978). A very clear course design is required to allow the students to focus on the content of learning (Laurillard, 2002), as is a constant evaluation of the process that the students are undertaking to make sure that they are meeting the goals set by the course design.

Using English as the medium for teaching and learning and introducing skills that help students understand the use of the language are the ideal solutions. As outlined in the following section, I have mapped the abilities commonly required for global human resources as mandated by METI to an ICT contents-based lesson.

Mapping METI Mandates to ICT Content

To compare the role of the ICT Contents to the METI mandates, Table 3 briefly outlines each part of the ICT Contents that is covered in this course and matches it to the corresponding METI mandate. By providing these details it will make it easier to see the links between what is being mandated and how the course was designed to follow the mandates.

Table 3. Mapping METI Mandates to ICT Content

METI Mandate	ICT Content	Details
Communication ability in foreign language	Content based lessons	Students work on presentations with content they have researched from the web.
Ability to understand and take advantage of different cultures	Introducing content that comes from other countries and cultures	Students are exposed to content from other countries and cultures.
Ability to step forward (action)	Presentations, posters, reports	Students need to plan and take action to get things done with their groups. These goals are clearly identified in the course design.
Ability to work in a team (teamwork)	Group collaboration in forums, presentations, posters, reports.	Students need to work in groups to get their projects complete. Deadlines are set by the course design.
Ability to think well (thinking)	All projects	Students have to think through their projects, determine steps, and carry those steps through to the end of their projects. Mediation with the teacher is also essential for guidance and for the teacher to determine the effectiveness of the course design.

METI—Communication Ability in a Foreign Language; ICT Content—Content-Based Lessons

Since the focus is not on the language, but instead on using the language to convey meaning, share thoughts, and develop argu-

ments, students are learning how to use the language in a way that teaches them to learn how to convey meaning (Halliday, 1975; Stahl, 2006; Wells, 1999). They can communicate through the forums in the LMS or in the face-to-face environment (de-Boer & Townsend, 2013; Stahl, 2006).

METI—Ability to Understand and Take Advantage of Different Cultures; ICT Content—Introducing Content That Comes From Other Countries and Cultures

Both the videos that the students watch to gain information as well as the sites on the Internet that students find to gather more information are primarily from North America and Europe. Students observe different ideas, cultures, viewpoints, and opinions from these outside sources. Some students send inquiries to companies and universities outside Japan, which gives them experience in sending emails to get information. Different opinions and thoughts come from members inside the group and this introduces students to different peer-culture or the workings of a composite repertoire of culture within a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Learning to interpret different opinions (that other members have shared) and then adapting them as a part of one's own intellectual repertoire is a fundamental part of the learning process (Stahl, 2006).

METI—Ability to Step Forward (Action); ICT Contents—Presentations, Posters, Reports

To complete projects, students must plan, take initiative, and start to work on their projects with the understanding that the onus is on them. Students working on projects encounter setbacks, disagree with others, and also have to take responsibility for their own part of the project (Engeström, 1999), which helps them understand the process of learning. They learn to make schedules, to work with others towards a deadline, and to work out their differences in order to meet requirements. In other words, they learn to take action and determine a division of labor within the group to focus on the process that will assist them toward completing their projects (Engeström, 1996). Using these types of learning objects to enhance the student's learning (Ravenscroft & Cook, 2007) provides them with the opportunities for collaborative team learning.

METI—Ability to Work in a Team (Teamwork); ICT Contents—Group Collaboration in Forums, Presentations, Posters, Reports

In many of the ICT contents lessons, teamwork plays a vital role during the process of completing a project (Engeström, 1996). Delegating work (the groups are required to choose a group leader), working through schedules, sharing the workload, and learning to work through ideas and disagreements are valuable skills that students would not otherwise learn by merely doing pair-work (Stahl, 2006). Learning to collaborate is vital to learning what can be done as a team (Resnick, 1987).

METI—Ability to Think Well (Thinking); ICT Contents—All Projects

In order to create a presentation or poster, students need to clearly create a plan, go through the logistics of completing the plan, and know what kinds of questions to ask to get help or information. Rote process, or following a manual, has its place, yet learning how to adapt and learning how to think using the information that has been given can create a much richer learning environment (Engeström, 1996) and teach students to be expansive learners.

The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher changes to one of a facilitator. Teaching at the front of the classroom or providing time for students to do pair-work is not as effective as providing the students with an opportunity to generate their own language, which in turn provides much more valuable information about their levels, their abilities (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; van Lier, 1996; Vygotsky, 1926/1997), and their individual opinions. The teacher walking around the classroom and answering students' questions provides the help that students need at any given moment and gives them direct feedback on their progress (Wells, 1999) and at the same time, teachers can identify gaps in language that can be discussed immediately (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Poehner, 2008; van Lier, 2004). The online forums are also viewable by the teacher, who can help students work through their project, suggesting ways to help them move forward but still be thorough in their approach and process. Yet even without the teacher present in the online forums, students collaborate and share ideas as they work through the process of completing their projects (deBoer & Townsend, 2013).

Information and Communication Technology

Technology in the classroom is necessary, but it should not interfere with the educational process (Laurillard, 2002; Stockwell, 2010). Technology should be used as a tool to get the work done, not as the reason for the work itself. Computers are used to generate reports, or to make presentations, or to generate documents such as letters and user manuals. The Internet is used to search for information, send emails, and communicate. It would seem ideal to create an environment where the classroom looks like a work place and provide technology that supports it. Providing a student with technology and saying, "Let's use this to write something" is not as effective as saying, "Let's collaboratively make a presentation and here is some technology that is available to use." Technology can be used to enhance one's abilities and also to provide alternative mediums for communication.

In the ICT Contents section of the course outlined (see Table 2), students use a variety of tools that assist them in the completion of their presentations. This is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Details of the Technology Students Used in an ICT Contents Course

Technology	Details
Word processor	Students used Microsoft Word to create documents, such as reports or scripts for handing to other students.
PDF	When students are required to hand in a final report or any other final document, they are required to hand in a PDF.
Excel	Students used Excel to track data and to create graphs and charts for their presentations.
Internet	Students used the Internet to look up information, share URLs, and to access the LMS.
PowerPoint	Students were required to use PowerPoint to create their slides for a presentation. Other presentation software was also acceptable, such as Keynote for Apple computers.
Forum (LMS)	Students accessed the forum in the LMS to upload and download documents as well as share information and provide feedback to each other outside classroom time. A look at the log records shows that students did a lot of their online work late at night or on weekends.
Database (LMS)	Students used the LMS database to share and store information about their projects. The teacher set this up.
email	Students used email to gather information from companies or from professors about their project.
Phones	Students also communicated by phone. Smart phones were allowed in class so students also used their phones as dictionaries and Internet devices.

It is interesting to note that the software that students used during the course was not specific for learning English. This is similar to the findings in a recent study that showed that effective e-learning courses for English rarely use sites that are designed specifically for studying English (N. Cowie, personal communication, 1 June, 2013).

The teacher did not teach the students how to use the technology. Many students started the year asking questions about how to use the various pieces of software but as students worked in groups, the teacher redirected their questions to other group members. At the end of the first term, walking around the classroom, the teacher noticed that all the students were able to use the software adequately to do their work.

Conclusion

This paper proposes an alternative to the current practices of teaching English at the university level. The solution of implementing an ICT Contents type program as proposed here shows a very close correlation to what METI and MEXT have mandated in their documents. We need to realize that each student already has basic English upon entering university and we should use that to our advantage to give them the opportunity to study English better aligned to their own career paths. Teaching skillsets (such as giving presentations, making posters, and writing reports in a collaborative environment) and using English as a tool for collaboration teaches students how to use English for communication in their future as well as provides them the opportunity to understand the value and importance of teamwork. Using technology as a noninvasive tool to support their communication and collaboration also becomes important for their education as it simulates future activity in the work place. By providing a classroom that supports a work environment and uses English to communicate, we can assist METI in their goal to foster global human resources.

