The Language Teacher

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Feature Articles

3 Are Japanese Junior High School Teachers Ready for One-To-One Devices in Schools? A Case Study
Steven Lim

10 University Students' Perceptions of Seeing People's Faces in Synchronous Online Breakout Sessions
Tomoko Hashimoto

Readers' Forum

16 The Importance of Teaching Expertise Research for L2 Teaching Contexts
Mayumi Asaba

20 Developing L2 Pragmatic Competence Through Project-Based Learning
Justin Charlebois

TLT Interviews

24 An Interview with Professor Yuko Butler
Jeremy White

30 An Interview with Takaaki Hiratsuka
Matthew Nall

My Share

33 Classroom ideas from Andrew A. Kirkpatrick, Chris Huang, Colleen Dalton, and Steven Asquith

JALT Praxis

38 *TLT* Wired
44 Younger Learners
49 Book Reviews
52 Teaching Assistance
55 The Writers' Workshop
58 SIG Focus
61 Old Grammarians

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Contents

Feature Article

- Are Japanese Junior High School Teachers Ready for One-To-One Devices in Schools? A Case Study 3
- University Students' Perceptions of Seeing People's Faces in Synchronous Online Breakout Sessions 10

Readers' Forum

- The Importance of Teaching Expertise Research for L2 Teaching Contexts. . 16
- Developing L2 Pragmatic Competence Through Project-Based Learning . . . 20

TLT Interviews

- An Interview with Professor Yuko Butler 24
- An Interview with Takaaki Hiratsuka . . 30

JALT Praxis

- My Share 33
- *TLT* Wired 38
- Younger Learners 44
- Book Reviews 49
- Recently Received 51
- Teaching Assistance 52
- Writers' Workshop 55
- SIG Focus 58
- Old Grammarians 61

Other

- JALT Membership Information 60

JALT Publications Online

Material from *The Language Teacher* (TLT) and *JALT Journal* (JJ) published in the last six months requires an access password. These passwords are only available to current JALT members. To access the latest issues of *TLT* and *JJ*:

https://jalt.org/main/publications

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In this month's issue . . .

Welcome to the January/February issue of *The Language Teacher*. We hope your new year has gotten off to an auspicious start.

This issue includes two Feature Articles and two Readers' Forum pieces. Our first Feature Article is from **Steven Lim**, who assesses teacher readiness for individual student use of computing devices in Japanese junior high schools. Our second Feature Article is from **Tomoko Hashimoto**, who investigates the degree to which online university learners feel the need to use their cameras during synchronous breakout sessions.

Our first Readers' Forum piece is from **Mayumi Asaba**, who provides an overview of past research on teaching expertise and suggests potential applications specifically for L2 teaching contexts. Our second Readers' Forum piece is from **Justin Charlesbois**, who illustrates the use of project-based learning for developing L2 learners' pragmatic competence in a university-level intercultural communication course.

In addition to these four articles, this issue includes an interview with **Yuko Goto Butler** by **Jeremy White** and another with **Takaaki Hiratsuka** by **Matthew Nall**. Please be sure to check out our many regular JALT Praxis columns, such as My Share, *TLT* Wired, Young Learners, Book Reviews, Teaching Assistance, Writers' Workshop, SIG Focus, and Old Grammarians, as well.

As some of you may know, my tenure as *TLT* co-editor was officially set to end with the JALT2022 conference, after which I was to move into the largely titular role of senior editor to make way for Irina Kuznetcova—yes, our guest editor from the preconference issue—to serve as the new co-editor, alongside Bern Mulvey, who would have been our returning co-editor. I am pleased to announce that Irina will indeed be joining our ranks as she will surely make a fine addition to our team. Regrettably, however, for personal reasons, Bern decided to step down in September, leaving his position vacant. If you or anyone you know might be interested in training to become his eventual replacement, I encourage you to contact JALT Publications Board Chair Theron Muller

Continued over

TLT Editors: Paul Lyddon, Irina Kuznetcova
TLT Japanese Language Editor: Mami Ueda

at jaltpubs.pubschair@jalt.org. In any case, I sincerely wish Bern all the best and thank him for his many valuable contributions during his time with us. I also want to thank the rest of the *TLT* staff for pulling together over the past few months to help keep everything running smoothly through the rather sudden and unexpected transition.

In closing, as always, I would like to thank you, our readers, without whom none of our efforts would even matter. I hope you enjoy the issue and find it useful.

—*Paul Lyddon*, TLT *Co-editor*

The Language Teacher の2023年1/2月号へようこそ。皆様にとって新年が幸先の良いスタートを切ったことを願っております。

今号のTLTには、２つのFeature Articlesと２つのReaders’Forum を掲載しています。最初のFeature Articleは、Steven Limによるもので、日本の中学校で個々の生徒がコンピュータやタブレット等の端末を使用するための教師の準備状況を評価しています。2つ目はTomoko Hashimotoによるもので、大学のオンライン学習者がブレイクアウトセッション中に顔出しを使用する必要性をどの程度感じているかを調査したものです。

最初のReaders’Forumでは、Mayumi Asabaが教育の専門知識に関する先行研究の概要を説明し、特に第二言語教育における、潜在的な適用法を提案しています。２つ目のReaders’Forumでは、Justin Charlesboisが大学の異文化コミュニケーションコースでL2学習者の実用的な能力を開発するための課題解決型学習の使用を説明しています。

本号ではこれら4つの論文に加えて、Jeremy WhiteによるYuko Goto Butlerのインタビューと、Matthew NallによるTakaaki Hiratsukaへのインタビューも含まれています。My Share, *TLT* Wired, Young Learners, Book Reviews, Teaching Assistance, Writers’Workshop, SIG Focus, Old Grammariansなど、JALT Praxisの定期コラムもぜひご覧ください。

ご存知の方もいらっしゃいますが、私の*TLT*共同編集者としての任期は、JALT2022年次国際大会をもって正式に終了することになりました。その後は、名誉職でもある上級編集者の役割に移り、以前の共同編集者だったBern Mulveyとともにpreconference issueのゲスト編集長だったIrina Kuznetcovaに道を譲ることになりました。Irinaが我々のチームに仲間入りした事を皆様にお伝えできることを大変うれしく思います。しかし残念なことに、Bernは個人的な理由により9月で辞任することを決めたため、彼の職は空席のままです。皆様自身あるいはお知り合いで、彼の後任になるための養成に興味がある方は、JALT Publications Board ChairのTheron Muller（jaltpubs.pubschair@jalt.org）までご連絡ください。

いずれにしましても、Bernの多大で貴重な貢献に対し感謝の意を表すと共に、彼のご多幸を心よりお祈り申し上げます。また、突然の予期せぬ業務をスムーズに進めるために、過去数か月にわたって協力してくださった*TLT*スタッフの皆さんに感謝したいと思います。最後に、読者の皆様があってこその*TLT*です。読者の皆様への変わらぬ感謝を申し上げます。今号が楽しく有益であることを願っています。

—Paul Lyddon、*TLT*共同編集者

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to the improvement of language teaching and learning in Japan. It provides a forum for the exchange of new ideas and techniques and a means of keeping informed about developments in the rapidly changing field of second and foreign language education.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

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Are Japanese Junior High School Teachers Ready for One-To-One Devices in Schools? A Case Study

Steven Lim

Meikai University

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the GIGA School Program, a policy to provide one computer or tablet to each student in compulsory education (MEXT, 2020), was brought forward from its original 2023 deadline to March 2021. This accelerated implementation has led to concerns as to the readiness of in-service teachers to integrate one-to-one device usage into their pedagogy. In order to examine these concerns, a mixed methods study was conducted using a questionnaire and interviews to determine the attitudes of eight Japanese public junior high school English teachers towards the incorporation of the technology in their classes, and their preconceptions regarding the usefulness and ease of use of the devices. The results indicate that teachers believe the technology could prove beneficial for their teaching but have yet to receive sufficient training in how to effectively utilize it.

COVID-19の影響を受け、文部科学省は義務教育において児童生徒がコンピュータやタブレット等の端末を１人１台使用するGIGAスクール構想の実現目標を当初の2023年度から2021年3月へ前倒しすると表明した(MEXT, 2020)。この実現時期の前倒しは、コンピュータ端末の活用また指導法に対する教員のレディネスに関して懸念をもたらしている。本研究は公立中学勤務の英語教師（n = 8）を対象とし、リッカート尺度を用いたアンケート調査及びインタビュー調査を組み合わせた混合型研究法を採用することで、教育現場におけるコンピュータ端末の有用性及び活用の難易度に対する教員評価を検証した。本研究の結果、教員は教育現場に及ぼすGIGAスクール構想の好影響を評価する一方で、活用に向けた十分な研修機会が与えられていないことが示唆された。

https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT47.1-1

Japan's failure to integrate technology in the education system was exposed when, from March to June 2020, schools were closed across the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Sato (2020), in this period almost no online lessons were conducted in public schools. Though some schools had the necessary infrastructure to conduct online classes, they chose not to do so. As of 2018, Japan ranked last among the 38 member countries in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for learning (Horita, 2021). Just 3% of Japanese students used PCs to do homework every day or almost every day compared to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 22.2%, and 6% used websites for schoolwork compared to the OECD average of 23%. In contrast, 87.4% of Japanese students chatted online and 47.7% played single-player video games every day or almost every day, compared to the OECD averages of 67.3% and 26.7% respectively. These statistics indicated that Japanese students were comfortable using technology in their leisure time but did not incorporate it in their academic pursuits.

The implementation of the Global and Innovation Gateway for All (GIGA) School Program, a policy to provide one computer or tablet to each student in compulsory education (MEXT, 2020), was accelerated from its original 2023 deadline to the end of March 2021 to ensure distance learning could be conducted during the pandemic (Sato, 2020). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) also laid out ambitious goals as to the changes in pedagogy that it expected to be brought about by each student having access to a device. Examples of learning made possible by a one-to-one program included teachers being able to adapt their interactive lessons based on students' reactions, individualized learning adjusted to the needs of each student by recording study logs for analysis, and students being able to collect information independently but edit collaboratively (MEXT, 2020). Teachers were being asked to not only become proficient in conducting distance learning, but also to overhaul their existing teaching practices to incorporate the capabilities of the new technology.

Given the abrupt acceleration of the GIGA School Program, there are concerns from teachers in compulsory education as to the extent to which they are prepared to integrate technology into their lessons (Kang, 2021). Whether teachers are willing to accept and adopt these technology-based pedagogies depends on their attitudes regarding the implementation of technology in the classroom, the training they receive, their understanding of the affordances the technology can provide, and the support systems put in place.

The purpose of this study was to examine the

attitudes of junior high school English teachers towards one-to-one devices. At the time of the study, the participants had yet to experience any significant time using the devices. As such their perceptions as to the usefulness and ease of use of the devices, as well as their attitudes regarding the use of technology in the classroom, were based on their preconceptions rather than experience.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How useful do junior high school English teachers perceive one-to-one devices to be?
2. How easy to use do junior high school English teachers perceive one-to-one devices to be?
3. What are the attitudes of junior high school English teachers about teaching with one-to-one devices?
4. How prepared do junior high school English teachers feel they are to teach using one-to-one devices?

Method

This was a mixed methods study which used a Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The participants were eight Japanese English teachers who worked in public junior high schools in the Kanto region and whose teaching experience ranged from three to more than 30 years. The participants were current or former colleagues of mine. The participants gave their informed consent to take part in the study and were made aware that they could withdraw from this study at any point.

The questionnaires were submitted anonymously, and the interviewees are referred to by pseudonyms. The questionnaire and interviews were conducted in English, the L2 of the participants, but they were given the option to write or speak in Japanese. The questionnaire and interview questions were piloted and design changes were made based on the results. The questionnaire was constructed using Google Forms and sent to the participants in June 2021. Teachers answered 28 Likert-scale questions regarding how prepared they felt to teach using the devices, and to address the constructs of usefulness, ease of use, and attitude, not only from their own perspective, but also from their students' perspective. All Likert-scale questions required participants to choose a response to a positive statement (e.g., *Using Chromebooks/tablets will improve my teaching*) on a five-point scale from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*.

Some questions were adapted from ones used by Davis (1989) in the technology acceptance model (TAM). Originally devised for application in a business context, Liu et al. (2017) reported that the TAM had been tested in many educational studies and was seen as an effective predictor of teachers' intention to integrate technology into their pedagogy. Other questions were informed by a review of the literature and the pilot study.

Semi-structured interviews with five of the participants, one male and four female, were carried out later in the month. Two participants were interviewed in person and three using an online video conferencing service. Descriptive statistics were calculated using JASP (JASP Team; Version 0.14.1). The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded in relation to the four constructs of usefulness, ease of use, attitude, and preparedness.

Results

Table 1 shows the results of the five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Each of the acceptance factors was examined using paraphrased and verbatim responses from the semi-structured interviews.

