



repetition, active use, and contextual learning, with a focus on both word form and meaning (e.g., Nation, 2001; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). The question is: How best can these elements be integrated into an L2 classroom? Working with examples from the *Official TOEFL Vocabulary Guide*, we will explore learner-centered techniques for designing tasks, lessons, individual practice, and assessments that will support meaningful L2 vocabulary development. Given the growing role of technology in L2 instruction, we will also discuss how technology can assist L2 vocabulary learning, especially for self-study. Participants will be invited to engage in hands-on creation of their own teaching materials that emphasize the activation of vocabulary knowledge for communicative purposes.

## Shaping Meaningful Language Education in the Digital Age

What does meaningful second language (L2) learning, teaching, and assessment look like in the age of technology? This article reviews some of the key principles of second language acquisition (SLA) and discusses how technology might enhance or augment opportunities for SLA in light of students' real-world, communicative needs and goals. It also explores potential challenges that technology presents and how we might overcome those challenges to make meaningful L2 education happen.



**T**he landscape surrounding second language (L2) learning, teaching, and assessment has changed dramatically over the past 50 years. When JALT was first established in 1976, personal computers were just beginning to emerge, the internet and email were not yet publicly accessible, and computer-assisted language learning was still in its infancy (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Now, half a century later, it is all-too-common to own a personal computer and mobile devices, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated society's shift to engaging in nearly every aspect of work, education, and leisure communication via online platforms. Social media has become prevalent in our daily lives, and the rise of generative AI has, with little doubt, completely changed the game. As this rapidly evolving state of affairs inevitably shapes how and where we communicate, it also raises the critical question: What does meaningful L2 learning, teaching, and assessment look like in the current era?

Before considering the role of technology in second language acquisition (SLA), we should first

review the most basic principles of SLA. The past 50 years has also witnessed tremendous progress in our understanding of SLA, with numerous theories proposed by various researchers and the accumulation of considerable evidence about language learning. To demonstrate how such core principles of SLA may be reinterpreted in the current context, here, I will focus in particular on three seminal ideas: the input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985), and the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1983). In short, accumulated research evidence suggests that input, output, and interaction are absolutely critical conditions for SLA. In other words, L2 learners require plenty of opportunities to actively and intentionally listen and read (input), speak and write (output), and interact with others for meaningful purpose in the target language, especially when communicative ability is the goal of language learning. In what follows, I will discuss how opportunities for these basic principles of input, output, and interaction can be effectively created in the context of today's technological advancements.

### Input

With the spread of technology, it has become easier to gain access to authentic input in both oral and written modalities. Movies, YouTube videos, podcasts, news articles, and social media posts are now just a fingertip away. Even in foreign language contexts, learners can easily be exposed to real-world language use by a variety of speakers and writers. Although this availability of authentic input is certainly beneficial for SLA, it also introduces an important challenge: how to make input comprehensible to L2 learners. If choosing between audio-only input (e.g., podcast) and multimodal (i.e., audio plus visual) input (e.g., YouTube videos), opt for multimodal input to facilitate learners' comprehension of the content. Here, if the purpose is to push learners' language acquisition through comprehensible input, presentation of complementary information in multiple modalities (e.g., narration plus visual support that adds to information provided orally) lowers the overall cognitive load and thus promotes comprehension (Sweller et al., 1998). At the same time, care should be taken when using multimodal input. For example, providing on-screen texts, such as subtitles in the target language, is not always a good idea. Findings from multimedia learning suggest that concurrent presentation of redundant information in multiple formats (e.g., voice-over plus text that is identical to the narra-



tion) may interfere with, rather than facilitate, comprehension (Sweller et al., 1998). Having to process the same information in different formats causes cognitive overload, especially for L2 learners with limited proficiency. An effective alternative might be to familiarize learners with the content through a pre-task activity or to pre-teach key terms. These strategies will lower the overall cognitive load of a task and thus facilitate learners' comprehension of the input content, potentially allowing them to focus on language use as well (Sasayama et al., 2025).