Bio Data

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Teachers as Learners: Evolving Perspectives

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Reference Data:

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Ongoing language learning experience helps foreign language teachers empathize with their own students. This paper presents the Reading-Writing Component of an in-service teacher development program. The component invited participants to adopt a learner perspective, writing original articles on secondary school textbook reading topics. The paper shares one example of a participant's writing outcomes and narrative data, pointing to the participant's autonomous self-expression and enhanced confidence when readopting a teacher stance. Directions for further research are also suggested.

継続して言語を習得するという体験は、外国語の教員にとって自分の生徒に感情移入するのに大変役立つものである。この研究論文は、現職の教員研修プログラムで行っているリーディングとライティングのワークショップについて述べている。研修の一つのセッションで、研修者たちは高校の教科書のリーディング教材をもとに独自の記事を書き、教師としてではなく学習者として自分自身を見つめるよう求められる。論文の中で、セッション中にある研修者が書いた記事や振り返りのコメントなどの例を共有することで、その研修者の学習者としての自主的な自己表現や、再び教員の立場に戻ったときに自信が増していることを示していく。今後のさらに詳しい研究の方向性も提案する。

Second and foreign language teachers can benefit greatly by ongoing language learning; the experience helps them empathize with their own students and therefore make more effective teaching decisions (Snow, 2007). Although it is recommended that teacher development (TD) programs emphasize language proficiency (Barnes, 2002; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004), few of the in-service TD options open to Japan's high school English teachers do so.

This paper presents the experiential Reading-Writing Component of a yearlong in-service TD program. In writing original articles on high school textbook reading topics, participants adopted an "EFL learner" perspective as they worked to establish unique contexts that clarified their readerships, their roles as writers, and their writing purposes. After each workshop, they reflected on their own experiences and evolving perceptions of English as a tool for action in the real world (Gee, 2001). The writing outcomes and narrative data from one participant are shared here, illustrating the Reading-Writing Component's impact on her autonomous self-expression and confidence as she subsequently readopted a teacher stance. Some directions for future research are also suggested.

Perspectives From the Field

Language as Situated

Gee (2001) argued that objectively comprehending and conveying neutral information are not the main functions of language. Drawing on Tomasello's (1999) position that "linguistic symbols are social conventions for inducing others to construe, or take a perspective on, some experiential situation" (p. 118), Gee asserted that language "is about communicating perspectives on experience and action in the world, often in contrast to alternative and competing perspectives" (p. 716). Language supports people in their efforts to establish and maintain affiliations in cultures, social groups, and institutions; Warschauer (2003) defined our ability to benefit from these affiliations as "social capital" (p. 316).

In a study of pre-service nonnative EFL teachers, Bektas-Cetinkaya (2012) reiterated the notion of reading, specifically, as "sociocultural practice, to be approached from social, cultural, and political perspectives" (p. 18). Redefining reading as social practice helps teachers shift from the traditional focus on readers' interaction with a text to readers' interaction with the writer of the text. In authentic situations, effective reader-writer interaction allows readers to redefine not only themselves, but also their positions within material and social worlds.

L2 Reading and Writing

The view of language as situated in social practice is, unfortunately, at odds with the reality of many English classes in Japan's secondary schools. Although teachers may agree with the principles of communicative language teaching as set forth in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Course of Study for Foreign Languages (MEXT, 2009), they face a variety of challenges in putting them into practice. Perennial obstacles include washback from university entrance exams (Gorsuch, 2000; Murphey, 2004; Sakui, 2004; Tahira, 2012) and textbooks that perpetuate a perception of English as a decontextualized body of knowledge to be internalized (Hanks, 1991; Suzuki & Collins, 2007).

This perception underpins the *yakudoku*, or "read and translate," approach that continues to dominate four skills and reading classes. Students are tested on their memory and comprehension of readings, as well as their ability to manipulate the target grammar structures featured. However, they are seldom requested to read critically, react to what they have read, or ascertain a writer's intent, voice, or tone. As Snow (2007) pointed out, when intensive readings are used primarily to teach vocabulary and grammar in this way, students not only misunderstand the purpose of reading, but are also unlikely to derive any enjoyment from the experience. Similarly, students in secondary school writing classes almost always find themselves writing for an audience of one, their English teacher, who reads for the sole purpose of evaluating linguistic accuracy. This lack of context makes for low student motivation in writing tasks; after all, why continue trying to articulate experiences and thoughts if they are to have no discernible impact on a reader?

Reading-Writing Workshops 1 – 3

Context and Rationale

I was involved in designing and facilitating the Reading-Writing Component of a yearlong in-service TD program for senior high English teachers from around Japan (Collins & Suzuki, 2010). From March to July, roughly corresponding to the teachers' spring semester, the 10 participating teachers traveled to Tokyo once a month for 1 or 2 full days of sessions designed to provide them with experiential learning opportunities. These included participation in a formal debate tournament and performances of dramatic scenes, in addition to workshops on practical topics

such as team teaching, explanation of grammatical structures, and cross-content collaboration.

After each month's sessions, participants were requested to complete a Reflection Survey 1 (see Appendix A for sample questions on a Reading-Writing Workshop). Additionally, a "Teacher Forum," similar to a blog, gave them a chance to reflect more publicly on the contents of the sessions. Following a week-long Summer Intensive Seminar, the fall semester brought open class demonstrations and final presentations on participant portfolios.

A key objective of the Reading-Writing Component was for participating teachers to experience situated reading and writing in English for themselves. A preliminary survey revealed that, although some had constructed extra readings for their own students, none had experienced writing in English for an audience of their own. The three workshops would allow participants to explore, from a learner perspective, the impact of reader-writer and writer-reader interaction on understanding.

Snow (2001) advised teachers that they must understand "how much they can and should demand of students, how much encouragement students need, what kinds of encouragement students need, [and] what kind of goals will effectively motivate them" (p. 7) and make decisions accordingly. It was hoped that, upon completing and reflecting on the Reading-Writing Component, TD participants would readopt their teacher stances with greater confidence, drawing on stronger empathy with their own students when setting and facilitating reading and writing tasks.

As Medgyes (2001) reminded us, "most [nonnative English speaking teachers] are all too aware that they are teachers and learners of the same subject" (p. 38). With a few exceptions, most of the TD participants had seldom had opportunities to interact with either authentic texts or with native English speakers. An additional objective of the component, then, was to support TD participants to develop their own English proficiency, a key part of professional development for EFL teachers (Barnes, 2002; Lavender, 2002; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). The component would invite the TD participants to "join a 'literacy club' that makes a wealth of English-language information, ranging from implicit cultural information to explicit information, available to them" (Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2012, p. 18).

Organization and Contents

Reading-Writing Workshop 1

TD Program participants attended sessions each month from March through July. Reading-Writing Workshop 1 was part of a special 2-day block of sessions in March. Participants were introduced to the concept of situated language and discussed some of the educational assumptions underpinning English education in Japan's secondary schools. They also compared three short articles I had written: (a) a personal reflection on my own language learning experience for an in-house newsletter, (b) a column about tech-related neologisms for a junior high school textbook newsletter, and (c) an essay on team teaching's potential to support MEXT goals for an academic newsletter. The participants discussed how the different purposes and audiences for each article had helped me make specific choices about tone while maintaining my own writer voice.