Table 1

Participants' Perceptions of Acceptance Factors for Teachers and Students

Acceptance Factors	For Teachers *M*	For Students *M*	Combined *M*
Usefulness	4.28	4.09	4.19
Ease of Use	3.41	3.41	3.41
Attitude	4.13	4.34	4.23
Preparedness	2.00		

Note. $N = 8$

Usefulness

In response to Research Question 1, *How useful do junior high school English teachers perceive one-to-one devices to be for themselves and their students?*, the qualitative results support the 4.19 combined usefulness factor score in that all the participants agreed that the devices would be useful for both themselves and their students. The three themes related to usefulness that emerged from the interviews were: affordances, autonomy, and efficiency.

The teachers discussed how the devices would enable the students to take advantage of affordances

that would be unavailable to them otherwise. Several teachers mentioned that the Chromebooks had speech recognition software that would allow the students to practice speaking, whether by interacting with virtual assistants or using AI to evaluate their speaking ability. One teacher mentioned the ability to screen share as being beneficial to those students with poor eyesight or positioned at the back of the classroom who might struggle to clearly see PowerPoint displays.

The participants also noted the opportunities for autonomous learning that the devices would provide for the students. Rather than being limited to the textbook, teachers mentioned how students would be able to access information in English from news websites and social media services, as well as being able to research topics they were interested in for reports and presentations. One teacher suggested that students would be empowered by being able to look up grammar or vocabulary they did not understand.

The improvements to efficiency in teaching and administration work that technology would bring was also a recurring theme in the responses. There was the perception that once teachers became familiar with using ICT, it would shorten their lesson preparation time and allow them to collect work and distribute grades quickly and easily. More efficient marking and feedback were mentioned by several participants who noted that the spelling and grammar checking functions of the devices could save them considerable time and effort.

Ease of use

In response to Research Question 2, *How easy to use do junior high school English teachers perceive one-to-one devices to be for themselves and their students?*, despite the 3.41 score indicating that the teachers had a moderately positive response to the ease of use of the devices the comments made in the semi-structured interviews were predominantly negative. The three themes related to ease of use that emerged from the interviews were: time-consuming, technical issues, and insufficient computer skills.

Every teacher referred to how time-consuming preparing lessons using one-to-one devices would be, at least initially. There was also concern as to time-management issues arising from the introduction of a new medium of study with several teachers questioning whether they had sufficient lesson time to make use of the technology.

None of the teachers saw themselves as computer experts and as such they raised concerns over potential technical issues. Two were worried they would be held responsible if the devices broke. Networking issues were also seen as problematic. In the area the participants worked in, there were problems with setting up Wi-Fi in the schools. As a result, the junior high schools could only use the Internet three days a week, one day for each grade, and the elementary schools were apportioned the remaining two days. In addition, one teacher described how getting the students to log into the network and set up their password took 30–40 minutes due to the poor internet connection.

Results from analyzing the interview data show that many teachers believe they lack the necessary computer skills to use them effectively in the classroom, worry about damaging the devices, and are concerned about the students' abilities to operate these computers. One teacher raised the issue that students had little experience using computers to study and that many were not comfortable typing in Japanese, let alone English.

Attitude

In response to Research Question 3, *What are the attitudes of junior high school English teachers regarding one-to-one devices and what do they perceive the attitudes of their students to be?*, the 4.34 for student attitude indicates that the teachers believed their students would have positive attitudes towards using the devices, and this was reflected in the interviews. The three themes related to attitude that emerged from the interviews were: interaction, entertainment, and novelty.

The medium of interaction was a reason given by teachers as to why students would respond well to the devices with several participants suggesting that students were intrinsically more interested in screens than paper, citing their extensive use of smartphones. The effortless nature of interacting with a screen compared to using a pen and paper was also a recurring theme. There was a belief by some of the teachers that unmotivated students would be more likely to participate since selecting an answer with a touchscreen required less effort than writing a response.

The use of computers as a bridge between education and entertainment was alluded to by the participants through mentions of quizzes, movies, TV shows, and the inherent game-like qualities of using a device. Teachers also spoke about how students would have greater opportunities to explore their creativity whilst learning by making animations, filming skits or dramas, and editing videos using the computers.

The novelty of having a new way to engage with English was also suggested as being sufficient to generate enthusiasm from the students. The only concern raised regarding student attitudes was that the Chromebooks might prove to be too popular. One participant was worried students might spend too much time on their computers and would respond negatively to classroom activities that did not involve the devices.

Preparedness

In response to Research Question 4, *How prepared do junior high school English teachers feel to teach using one-to-one devices?*, the preparedness score of 2.00 in the Likert-scale questionnaire was supported by the negative responses regarding this factor in the interviews. The two themes related to preparedness that emerged from the interviews were: limited training and limited hands-on experience.

The interviewees expressed concern and frustration about the lack of instruction they had received, and their unpreparedness to teach using the Chromebooks. Of the five interviewees, two had received some form of training, but for both it had been conducted over a year ago and was a single, two-hour session. Only one of the participants was aware of an upcoming training session.

In terms of hands-on time with the devices they would be using in their respective schools, all the participants had logged in to make an account, but because they had not been allowed to access the computers subsequently, that was the extent of their experience.

Discussion

The participants were optimistic about the usefulness of the devices and held positive attitudes towards their integration in the classroom. The themes of affordances, autonomy, efficiency, interaction, entertainment, and novelty highlight the potential benefits the teachers felt a technology-facilitated pedagogy could provide for both themselves and their students. However, the participants raised concerns about the ease of use of the devices as well as their own preparedness to utilize them in lessons. The themes of time-consuming, technical issues, insufficient computer skills, limited training, and limited hands-on experience which emerged from the interviews suggest that the teachers had not received the instruction and support to make them confident about utilizing the computers in their classes.

In a case study examining the implementation of Chromebooks in an American high school, Saltmarsh (2021) found that three factors were key to the successful adoption of a one-to-one device program: independent research, collaboration, and support systems.

The teachers in Saltmarsh's (2021) study referred to the importance of self-learning through trial and error and using online resources as a means of independent research. One of the participants in this study echoed the notion, suggesting that teachers needed to take the learning process into their own hands, "Every teacher is like, let's just try and touch it and figure out how to use it. The fastest way is maybe just google how to use it." However, the take-home policies varied from school to school, so whilst some teachers were informed that they would be able to bring their computers home over the summer holiday, others were not permitted to do so. Considering that one fundamental motivation for the acceleration of the GIGA School Program was to enable distance learning in response to the pandemic, not allowing teachers and students to take the devices home for security reasons seems counter-productive.

Teachers can foster an environment of collaborative learning through sharing their self-learning experiences, allowing the group to develop their knowledge collectively. All of the participants made reference to one teacher from their school being sent to a one-to-one device training session, then being responsible for disseminating this information amongst their coworkers. One of the interviewees had been asked to take on the role of a technology mentor for her school, despite having only received 2–3 hours of training over a year ago. Whilst the strategy of teachers teaching teachers is not problematic in and of itself, they should not be expected to do so without having received a significant amount of training themselves. Koehler and Mishra (2009) observed that when teachers are given technology training that is not specific to their discipline it reduces their perception of its usefulness. Rather than expecting one person to provide training to teachers of all disciplines, having one representative from each department would allow more specific demonstrations regarding the value of the technology to the teaching of the subject. Training is most valuable when it is focused on how to fuse technology and curriculum rather than the teaching of isolated technology skills (Zhao & Bryant, 2006).

Having technical support systems in place to assist the teachers in case the devices break is also a

necessity. Although MEXT set aside 10.5 billion yen to support the placement of ICT engineers (MEXT, 2020), none of the participants in the study mentioned one being assigned to their school. This lack of an expert presence undoubtedly contributed to the unease of some of the participants as to who would be responsible if the computers were damaged. By having a designated expert available for the teachers to consult and call upon when technical issues occurred, teachers would be more willing to make use of the devices.

Human resource support systems also need to be put into place to allow all teachers to attend training sessions during work hours. Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) have noted that teachers in Japan were often too busy to attend teacher training sessions and that there were limited opportunities provided to do so. Indeed, one participant said that he would only be able to attend a training session if he was exempted from supervising his school club. All of the interviewees mentioned that the only feasible time for training sessions to be held was in the summer break, thus limiting their effectiveness in addressing the immediate needs of the teachers throughout the year.

The positive reaction from the teachers regarding their intention to adopt the technology is nothing short of remarkable given their limited preparation time, lack of training, and the technical issues they continue to face. This lack of preparedness is a consequence of the rush to introduce technology into Japanese schools in response to the pandemic after years of neglect of ICT in the education system. By pushing the GIGA School Program forward two years from its original date, MEXT has attempted to address the historically poor integration of ICT with education in Japan. However, such a rapid change has resulted in deficiencies. Not only are there severe infrastructure issues that limit the use of the technology, the teachers responsible for using it in their classrooms have not received the information, training, and resources they need to implement the program.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of Japanese junior high school English teachers regarding the impending implementation of a one-to-one device program in Japan. There were several limitations to this study. Because there were few participants and they all worked in one area, the findings cannot be generalized beyond those who took part in the study. Instead, this study should serve as the starting point from which to examine how successful the GIGA School Program ultimately proves to be. Further studies need to take place to determine how teachers are able to effectively integrate the one-to-one devices into their pedagogy so that they may serve as models for other educators in the Japanese public school system. There also needs to be an examination of the potential drawbacks of the use of one-to-one devices so that these issues can be addressed collectively. Both issues should be addressed from the perspective of teachers and students in order to get a more complete picture as to which practices are most effective. Such studies can contribute to the collaborative learning process that is currently ongoing throughout the country.

Due to the circumstances surrounding the hastened introduction of the GIGA School Program, this study represents a unique point at which to inspect a national education technology integration program. The participants were asked for their opinions regarding the usefulness, ease of use, and attitudes of themselves and their students, as well as the extent with which they were prepared to integrate technology in their teaching practices. Teacher attitudes are critical in determining how successful the integration of technology in the classroom will be (Teo et al., 2009). The teachers in this study were positive about the potential for ICT to improve their teaching, facilitate new methods of learning for students, and to streamline aspects of feedback and administration, but expressed strong concerns over their own lack of preparedness.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Likert Scale Questions Categorized by Acceptance Factor

Perceived teacher usefulness

1. Using Chromebooks/tablets will improve my teaching.
8. Using Chromebooks/tablets will enhance my effectiveness as a teacher.
15. Using Chromebooks/tablets will allow me to use new teaching methods.
22. Using Chromebooks/tablets will be useful in my classes.

Perceived students' usefulness

4. Using Chromebooks/tablets will allow my students to study English in new ways.
11. Studying English be more effective for my students using Chromebooks/tablets.
18. Using Chromebooks/tablets will improve my students' English.
25. Using Chromebooks/tablets will be useful for my students to study English.

Perceived teacher ease of use

2. It will be easy for me to use my Chromebook/tablet in lessons.
9. It will be easy for me to learn how to use Chromebooks/tablets in my lessons.
16. It will be easy for me to improve my skill at using Chromebooks/tablets.
23. It will be easy to include the use of Chromebooks/tablets in my lessons.

Perceived students' ease of use

5. It will be easy for the students to use Chromebooks/tablets.
12. It will be easy for the students to learn how to use Chromebooks/tablets.
19. It will be easy for students to improve their skill at using Chromebooks/tablets.
26. Using Chromebooks/tablets in classes will be a smooth experience.

Teacher attitude towards Chromebooks

3. Chromebooks/tablets will make teaching more interesting.

10. I'm looking forward to using Chromebooks/tablets in my classes.
17. I like using computers to teach.
24. It's fun for me to use technology in my classes.

Perceived students' attitude towards Chromebooks

6. Chromebooks/tablets will make studying English more interesting for my students.
13. My students are looking forward to using Chromebooks/tablets to study English.
20. My students like using computers to study.
27. It's fun for my students to use technology to study English.

Teacher preparedness

7. I have received enough training in how to use Chromebooks/tablets in an English lesson.
14. I am now ready to teach English using Chromebooks/tablets.
21. I know what activities to do with my students using Chromebooks/tablets.
28. I have watched enough demonstrations of how to use Chromebooks/tablets in an English class.

Appendix B

Open-Ended Questions

1. Are you excited to use Chromebooks/tablets in the classroom? Why or why not?
2. How do you think using Chromebooks/tablets will change your teaching?
3. Have you had training on how to use Chromebooks/tablets with students in the classroom? Tell me about it.
4. Are you ready to use Chromebooks/tablets in your classes? Why or why not?
5. How often are you planning to use Chromebooks/tablets?
6. What parts of teaching English will be better using Chromebooks/tablets? For example, listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary.
7. How will you use Chromebooks/tablets with your students? For example, quizzes, surveys, research, filming video, recording audio, watching videos, listening to audio.
8. What software, apps, or websites are you planning to use?
9. Do you want your students to use the Chromebooks/tablets at school, at home, or both?
10. Do you have any worries about your students using Chromebooks/tablets? If yes, what are they?
11. Are Chromebooks/tablets helpful for your teaching style? Why or why not?

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FEATURE ARTICLE

University Students' Perceptions of Seeing People's Faces in Synchronous Online Breakout Sessions

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Meaningful social interactions are essential for individual well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), though with the evolution of information technology, how these interactions take place has changed dramatically. Face-to-face interaction (still used but increasingly less often) allows individuals to see group members' facial expressions, whereas this is not necessarily the case with online mediums. This study investigated whether students feel the need to see people's faces when talking in small groups during real-time online lessons. More specifically, it looked at how important university students think it is to see the faces of their teachers and classmates in synchronous online breakout sessions in English classes. The 196 study participants did not indicate a strong need to see their teachers' or classmates' faces, regardless of personality type, gender, or pre-COVID-19 mask-wearing behavior. These findings suggest that teachers need neither keep their cameras on nor constantly remind their students to turn theirs on in synchronous online breakout sessions.

