



## JALT2025 Kevin Cleary Invited Speaker • Kinsella Valies

Jissen Women's University & Aoyama  
Gakuin University

### Session

#### Collaborative Research: Trials and Triumphs

In today's globally connected academic landscape, collaboration among language educators is both a strategic necessity and a rich source of innovation. By working as research duos or teams, scholars can enhance their research capabilities (Glebova, 2024). In other words, combining different skill sets and resources can help teams tackle complex challenges that exceed what individuals can handle alone. This 25-minute presentation addresses the practical, interpersonal, and intercultural dimensions of building successful research partnerships between colleagues in higher education. Focusing on what should and should not be done to ensure effective collaboration, the talk explores key questions: Should you partner with someone who shares your style and research interests, or seek out a colleague whose knowledge and skills complement your own? Is it better to form a tightly coordinated partnership or to build a larger, more diverse team? What are the benefits and potential drawbacks of collaborative scholarship—especially across cultures, institutions, and disciplines? With particular attention to diversity, intercultural communication, and complementary expertise, the presentation draws on empirical literature and personal experience to offer guidance. Topics covered include selecting the right partner(s), negotiating project roles and authorship, managing differing communication styles, and maintaining long-term collaboration across institutional and cultural boundaries. Designed for early-career and experienced researchers, this session highlights how collaboration, done well, can deepen pedagogical insight, and foster a more inclusive, innovative academic culture. Attendees will leave with concrete tools and questions for reflection, which they can use to initiate or improve their research partnerships in linguistics and EFL.

### Workshop

#### Co-creating Research: Are You an Effective Team?

According to Wenger et al. (2002), *communities of practice* “are the result of continuous processes of learning in which individuals engage and sustain through time.” It can be said that collaborative research starts at the community-oriented level and moves to the practice-oriented level as research goals are formed (Córdoba & Robson, 2006). In this interactive and reflective 60-minute workshop, participants will explore the interpersonal and intercultural dimensions of research collaboration. Building on the presentation “Collaborative Research: Trials and Triumphs,” this session will introduce practical tools for forming, maintaining, and reflecting on academic partnerships. The workshop focuses on collaborative dynamics such as selecting partners with complementary strengths, co-defining project roles, navigating power imbalances, and fostering equitable authorship practices. Participants will engage in structured pair and group activities, including a brain-

storming session, a “Collaboration Style Match” exercise, a discussion, a “Conflict Mapping” scenario roleplay, and a reflective dialogue. By integrating core principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the workshop empowers participants to approach research collaboration as a culturally responsive practice. Whether their context includes working across departments, institutions, or continents, attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to build resilient, respectful, and productive academic relationships. Designed for early-career researchers and seasoned scholars alike, the session combines reflection, dialogue, and strategic planning in an energizing format. Participants may gain valuable insights into fostering trust and achieving shared success in their collaborative endeavors.

## Navigating Real World Collaborative Research

It was quite a wonderful surprise and honor to be chosen as the Kevin Cleary Invited Speaker for the 2025 JALT International Conference. In honor of Kevin Cleary's distinguished contribution to JALT, I have chosen to present on a topic that I am sure will resonate with educators, researchers, and JALT volunteers.



This year's conference theme is *LanguageS: Learning, Teaching, Assessing—JALT 50 Years—Challenges and Perspectives*. JALT has flourished for 50 years and overcome challenges through the power of collaboration, developing professional partnerships, and service. As Dykes, referring to working on a conference team, wrote, “it's more honest and real. Ideas and opinions are shared more freely (...). You walk away with an idea of who that person is in a way often is not possible from many other scenarios” (personal communication, May 20, 2025).

In my time as a JALT participant, volunteer, and leader in various capacities, I have been provided with numerous opportunities to develop professionally as a language teacher, editor, presenter, and researcher. I have actively participated in previous Shizuoka Chapter events, attended the annual international conference, and taken part in various PanSIG and regional conferences. Supporting colleagues is important to me, and during my stint as the chair of the Writers' Peer Support Group, I was



privileged to work with a committed team to support educators from the membership and beyond as they worked to publish their research. Many were new researchers who benefited from the experience of more advanced colleagues, who shared their advice either live or online through workshops, or by means of written feedback on papers. Supporting each other as colleagues and as JALT community members is part of the organization's tenets around improving learning, teaching, and volunteering.

My upcoming JALT International presentation, celebrating JALT's 51 years of fostering professional partnerships, will be about collaborative research. Japan has seen a notable increase in international research collaborations. According to the National Science Board (Schneider et al., 2023), in 2022, 31.8% of Japan's scientific and engineering articles involved international co-authors. This is a significant rise from 18.7% in 2003. I will touch on why each of us should take advantage of the JALT community of practice to support this trend, grow our skills as researchers and cement global academic relationships.