Participants were then asked to imagine themselves as columnists and to choose a lesson from an English I, English II, or Reading textbook they were using at the time. Their task was to write an article about or related to the lesson content. The first step was to clarify the context of the article; participants imagined what type of English language periodical they were writing for and its readership. They then established the purpose for the article—to inform, persuade, move, inspire, and so on—and began to think about developing both a voice and an appropriate tone. The

participants continually revisited their purpose as they searched for and skimmed related English articles online, reported their progress to TD Program instructors, consulted with other participants, and began revising their first drafts. The participants were given 4 hours in all and were given 2-week deadlines for submitting their second and final drafts to the TD Program webpage.

Participants were warned from the beginning that the time constraints of Workshop 1 would prevent them from engaging in the kind of brainstorming and outlining integral to process writing (White & Arndt, 1991). Even with a genre-based approach (Badger & White, 2000) that left out the "modeling stage," the instructors had some misgivings about the participants' ability to develop and write articles quickly enough. However, almost all the participants' first drafts were surprisingly well organized and fluent. A much bigger challenge for them was to understand and operate within the context provided; it emerged during progress reports that some participants still thought they were writing supplementary readings for their own students and therefore were struggling to write about challenging topics in the simplest possible language. Other traps participants fell into included presenting two sides of an argument equally when trying to write persuasively and presenting the kind of pat, formulaic conclusions often encountered in the textbooks they teach with.

Reading-Writing Workshop 2

The second workshop was unique among the three in two important ways. First, it was integrated with the TD Program's Drama Component. In March, participants had been cast in roles from three Hollywood movies, and each of the four scene groups had been assigned a single scene in one of the movies to explore. Second, Reading-Writing Workshop 2 was scheduled in June, when the TD Program overlapped with a separate seminar on team teaching, and 20 native-English-speaking assistant language teachers (ALTs) joined the sessions. As a pre-workshop assignment, TD participants had been given the entire screenplay of their movie to read and had been asked to prepare questions about cultural aspects of the movie, including the background and setting, customs and behaviors, the characters' motivations, and the language used.

For the first session, scene partners were separated and paired with ALTs for a discussion of the screenplay. In the next session, still working with their ALT partners, they took on the role of co-authors whose task it was to research and write about a particularly difficult cultural point related to the scene. They were free to determine the genre of their writing, but their audience was set: their own Japanese scene partners, who needed deeper understanding in order to more effectively memorize and perform their scene at the Summer Intensive Seminar in July. In the third session, they shared their drafts with their scene partners, giving and receiving feedback on the drafts' helpfulness. Participants were again given deadlines for submitting second and final drafts online and asked in the reflection survey about their experiences collaborating with ALTs.

Some co-author teams were creative, filling in gaps in subtext and cross-cultural understanding by writing diary entries, letters, newspaper articles, and dialogs that extended the scene. For others, however, understanding and operating within the context was again the most challenging aspect of the task. Though they had the benefit of ALT partners, as well as their Reading-Writing Workshop 1 experience, a few found it difficult to set aside their teacher stance and added comprehension questions for imaginary student readers.

Reading-Writing Workshop 3

For the final workshop, the participants found themselves on relatively familiar ground, again choosing a lesson from one

of their own four-skills or reading textbooks. They were now asked to adopt the role of textbook writer—not an English textbook targeting EFL learners, but a content-based textbook for tertiary students in an English-speaking environment. If an original textbook lesson featured anecdotes about sportsmanship, for example, a participant might imagine contributing an essay to a textbook written for P.E. majors in Singapore who hoped to become basketball coaches someday. Each participant was free to clarify a context that would allow them to set a goal for interacting with their readers and develop a voice and tone appropriate to the genre.

Again, participants were invited to go online to supplement their background knowledge and broaden their perspective on their chosen topic. They also shared their progress with the TD instructors and other participants after writing and after revising their first draft. Before submitting their final draft online, the participants were asked to consult with teachers from other departments at their own schools. A participant working with an environmental topic, such as biofuels or deforestation, might explain the contents of the original textbook lesson to a science teacher in Japanese and ask for advice on directions the article might take. Reading-Writing Workshop 3 extended into the Summer Intensive Seminar, with participants sharing their latest drafts in groups of three. After taking notes, they discussed their responses to each article, then offered suggestions for strengthening other writers' purposes and interaction with target readers.

By now, most of the participants were relatively comfortable with the notion of temporarily adopting what Gee (2004) called a "virtual identity." Although the audiences for their writing were imaginary, the goal was for each participant, as Gee says, to "know that he or she has the *capacity*, at some level, to take on the virtual identity as a real-world identity . . . . It is often enough that they have sensed new powers in themselves" (p. 114).

The follow-up discussion was lively, with participants brainstorming ways to meet the challenges they faced in setting reading and writing contexts for their own students in the fall. As evidenced by their outcomes and comments on the reflection survey, the most challenging step in this task sequence turned out to be taking notes on other participants' writing. Some were unable to identify the main points and organization in the essays, while others fell into the perennial teacher trap of proofreading for accuracy.

Evolving Perspectives

Case Study Y

Each participant brought unique English learning and teaching experiences to the Reading-Writing Workshops. These experiences impacted their attitudes toward each task, including their confidence, motivation, and ability to make autonomous choices in planning and writing their articles. Participant Y's journey is of particular interest, since, among the participants in the TD Program, she was under the most pressure at her school to prepare students for one thing only: Japan's National Center Test for University Admissions. Participant Y had no personal experience in either writing for an audience in English or asking her students to do so.

For Reading-Writing Workshop 1, she chose a challenging textbook lesson on water shortages in South Africa. Heavy on technical vocabulary, yet light on message, the lesson reading lacked a sense of writer voice or tone. Participant Y's first draft was similarly impersonal and featured a tacked-on conclusion recommending that water was an issue more people should be aware of. Through discussion with instructors and other participants, she was able to adopt a stronger columnist stance, eventually producing an article that was more personal and therefore more persuasive. Participant Y also studied web-based

periodicals and worked to create a realistic and attractive layout for her article, including photos and sidebars. In the reflection survey, she noted that the biggest challenge had been to clarify and share her own perspective on the topic.

Cast in the movie *Se7en*, Participant Y identified "revising the first draft" as the most challenging phase of Reading-Writing Workshop 2. Her ALT partner, on the other hand cited "identifying a cultural aspect to focus on" and "creating a first draft" as most challenging and allowed Participant Y to take the lead during these steps. Although they were dismayed to realize that their first draft amounted to little more than a synopsis of the movie, the pair was able to transform it into a more insightful piece of writing that included helpful statistical charts and was written in second person to Participant Y's scene partner.

The lesson Participant Y chose to work with for Reading-Writing Workshop 3 featured another challenging scientific topic: the effects of sleep deprivation on humans. With her previous writing experiences in mind, she immediately established a context that would help her personalize her writing. Imagining herself as a textbook writer for nursing students in Australia, she chose to write an essay on how to identify and advise students who showed signs of sleep deprivation. The process of contextualizing the content supported her in creating a first draft that was far stronger than those she had produced in the first two workshops. After cross-content consultation with both a science teacher and the nurse at her school, she presented a second draft for the group discussion phase that included discussion, rather than comprehension, questions and a model form a nurse might complete based on a student interview.

Participant Y's responses to the reflection survey showed how much her confidence had increased since Reading-Writing Workshop 1; she noted satisfaction with, among other things, her ability to interact with other participants' writing and other participants' ability to interact with hers. To an open-ended question about her evolving perspectives she answered, "Almost all textbooks provide us with only facts about some matters or histories. That's why I've never had an idea that we try to feel connection with writers. Feeling a connection develops our positive attitude for learning." In reflecting on the impact of the workshops on her future teaching, she wrote, "I'll try to plan lessons to encourage students to feel connections with writers, especially in reading class."