有意義な人との関わりは幸せを感じるために不可欠だが、情報技術の台頭によりそれがどのように行われるかは劇的に変化した（Baumeister & Leary, 1995）。頻度が少なくなっているが未だに行われている対面での関わりが実施される場合、グループメンバーは互いの表情を見ることができる。しかし、オンライン媒体を介した場合、必ずしも相手の顔が見えるわけではない。本研究では、学生がリアルタイムのオンライン授業中に少人数で話すときに、人の顔を見る必要性を感じているかどうかを調査した。より具体的には、オンラインのブレイクアウトセッション中、教員やクラスメートの顔が見える必要性について学生の意識を調査した。196名の被験者を分析した結果、大学生は性格、性別、あるいはコロナ前に日常的にマスクを着用していたかどうかに関わらず、教員やクラスメートの顔が見える必要性を強く感じていないことが明らかになった。本研究結果は、リアルタイムで実施されるオンラインのブレイクアウトセッションにおいて、教員は必ずしもカメラのスイッチをつけておく必要がなく、また、学生にもカメラのスイッチをつけておくよう、常に促す必要がないことを示唆している。

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The COVID-19 pandemic has remarkably increased the number of university classes that are held online (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021). As a consequence, many teachers and students have been forced to shift their classes to web-based mediums such as on-demand videos, synchronous online classes, and hybrid lessons. This study focuses on one type of web-based lesson: synchronous online classes, defined here as real-time classes using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet.

Synchronous online classes raise the issue of whether cameras should be on or off at all times during lessons. Although policies differ, many academic institutions take the route of encouraging, rather than requiring, students to turn their cameras on (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021). The reason for this approach could be that many people have reported increased psychological distress since COVID-19 (McGinty et al., 2020), and forcing students to turn on their cameras could potentially become a stressor. If it could be psychologically detrimental, why do teachers always keep their cameras on and ask students to do the same?

One reason may be that past studies have demonstrated the advantages of social interaction (with in-person meetings as a precondition) on one's well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In classrooms, students often engage in group work, which usually involves *face-to-face promotive interaction*. Face-to-face promotive interaction is defined as individuals promoting each other's success through assistance, support, encouragement, and praise (Johnson et al., 1998) and is known to have positive effects on students' affective filters (Hashimoto, 2020; Slavin, 2010). Although Johnson et al. (1998) do not explicitly state that individuals need to be in the same physical location, they do stress the importance of nonverbal responses in addition to verbal responses during group work, which suggests a shared location as being important. That said, the recent surge in the use of information technologies in education has called into question the need for physical presence to effectively conduct group work.

This change in the social environment inspired the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1. How important is it for university students to be able to see their classmates' faces in synchronous online breakout sessions (i.e., small group sessions during online classes)?

RQ2. How important is it for university students

to be able to see their teacher's face in synchronous online breakout sessions?

RQ3: Do demographic factors affect the importance university students place on being able to see their classmates' or teacher's faces?

In other words, the aim was to find out how essential the face-to-face aspect of small group work is in university synchronous online classes. As mentioned previously, the recent transformation of norms of social interaction appears to have changed the needs of students to see their counterparts' faces in real-time web-based classes. However, research in this area is still nascent. Thus, an inquiry into this topic was believed to be worthwhile.

Previous Studies

Definition of Face-to-Face Interaction

Face-to-face interaction has been researched in various fields, including psychology (Prochazkova & Kret, 2017), digital communication studies (Baym, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2021), sociology (Turner, 2002), and education (Johnson et al., 1998; Kim et al., 2020). Since the emergence of the term, its definition has been somewhat difficult to specify (Duncan & Fiske, 2015; Goffman & Best, 1967). Rather than define the term, Duncan and Fiske (2015) describe specific actions that characterize face-to-face interactions, such as smiles, head nodding, leg crossing, eyebrow raising, and posture changes. These behaviors suggest that face-to-face interaction involves authentic physical presence of the interlocutors during the time of communication.

Many other researchers (e.g., Goodfellow et al., 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 2002) also qualify these same types of behaviors as face-to-face interaction, although not explicitly. Terms used synonymously with face-to-face interaction include face-to-face communication (e.g., Hellman et al., 2020, Kappas & Krämer, 2011), face-to-face promotive interaction (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1999), and live social interaction (e.g., Pan & Hamilton, 2018). Some recent research (e.g., Jucker et al., 2018), however, describes face-to-face interaction as not being limited to physical co-presence between individuals. Moreover, even Johnson and Johnson (2018) and Johnson et al. (1998) now simply refer to "promotive interaction," leaving the face-to-face specification out. In this paper, the term face-to-face interaction will be used to indicate live interaction between individuals wherein those taking part in the interaction can see each other's faces but are not necessarily in close physical proximity.

Face-to-Face Interaction in the Digital Age

Given obvious dissimilarities in the traditional nature of face-to-face interaction in prior times, the meaning of the term in the digital age needs reconsideration. Kessler et al. (2021) give an overview of synchronous video computer-mediated communication (SVCMC), stating that despite the popularity of this platform, it is still somewhat uncommon in English language teaching. Possibly for this reason, the number of studies regarding real-time online face-to-face interaction in this area is still limited. Previous investigations not confined to the field of English language learning include one conducted by Peper et al. (2021), comparing the experiences of 350 college students participating in online learning on Zoom versus taking part in in-person classes. They explored reasons why some students describe themselves as having more issues learning online, especially in synchronous Zoom classes. Students reported feeling comparatively more isolated, anxious, and depressed than in face-to-face classes, though noting as well that isolation due to COVID-19 could also have been a contributing factor. Students were also less responsive in class, which negatively affected nonverbal student–teacher interactions. Furthermore, students said it was more difficult to stay attentive during lessons. Peper et al.'s (2021) study is noteworthy as it concerns students' perceptions of synchronous online classes. However, it seems to assume that individuals in synchronous Zoom classes keep their cameras on, which is not always the case.

Another study of face-to-face interaction in web-based classes is one by Wang et al. (2018). Their investigation was done as part of a blended synchronous learning initiative. Participants were master's students in a theory and practice course at a teacher education institute with most students attending in person but others attending through videoconferencing. The purpose of the study was to examine what kind of learning experiences and understandings students had with regard to the design and implementation of blended learning. The researchers noted that students sometimes turned their cameras off "to avoid being observed, which indicates that they might have become bored and most likely walked away from their computers" (Wang et al., 2018, p. 11). However, they did not go into detail about others' perceptions of this phenomenon. Thus, to shed light on this issue, the present study investigated students' perceptions of seeing their counterparts' faces in online classes.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were 196 first-year students in a compulsory English course at two medium-sized, private, four-year universities in Tokyo, Japan. At the time of the survey, these students had studied English for seven years and had taken online classes for one year. The study was conducted at the end of their freshman year. At both universities, lessons met for 90 minutes per week over two 15-week semesters with a two-month summer break in between. The students' English proficiency levels ranged from CEFR A1 to B1, as determined by the instructor based on tests taken during the first lesson.

Data-Collection Instrument

The students were given a two-part survey about their perceptions of breakout sessions in their synchronous online English classes. Before completing the survey, the students were told that participation was voluntary and that it would have no effect on their evaluation. The survey took 7 minutes to administer. As there were no previously existing instruments assessing students' perceptions of being able to see their counterparts' faces in synchronous online classes, the survey items were created by the researcher. Their reliability and validity were then checked using factor analysis in IBM SPSS Version 28. The survey was administered in Japanese and then translated into English after the investigation.

Part One was a 10-item demographics section inquiring about the participants' general backgrounds (e.g., previous years of English language learning, gender), personality types (i.e., introversion vs. extroversion), and daily habits (e.g., pre-COVID-19 mask-wearing behavior).

Part Two comprised an additional 12 items, all targeting the students' perceived importance of seeing their counterparts' (i.e., their teacher's or classmates') faces. These items included statements such as "I am not bothered even if I cannot see my teacher's face" and "I feel reassured when I can see my classmates' faces," to which the students were asked to agree or disagree according to a five-point Likert scale as follows: 1 (*strongly agree*), 2 (*agree*), 3 (*neither agree nor disagree*), 4 (*disagree*), or 5 (*strongly disagree*). Three items were reverse scored so that lower scores would indicate greater importance students placed on being able to see their counterparts' faces, specifically by having cameras turned on during breakout sessions of their synchronous online English classes.

The 12 items in Part Two were then subjected to an initial exploratory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method and oblique rotation in Promax. Items with a factor loading of less than 0.4 as well as those with high factor loadings on all factors were excluded. Hence, six items were omitted, leaving six for analysis. A second exploratory factor analysis was conducted on those six items. Based on a scree plot with the lower eigenvalue limit of 1, a two-factor model appeared to be appropriate. Examination of the items on each factor revealed that Factors I and II appeared to capture students' perceived value of being able to see the faces of their classmates and teacher, respectively. Internal consistency for the two factors was $\alpha = .85$ and $\alpha = .82$, suggesting high reliability. The interfactorial correlation was $\gamma = .50$, suggesting a moderate association. The factor loadings of items in the second exploratory factor analysis as well as Cronbach's alpha for the two factors are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Factor Loadings from Exploratory Factor Analysis

	Factors	
	I	II
Factor I: Perceived Value of Being Able to See Classmates' Faces (α = .85)		
It does not bother me if I cannot see my classmates' faces.	**0.94**	-0.02
There is no problem even if I cannot see my classmates' faces.	**0.81**	0.06
I feel anxious when I cannot see my classmates' entire faces.*	**0.68**	0.00
Factor II: Perceived Value of Being Able to See the Teacher's Face (α = .82)		
I am not bothered even if I cannot see my teacher's face.	-0.05	**0.90**
There is no problem even if I cannot see my teacher's face.	0.00	**0.88**
I feel anxious when I cannot see my teacher's entire face.*	0.12	**0.54**

Note. Asterisks (*) indicate items that were reverse scored. The two factors together constituted a scale concerning the students' perceived value of being able to see their counterparts' faces in real-time online breakout sessions. The reliability of the entire scale was high at α = .84.

Results

Effect of Personality Type

The participants were divided into two personality types according to their average score on two items from the demographics section, "I like being with other people" and "I think I am sociable." Those with average scores above and below 3.0 ($n = 96$ and $n = 100$, respectively) were classified as being either extroverted or introverted. Independent-samples t tests were then conducted to compare the averages of these two groups on the two factors identified in Part Two of the survey. For Factor I, the score difference between the 96 participants categorized as extroverted ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.15$) and the 100 categorized as introverted ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.98$) was not statistically significant, $t(194) = 1.30$, $p = .19$. Likewise for Factor II, there was no statistically significant difference between the extroverts ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .98$) and the introverts ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.07$), $t(194) = 1.86$, $p = .07$. In other words, extroversion or introversion did not seem to affect the perceived importance of being able to see either one's classmates' or the teacher's face in real-time online breakout sessions.

Effect of Gender

On Part One of the survey, the students indicated their gender as female ($n = 140$), male ($n = 54$), or non-binary ($n = 2$). Because of their small number, those who identified as non-binary were excluded from the gender analysis.

An independent-samples t test was then conducted on the two remaining groups to determine whether gender affected their perceived importance of being able to see their teacher's and classmates' faces in real-time online breakout sessions. For Factor I, the score difference between the 140 self-identified females ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .96$) and the 54 self-identified males ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.02$) was not statistically significant, $t(192) = -0.15$, $p = .88$. Likewise for Factor II, there was no statistically significant difference between the first group ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .99$) and the second ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(192) = 0.20$, $p = .84$, suggesting that gender did not affect students' responses to the two factors. In other words, whether students identified as female or male did not seem to affect how important they felt it was to be able to see their teacher's or classmates' faces in synchronous online lessons.

Effect of Mask-Wearing Before COVID-19

As it was possible that regular mask-wearing prior to COVID-19 could have influenced the importance students placed on being able to see their teacher's and classmates' faces in real-time online breakout sessions, the participants were divided into two groups according to their response to the demographics item "I wore a mask regularly even before COVID-19." The first group comprised those who chose response options 1 or 2 ($n = 132$), the second group those who chose response options 3, 4, or 5 ($n = 64$). Independent-samples t tests were then conducted to compare the averages of these two groups on the two factors identified in Part Two of the survey. For Factor I, the score difference between the 132 participants in the first group ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.00$) and the 64 in the second ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .77$) was not statistically significant, $t(194) = .79$, $p = .43$. Likewise for Factor II, there was no statistically significant difference between the first group ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.04$) and the second ($M = 2.35$, $SD = .97$), $t(194) = -1.36$, $p = .18$. Hence, regular mask-wearing before the COVID-19 pandemic appears not to have affected the importance students placed on being able to see their teacher's and classmates' faces in real-time online breakout sessions.