### Output

Output—speaking and writing—plays a critical role in promoting SLA. One advantage of technology in this respect is its ability to make output-based tasks more reflective of real-world scenarios. Take an email-writing task as an example. Helping learners develop abilities to select the appropriate register, to express politeness, and to craft impactful messages are all important learning outcomes, but additionally, students must learn how to do all these things in a meaningful, real-world context. In reality, we often need to write an email quickly, in a noisy café or busy train station, where we have limited time and numerous distractions. Technology is useful in replicating the real-world scenario, allowing us to add relevant visuals and background noise (Norris et al., 2023) or to simulate real-life contexts through the use of virtual or augmented reality (Bahari, 2022). One thing to keep in mind when implementing simulation-based learning is that high-fidelity tasks pose high cognitive demands (van Merriënboer et al., 2003). Having to deal with time-pressure and background noise, for example, is extraneous to the task at hand and thus may interfere with learning if not introduced appropriately. It is critical to gradually increase the degree of fidelity and, as a result, the level of cognitive demands (Robinson, 2010), so that students can learn to deal with real-life extraneous factors in a step-by-step manner and eventually to execute the task successfully outside the classroom. In a similar vein, technology-mediated, high-fidelity tasks offer a unique advantage in assessment. Given their proximity to reality, such tasks better gauge learners' ability to use the language for real-world communication purposes (Norris, 2016). This aspect of technology is particularly important because it helps us tailor our instruction towards real-life goals.

### Interaction

Similarly, communicative interaction has become increasingly technology-mediated and AI-driven. Technology-mediated interaction may help address the problem of a lack of interlocutors, especially in foreign language contexts. Given the criticality of interaction for SLA, this advancement in technology is no doubt beneficial. A recent meta-analysis has found that AI interventions, including interaction with AI agents, promote language acquisition (Wu, 2024). AI can provide useful feedback based on spoken production and interaction patterns, which helps enhance the availability of an important learning mechanism. Having acknowledged these potential benefits, we should not forget that communication is fundamentally human in nature, especially spoken interaction with its immediacy and intimacy. Most of the time, we learn how to communicate with others in a new language to talk to people, not AI agents. The question then is whether the skills acquired through AI-mediated communication can be transferred to real-world scenarios where learners are expected to interact effectively with fellow humans in the target language. More research is needed along these lines, and we, as language educators, should continue to strategically balance and augment the use of AI with an understanding of our learners' real-world communication needs. A good dose of human-to-human interaction remains a vital component of meaningful language teaching.

Technology will continue to evolve and play a critical role in L2 learning, teaching, and assessment. Although the value of input, output, and interaction for SLA remains constant, we should carefully consider how opportunities for these basic principles can be offered and tailored to each student's real-world needs. Technology is useful, but it may at times present a double-edged sword. We should strive to take advantage of it while being aware of its potential challenges and their possible solutions.

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## JALT2025 JALT Junior Plenary Speaker • 基調講演

### Plenary Session

#### 多文化共生の学校づくり

横浜市立南吉田小学校は、2025年4月現在、全校児童577人の半数以上（58.5%）が外国籍または外国につながる児童（以下外国籍等児童）で、つながる国や地域は20におよぶグローバル化のすすんだ学校である。学校では、増え続ける外国籍等児童の日本語教育と多文化共生教育に力を入れ、学校教育目標の一つに「多様性を尊重できる子ども」を掲げ「誰一人取り残さない」をモットーに様々な取組を行っている。

### Plenary Workshop

#### 海外編入児童の受入れに必要な教職員の連携について

外国籍等児童を受け入れる上で欠かせないのが職員間、支援者間の連携である。子どもの得意不得意を理解し、友達関係や家族関係の悩みを把握し、安心して学校生活を送れる環境づくりをする。そのためには担任と国際教室担当の連携をベースに、支援者との情報共有を大切にしている。心のケアではスクールカウンセラー、家庭生活の悩みやトラブルは、SSWを介して区役所、児童相談所など関係機関と連携して解決に向けて動く。本人の意志と関係なく来日しているケースがあることから、心のケアをしていくことは大切なことである。

### Plenary Article

#### 多文化共生の学校づくり

##### 学校概要

横浜市立南吉田小学校は、全校児童577人の58.5%が外国籍または外国につながる児童（外国籍等児童）で、つながる国や地域は20におよぶグローバル化の進んだ学校である。中国籍児童が多数を占めるが、韓国、フィリピン、タイ、ベトナムなどアジアの国々につながる児童や、近年はネパール、イスラム圏からの編入児童も増えている。増え続ける外国籍等児童の日本語教育と多文化共生教育に力を入れ、学校教育目標の一つに「多様性を尊重できる子ども」を掲げ「誰一人取り残さない」をモットーに様々な取組を行っている。