Readopting a Teacher Stance

Given the lack of support for teacher autonomy at Participant Y's school, she is likely to meet some resistance when introducing message-based reading and writing activities in her classroom. However, now that she and the other TD Program participants have experienced the challenges and satisfaction of interaction from both reader and writer stances, they may find ways to enrich their own students' language learning experiences.

The final Teacher Forum topic centered around the Reading-Writing Workshops, inviting participants to reflect on their own experiences and to imagine ways to apply them to their own teaching (see Appendix B). Seven participants reported increased confidence in one or all of the following areas: reading for gist, identifying main ideas, and developing a writer voice and tone appropriate to a context and readership. Five reported feeling greater empathy for their own students' efforts to tackle reading and writing tasks. Four were optimistic about planning and facilitating simpler versions of the workshops in their own classes, although two of them were unsure about how much they could reasonably expect from their students. Finally, four of the 10 participants were still struggling with the notions of writer-reader and reader-writer interaction.

Directions for Further Research

Gee (2004) described learning as, ideally, "both a personal and a unique trajectory through a complex space of opportunities . . . and a social journey as one shares aspects of that trajectory with others . . . for a shorter or longer time before moving on" (p. 89). The Reading-Writing Workshop component was conceived as a way for participants to go on three different reading and writing "journeys." Although End-of-Year Reflection Survey results are still pending, the component is being fine-tuned for inclusion in future programs.

Two areas for further research suggest themselves immediately, the first concerning corpus analysis of the participants' writing outcomes. Of particular interest is how much and how effectively they drew on the contents and language in the original textbook lessons and in other reading materials they found online. The second area regards the sustainability of the participants' newfound enthusiasm for reading and writing as situated action. This may be observable in (a) how much they share their TD Program experiences with teachers at their own schools; (b) the extent to which they invite students to interact with the writers featured in the textbooks, rather than just the contents; and (c) whether they choose to extend textbook lessons with contextualized writing activities. Armed with their own learning experiences and evolving perspectives, Japan's junior and senior high school English teachers may be better equipped to tap into any inherent desire their own students have to use English to interact with others.

Bio Data

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Appendix A

Questions Related to Reading-Writing Workshop 1 (From Reflection Survey 1 of 5)

22) What textbook and lesson did you target? Why?

23) Which were the most challenging phases of the workshop? (Check two.)

- Clarifying a context for my reading and writing
- Choosing a textbook lesson topic
- Reading the textbook lesson
- Finding readings to supplement the lesson topic
- Identifying key information in the supplementary readings
- Synthesizing the key information with my own knowledge and perspectives
- Organizing the key information and my own perspectives into an article
- Revising my article

24) Explain why you checked the items you did for Question 23.

25) I was able to manage my time well during the workshop. (Check one.)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

26) I'm satisfied with my writing outcome. (Check one.)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

27) I'm optimistic that my outcomes will be stronger in Workshops 2 and 3.

28) Further comments / questions

Appendix B

Teacher Forum: Topic 5

This month, you took part in the third and final Reading-Writing Workshop. In researching and writing original articles, you tried to imagine and establish three different contexts. This month, please share your own experiences in the workshop, and imagine how you might provide your students with similar experiences.

1. For your students, what are the goals of reading in English? Of writing in English?
2. When and how can you help students experience feeling a connection with a writer?
3. When and how can you help students experience making a connection with a reader?

Using Applied Conversation Analysis for Professional Development

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In this study we investigated the application of conversation analysis (CA) practices and principles as a method to analyze teacher acts and as an aid to professional development. We audio- and video-recorded lessons from two of our own classes and transcribed them following CA transcription conventions. Following the analysis of the transcriptions in CA-like data sessions, we imagined and discussed alternative teaching acts. While we found the application of CA-like practices and principles an effective tool for observing our teaching acts and for understanding how we and our students achieve a common understanding, we also noted some of the challenges that could prove problematic for teachers applying CA-like practices to classroom observations. With these challenges in mind, CA-like practices and principles afford teachers the opportunity to pursue professional development collaboratively, especially in data sessions.

本研究は、conversation analysis (CA) の実践と原則のアプリケーションについて、教師の言動を分析するための方法、および教師の専門的能力の開発向けの補助ツールとして検討するものである。著者は共同で、2つの授業から、音声/ビデオで授業の内容を記録し、CA　トランスクリプション方法に従って、その記録内容を書き起こした。この結果として、CAデータセッションで分析されたトランスクリプトより、選択肢として検討が可能な教育方法を考察よび説明する。CAのような実践と原則を用いたアプリケーションは、教育方法の観察、および教師と学生が相互的理解に達する方法を理解するうえで、客観的で有効的なツールであると説明する一方で、教師が CA を授業に適用する上で生じる可能性のある問題といった課題についても注記する。このような注意点を考慮し、CAのような実践と原則は、教師の専門的能力開発を共同で研究する教師によって、活用できるものであると考察する。

As language teachers we should strive to better understand our teaching and to improve the quality of the learning opportunities our teaching acts create for students (see Crabbe, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 1994). Classroom observation is one way for teachers to conduct professional development (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001; Wajnryb, 1992), and affords teachers the opportunity to better understand their teaching. Nonetheless, it is difficult for teachers to describe the teaching act with any consistency. Unfortunately, observations are also laden with subjective personal (Fanselow, 1976, 1987) and cultural biases (Canagarajah, 1999). Fanselow (1976) developed FOCUS (foci for observing communications used in settings) as an observation framework to empirically explore and discuss the teaching act using technical language (Bailey, et al., 2001), but there are other methods of observing and

analyzing teaching acts. Although in a strict usage of conversation analysis (CA), one does not ask *How can I improve my teaching?* (ten Have, 2007), applying CA-like practices and principles to classroom discourse (see Antaki, 2011) could offer another avenue for exploring the teaching act and in the process facilitate professional development. In this research, we applied CA-like practices and principles to conduct peer observations and imagine, using the language of Fanselow (1987), alternatives to how we teach. The paper concludes with our impressions of using these practices and principles to conduct professional development, highlighting CA's strengths and noting its shortcomings.

Applying Conversation Analysis

CA is done in three steps: collecting, transcribing, and analyzing talk-in-interaction (ten Have, 2007; Wong & Waring, 2010). After the data are collected, a transcription must be made. By using CA transcription conventions, researchers can record in fine detail how talk-in-interaction unfolds (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Analyzing the data entails viewing and reviewing data in CA data sessions. CA data sessions are conducted from an emic perspective (Firth & Wagner, 1997); that is, researchers attempt to understand the talk-in-interaction from the point of view of the speakers. With that said, we want to stress that our methodology and purpose stands outside the framework of *pure* CA. Instead we applied insights and methodology from CA to investigate *our* teaching acts for the purpose of professional development.

Method

Participants

This study encompassed two classes. Both classes met once a week for 1 hour. Class 1 consisted of two female learners, aged 13 and 14, with Robert as their teacher, and Class 2 consisted of six female learners, ages ranging from 50 to mid-60s, with Seth as their teacher.

Materials and Apparatus

Digital video cameras recorded only the teachers while audio recorders recorded both teachers and students. All participants voluntarily consented to the recordings.

Procedures

The research was conducted over 6 weeks. In the beginning, the research project was explained to each class. Soon after, the classes were video and audio recorded. The recordings were then viewed and transcribed in accordance with CA transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004). Then we examined the transcripts in two 2-hour data sessions which were not recorded. During each data session, we analyzed and discussed the data from each class, ending each session with a discussion of how our observations could lead to alternatives in our teaching acts. The process is described below to give an accurate picture of how we analyzed our teaching acts as a tool for professional development.