Discussion

This study investigated the importance that students placed on being able to see their teacher's and classmates' faces during break-out sessions in synchronous online English classes. Although it cannot be stated for certain that students equally devalue seeing each other's faces in these sessions regardless of personality type, gender, or pre-COVID-19 mask-wearing, it can be inferred that students agreed with the statements in Factors I and II since the means of the group comparisons were less than 3. Hence, they seem not to place a high value on being able to see their teacher's or classmates' faces in real-time online breakout sessions. Perhaps this finding is of no surprise. As Prensky (2001) pointed out, students in the digital age have grown up surrounded by digital devices such as video games, cell phones, music players, and computers, many of which do not have to be mediated by a human being to be used. He also asserted that "our students' brains have physically changed—and are different from ours—as a result of how they grew up" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1). As we now live in a world where individuals can order necessities online and have these delivered to their doorsteps, allowing them to survive without leaving their houses or seeing anyone, we may need to reevaluate the premium put on face-to-face interaction. The importance placed on in-person meetings, let alone being able to see others' faces, may also need to be revisited. The ways of thinking and of processing information for students of the current generation

are different from those of their predecessors (Ugur, 2020). As such, educators might consider changing their pedagogy to better relate to their students.

Implications

The findings of this study could imply that it may not always be essential for teachers and students to show their faces during real-time online breakout sessions. Specifically, teachers need not always feel it necessary for their cameras and those of their students to be on continuously. If teachers and students wish not to continually show their faces, it may be acceptable for teachers to turn off their own cameras and allow their students to do likewise.

Limitations

The participants in this study were all first-year students, many of whom had no prior experience taking university classes before the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, they may have lacked any preconceptions about how university classes should be conducted. If they had been students in later years and, thus, used to having university lessons in a physical classroom setting, the results may have been different. Moreover, it is possible that students who prefer not to turn on their cameras responded to the survey in ways that they themselves would not ultimately be required to do so.

Conclusion

The number of synchronous online English classes is bound to increase as teachers and students realize the benefits of web-based classes. Considering this situation, teachers may want to raise awareness of class delivery methods that are sustainable for both students and themselves. This study provides insight into students' perceptions as to whether cameras should be turned on during synchronous online breakout sessions. In an age when friendships are formed virtually through online games and people meet their partners via matchmaking applications, individuals may not need to encounter or even be able to see each other to form close connections. As such, teachers may want to reconsider the value placed on face-to-face communication as digitally mediated class delivery methods continue to develop.

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The Importance of Teaching Expertise Research for L2 Teaching Contexts

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Researchers have examined both the nature and development of teaching expertise. However, the implications of these findings for L2 teaching have not been fully explored and discussed. The purpose of this piece is to reveal what the existing studies of expertise suggest for L2 teaching and learning. After a brief review of the literature and an explanation of the key concepts of teacher knowledge, adaptive expertise, and progressive problem solving, there follows a discussion of some important implications that these studies and concepts have for teachers, administrators, and researchers in L2 teaching contexts.

研究者たちは、これまで教育に関する専門知識の特質と発達過程の両方について調査してきた。しかし、これら先行研究の結果が第二言語教育にもたらす意味は、十分には探求・議論されていない。本論の目的は、教育に関する専門知識についての先行研究が第二言語習得の分野にどのような示唆を与えているのかを明らかにすることにある。最初に、先行研究を紹介し、教育に関する専門知識についての研究を理解する上で重要な概念である「教師の知識」「適応的専門知識」「前進的問題解決能力」について説明する。次に、第二言語教育において、先行研究やこれらの概念が第二言語教師、コーディネーター、研究者に与える意味や示唆について具体的に論じる。

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One formidable challenge of the teaching profession is having to juggle the multiple roles of not only teacher, but also mentor, counselor, administrator, and researcher. Thus, it is understandable that some teachers may tend to rely on the same teaching strategies and activities with only minor and infrequent revision as they gain experience and establish routines. Although the rich and varied repertoires of experienced teachers indisputably facilitate rapid selection of familiar activities and consistent delivery of reliable lessons, thus making teaching more efficient, there is disagreement as to what it means to move from being merely an experienced teacher to becoming an expert. On the one hand, expertise is sometimes viewed as a stage that is attained at some point in one's career. On the other hand, it is also sometimes seen as a continuous process of pursuit. Although these two paradigms may seem to contradict each other, they rather reflect different aspects of expertise: one capturing what teachers know and do, the other highlighting how teachers continue to develop such knowledge and skills.

Background

To date, research on expertise in teaching has mainly examined the topic from one of two perspectives. The first views expertise as the state of teachers at a certain point in time, often comparing novices and experts by investigating different aspects of the phenomenon, such as the effect that knowledge has on lesson planning (Richards et al., 1995) or on teaching practices (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Gatbonton, 2008). Research from this perspective has shed light on the rich knowledge that experts have about different aspects of teaching. However, this between-subjects approach has been criticized for not elucidating the way in which expertise is actually developed (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Johnson, 2005).

In response to this criticism, researchers such as Bullough and Baughman (1995) investigate expertise as a process. In these studies, within-subjects data are collected over an extended period of time, during which multiple class observations and interviews are conducted to note changes as they occur. Additionally, some researchers have examined such areas as characteristics differentiating experts from experienced nonexperts in the process of their development (Tsui, 2003), factors contributing to teacher development (Lee & Yuan, 2021), and expertise as a cyclical process (Asaba, 2019), thus providing insight into how teachers develop expertise throughout their career.

Concepts of Expertise

Researchers have identified three key concepts integral to understanding expertise: teacher knowledge, adaptive expertise, and progressive problem solving. Teacher knowledge facilitates expert teaching (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995; Turner-Bisset, 2012). This knowledge integrates different aspects of teaching, including content, pedagogy, curriculum, and learner population (Shulman, 1986, 1987). An integrated knowledge base of this sort is essential as it allows teachers to convey their content most effectively, such as by creating appropriate tasks (Richards, 2010), presenting information from the students' perspectives (Johnston & Goettch,

2000), and helping students attain instructional goals (Farrell & Bennis, 2013).

The second key concept is that of adaptive expertise. According to Hatano and Inagaki (1984), there are two types of expertise, namely routine and adaptive. Routine expertise refers to the acquired ability to competently and efficiently complete a given task through repeated performance. For example, most experienced teachers can easily choose an activity from their repertoire, present it in a comprehensible manner, and effectively help their learners achieve an instructional objective. However, the utility of routine expertise is limited to the solution of familiar problems. To skillfully overcome new challenges requires adaptive expertise, in which abilities and knowledge are applied in a flexible manner under various and uncertain conditions (Hatano, 1996; Hatano & Inagaki, 1984). Thus, studies of teacher expertise should take into account not only the routine variety but also its adaptive counterpart.

Along these lines, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) coined the term "progressive problem solving" (p. 96) to indicate a particular type of problem solving that leads to the development of expertise. This process requires solutions to problems that lie at the edge of one's current level of competence. Moreover, it involves tackling complex aspects of problems that are not identified until some of the more fundamental aspects of the domain (in this case, teaching) have become automatized. For example, instead of attributing student non-completion of homework to laziness, teachers engaged in progressive problem solving might explore the problem's underlying cause(s) by reevaluating their lesson content and instruction. It is this process of seeking answers beyond the surface that leads to the development of superior teaching abilities (Bullough & Baughman, 1995) and greater teacher knowledge (Asaba, 2019).

In summary, truly expert teachers must not only possess both rich teacher knowledge and routine expertise, allowing them to readily facilitate effective student learning, but they must also exhibit the necessary adaptive expertise to solve new problems in a flexible manner. Finally, it is progressive problem solving—tackling important issues beyond their competence—that ultimately facilitates teacher development. What follows hereafter is a discussion of the implications that these assertions have for teachers and administrators in L2 contexts as well as for researchers who are interested in investigating expertise in L2 teaching.

Implications for Teachers

Mastery of teaching is not merely a matter of establishing routines; it requires continuous efforts to expand teacher competence as well. To this end, two suggestions can be made for L2 teachers looking to develop expertise: engaging in reflective teaching and taking on new challenges.

Reflective teaching involves teachers thinking deeply about their teaching and identifying problems in their own practices, such as with regard to their instructional techniques or their relationships with students (Farrell, 2013). One way for teachers to engage in such reflection is by discussing their teaching with other teachers. For example, a regular reflection group focused on sharing issues and teaching techniques with colleagues helps teachers become more aware of their teaching (Farrell, 2013). Another way of promoting teacher reflection is through participation in peer observations. According to Hatano (1996), performing tasks in front of other professionals leads to greater expertise because it encourages reflection on one's own abilities. Thus, peer observations may prompt teachers not only to notice unfamiliar pedagogical approaches used by others but also to critically reexamine their own teaching.

In addition to engaging in reflective teaching, teachers also need to continue to seek and tackle new challenges. Given the necessity of progressive problem solving in developing expertise, teachers must continue to challenge themselves at every stage of their career. Especially busy teachers may have to limit new initiatives to one or two that they can successfully manage within their own classrooms while relying on routine expertise to complete the bulk of their customary duties. For instance, they might try to devise better ways of presenting empirically difficult learning material. More ambitious options, however, might include creating a new course, performing an active role in a professional community either within an institution or as part of a teachers' association, or running a workshop to help fellow teachers in their programs learn practical skills, such as integrating educational technology (Skeates et al., 2020).

Another challenge L2 teachers should welcome is the opportunity to teach different types of classes in different programs, as experiencing a variety of teaching contexts helps to broaden teacher abilities and understanding. Throughout their careers, many L2 teachers must deal with changes in teaching assignments, class sizes, student populations, and curricula, each of which presents its own unique set of challenges. Some teachers may respond by relying on routine expertise they have developed in previous teaching roles. However, as complete expertise requires adapting one's teaching appropriately to each new situation, having to adjust to

multiple and diverse circumstances serves a vital role in furthering teacher development.

Implications for Administrators

Administrators, including program and curriculum coordinators, need to understand that teachers should not have to bear the burden of acquiring expertise all alone, and that institutions can act as either a help or a hindrance in this endeavor (Bullough & Baughman, 1995). Two ways in which administrators can promote teacher expertise are by listening to teachers while eliciting their feedback about programs and by offering them additional opportunities for further professional development.

Taking feedback and ideas from teachers into consideration when developing and starting new classes or building curricula is important because expertise is context specific (Berliner, 2004). In other words, experienced teachers have knowledge about the specific needs and abilities of their students, and they use that knowledge as a guide to best facilitate learning (Johnston & Goettch, 2000). As such, top-down administrative decisions made without consideration of teacher perspectives might not only demotivate teachers but also impede student learning. To create a community in which teachers feel their knowledge and ideas are valued and can be openly shared, administrators and teachers need to build trusting relationships. One suggestion for administrators seeking to gain trust and obtain teacher insights is to hold regular discussions about issues related to classrooms and curricula.

A second recommendation for fostering L2 teacher expertise is for administrators to provide opportunities for institutional professional development (PD) that is contextualized and specifically applicable to them. PD can take on different forms, such as providing and receiving teacher training (Smith & Strahan, 2004), participating in school workshops (Lee & Yuan, 2021), and attending conferences (Bullough & Baughman, 1995). These types of activities can expose teachers to new and different methods and tools as well as highlight connections between theory, research, and practice in order to better inform their teaching decisions (Richards, 2010; Tsui, 2003). For this to occur, however, teachers need to see their PD opportunities as relevant. Lavolette and Koyama (2021) found that L2 teachers are more likely to attend PD events when topics relevant to pedagogy, research, and career are intertwined. Thus, administrators should provide PD that is relevant to teachers in their contexts and based on their needs and interests. To this end, administrators can conduct needs assessments when choosing topics or ask teachers to take leadership roles in organizing and running PD events.

Implications for Researchers

Further research on teacher expertise would benefit L2 learning communities in two ways. First, a better understanding of expertise helps teachers better develop it, in turn resulting in better learning experiences for students (Tsui, 2005). In addition, as more teachers develop and utilize adaptive expertise, more effective curricula, classroom activities, and teaching approaches are created and shared among teachers and with students. Two areas of study that particularly deserve further investigation are the particulars of expertise in different contexts and the effects of expert mentors on less experienced peers.

Examining the knowledge and skills teachers use to deal with contextual factors in different schools and programs is a promising area of future study because it would allow researchers to explore, for example, how teachers effectively work with less proficient or less motivated students, how they handle large classes, or how they maximize student learning with limited resources. The existing studies of expert L2 teachers to date are limited in number and have mostly been conducted in ESL settings. Expanding the range of target contexts to include a wider variety of educational settings, programs, and curricula would offer additional insights to those teaching in similar situations.

The second area of expertise warranting further investigation is the effect that expert teachers have on nonexperts. According to Hatano and Inagaki (1984), development of expertise is enhanced when people work with mentors who are more experienced and knowledgeable than themselves. In a case study of an expert teacher educator, Asaba (2018) found that one characteristic of the participant's expertise was his guidance of novice researchers by suggesting promising research ideas in his domain and offering support, including advising on methodology and collaborating on publications. However, no other L2 studies to date have examined expertise from this perspective. Understanding how novice teachers benefit from working with and learning from expert teachers has important implications for teacher education, and it is an area worthy of additional exploration.