##### 日本語教育

海外編入児童はまず横浜市日本語支援拠点施設「ひまわり」に通い初期日本語指導を受けながら、学校の国際教





室でも初期指導を受ける。GIGAスクール構想により、1人1台PCが貸与されてからは、写真や動画、ひらがな、カタカナアプリ、デジタル教科書なども活用して日本語指導を行っている。

多くの児童は半年から1年で初期指導を卒業し、学年の国際教室での指導に移る。この段階で日常会話は概ね分かるようになっているが、学習言語を習得するにはさらに3年から5年ほどかかるという研究もあり、日本語指導を継続していく。

在籍学級では外国語補助指導員や母語支援ボランティア(横浜市教育委員会事業)が教室に入り込みサポートする。

### 多文化共生教育

本校では「笑顔で結びつなげよう南吉田」を合言葉に、国や言語、文化の違いを超えて認め合える子どもの育成を目指し、様々な取組を行っている。

6か国語のアナウンスで始まる運動会では、民族衣装を着た児童が聖火リレーを行い盛り上げる。運動会ではオリンピックの精神を体現しているとして「東京2020 みんなのスポーツフェスティバル」で大会組織委員会から表彰された。

夏休み国際読書会は、各国の講師が来校し多言語で読み聞かせをした後、その国の遊びを紹介する。その他

にも、世界の遊びを紹介する集会、二胡教室やK-popダンスなどの催しを通じて、子どもたちのつながる国の言語や文化にふれる機会をもっている。

母語教室も開いている。どの取組も学校だけではなく、PTA、地域協働本部、行政や横浜市国際交流協会が運営するみなみ市民活動・多文化共生ラウンジ、横浜国立大学等との連携で行っている。

保護者、児童を対象に実施している学校評価アンケートでは「国や文化の違いを超えて認め合う気持ちが育っています」という質問に、9割近い保護者が肯定的な回答を寄せている。

Masato Kaneko 金子 正人 (校長 Director)

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### 学校ホームページ

- <https://www.edu.city.yokohama.lg.jp/school/es/minamiyoshida/>
- <https://minamiyoshida-es.note.jp/n/nf8fbcddb5f4e>

## JALT2025 Balsamo Asian Scholar • Lodomchanh Khantry

### Plenary Session

#### From Barriers to Bridges: A Decade of ASP Impact

Over the past decade, the Academic Support Program (ASP), implemented through the Laos-Australia National Scholarship and The Asia Foundation, has been instrumental in advancing educational equity in Laos. As the Head Teacher, I have had the privilege of working closely with students from marginalized communities, including those with disabilities, who face substantial social, economic, and structural challenges to accessing higher education. This presentation reflects on the evolution of the ASP and its comprehensive approach to supporting students. The program integrates English language instruction, IT skills training, soft skills development, personalized counseling, extracurricular activities, and teacher professional development. Through inclusive pedagogy and a flexible curriculum design, ASP has empowered hundreds of students with the confidence and skills necessary to succeed both academically and personally. A core aspect of the program is its focus on student well-being and resilience, providing not only academic support but also emotional and psychological counseling, mentorship, and community-building opportunities. ASP also fosters a culture of inclusion and equity by providing professional development workshops for educators on inclusive teaching strategies and practices. As a testament to the power of targeted, student-centered support, ASP has demonstrated how barriers to education can be transformed into bridges for success. This session will discuss the program's impact and offer a model for replicable inclusive educational practices in resource-constrained settings.

### Plenary Workshop

#### Soft Skills and English Language Teaching

This research investigates the workplace soft skills most needed by graduates from the Department of English, Faculty of Letters, National University of Laos (NUOL), with a focus on their integration into English teaching. In today's increasingly competitive job market, graduates are expected to possess not only academic knowledge and language proficiency but also a wide range of soft skills essential for effective communication, collaboration, leadership, and professional growth. The study employed a quantitative research design, using survey data from alumni to identify the most in-demand soft skills and analyze them across gender and age groups. The findings reveal significant gaps between the soft skills emphasized in the current English curriculum and those expected in the workplace. Key areas lacking include human skills, self-confidence, work ethic, personal organization and time management, and leadership. To address these challenges, the study provides practical recommendations for implementation. These include integrating soft skills explicitly into English language courses, updating teaching methods to promote active learning and communication, strengthening teacher training, and providing student support services focused on soft skills development. The research highlights the need for a more holistic approach to English education that aligns academic instruction with real-world expectations. These insights are valuable for educators, administrators, and policymakers working to improve graduate employability and the quality of English language education in Laos.