Data Session 1

The transcripts provided a considerable amount of information. Some of the things that caught our attention were as follows: (a) Robert's fast-paced speech with only a few micro-pauses separating a series of questions, and (b) his use of the word OK.

Extract 1. Robert's fast-paced questions

R is Robert, the teacher. S1 is one of the students.

```
08    R     OK. (2.0) Who do you go to school with?
09          ((Robert breaks eye contact, takes
10          something out of bag))
11    S1    My friends.
12    R     Did you do anything special ((Robert
13          glances at camera and rubs nose)) at
14          school? >Did you do anything special?<
15          >Do you understand that?< >Did you do
16          anything special?< >Nanka tokubetsu koto
17          shimashita?< ((teacher again looks into
18          bag)) ( . ) Did you do anything special
19          at school?
20    S1    ((Shakes head no))
```

Robert's Fast-Paced Questions

At line 12, Robert glances at the camera and starts speaking at a faster pace. (Note the "quick speech" inward-facing indents [> <] in the transcript at line 14.) Throughout the transcripts, Robert allowed for little silence, repeating questions or asking them in a different way when student replies were not immediate. Here CA practices provide a valuable professional development moment. While we did not judge the manner in which the questions were asked, a couple of questions arose:

1. Should Robert become more comfortable with silence? If so, what strategies can he use?
2. Could Robert try giving his students more time to think before repeating a question or offering a translation as he did in line 16?

The Use of OK

During the data session, Robert said he felt that he overused OK and wondered how his lesson would be different if he used OK less. Seth noted that the absence of OK could make the conversation sound less authentic. Compare Extract 2 with Figure 1.

Extract 2. Robert's Use of OK

R is Robert, the teacher. S is one of the students.

```
01    R     What did you do last week?
02    S     I went to school
03    R     OK. OK. Um (.) where (.) where do you go
04          to school?
05    S     Misono school.
06    R     OK. (2.0) Who do you go to school with?
07    S     My friends.
```

```
01    R     What did you do last week?
02    S     I went to school.
03    R     Where did you go to school?
04    S     Misono school.
05    R     Who did you go to school with?
06    S     My friends.
```

Figure 1. Extract 2 Without OK and Other Small Words

Robert imagined different classroom alternatives by asking questions like "What if I said OK less?" or "What if I said OK more?" OK is identified as a receipt marker (Beach, 1995) and as a change of topic marker (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Instead of OK, Robert could try using response tokens (e.g., *Really?* or *Oh*) or formulations like repeating (Nakamura, 2010), as illustrated in Figure 2.

```
01  S   I went to school.
02  R   Oh. Um (.) where (.) do you go to school?
03  S   Misono school.
04  R   Misono school? (2.0) Who do you go to
05      school with?
06  S   My friends.
```

Figure 2. Extract 2 Without OK but with Alternatives

Data Session 2

Eight-Second Response Time

Extract 3 shows how Seth gave his students more time to respond to questions and complete tasks than Robert did. Seth's students received an average of 8 seconds to respond to instructions. To help students overcome their confusion, Seth showed them an illustration of the target word and waited 6 seconds before asking *What's the first one?* at lines 23-25. Seth also used gestures and illustrations during moments of silence (e.g., lines 28-30). Despite Seth's use of gestures, illustrations, and allowing for silence, the students were still unable to understand (line 33).

Extract 3. Seth Using Gestures and Illustrations

Se is Seth, the teacher. S1 is one student. S? is an unknown student. Ss are more than one student.

```
20    Se    (2.0) °Yes.° (.) But look at the picture
21          (.) look at the picture. (1.8) Picture
22          and: ((Seth is holding the handout,
23          pointing to the illustrations)) (6.0)
24          ((Seth puts handout on table and looks at
25          it)) So: uh: (.) What's the first one?
26          (2.0) ((Seth is holding up handout with
27          both hands)) Thi what's this one? (6.0)
28          ((Seth is holding up handout and moving
29          it from right to left to show the
30          students))
31    Se    °((inaudible))° ((Seth is pointing left
32          hand in direction of students))
33    S?    Uh.
```

Only when Seth told the students the answer (*listen to music*) at lines 66-67 and again at lines 72-73 in Extract 4 were the students able to complete the task. Seth's allowing for more silence (e.g., lines 23-27 in Extract 3) than Robert seems to have given his students more opportunities to employ repair initiators to let Seth know that they were having problems with the prior talk. Seth wondered, however, if it would have been better had he given his students less time and given the answer much earlier.

Extract 4. Seth's Students Complete the Task

Se is Seth, the teacher. S4 and S5 are individual students.

```
65    Se    Ah I I'll give you I'll give you uh: hint.
66          The first one (0.8) i:s (0.3) listen to
67          music. Right? (1.5) ((Teacher writes
68          "listen to music" on the board)) Listen
69          (2.0) to (2.5) music.
70    Ss    ((Students talking to each other about
71          the handout))
72    Se    °Listen to music.° Th that's the first
73          one, right. (21.0)
74          ((Students are working on the activity,
75          and talking to each other while the
76          teacher is looking down at the handout))
77    Se    ((Seth looks at his wristwatch)) Alright
78          let's uh let's (.) what about the next
79          one? Right here. ((Seth is pointing to an
80          illustration on the handout)) (1.0) What
81          is this one? ((Pointing to the
82          illustration in a circular motion)) (0.8)
83    S4    C clea[n
84    Se          [Clean (5.5) ((Students are trying
85          to complete the task))
86    S5    C clean house.
87    Se    YEAh. Clean the hou clean house. Yeah.
```

Giving Students Hints

Another trait noticed was that Seth gave students hints to help them accomplish a task. In Extract 5 at line 456, Seth's student indicated that she was having trouble completing the task. Seth responded by offering a hint at line 457 (Bu bu). At line 458, the student signaled her confusion with a *repair initiator* (Huh?), and Seth responded by repeating his hint again at line 459. The student responded with another repair initiator (Bu?), and after a moment of silence she indicated that she understood the hint (Ahh: read a book). At line 461, Seth indicated to the student that she had given the correct answer (Good). Unlike the sequence in Extract 4, Seth's giving hints in Extract 5 proved successful. One alternative Seth could explore is giving fewer hints before the goal of a teaching act is mutually understood by both him and his students.

Extract 5. Seth Gives Student Hints

Se is Seth, the teacher. S1 is one student.

```
455   Se    So we got we got rea:d and newspaper, read
455         comics, rea[d a novel, read
456   S1              [re::do eto eto
457   Se    >I'll give you a hint< (.) Bu bu
458   S1    Huh?
459   Se    Bu bu.
460   S1    Bu? Hh(1.5) Ahh: read a book.
461   Se    Good.
```

Discussion

During the reflective process, we gained considerable information about our teaching. We made many observations, but we would like to comment on three here: (a) how to help students get on the same page; (b) how to use transcripts to imagine teaching alternatives; and (c) how professional development happens at CA data sessions.

How to Get Students on the Same Page: Exploring Intersubjectivity

To be on the same page means that both the speaker and listeners understand each other. In terms of teaching acts, when the purpose of a task is shared by teacher and students then *intersubjectivity* is co-achieved (Ellis, 2003). For the most part, teacher talk in the language classroom is not *monologic*. Although many of our extracts include mostly teacher talk, that did not mean that students were passively listening. Instead, teachers and students, through linguistic and paralinguistic means, collaboratively overcame breakdowns in understanding, thus reaching a point of mutual understanding in terms of what a teaching act's goal was. Before students could complete a classroom task, both teacher and student(s) needed a shared understanding of what the task was and how to complete it. Finally, Robert's and Seth's students were capable of indicating when they were not on the same page as their teacher. When this happened, Robert would repeat a question or translate while Seth used body gestures, illustrations, and gave hints. The process of reflecting on our preferred classroom communication strategies led us to consider potentially more successful alternatives to use in future lessons.