Conclusion

Understanding exactly what constitutes L2 teaching expertise and how teachers develop it can further promote expertise among teachers in the field. Reliance on routines and the optimization

of teaching efficiency comprise but one type of expertise. The additional need to develop adaptive expertise and to maximize knowledge and skills by taking on new challenges beyond one's current level of competence suggests that expertise is something teachers must continually pursue at every stage of their career. Moreover, rather than put the responsibility of acquiring expertise solely on teachers, institutions need to realize their shared role in facilitating this vital aspect of teacher development. Finally, as researchers continue to elucidate different aspects of expertise in L2 teaching, greater numbers of teachers and institutions will gain insights into how better to ultimately help L2 learners become expert users of an additional language.

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ARTICLES

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Developing L2 Pragmatic Competence Through Project-Based Learning

Justin Charlebois

Critical to communicative success in this era of globalization are pragmatic awareness and competence. A promising instructional approach for attaining these traits is project-based learning (PBL), as it promotes the development of problem-solving skills as well as deeper engagement in course content. This paper describes how PBL was used in a university-level intercultural communication course to sensitize learners to the pragmatics of disagreement, mediate analysis of its expression in authentic discourse, and provide opportunities for authentic practice.

グローバル化時代においてコミュニケーションを成功させるためには、語用論的な認識と能力が重要である。これらの特性を獲得するための有望な教授的アプローチとして、課題解決型学習(PBL)がある。この学習法は、授業内容への関与をより深めるとともに、問題解決スキルの発達を促進するからである。本論では、大学の異文化コミュニケーション講座において、PBLの採用がどのように学習者を意見相違の語用に敏感にさせ、実際の議論でそれがいかに表現されているかについて分析する助けとなり、実践的学習の機会を提供したかについて報告する。

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In our increasingly interconnected and globalized world, interactions between individuals with different sociocultural backgrounds are now commonplace. However, misunderstandings can occur when interlocutors possess different norms for social interactions, such as how to appropriately accept a compliment or decline an invitation (e.g., Taguchi, 2015; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Instruction can facilitate the development of learners' pragmatic competence (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2015; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), and project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional approach that can be used to engage learners in authentic experiential learning experiences. This article discusses the importance of understanding pragmatics for language education and how PBL can be utilized to facilitate pragmatic competence. It then describes a concrete example of how PBL can be used to immerse second language learners in experiences involving authentic discourse and, thus, foster the development of their pragmatic abilities.

The Importance of Pragmatics

Pragmatics, that is, the ability to use language appropriately in specific contexts (Taguchi, 2015; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018), has been shown to play an instrumental role in achieving second language proficiency (Cohen, 2017; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In fact, native English speakers in many Anglo-American contexts view pragmatic breaches more unfavorably than linguistic errors (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). To increase pragmatic competence, learners can benefit from both the implicit and explicit teaching of pragmatic routines (Cohen, 2017; Taguchi, 2015).

Pragmatic conventions vary due to factors such as geographic region, gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and, thus, must be taught in reference to specific contexts. Additionally, they are fluid, multi-faceted, and situated in specific *communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998), in dynamic relation to which they must also be presented (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018).

While researchers and practitioners alike have long devoted considerable attention to the teaching of speech acts (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Taguchi & Roever, 2017), we are now witnessing a paradigm shift where speech acts are not taught in isolation but as produced in discourse (Cohen, 2017, 2019). In short, learners benefit from noticing how speech acts are realized in certain situations and then practicing them in class, but instruction must extend beyond the level of speech acts as pragmatics also encompasses other areas, such as politeness, implicature, conversational management, and discourse markers (Cohen, 2017, 2019).

The Potential of Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is an inquiry-based instructional approach that aims to teach scholastic subject matter through experiential learning. The aim is to teach nonlinguistic subject matter in the target language, and projects are a pathway to achieving that goal. PBL engages students in producing an authentic product, with the instructor acting as facilitator. Although the determination of

exactly what constitutes PBL varies within individual classroom contexts, Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) claim that "traditional" projects are primarily used as a mechanism to *assess mastery* of course content, whereas PBL projects serve as vehicles to *teach* that content.

PBL can be utilized to effectively teach pragmatics because it allows instructors to design their course so as to incorporate into their students' learning experiences the production of pragmatically appropriate discourse. Below is an illustration of this possibility in the form of an actual example.

A University-Based Example of Teaching Pragmatics Using PBL

I teach a multi-week PBL unit in an upper-division course on intercultural communication. As one of my course topics is disagreement strategies, my PBL unit focuses on disagreement. However, the principles of its design can be adapted to other academic subjects and contexts as well. The specifics of my particular PBL unit are discussed in detail below.

After the first two lessons, which are spent using the textbook, I introduce students to the project by showing them a clip from a U.S. news broadcast, in which several experts weigh in on a current issue and use disagreement strategies. In contrast to this format, Japanese news media typically feature an expert from a prestigious university or other institution giving an opinion or analysis of an issue and are typically less antagonistic in nature. Thus, I also show the students a clip from a Japanese news broadcast for the purpose of cultural comparison. I select these clips because they provide material for discussing media discourse in two different cultures. Before reshowing the clips, I ask the students to note what they notice about the news programs. In groups, the students are asked to discuss their observations about the programs and later share their views with the rest of the class. Since the purpose of this introductory activity is to spark the students' interest and introduce them to the topic of disagreement, at this time I do not explicitly teach them about the interactional norms of these broadcasts; however, we eventually tap into this rich source of pragmatic input to discover the pragmatics of disagreement.

Next, I introduce the central focus of the unit. The goal of the project is to teach students about the pragmatics of disagreement in conjunction with course content. As members of a team, students choose a course-related topic to research and an authentic discussion format (e.g., debate, newscast, podcast, interview, talk show), through which to eventually present their findings to the rest of the class. For example, a team could choose to conduct a panel discussion about the challenges that an individual from a high-context culture faces while residing in a low-context culture. In this way, students not only learn academic course content about cultural adaptation but also practice disagreement strategies when they deliver their presentations. Although the students are entirely free in their choices of topic and format, the project requires that all team members actively participate in the actual discussion.

I then provide the students with the necessary background information for researching how disagreement is expressed in their chosen format. Naturally, the way disagreement is expressed is contextually bound and exhibits variation (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). For example, the social distance between interlocutors influences how they express disagreement. While mere acquaintances may need to preface disagreement with hedges, intimates can often explicitly disagree without harming their relationship. As students have not yet learned about the discursive features of disagreement, I provide some contextualized instruction about the pragmatics of disagreement.

Students most often choose discussion formats that involve mitigated, rather than strong, disagreement (e.g., podcasts versus political debates). As such, I start by teaching them the main strategies that pragmatically competent speakers employ to express mitigated disagreement, that is, indirect disagreement using linguistic expressions that soften the main speech act and thereby decrease the potential face threat (Maíz-Arévalo, 2014). To illustrate, I provide explicit instruction using contextualized examples of adjacency pairs that show how individuals use hedges ("I guess," "it seems"), downtowners ("maybe," "perhaps"), requests for clarification ("maybe I didn't understand"), and expressions of regret ("I'm sorry but I have a different opinion") to diplomatically express a contrasting view. As an application exercise, students are presented with authentic examples from podcasts and news broadcasts and asked to identify the relevant strategy and explain its discursive functions in the specific context.

However, because language learners benefit from gaining exposure to different forms of disagreement, I later also expose students to unmitigated, *strong* disagreement (e.g., "no way"). Specifically, I help students who select more combative discussion formats find research on unmitigated disagreement that supplements the basic strategies

taught in class. With this knowledge, students can more easily find authentic examples of unmitigated disagreement that they implement into their own discussions.

This focus on elucidating the nuances of disagreement strategies reinforces the point that disagreement is complex and often occurs over several turns and counters the stereotype that blunt disagreement is normative in English. Moreover, it also encourages students to analyze how disagreement emerges in authentic discourse and thus develop their ability to become linguistic ethnographers (Ishihara, 2016; Roberts et al., 2001).

The next phase of the project involves sustained inquiry, whereby the students work on the project with their teammates and receive instructor support both inside and outside of class. Students may modify their own research questions as they encounter new and relevant information from the class lessons and from individual student–teacher conferences. As the previous example of the challenges of living in a low-context, individualistic culture is too broad, the focus could be narrowed to the difficulties Japanese exchange students face when adapting to life on a U.S. college campus. After researching U.S. college life, team members would need to develop a final presentation where they could discuss the different cultural challenges Japanese students might face and enact a discussion in front of the class. For instance, they could choose to prepare a panel discussion where they perform the roles of Japanese students sharing their experiences in the U.S. As each individual would be expected to have different experiences of college life in the U.S., the panelists would naturally use disagreement strategies when sharing these experiences, for which they would also need to previously view authentic examples of panel discussions to learn how to express their views in this format.

As the inquiry stage is iterative and not static (Larmer et al., 2015), students may find they need to refine their own research questions, search for additional references, and conduct additional field research by viewing various media. For instance, they may need to use the internet to find interviews with students about campus life in the U.S. to increase their knowledge. In doing so, they can simultaneously tap into a rich source of authentic discourse and integrate that language into their discussion. While a fixed deadline must be set for the public presentation, this continual feedback encourages students to accept constructive criticism and strive to produce a superior final product.

The final phase of the project is the public presentation, which requires the students to enact their discussion in front of the class and field questions from the audience. Each student is also required to submit an independently written reflection paper about their learning experience, including the research and collaborative processes as well as the final product. Students reflect on the entire process to develop the ability to evaluate their own work and apply their learning to new situations.

Discussion

The language of disagreement is notoriously difficult for language learners to master. They tend to either avoid disagreement altogether or underuse the relevant language (Bardovi-Harlig & Salisbury, 2004). This tendency may stem from exposure to ELT materials that present decontextualized expressions of agreement and disagreement (Ishihara & Paller, 2016), leaving learners unfamiliar with the functioning of mitigation strategies in interactional contexts. As disagreement is a face-threatening speech act, learners may avoid it based on the pragmatic norms of their first language (Ishihara, 2018; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). However, learners need pragmatics-focused instruction to master mitigation as insufficient mitigation could result in communication breakdowns in high-stakes contexts and thus have detrimental consequences (Ishihara & Paller, 2016). In an attempt to increase learners' pragmatic awareness, I selected authentic discourse so students learn to notice how these speech acts are nuanced and how they develop over multiple conversational turns.

PBL is an instructional approach that can be used to foster the development of students' pragmatic competence and analytical skills. The internet provides access to authentic discourse educators can use to help students deepen their pragmatic awareness. In an effort to cultivate learner autonomy, my particular PBL unit engages students in the process of finding authentic discourse so they not only increase their pragmatic awareness but also improve their own pragmatic competence. The rationale behind involving students in identifying how disagreement manifests in social interaction is that this process encourages them to become ethnographers (Ishihara, 2016; Roberts et al., 2001). Ordinarily, linguistic ethnography would entail language learners traveling or residing abroad and observing how language is used in specific communities of practice. In the internet age, however, all language learners now have access to naturally occurring data that they can use to increase their pragmatic competence and further develop their linguistic repertoires. As this PBL unit involved analyzing discourse to identify the features of disagree-

ment, the learners can hopefully apply the same analytical process to other speech acts (e.g., giving and refusing compliments, accepting and declining invitations) and, thus, they become linguistic ethnographers who are adept at deciphering pragmatic strategies and increasing their own pragmatic competence.

This project could be extended by teaching students the pragmatics of disagreement in other contexts or other manifestations of oppositional talk. I highlight oppositional discourse because it is often face-threatening and can result in pragmatic failure. Clearly, news media, television programs, and film provide accessible sources of input. Learners who will spend a portion of their professional or academic lives in multilingual environments would benefit from exposure to pragmatic norms of other varieties of English. The normalization of computer-mediated meetings and conferences also necessitates more exposure to other varieties of English. Language teachers can expose learners to other varieties of English to promote greater tolerance of linguistic pluralism and prepare them to communicate in a world where English is a global medium of communication (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018).

Conclusion

One goal of language teaching is to foster learners' ability to navigate the complex communicative terrain of an increasingly global world. A means of achieving it is to implement authentic learning tasks that reflect actual communicative contexts. The long history of pragmatics instruction and recent shift toward creating more authentic ELT materials further advances the goal of supporting the development of learners' pragmatic competence. As such, language teachers must provide students with examples of authentic and diverse discourse. The integration of pragmatics instruction into a PBL course is yet another way we can further support the development of communicative competence. PBL engages students in a collaborative process that can equip them with the critical thinking, pragmatic competence, and global awareness that will help ensure their success in a world that is increasingly complex and no longer defined by national boundaries.