Wenger (1998) describes a community of practice as a community that centers around shared practice, around something that matters to people. People can participate in different ways and to different degrees. A community of practice such as JALT is defined by knowledge rather than by task and exists because participation has value to its members. Collaborative research is generally born from communities of practice and an exchange of ideas between their members. According to Das (2025), collaborative research is "a form of scientific inquiry conducted by researchers from different groups, disciplines, or institutions who come together to pursue a shared scientific objective" (para. 3). For example, researchers meet at a JALT conference, discuss their shared interests, and decide to work together on a project.

Collaborative research provides numerous benefits, notably accelerating discovery and efficiency. This occurs because it pools diverse expertise and resources, allowing teams to tackle complex challenges and access broader funding opportunities. This interdisciplinary approach enhances scientific rigor, facilitates the efficient translation of research findings into practical applications, and champions diversity and inclusion by bringing together individuals from different fields, regions, and cultures. Finally, it significantly contributes to career growth, especially for early-career researchers, by increas-

ing visibility, opening interdisciplinary doors, and enhancing communication and skill development.

Collaboration can take the form of pairs or teams. Glebova (2024) states that dyadic relationships in "research duos" can function as foundational units for larger collaborative efforts. This type of collaboration can enhance communication, forge interpersonal bonds, and build peer support. For dyadic collaboration to be effective, flexible roles and responsibilities and agreements on authorship are of paramount significance. My experience as a member of research and writing duos lead me to conclude that though task division in the early stages may be efficient, co-writing and co-editing, for example, become more important in the final stages.

An illustration of how collaborative research fosters peer support is the integration of peer editing during the team project's writing phase. As research partners working on the same study, collaborators are uniquely positioned to offer insightful feedback on clarity, accuracy, and overall quality within each other's work.

Finally, the world of academic collaboration, while promising rapid and efficient discovery and career growth, often encounters the messy reality of human dynamics. Four common collaborative conflicts illustrate reasons why early-career researchers might shy away from collaborative research: subtle power imbalances, generational and methodological clashes, communication breakdown and disrespect, and team dynamics and bullying. These mirror real-world conflicts common in academic partnerships, and such situations often arise when one language educator's lack of focus, disregard for others' time, or poor communication skills frustrate their collaborative partner.

In response, one partner can directly, yet calmly, address the specific behaviors, acknowledge their impact, and propose concrete solutions, such as strict meeting agendas, time limits, and written confirmations for key decisions. By proactively managing expectations, fostering open communication and a supportive environment, we can transform potential pitfalls into opportunities for stronger, more effective, and genuinely inclusive academic collaborations within our community of practice.

My talk will delve into the above "challenges and perspectives," focusing particularly on how we can make collaborative experiences more effective, and memorable by nurturing positive working relationships.



## References

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**Kinsella Valies** is an Assistant Professor at Jissen Women's University and Aoyama Gakuin University. With a background in cinema and photography, TEFL, and applied linguistics, her research interests include filmmaking in the classroom, speaking assessment, and black women's experiences in Japan. A dedicated contributor to JALT, she has held numerous leadership roles and is currently chairing the Nominations and Elections Committee. Her recent work includes JSPS-funded research on student empowerment through film festivals.

## JALT2025 Featured Speakers

### Emotional Journeys in Teaching Languages Other Than English: An Intensive Single-Case Study with Early Career Teachers

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This presentation reports on a semester-long study that followed the changing emotional states of three Thai secondary Languages Other Than English (LOTE) teachers (Chinese, French, and Japanese) through repeated card-sorting tasks. The findings reveal that emotions are shaped by expectations, the perceived status of each language, and shifting classroom conditions tied to student engagement and progress. The study suggests that the realities of LOTE education should be made clear to pre-service teachers and should guide ongoing professional development.



### From Simulation to Skill: Student-Centered

Kuepper, Eileen  
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This interactive workshop explores how student-centered simulation projects can build intercultural competence and language skills. Based on a decade-long global collaboration, participants will experience authentic tasks, reflect on cultural dynamics, and leave with low-threshold templates for designing their own accessible and meaningful projects. Emphasis is placed on student agency, real-world communication, and cultural reflection to deepen language learning in diverse classrooms.

### CEFR: An Ecological Perspective and Pedagogical Implications

Nagai, Noriko  
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Emphasizing the CEFR's conceptual rather than evaluative function, this workshop gives practical