How to Imagine and Explore Alternatives in the Teaching Act

Once the data were collected and analyzed, we used the transcripts and our observations to imagine alternatives. In data session 1, we experimented with new dialogues, imagining how the talk would sound and proceed if something were done or said differently. Robert also wondered what would happen if he gave the students more time to respond to his questions. Would students employ repair initiators? In data session 2, Seth wondered what would happen if he gave his students less time to think. In Seth's case, only when he gave the students the answer to the first problem were they able to complete the task. So, would telling the students the answer sooner rather than later be more effective in helping the students understand the task? The goal in exploring these alternatives was to find ways to help ourselves as teachers better achieve the goals of our teaching acts.

How Professional Development Happens Through CA Data Sessions

While transcription proved the most arduous part of the process, the data sessions were the most productive. Analyzing the transcripts in the data sessions led to considerable opportunities for professional development, as we observed our teaching acts and imagined new possibilities for our lessons. We also discussed and analyzed our teaching collaboratively and enthusiastically, refreshing our desire to improve the quality of learning opportunities that our teaching acts create and expanding our knowledge of how students and teachers intersubjectively co-create meaning. For instance, Robert believed he used OK too much ("too much" is the subjective observation), but did so pointing out that he used OK 6 times in 60 seconds (the empirical observation). This observation caused us to examine turn-by-turn how OK was used, thus providing us with new insight and future alternatives (e.g., using OK less or using other words).

Challenges

CA can be a valuable component of professional development, but there are two issues: the challenge of recording and the time that analysis takes.

Recording Classes as a Challenge

Ethics demand that student permission is necessary before recording any classes. Students then must become acclimatized to the presence of the various recording devices. Robert attempted to acclimatize his students by placing the video camera on the table during several lessons before an actual lesson was recorded. Nevertheless, Robert remarked that the two female learners in his class spoke less in classes when the video camera was present. Additionally, in the extracts there are frequent inaudible entries, meaning it was difficult to record all utterances, gestures, and facial expressions, especially when there are numerous speakers speaking simultaneously.

CA Takes Time

Transcribing the audio and video recordings is an intricate process requiring a considerable investment of time. Some CA experts have said they can transcribe one minute's worth of words and delivery components in approximately 43 minutes, but we found transcribing our respective lessons took considerably more time.

Conclusion

Despite these and other challenges, applying CA-like practices and principles afforded us as teachers the opportunity to pursue professional development collaboratively. We found the analogy of panning for gold to be an accurate description: You will need to move a lot of sediment, which will take a great deal of time and energy, but the nuggets of information you find will be of considerable value.

We believe that CA should not be done alone, since it benefits greatly from the input and advice of fellow CA practitioners (ten Have, 2007). Finally, the CA data sessions are scary experiences because they pull back the curtain that often covers what goes on in the classroom. We often felt a little embarrassed by what we saw and heard, but we tried to focus on how students responded to our actions and how we responded to theirs. By focusing on actions while avoiding subjective descriptions, most of that anxiety dissipated. How teachers and students get on the same page and show they are or are not on the same page both verbally and nonverbally adds to our understanding of the teaching act. When teachers are more aware of how they co-create meaning with their students in the confines of the language classroom, they can begin to imagine alternatives, and are thus better positioned to makes changes and develop as teachers and researchers.

Bio Data

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Appendix

CA Transcription Conventions

The following is reproduced from Greer (2010) with the editor's permission. Detailed explanations of CA transcription conventions can also be found in Jefferson (2004) and Schegloff (2007).

Simultaneous Utterances

`huh [ oh ] I see`	Left square brackets mark the start of overlapping talk
`[what ]`	Right square brackets mark the end of an overlap

Intervals Within and Between Utterances

`(0.4)`	Numerals in parentheses mark silence in tenths of a second. A period in parentheses indicates a micro-pause (less than 0.1 second).
`(.)`	

Characteristics of Speech Delivery

`don't`	Underlining indicates marked stress.
`yes?`	Question mark indicates rising intonation.
`yes.`	A period indicates falling intonation.
`so,`	A comma indicates low-rising intonation, suggestion continuation.
`HUH`	Capitals indicate increased loudness.
`°thanks°`	Degree signs indicate decreased volume.
`>I can't<`	Inward-facing indents embed talk that is faster than the surrounding speech.
`go:::d`	One or more colons indicate lengthening of the preceding sound. Each additional colon represents a lengthening of one beat.

Commentary in Transcripts

`((hand clap))`	Double parentheses indicate transcriber's comments, including descriptions of nonverbal behavior

Using Online Tools to Facilitate Communication, Interaction, and Collaboration

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Working together allows people to accomplish things that would be difficult if not impossible to achieve by working alone. It can reduce workloads, support networking, and expose people to new ideas and technologies. But for many language teachers in Japan, getting together with peers for research or projects is hampered by separation or conflicting schedules. When face-to-face meetings become impractical, online tools become essential channels of communication. Relying on these technologies, however, can pose challenges. The JALT2012 workshop "Engaging in Online Collaborative Projects" was held to allow teachers to share their online experiences working with others. By learning about the virtual technologies, group strategies and preventative measures other teachers have found effective, teachers could better plan for and manage their own future online interactive projects. In this paper 3 teachers will describe technologies they used to coordinate with peers on online projects, outline their experiences, and provide recommendations.

オンライン・コラボレーティングは、共同研究のための技術的支援を行うことによる研究遂行の促進を目的としている。適切な分任による作業量軽減、ネットワーク化による情報共有の円滑化、アイディアや最新テクノロジーに触れる機会の増進が重要である。しかし、研究者(語学教員）達がしばしば遠隔地にあって異なるスケジュールで活動しているため、会合の場を設けることが容易でなく、主要な通信チャンネルとしてオンライン・ツールを活用することが望ましい。JALT2012ワークショップは、研究者達がオンライン・ツールの利用状況を発表しノウハウを共有するために開催された。実効性のある処方として提案されたのは仮想化技術、様々なコラボレーション戦略やトラブル防止手段等であり、これらによって共同研究プロジェクトの設計及び運用が改善される見込みである。本稿では語学講師3名が、共同研究のための実用化されたオンライン技術の紹介と提言を試みる。

During a JALT2011 presentation on quantitative research (Sholdt, 2011), the audience was invited to participate in an upcoming professional development project. The project was designed as an educational opportunity for English educators to learn about quantitative research while applying what they learned to complete a small, publishable research study on writing fluency in their own teaching contexts, based on a previous study by Bonzo (2009). The project, called the Writing Fluency Project (WFP), connected educators from all over Japan, including the authors of this article. The project was conducted completely online and provided a number of insights into the nature, challenges and possibilities of online tools in facilitating communication, interaction and collaboration. The larger group consisted of over 40 educators from various teaching contexts around Japan. The participants were connected through a Moodle site, while smaller discussion groups met independently online to

discuss readings and their evolving research projects. Because of the nature of the project, participants were exposed to a variety of online technologies, many of them for the first time.

In addition to the promised educational goal of learning about quantitative research and basic statistics, the WFP also demonstrated to us that working together with coworkers and peers on projects like research, professional development, and education, provides a multitude of benefits beyond what might be accomplished alone. For example, people bring different strengths and abilities that can be shared, not to mention the workload that is reduced by dividing labor. The others can help provide support and motivation when challenges arise and offer different viewpoints and perspectives. In addition, interacting facilitates networking, which can open educational, social and professional opportunities. This project brought into focus the large number of professionals who, due to limited term contracts and remote teaching locations, are working in isolation from the larger community of educators around Japan. Although JALT meetings and conferences offer excellent opportunities to make connections, arranging face-to-face interactions can be challenging. When we cannot meet physically, the use of online applications, tools, and resources offers an avenue for coordinating on projects remotely. Using online technologies, however, is certainly not without challenges.