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Welcome colleagues, and a happy New Year to you all! We are thrilled to bring you two fantastic interviews to kick off 2023. The first interview is with Yuko Goto Butler, a Professor of Educational Linguistics in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. She is also the Director of the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Program there, and was a plenary speaker at the JALT2021 international conference. Her research primarily focuses on the improvement of second/foreign language education among young learners in the U.S. and Asia in response to the diverse needs of increasing globalization. Her recent edited books with colleagues include Research Methods for Understanding Child Second Language Development *(Butler & Huang, 2022) and* English for Young Learners in Asia: Challenges and Directions for Teacher Education *(Zein & Butler, 2022). After her plenary talk at JALT2021, she was interviewed by Jeremy White, an Associate Professor in the College of Information Science and Engineering at Ritsumeikan University. His research is focused on computer assisted language learning (CALL) and game-based learning with a focus on low-level Japanese learners of English. He is also a PhD candidate at Kyoto University. So, without further ado, to our first interview!*

An Interview with Professor Yuko Butler

Jeremy White

Ritsumeikan University

Jeremy White*: Thank you for your time today. Language systems of young learners seem like a challenging area for you to have focused your research on. How did you get there?*

Yuko Butler: I got interested in assessment through my initial interest in language teaching and language policies. Assessment should be closely tied with teaching and learning, but they are often discussed separately, and I always think that this is very unfortunate. I have been very interested in language policies as well, and of course, assessment and policies are quite connected. When I started my graduate program in California, I was very interested in language policies around English-learning im-

migrant children in the US, and that's how I started my research among children. When I realized that many East Asian countries started introducing English as a foreign language at the primary school level, it was a natural transition for me to look into the policy impacts. There were a lot of issues around the policies, and I felt like I heard echoes: East Asian countries faced the same challenges that I heard about in California. Then coincidentally, I had some opportunities to work with language assessment agencies that were interested in developing assessments for young learners as a consultant or in other capacities. These opportunities helped me a lot to better understand the assessment and its consequences, and I became more and more interested in the assessment issue.

Much of your research is with young learners, so I wonder how you think we can better conduct research with young learners?

That's a big question, and I sort of touched upon that issue in my second talk at the JALT2021 conference. I wouldn't say that research with children is uncontroversial, and the idea has been interpreted in so many different ways by researchers. I have been interested in research with children, but at the same time, I've been struggling to figure out how best to implement it in my research. What I proposed (in my talk) was that participatory research could be one way to answer that question. Of course, that's not the only way. Participatory research can grant greater autonomy to students, and students can be more involved in research. In order to grant children greater autonomy in research, we really need to understand what their needs are. In one of my participatory studies, I had three groups of participants, namely students, teachers, and researchers. My view towards research with children is that children do not have to be involved in all phases of the research, such as planning, data collecting, analyses of the data, and so forth, as researchers do. Some people advocate that way (i.e., children should be involved in all phases of research), but I don't think that's necessary. In my view, the most critical element of doing research with children is to make sure that children, by participating in a project, can learn something from the project. Children can have their own objectives in the project, which do not have to be the same as the researcher's objectives. Teacher participants can have their own objectives in the project as well. In my study, I laid out the objectives for all three parties (i.e., children, teachers, and researchers). An advantage of doing it is that it makes it easier for all the parties to participate in the research. I also think it is important to acknowledge that all the participants have their distinctive expertise and to make sure that they can bring their expertise to the project. Thus, in my project, I also laid out the expertise of each group of participants. By doing that, we can respect the participants' autonomy because they have their own goals to achieve, and they can contribute to the project in their distinct ways as well.

But, I have to confess that I'm still in the process of figuring out how best to conduct research with children in my research. I also acknowledge that, depending on the type of research, research with children may not work well, but everybody can start with having greater reflection on his or her research. Even in experimental studies, the researchers can reflect on their research. They can think, for example, if the instruments and task procedures are appropriate developmentally, if the children have a good time during the activities in the research, if their rights are well-protected, and so forth. I know saying this is much easier than actually doing it though. Annamaria Pinter at Warwick University in the UK is one of the major researchers to talk about ethical issues in doing research among young learners. I've learned a lot from her research by collaborating with her. We're working on a book project now, and in that book project, we are asking leading scholars of child language development and pedagogy to describe how they conceptualize the "child-centered approach" in their research. We are asking them to write reflection papers on their own research experience and how they have incorporated (or not incorporated) the "child-centeredness" in their research. We anticipate that the experts may conceptualize it very differently, which itself would be interesting to know.

Your research takes place in many countries, including the U.S., Japan, and China as well. Can you explain a little bit how assessment differs in these countries, and do you think any of the countries you know have got it right, and have the magic bullet there?

Well, unfortunately, there's no magic bullet. I think all the countries that I have worked with are still struggling with how to assess young learners. I think one of the challenges is that the teachers themselves tend to have a set notion about what assessment should look like, and their practice tends to be very constrained by that idea. A lot of teachers still have a very traditional way of looking at assessment; this is probably because that was what they experienced as a student. When English was introduced at the primary school level in East Asia, the teachers couldn't get away from the old notion of assessment. Importantly, assessment is not just

measuring students' achievement. It should be used for assisting their learning primarily. So, the concept of *assessment for learning*, not just *assessment of learning*, is quite important. But it takes some time for many teachers to fully understand the notion of *assessment for learning*. The assessment for learning is not implemented sufficiently or effectively in any of the countries that I have closely worked with. The situation is probably changing a little bit at the individual level, and I am sure that some teachers are already effectively implementing "assessment for learning" in their classes, but by and large, I think you can still see the very old-fashioned assessment practice in many parts of the world. That's really unfortunate, so I think we need to promote assessment for learning more through professional development for teachers. We can't simply assume that teachers can implement "assessment for learning" easily if they haven't experienced it themselves as a student, so, the teachers definitely need professional development.

What I found recently is that children, especially when they get to the upper-grade levels at primary school, already have a very sophisticated understanding of how assessment works; namely, they already have a good degree of language assessment literacy. Researchers have not discussed the importance of learners' assessment literacy much at all in the literature, but I strongly believe that learners, as well as teachers and test developers, should have good language assessment literacy. If you ask children what language assessment should capture, how it should be developed and administered, what the consequences of assessment are, and what is fair (or not fair) in the assessment practice, you will find out how much they already know about language assessment and how much their view can be incorporated to improve our current assessment practices. It is unfortunate that we have not yet paid sufficient attention to children's knowledge, experience, and feelings about assessment. We need to listen to their voices more seriously because they're the major stakeholders of the assessment.

Listening to children's voices also can resonate well with the idea of a child-centered approach. Recently, I conducted a study where I asked children what they thought about the idea of developing assessments together with their teachers. Many of them were very excited about that idea. If we invite children to develop assessments, they will be able to provide us with lots of interesting ideas concerning what kind of assessments they want to take and why. It's fascinating to ask them and let them be involved in the process of developing assessments. That's something that I'm interested in promoting at this point. But to answer your question, if you look at the assessment practice in many countries, there's no magic bullet at this point as far as I can see.

How do you think Japan is doing with English language assessment? They have only just, in the last ten years, really brought English into elementary schools. They have Eiken tests, Junior Eiken, and some assessments like that. How do you think it's going in Japan?

The Japanese case is very difficult to discuss because it's been only one year since English was introduced at primary school as an academic subject. Before English became an academic subject, it was really up to individual teachers or schools to conduct any kind of assessment. The difficulty was that, as I mentioned already, the assessment should be closely tied with teaching and learning. So, if the teaching objectives are not clearly defined, it is difficult to implement proper assessments, and that was the case in Japan for quite some time. Now since English has become an academic subject, teachers are required to do some sort of assessment. In my view, teachers are still struggling to figure out how to assess the children in their English classes. The assessment criteria specified by MEXT at the primary school level are not specifically designed for English per se; they are meant for all academic subjects. Thus, some teachers may find it difficult to use them in their English classes. Moreover, constructs of assessment in English are not clearly defined in my view. For example, one of the challenging criteria is *learning attitude*, but how do you assess children's attitudes? I don't think that we have a very good consensus on how to evaluate children's attitudes toward learning English. More critically, we need to better understand how to conduct an assessment for learning, as I mentioned already. I think that, in many cases, children don't get sufficient and appropriate feedback in English to improve their learning. I think that the current assessment practice does not deal with individual differences in language learning very well either. Some students are fond of producing English (i.e., speaking English), but others are not. I think receiving sufficient input (listening) is generally more important than making production (speaking) at the primary school level, especially when you have English only for a couple of hours per week. How do you expect them to produce a lot of English? Children take different strategies, and the rate of learning is different as well, but we don't know how best to accommodate such individual differences among children in our assessment practice.

I think that's a point, one hour a week, basically 35 hours in a year. What can you get out of that?

Exactly. Some researchers suggest we need to pay more attention to input-based tasks, and I completely agree with that. So, an assessment should also include the idea of input-based task assessment. Of course, if some students want to say a lot of things in English, that's fine, but I'm not quite sure everybody should be expected to speak up uniformly.

I'm sure you've heard of Prensky (2001) talking about digital natives, but I noticed in your second talk you used the term digital generation. Is there any reason for that?

Actually, I talked about the reason in my first presentation. The reason why I used "digital generation" in my talk is that "digital natives" has been a controversial term. In applied linguistics, people try to avoid using the term "natives." I know that "digital natives" is a popular term among the general public, but language teaching educators prefer not to use the term. First, there has been criticism towards the notion of native speakers and its uncontested assumption that native speakers should be the goal of language learning. The "natives" in the "digital natives" implies that "digital natives" are superior to "digital non-natives." Indeed, Prensky addressed that non-digital natives have "an accent" in that their use of digital technology deviated from the natives' use. This way of characterizing digital natives versus non-digital natives has been questioned, and thus I did not use the term "digital natives" in my talk. I looked for a good alternative term. There are many terms, but none of them were appealing to me. Many terms also come and go quickly, so, I decided to use "digital generation." I know it's very generic, but at least it is less controversial.

Do you think there's a digital divide between private (fee-paying) and public (free) education due to the COVID pandemic? If so, how do you think we could address this?

Yes, I definitely agree with that. I think that, during the pandemic, the disparities between those who could access online education or any other digital-based learning and those who couldn't became much wider. How much wider, that I don't know. There have been heated discussions about the gaps in access to technology-based learning opportunities everywhere, not just in Japan. This is also a serious concern here in the U.S. as well. Yesterday, on the radio, I heard U.S. educators discussing many challenges that children face if they do not have sufficient access to digital technology at home and at school, and how that would impact their long-term education and career goals. One of the educators said that we would probably need to wait for five to ten years, or even longer, to see the real impact. We may see if there are any differences in terms of college admissions or getting jobs among children according to their accessibility to digital technology. What kinds of job-related preparation did the children have or miss out on during the pandemic? At this point, I don't think people have a very clear idea of how much impact the pandemic had on children's education, but it's probably fair to say that there will be a huge gap according to children's socioeconomic status. I mean, we probably created a big gap between students in the public school systems and students who had greater access to systematic and higher-quality digital-based learning during the pandemic. When it comes to Japan, public schools did so little during the pandemic (during the academic year of 2020-2021). According to an OECD report, other developed countries, by and large, tried to make more effort than Japan to provide their children with systematic digital-based learning during the pandemic. In Japan, systematic online education, with few exceptions, was not offered to public school children. Of course, there were some individual teachers who implemented digital technology in their lessons, but the majority of the teachers were not sufficiently trained to use digital technology in class at that time.

Could you please outline the communicative competencies that you believe are needed for the digital generation?

Yes, I discussed my (tentative) conceptualization of communicative competence in the talk. I expanded on the notion of traditional language communicative competence, such as Canale and Swain's (1980). My notion includes multimodal abilities, not just limited to linguistic abilities. First, it contains basic linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of phonology, semantics, vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, and so forth. That knowledge-based competence has been strongly emphasized in the traditional school system. This competence remains important, but I believe that's not good enough. Even if you have good knowledge of the language, that doesn't necessarily mean that you use the knowledge. We need to have abilities to use the language. Then I emphasize three abilities to use language in the era of digital technology. One is the ability to use language autonomously, the second is the ability to use language socially, and the third one is the ability to use language creatively. The ability to use language autonomously refers to the ability to manage and control your own language use. It includes not only language processing but

also cognitive and metacognitive processing as well. There is so much information on the Internet nowadays; therefore, you need to be good at selecting information that is useful for you. There's no way that you can access everything, and you don't need to. Among the massive amount of information available on the Internet, you have to select the information that is important for you and also true, not fake, information. You need to be selective and strategic. You need to understand the intention of the writers, and you must quickly process multimodal information. You have to be proactive as well. You need to be autonomous, otherwise you're going to be consumed by the Internet, and you're going to be used by digital technology.

The second ability is to use language socially. We should not forget that we use language for social purposes. We use language in social spaces and social interactions. In essence, the ability to use language socially means the ability to use language for effectively building social networks both in the virtual and physical worlds. In my talk, I mentioned a recent study that examined more than 140,000 job advertisements in the U.S. The researchers tried to understand what kinds of abilities the companies or labor markets were looking for. They found a clear difference in trends between the past and present advertisements. Currently, the number-one quality that companies value is oral communication ability, the second quality is written communication ability, and the third one is collaborative skills. In other words, companies are looking for people who have high oral and written communication skills and can collaborate with others to get the job done. Whereas in the previous generation, the important qualifications included self-organization skills, professionalism, leadership skills, and so forth. You can say that they are primarily individual-based qualifications. You can see that desired qualifications have changed in the last 20 years or so. As this example shows, in the 21st century, you need to be able to use language in social contexts and in collaboration with others. "Others" may include non-humans as well as humans. You increasingly need to communicate with AI or use multiple avatars. AI may not be as accommodating as human speakers. They may say something like "I don't understand you." Humans would not say something like that because it is considered rude, but AI may say it. Instead of being upset about the AI, you need to be flexible in communicating with AI or any other "others."

The last competence is the ability to use language creatively. To be able to use multimodal communication tools effectively, you must be creative in your communication. Creativity means rebuilding or reorganizing the existing knowledge or applying the existing knowledge to a new context. In order to be able to use language creatively, you need to have good foundational knowledge. Without having the foundational knowledge, you can't be creative. This is an important point. This is my proposal for the communicative competencies for the era of digital technology. Learning about vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and so forth—acquiring basic knowledge—is still important, but we have to take a step further and think about how to use language effectively in multimodal contexts through digital technology.

You had children designing computer games for English education. What did the children think was effective and attractive in a game?

I asked children why playing games was so fun; namely, what the "motivation elements" were in games. I assumed that children had a good idea of what motivated them to play games. For example, many games have "staging" functions: Once you master a stage, you can move up to the next stage. That would motivate players. Time limitations may stimulate the players' motivation as well. I was also interested in understanding how children thought about facilitating their own language learning; in other words, "learning elements" in their view. Many games give players instant feedback, and that would help them learn various strategies to win the game, for example. So, I asked children to identify what the motivation and learning elements were through playing some existing instructional games and discussing them in small groups. Once they identified motivation and learning elements, I then asked each group to design a game for English vocabulary learning while incorporating both the motivation and learning elements. As expected, children came up with a number of motivation and learning elements and used them to design the games. One thing that stood out was that children strongly want to control their own learning. For example, they want to choose their own difficulty level. They want to control the time to learn and decide what kinds of words to learn. Having a choice like that, or controlling their own learning, seemed to be very important for them. Another element that children valued a lot was learning in context, particularly learning vocabulary in stories. They are not interested in learning vocabulary in a decontextualized fashion, such as using flash cards. Children often indicate that they like to learn words in stories because they can learn words much more easily in stories. For them, understanding stories is primary; they learn words because they want to understand stories but not the other way around.

But don't we preselect words for children to learn first and then give them some texts or stories to make sure that they learned the words?

When it comes to the learning elements, children valued "repetition." Children even had fun with repetition, but importantly, repetition can be fun and enjoyable only if they don't repeat the same things. They want to have control over their repetitive activities: They want to decide what to repeat, when to repeat it, and how to repeat it. They don't like to be told "repeat after me" by their teachers. Having control over their own learning is important. This element seemed to be the key for the children in my study.

Interestingly, competition was not part of the important motivation elements for children, which I thought was very interesting because a lot of games have competitive elements. But, some children in my project clearly articulated that when it came to English learning, competition would not be necessary. I also worked with Chinese children, and they valued competition very much, so there may be some cultural differences. In any event, the Japanese children in my project did not think that having competition is necessary to motivate them. Another element that we anticipated to be important, but the Japanese children did not mention, was an interactive element, but this may be something to do with our project design. In the project, we let the children play some existing instructional games to identify motivation and learning elements. The instructional games that they played didn't have social interactive components reflecting reality; many existing instructional games in Japan do not make much use of social elements. So, this could have influenced the results of this study. But, in the end, we found that collaboration appeared to be important for the children anyway. After we created a game based on the children's game designs and brought it back to the children for their opinion, they told us that we should have incorporated interactive functions in the game to be more effective. So, they believed that the interactive element would be important for game designs, but they didn't include it when they designed the games.

Did any of these games get beyond the design stage?

Yes. We told the children that we were going to make a real game based on their game designs, so they needed to identify the best design. They took our word very seriously and evaluated each other's designs through a peer assessment, but we made a mistake. We, teachers and researchers, couldn't make a decision on which one was the best design. There were 15 game plans generated by the children altogether. Because for us, all the designs that the children came up with looked great, we took one element from one game design and another element for another game design and so forth, and we ended up doing some patchwork. After we created a game based on "the patchwork" and brought it back to the fifth graders for their review, they kind of liked it. They thought it was fun to learn vocabulary using the game. By the way, the 6th graders were told to design a game for the 5th graders; that was why we asked the 5th graders to review the game first. But later, when we had a chance to ask a selected number of the 6th graders, the original game designers, for their opinion, they didn't like the game much because, I suspected that, the game that we created was a patchwork: it was not their idea anymore. Unfortunately, in the process of making the actual game, the adults' perspectives came into play, and the children did not like it. Children are full of ideas, and they're so creative, absolutely creative. I have to say that this is probably the most enjoyable research project that I've ever done in my life. The children constantly impressed me, and it was very exciting to see them being so creative.

Thank you, this was all very helpful. Hopefully, we can see you again face-to-face sometime soon.

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For our second interview, we have an insightful interview with Takaaki Hiratsuka. Takaaki Hiratsuka is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of International Studies at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. His research interests lie around language teacher education. He has recently authored a book entitled Narrative Inquiry into Language Teacher Identity: ALTs in the JET Program *(Hiratsuka, 2022). He was interviewed by Matthew Nall, an Assistant Professor at Miyagi University. Matthew Nall is also a PhD candidate at Ryukoku University, and his research focus is language teacher identity. Now, to the second interview!*

An Interview with Takaaki Hiratsuka

Matthew Nall

Miyagi University

Matthew Nall: *Hello Takaaki, thank you for joining me today. First, I have to say congratulations for the recent publication of your research monograph on Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) identity. As a former ALT, and as a current researcher interested in the area of language teacher identity (LTI), I've read your book with fervor, and I'd like to interview you about it today.*

Takaaki Hiratsuka: Thanks for having me. The book's full title is *Narrative Inquiry into Language Teacher Identity: ALTs in the JET Program* (Hiratsuka, 2022). It represents a rich and fulfilling research project on the lived experiences of ALTs in Japan, and I am very happy that the book is out there for others to read now. Thank you for showing interest.

Before we get into your book, I want to first ask you about the research methodology of narrative inquiry. Why did you choose this methodology for your book? And what is the value of story in contemporary research in the fields of applied linguistics and TESOL?

Many years ago, I came across a quote by a poet, Muriel Rukeyser (1968), who contended that the universe is made of stories, not of atoms. I really loved that. Stories have been around for as long as human existence, even before the advent of writing. Humans have always lived with stories, whether they were the tellers or the receivers of them, right? Connelly and Clandinin (2006), researchers in the field of education, noted that people shape their daily lives with stories about who they and others are. This is so true. I was reading an article the other day as well, and a social psychologist named Krotoski (2011) claimed that stories can serve as memory aids, instruction manuals, and moral compasses. Stories are everywhere in our lives. I am one of those who has been drawn to the art and utility of stories and their telling. Therefore, the decision to employ narrative inquiry methodology as a research approach in my endeavor came naturally. In applied linguistics specifically, the use of narrative inquiry has become more common in recent times. In particular, it began to gain wide traction around the turn of the century. A prominent scholar in the field, Professor Gary Barkhuizen, who was actually my PhD supervisor, is one of many who have argued that storytelling helps us to understand the inner mental worlds of language teachers and learners and that the nature of language teaching and learning are social and educational activities (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). That is to say, stories deriving from narrative inquiry are always dynamically constructed and ingrained within the idiosyncratic social and cultural worlds. As far as the employment of narrative inquiry as the methodology in the present volume of mine, it helps to create compelling representations of the complex individual identities and illuminate the negotiations of identity within broader sociocultural contexts and surroundings. This is because narratives are, as I said, always constructed within social, cultural, and historical conventions. Stories allow us to see off-camera angles, and to think about and study, or understand and interpret, the experiences of people's lives that are usually concealed and unknown. These experiences are often difficult to observe or even become consciously aware of, but narrative inquiry makes it happen. Although nuances embedded within the complex identities of teachers can often be missed or underreported by other methodological approaches, this is not so with narrative inquiry. This is the reason why I decided to adopt narrative inquiry in my study, which focuses on language teacher identity of ALTs in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program.

What were your motivations for writing the book? And what did you plan on accomplishing? Do you feel that you've accomplished those goals?

When I was young, growing up in rural Japan, ALTs were just on my periphery because I was never taught English by them as a student. But in later years, they have become quite central to my professional, academic, and private spheres. This is because I team-taught English classes about once a week with them as an English teacher in public high schools. During my ten years of teaching in high school contexts, I taught with five different ALTs. I have also conducted research on the topic of ALTs and team teaching for many years. Privately, as well, I became acquainted with a whole host of ALTs, over 500 of them, outside of professional contexts through local cultural events, sports meetings, international holidays, and dinner parties. From my personal experiences, I can now say with confidence, that I have the dual desire for ALTs to lead the best life they can in Japan and for Japanese teachers and students, like myself in my own past, to successfully exploit the presence of the ALTs to the fullest. In tandem with these intrinsic private motivations, I now realize that research studies to date, including my own previous ones, have not

adequately examined ALTs' social and cultural experiences within the JET program in an all-embracing manner. Hence, I felt a strong need to delve into the development of ALT identity across the board by concentrating on both their professional and personal identities, which are socio-culturally and politically formulated through contextualized practices. In other words, my study holistically scrutinizes and documents who ALTs are and what it means to be an ALT. I feel that through the book projects, I could lay out the complicated and dynamic identities of ALTs in their gestalt, although of course I need to ask the readers themselves whether or not my book truly is a useful and meaningful resource for them.

Of course, ALTs are one target audience for your book, but what is the intended readership as a whole?

This book is an attempt to seal a large gap in our knowledge and effort to provide an illustrative example of the lives of native-speaking language teachers and local language teachers across the world. Therefore, the book is useful to those involved in team-teaching practices or in the employment of native speakers in numerous places around the globe. Native-speakerism is an ideology that remains prevalent these days, as exemplified by these team-teaching schemes. The comprehensive overview of the day-to-day experiences of ALTs in Japan would therefore be applicable to other contexts. That said, as you mentioned, the main intended readership includes prospective, current, and former ALTs, local Japanese teachers of English (JTEs), other coworkers of ALTs, officials working in Boards of Education and in other government positions in Japan, among others. This also extends to researchers interested in the topics of team-teaching practices, language teacher education, narrative inquiry, and teacher identity across the world.

In the epilogue, you bring up the ocean as a metaphor for identity. Can you talk a little bit about that? How does it apply to research in your field?

I allege in the epilogue, as you said, that the ocean is an apt metaphor to illustrate the idea of identities in our field (see also Williams, 2018), mainly because of the following five reasons. First, it is because the ocean and identity can both be described as being stable, unstable, peaceful, violent, changing, fleeting, infinite, abundant, and so on. Second, both the ocean and identities are a mishmash of everything. Just like all the little drops from completely different places comprise the vast expanse of an ocean, all the unique bits and pieces of identity constituents form a person. Third, the ocean and identities are both our focal points of transnational and global human experiences, including business, conflicts, love, and culture. Fourth, in the same manner that certain parts of the ocean suddenly transform other parts of the ocean, some identities within the self transform other identities within that same self. Last, the ocean and identities are heterogeneously constructed and arranged in unique ways (Hiratsuka, 2022, p. 216).

Can you please introduce your model for ALT identity? And what do you think is its significance?

Let me start with the significance of the ALT identity model. I want readers to know about what, broadly speaking, composes ALT identity and about the influential factors affecting its construction. It is my hope that with that knowledge, ALTs and those surrounding them will no longer react blindly, but respond wisely, when issues, difficulties, and struggles relating to ALT identity arise in front of them. It has been widely accepted in public discourses, almost too widely, that ALTs are valuable language teachers and cultural informants for people in Japan. The JET program itself has also been praised as being successful in making grassroots international exchange possible. An overwhelming number of ALTs themselves have been grateful for the friends they have met on the JET program, and spoken well of the regions where they have been placed—rightly so to some extent. Moreover, previous studies on the topic involving team teaching and the JET program were conducted and presented on the presumption that ALTs are ascribed to these language teacher and cultural identities automatically as well. In addition to or even contrary to these assertions, however, my inquiry characterizes ALTs—hence the ALT model—primarily as foreigners and dabblers who often struggle in their daily lives in the face of negotiating these identities. In other words, my study highlights the reality of an ALT's life being much more nuanced and contextualized. Regarding the ALT model more specifically, ALTs are first and foremost foreigners from English-speaking countries who will eventually go back to their home countries and be replaced by new ones. The ALT foreigner identity consists of celebrity, sojourner, and English expert sub-identities. ALTs in Japan are also dabblers, who do not acquire legitimate competence as full-fledged staff members within their schools, nor as functioning members of Japanese society. ALT dabbler identity is therefore composed of assistant, greenhorn, and Japanese novice sub-identities.

Why do you argue that the foreigner and dabbler identities are the most important findings?

I believe that this conceptualization of the ALT identity model is perhaps the most important finding of the present inquiry, and the most significant contribution of this book to the readers and to the field. This is because within this study, I embrace the complexity of that identity and the elaboration of it when it comes to language education in Japan within a particular set of intercultural relations for a particular group of individuals—ALTs in Japan. This study, with the presentation of the ALT identity model, elucidated how ALTs set up, develop, and enact their professional, private, political, and cultural identities, in what are inherently complex interactions and positionings of self. This aspect of ALTs' lives has not been extensively documented or discussed in previous research or in public discourses, and therefore adds to the knowledge in the field in a very original way.