What we learned about the uses, challenges and benefits of using online technology to work with people from various locations was valuable, but we felt there was a larger need and interest in the teaching community to learn about the exciting online technologies that can facilitate such virtual relationships, whether the goal of the relationships was to complete professional tasks, research projects, professional development, or various other projects that require working from remote locations. For this paper we employed a narrative style, as discussed in Barkhuizen (2011), to investigate and reflect on the different experiences we have had with online technology. Each of us will (a) describe our early encounters with online technologies, (b) reflect on our individual perspectives of the WFP—Sholdt as facilitator and Stoute and Mull as participants, (c) introduce other technologies we have employed to coordinate with peers online and finally (d) give recommendations for readers hoping to utilize online technologies for their own goals and projects.

Teaching in an Online Classroom

Gregory Sholdt

First Encounter

My first significant experience with professional online interaction and collaboration began when I agreed to design and teach an online course on quantitative research methods for a group of language teachers interested in building their research skills and knowledge. I had been providing workshops and seminars at JALT chapter meetings and conferences but knew that the one-time contact with participants meant only limited instruction and learning could take place. At the end of one of my workshops, a teacher approached me with the idea of the online course, and while it was something I had never previously considered, I quickly saw the potential for moving in this direction and jumped at the chance. This eventually led to the development of the Writing Fluency Project as a means of promoting knowledge and skill in quantitative research methods among language teachers in Japan.

Challenges and Successes

The main technology needed to run a live online course is a video conferencing application that allows the instructor and participants to gather and interact live in an online space. In

different cycles of the course and other webinars, I have used WebEx, Blackboard Collaborate (formerly Elluminate Live!), and Adobe Connect, with each having similar features and monthly fees. These online applications allow me to set up an online "classroom" that is essentially a closed website which the course participants can be invited to join by sending them a link through email. After signing into the site, their names appear on a list of participants in a small window on the screen. With the use of web cameras, I can show six small video windows with live feeds from participants and one of me. I can upload and control presentation slides that all participants can see. Additionally, there is an open chat window that allows participants to type in questions while I am teaching. Although it is far from a traditional classroom, there is a great deal of interactivity available through these applications.

While the technology allows for an important level of interaction, there are some difficulties in adjusting to the unique online instructional situation. As I teach from my computer at home, I need to make sure that I am not interrupted by family members or even my cat and be careful not to leave personal items, such as laundry, behind me that can be visible on the screen. It is also a bit awkward to look into the camera lens on the top of my computer screen while teaching when it feels more natural to look at the video image of the participants. Unfortunately, the video windows are small and have low resolution, so while it is helpful to see faces, a lot of subtle facial cues that might help me to gauge confusion or comprehension are lost. With seven or eight microphones open at once at the teachers' various locales, background noise can become a serious problem and participants are asked to keep their microphones off until needed. From experience with my online course, I learned that having one person serve as a tech assistant during each class is extremely helpful. Their job is to manage any issues that unexpectedly crop up so that the class can continue without interruption.

Outside of the web conferencing applications, I also employ other collaborative tools with the course and other research projects—in particular Google Drive and SurveyMonkey. Google Drive allows multiple users access to a suite of apps to jointly create and edit spreadsheets, documents, and presentation slides that are stored online. With the online course, I put homework questions on a Google document and have participants post their own answers as well as comment on others' responses. It can get a little complicated with many contributors to a single document, but assigning a color to each participant helps to separate and identify different authors.

With SurveyMonkey, an online questionnaire development and data collection application, I can quickly create questionnaires and conveniently gather and organize information from the course or other research project participants. Getting people to respond in a timely manner can be difficult, but adding a hyperlink to the questionnaire and giving an estimate of time needed to complete the questionnaire do seem to help. A bit of planning at the questionnaire development stage goes a long way too when it comes to reviewing and analyzing your data.

Recommendations for Teachers

Prior to working on the online course, I had just minimally used online applications for professional collaboration, but since that time, I now look at online interaction as a first, best option for the work and projects that I take on. For language teachers who have been apprehensive about online tools, I highly recommend jumping in and giving them a try. There is an astounding variety and number of useful applications out there that can open up new ways to collaborate professionally. I think it is important to be prepared for a learning curve and expect that there will always be limitations and compromises. Making a commitment to use a new application for at least a month is a good way to get over that initial hump. It is easy to get frustrated with what

does not work the way you want it to; however, try not to forget the advantages it brings. I still have quite a few frustrations when teaching courses online, but there is simply no way these courses or other new projects that I have started would even be possible without online collaborative technology.

Moodle: Technology and Community

Martin Stoute

First Encounter

My first experience using online technology in interactive activities was through a writing course I volunteered for while a BEd student at the University of Toronto in 2009 called Writers in Electronic Residence. K-12 students from across Canada are connected to a professional writer through FirstClass, a groupware technology. The professional writer commented on works of prose and poetry the students produced. Students also commented on the works of other students. BEd candidates like me provided feedback and encouragement. It was impressive to the students to have their work taken so seriously, and I remember their thoughtful online discussions, but I had minimal interaction with the different features of FirstClass and did not realize the power and range of the technology.

Challenges and Successes

By joining the WFP, I embarked on the most ambitious virtual group project I had ever been a part of. At the start of the WFP, Sholdt had all members sign into a Moodle site, which would serve as our online meeting place for the duration of the project. It was there that we would access our readings, ask questions, retrieve documents, and engage in dialogue. We were encouraged to quickly create a profile with a digital photo, and I recognized a few faces from Sholdt's JALT workshop. To develop social presence, Sholdt placed us into smaller groups of four to six people who could meet online regularly to share insights and raise difficulties. As a "non-tech" guy engaging in an online project, I quickly suggested a Skype introduction. The group, however, displayed a reluctance to interact online and it became clear that it would be difficult to establish a working relationship with them.

Like all participants, we were linked to the project through Moodle, so I had somewhere to fall back to. Navigating the Moodle site, however, proved a challenge. My limited computer skills, combined with a lack of patience with computers, made finding the right forum sections and documents frustrating. I got lost easily and found the layout and labeling confusing and counterintuitive. All the navigating options were text-based, and as I was used to typical graphical user interface (GUI) icons like those on a Mac or Windows system, this was a small hang-up. Also, there was so much information on the main page that it took up multiple computer screens of scrolling to reach the bottom, which I only later discovered contained the schedule.

To blame my difficulties solely on the setup of the project's Moodle site would be an overstatement. I was irrationally hesitant to contribute to or interact with the larger Moodle group "out there". Perhaps because I had not met most participants—and despite acquaintance with their profiles—I did not fully register that they were people similar to me. As time went on, I did not know whether I was keeping up with others in the weekly readings and was concerned I might be missing important information on Moodle. Rather than encouraging me to solicit advice from the larger community on the many forums, these factors combined to discourage me from stepping forward. Based on my connections with some of the others in the project, I found that I was not the only one who was apprehensive about posting ideas and questions.

Because my small groups ultimately never thrived, I had no recourse but to face my demons and make a stronger effort to

figure out the Moodle website. Through trial and error, I soon gained navigating competence, discovering where to find the weekly schedules, webinar links, and relevant forums. After overcoming my technical inhibitions, I began to post and worked with members in trying to solve common problems. Embracing the larger community showed me how fortunate I was to have such a good online meeting space to fall back on since my smaller team had fallen through.

Recommendations for Teachers

I learned that when working with large collaborative groups online, it is important to jump in right away, especially for those who are working in isolation outside a supportive work or teaching environment. Doing this will help collaborators make the social connections that will bind or tether them to the group. Whether by commenting on profiles or responding to forums, once there is interaction going on it feels more human and natural. It is also important for administrators to offer multiple points of entry to the online community and for participants to experiment with all of them. Whether it be online forums, blogs, audio-video conferencing, or even physical face-to-face meetings, all of these provide a link to the larger collective. Finally, I would strongly urge those who do not consider themselves "tech-savvy" to take the leap and just give new programs and technologies a real try. Technology can be intimidating and frustrating, but with a little persistence benefits soon begin to appear.

Moving Meetings and Projects Online

Jacqueline Mull

The First Step

My first real online experience working with others in an educational setting was an online writing course I mediated for Waseda University from my teaching position in the United States. The experience was a sterile one, with students reading instructions and writing models online before submitting their own writing to me for correction and grading. It was hard to imagine a real person on the other end of the email address and I know my students felt the same way. The dropout rate was high. While those students who stuck with the program showed improvement in their writing, the online program did not feel as rewarding as a traditional face-to-face class. In the years that followed I became more technologically skilled, but was hesitant about online projects.

Challenges and Successes

Before taking part in the WFP, I had only used Skype for personal calls and video chats with individual family members. As part of the WFP, we needed to organize regular meetings with a small group (four to five people) located around Japan. The purpose of these small group meetings was to discuss readings and our developing research projects in a more intimate setting, where our questions and concerns would be heard and would be more likely to be addressed. Both Skype and Google + were recommended as formats for these group meetings. My group chose Skype simply because of familiarity with the software. Unfortunately, the standard, free version of Skype, unlike Google +, does not allow group video conferencing unless one member pays for a premium account. We could, however, forego video and simply set up an audio conference call, which turned out to be adequate for our purposes.

Establishing our first meeting by email turned out to be a headache with multiple volleys of email over several weeks to find a common time in our schedules. In retrospect, something like BaseCamp, described later, or perhaps simply Google Calendar may have saved us time organizing our schedules. It did appear that groups who scheduled an initial contact time quickly were more likely to persist in the project than those who did not. After initial contact was made, all future meetings were scheduled in real time at the end of each meeting.

Once our small group made initial contact, we proceeded in much the same way described by Johnson, Suriya, Won Yoon, Berret, and La Fleur (2002). One member stepped forward as an initial leader as we tried to determine how best to proceed with the project at hand, and from that initial meeting on, leadership rotated. In order to get the most out of our Skype meetings, we took notes on our assigned reading individually, shared and commented on those notes by email before our meetings, and harvested difficult points from the developing email discussion as the focus of our Skype meetings. This kept meetings short and focused so we could discuss the most difficult points within our self-imposed 30-minute time limit. Our more persistent problems were posted to the Moodle forum for help. This process encouraged everyone to finish the reading early, and group members only occasionally came to meetings unprepared. Interestingly, unlike the situation described in Johnson et al. (2002), leadership did not rotate based on the weekly note-taker (our note-taker, who did rotate, tended to be less involved in the conversation because of their task) but rather around team members who had either posed problems in the email conversations or felt they might have an answer to a problem that had been posed.

One challenge to using Skype was turn-taking. Without a visual connection, group members were at risk of falling silent and forgotten as more aggressive members dominated the conversation. One team member made an early effort to monitor for members who had fallen silent and check in with them. This kept everyone involved and often brought out interesting problems and comments that might have gone unsaid otherwise. This dynamic made all team members more sensitive to participation and contributed to a strong sense of community. In the end, this sense of community was a highly motivating force and made the overall educational experience that much more rewarding.

In addition to the online technologies we used to an educational end for the WFP, I have also used project management technologies online for professional projects. A few years back, my colleagues and I were hired to write textbooks for another institution in Tokyo. Suddenly we had to coordinate with a remote client, and we also needed to coordinate with materials writers who were outside the Kansai area, in order to meet our deadline.

To address these challenges, we started using an online project management system called BaseCamp (Classic version). The user interface is designed with business teams in mind. It provides a calendar to post events and milestones, an internal message system, an option for posting documents online, and online To-Do lists. Administrators can give outside groups, such as clients, tailored access to the site, while giving different access to team members. At the time we started using this software there was a basic, free version of the software. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case, and BaseCamp now costs at least U.S. $20/month.

Aside from a very intuitive user interface, we discovered other features we enjoyed about this software. The To-Do lists allowed team members to check in quickly with people working remotely to see what was getting done throughout the day. This made it possible to coordinate with remote contract workers and for our core team to work outside the office while keeping

connected to the project. Another unexpected but key feature of BaseCamp was the milestone feature on the group calendar, which required a name associated with every project milestone. This removed any confusion about who was responsible for a project and also put pressure on group members to finish projects on time so they would not be responsible for an overdue milestone on the homepage. The public nature of the milestones plus the satisfaction of checking them off when work was complete turned out to be highly motivating for our team.

Had we been willing to pay a monthly fee, we could have used BaseCamp to upload and share documents, but the free version had very limited space and our textbook chapters were too heavy for BaseCamp or email, so we chose to use Firestorage (free online) for sharing documents instead. Firestorage, like Dropbox, allows users to upload documents to the Internet and share them with others. In my own opinion, Dropbox is more flexible than Firestorage, but Firestorage is straightforward, presented in Japanese, and was already used by some of our colleagues.

Recommendations

My more recent experiences with online education and project coordination have made me reconsider my early skepticism about coordinating with others online. I do find that learning a new technology often comes with bumps, but there are some concrete steps that can be taken to improve the experience. For discussion-focused interactions, it is important to establish contact quickly and monitor for quieter members. It is also highly recommended that a strategy be adopted for keeping meetings short and to the point. This may be accomplished by co-constructing an agenda ahead of time, agreeing on a self-imposed time limit, or doing both. For online project management, it is important to find avenues for keeping members organized and motivated, including having public goals and attaching names to mutually agreed-upon deadlines. To promote adoption of new technologies, it is valuable to have incentives, such as centralized information and public recognition of accomplishments. No matter what previous experiences with software or online interaction readers may have had, I highly recommend taking online opportunities seriously. As technology develops it is becoming an ever more compelling facilitator for connecting with others.

Conclusion

The "Engaging in Online Collaborative Projects" workshop (Stoute, Mull, & Sholdt, 2012) was a way of getting people together to discuss what group projects they were doing and learn from each other. Given the advantages of working with others rather than in isolation, the importance of online technologies that facilitate communication, interaction, and collaboration played a large role in the discussion. Thanks to the development of new technologies, many of which we discussed, online communication is relatively inexpensive, widely accessible, and potentially very effective in facilitating online group projects. But as our experience illustrates, project success does not magically occur when you give a group of people the relevant hardware and software and tell them to begin. Some participants may be confused about how to use some or many features of the technology or may simply feel awkward when doing so. It is therefore important to pay attention to the human element in online collaborations to maximize the opportunities for participants to productively connect with each other and to anticipate problems before they happen so that they may be avoided. This can be achieved by monitoring for quiet group members, scheduling early online introductions, and requiring participants to provide photographic representations. It is also helpful to encourage and support members to persist with the technology. Once a group coalesces, armed with useful and objective-appropriate online

tools, there is enormous potential for knowledge creation, problem solving, creative output, and project success.

Trying these technologies for yourself is an essential step in beginning to harness their power to facilitate and enhance online educational projects, professional projects, and relationships. By sharing our experiences of working with these technologies and working with other educators in our JALT2012 workshop, we hoped to create a forum that other educators would find valuable.

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