How do you expect this volume to help or improve the educational field in Japan? What can stakeholders hope to gain as a result of your work?

So, I provided suggestions and advice based on my study by saying all of us, including ALTs themselves, should be acquainted with the various aspects of ALTs' identities and the influential factors that dictate and manipulate them. Some of the salient, internal, and external influential factors include ALTs' nationality, gender, co-workers, and fellow ALTs. Being self-aware of where they stand, of what they are expected to do, and of what their responsibilities entail as an ALT in Japanese schools—hired as a member of the government-sponsored educational and cultural exchange program—are particularly important. Why? Because they are then equipped with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions as they navigate their lives as an ALT. Perhaps most germane to the readership of the TLT journal, like yourself Matt, for example, my research as a whole, and the participants' narratives in particular, could allow former ALTs to reminisce about and contextualize their own ALT experiences in Japan. For some former ALTs, reading my volume may become a catalyst for them to recall some fond and heartfelt memories of their time in Japan, and even rekindle that fondness going forward. This was certainly true during the narrative interviews for some of the participants in my study. The interviews seemed to have encouraged them to reconnect with some of the people they met through the JET program and reestablish or even deepen their relationships. For other former ALTs, moreover, reading my book might bring up their own unique memories of past events in Japan—both positive and negative. We human beings tend to have a bias towards selecting the best episodes of the past to include in our narratives, all the while excluding or distorting the unfavorable aspects. Therefore, former ALTs might hold overly positive memories of their time in Japan in accordance with the overwhelmingly positive narrative whole. My book might then give them an objective viewpoint, relatively speaking, about what in fact took place when they were ALTs, and perhaps give themselves a reality check about their mindscapes of their time in Japan, allowing them to more fully embrace their current lives and identities in a practical light.

In the book, you argued that the title "Assistant Language Teacher" was not adequate, and you suggested adopting "Language Teaching Assistants" instead. What would the significance of this subtle change be?

So, the term "Assistant Language Teacher," as far as I'm concerned, is grossly misleading as ALTs are primarily not teachers, but assistants. ALTs are not licensed teachers and can only serve as assistants to the JTEs. In principle, they cannot conduct lessons alone or become the main teacher in the classroom, right? Furthermore, ALTs are not in charge of any extracurricular duties or curriculum management work, nor are they held accountable as teachers for their performance at their schools in the way Japanese teachers are. Therefore, I suggest that the position should be labeled as "Language Teaching Assistant" instead of "Assistant Language Teacher" to avoid misunderstanding amongst ALTs themselves and those who interact with them.

In terms of identity, what would be the impact of changing the title for ALTs?

It is a subtle point, but consequential, because it directly affects the perceived and recognized identities of the particular cohort of people and those around them. For JTEs, I would assume that, for example, if they are clear about the title and job responsibilities of ALTs as being assistants, they will regard their ALT as someone to support and assist them, rather than giving them the full ownership of the English language itself or English language teaching in particular.

How do you think other researchers can draw upon your ALT identity model in future research studies?

The presentation of my ALT identity model and the formulation of my ALT identity conceptualization, in and of themselves, are not what I intended other researchers in the field of language teacher identity (LTI) to take away in the sense of advancing their future research studies. Having said that, if anything, I would like future researchers in LTI

to further their understanding about the original ways in which they can map out the findings of ALT research and also reinforce the idea that language teacher identities and their constructions are quite dynamic and complicated. I tried to convey this message by including three comprehensive figures in my book.

What are the implications of your research for ALTs, JTEs, and any other relevant stakeholders?

I carefully documented the implications of my research for ALTs and other stakeholders under a section entitled "Implications for Practice" in the book, which extends across 10 pages or so. I would not be able to explain all the details here, but I do want to state that the JET Program, involving hundreds of thousands of people, has been carried out under the auspices of tremendous financial, diplomatic, and social investments. Therefore, studies that closely inspect the program and its participants are warranted. The letters and testimonials posted on the official websites (e.g., JET Programme, n.d.) are not a true or honest reflection of the ALTs' experiences in Japan. In some sense, my book serves as an effective counter-narrative to the rose-tinted accounts and to the go-to phrase "Every situation is different" because it provides particular anecdotes and idiosyncratic examples. It will function, hopefully, as a yardstick or a point-of-reference of which readers can practically make use as transferable knowledge and information for their own contexts.

Well Takaaki, I know your time is valuable, so I think I'd like to end the interview here. Thank you so much for your time today, and for your book. Take care.

It's been my pleasure.

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[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE

Lorraine Kipling & Heather Yoder

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

Email: jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org • Web: https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

Hello everyone, and welcome to My Share, the column where TLT readers share original activity ideas for you to add to your repertoire. If one of your New Year's resolutions for this year is to give your students an enjoyable lesson before the end of the school year, then here might be your last chance to find something.

Are you looking for a way to engage your young learners in reading? Andrew A. Kirkpatrick has a wonderful activity for you, featuring silly voices galore! Do your students struggle with prepositions? Chris Huang's interactive activity will have students drawing and using prepositions as they describe their bedrooms. Colleen Dalton also uses drawing to encourage learners to play with language and find the fun in creating rhymes. Finally, Steven Asquith adapts reading circles to use with movies, helping students to have sustained and in-depth discussions about the media they consume.

If your resolution is to see one of your own ideas in print, just send us your original, useful, and accessible activity! Of course, we also welcome submissions from publishing veterans. We look forward to receiving your submissions at jaltpubs.tlt.my.share@jalt.org.

Reading Aloud for Young Learners

Andrew A. Kirkpatrick

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Young learners, early reading, reading aloud, semi-voluntary reading*
- Learner English Level: *Beginner to upper beginner*
- Learner maturity: *Preschool and lower elementary*
- Preparation time: *N/A*
- Activity time: *5-10 minutes*
- Materials: *A young learners/early readers text, preferably with illustrations, spoken text, and relatable characters and settings.*

In the spirit of communicative language teaching, rather than talking down to our young learners (YLs), perhaps we ought to try actually talking to them instead. This might mean trying to avoid using unidirectional commands such as, "Read this aloud, please." Of course, they need to practice, but would it not be preferable that learning opportunities arise more spontaneously and with less educational pretense? This activity attempts to motivate YLs (age 3-8) to read aloud of their own accord.

Preparation

No preparation required.

Procedure

Step 1: Begin reading as you usually would and start using the following technique when you reach a point in the text (a scene with dialogue, perhaps), where you would like students to practice reading aloud.

Step 2: Read the spoken part of the text in a voice that clearly does not match that character. Funny and obviously incorrect voices are perhaps more appealing to YLs. In fact, the more incorrect it is, the better. For example, if the character is large and brutish, reading their spoken text in a high-pitched voice obviously challenges expectations with a hopefully comedic effect.

Step 3: Pause briefly and ask/signal to the students if that voice sounded correct. Students will likely disagree (and this is the intended response).

Step 4: After receiving a confirmation from the students that the first voice used was incorrect, read the same text again but this time in a different (but equally unsuitable) voice. Continuing with the previous example, you might switch to a soft, shy voice. Again, try (and fail) to get the students approval for this new attempt.

Step 5: Repeat this process for a third time. Additional attempts can be made, however, but things to consider would be the length of the sentence, the students' attention, and the degree to which the activity remains engaging.

Step 6: Act exasperated at the students' continual dismissal of your reading attempts and signal to the students that they should read it aloud instead. This approach helps to avoid giving a teacher-like instruction. Remember, we are aiming for spontaneous engagement as opposed to forced participation.

Step 7: Students will read the spoken text aloud with minimal-to-no assistance. It should feel spontaneous and genuine.

Step 8: Continue reading, applying this technique during other spoken parts of the text as you feel is appropriate.

Variations

This approach is predisposed to informal formative assessment; students who read the text with a character-appropriate voice (tone and intonation) might be considered as having a greater understanding of the text's register.

Conclusion

By now, my sleight-of-hand should be clear: the repeated utterance of the same text is effectively a means of repeated exposure to a target text, with the added benefit that it disguises what might have otherwise been a tedious and frustrating task. Like so many of our interactions with YLs, it may superficially appear to be mere entertainment. Yet upon closer inspection, we see that it involves a combination of linguistic theory, reverse psychology, and subversive play elements. Interactions with YLs are innately variable, so if you are considering this activity then you can also adapt it to fit with your regular classroom practice.

My Bedroom

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Quick Guide

- **Keywords:** *Furniture, bedroom items, prepositions*
- **Learner English level:** *Low-intermediate to intermediate*
- **Learner maturity:** *Junior high school to university*
- **Preparation time:** *5-10 minutes*
- **Activity time:** *50 minutes*
- **Materials:** *Blank paper, pencil, example drawing of a bedroom (See Appendix)*

Prepositions can be one of the toughest challenges for Japanese learners of English to consolidate in their learning. My Bedroom is a fun and interactive activity in which students work together to practice forming prepositional sentences in a functional and authentic way. To maximize student practice, the activity can be done as many times as the teacher wants depending on time availability.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare an example drawing of your own bedroom. Make sure your example is a simple sketch, as you want students to only spend a few minutes drawing their own bedrooms during the activity.

Step 2: Prepare some example sentences using the target language (See Appendix).

Procedure

Step 1: Tell students you have drawn a picture of your bedroom (but don't show it yet). Ask them to guess what furniture and items are in the room.

Step 2: Do a gap-fill activity by writing some example sentences on the whiteboard, omitting the prepositions, and asking students to provide the missing words (i.e., *There is a teddy bear __ the bed. There is a guitar ___ _____ ___ the bed*.).

Step 3: Give students 3 minutes to draw a quick sketch of what they think your bedroom looks like.

Step 4: Show your picture and give feedback on whether students' predictions are correct. Ask a couple of volunteers to show and compare their sketch to yours.

Step 5: Tell students that they are also going to draw a picture of their bedrooms and practice describing the layout using prepositional sentences.

Step 6: Distribute a blank piece of paper to all students and have students fold their paper in half.

Step 7: Tell students to make a rough sketch of their bedroom on one half of the paper. Give them 3 minutes to do this.

Step 8: Tell students to write six to 10 sentences on the other half of the paper, using prepositions of place to describe what their room looks like. Give them 10 minutes to do this.

Step 9: Have students work in pairs. Tell student A to give descriptions of their bedroom to student B. Student B listens and uses the back side of the paper to make a rough sketch of student A's bedroom.

Step 10: Make pairs switch roles so that each student has a chance to describe their bedroom and draw their partner's room.

Step 11: Tell student A and student B to compare their sketches.

Step 12: If you have time, get students to pair up with different partners and redo the activity for extra practice.

Conclusion

This activity gives students the opportunity to work cooperatively and communicate in English about a topic of interest. Students will have to utilize a variety of useful skills to complete the task. This activity is most suitable for low intermediate students as the vocabulary and grammar are relatively simple. However, you can adjust the level of difficulty by incorporating higher levels of grammar and vocabulary, to make it suitable for higher level students.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

Rhyme Lines with Quick Pics

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Quick Guide

- Keywords: *Language play, rhyme, creativity*
- Learner English level: *High beginner and above*
- Learner maturity: *High school and above*
- Preparation time: *10-20 minutes*
- Activity time: *20-30 minutes (divided over two lessons)*
- Materials: *Worksheets (See Appendices)*

Rhyme Lines with Quick Pics encourages learners to play with language while exploring rhyme. Introduced in one lesson and completed in the next, this activity helps learners notice new things about English, provides instructors with opportunities to evaluate language proficiencies, and simply gives tired learners and instructors a boost. If you have ever used a foreign language to make others laugh, you know that feeling is great!

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare worksheets to introduce rhyme. They should include examples of (a) one- and two-syllable rhyming words; (b) rhyming lines from authentic texts, such as from picture books or songs; (c) original funny stories with at least three rhyming words; and (d) spaces for learners to write (Appendix A).

Step 2: Prepare model pictures of (c) (Appendix B).

Procedure

Step 1: Pass out the worksheets. Introduce the activity—Rhyme Time with Quick Pics—and help learners notice the rhyming words in the name.

Step 2: Read sets of one-syllable rhyming words from the worksheet, such as “cat/sat,” and ask learners to add words. Ask learners to complete the matching task. Confirm their understanding.

Step 3: Repeat Step 2 with two-syllable rhyming words.

Step 4: Ask learners to create their own rhyming sets and write them in the textbox on their worksheet.

Step 5: Read the lines from authentic texts included on the worksheet and ask learners to identify the rhyming words.

[Example:]

One hungry monster/underneath my ***bed****,/*<u>*moaning*</u> *and* <u>*groaning*</u>*/and begging to be* ***fed****.*

(O’Keefe, 1989)

Step 6: Read the original funny stories from the worksheet and ask learners to identify the rhyming words.

[Example:]

I went to the school ***gate*** *to ask you on a* ***date****, but I was too* ***late****. I saw you with my best* ***mate****.*

Step 7: Ask learners to listen again and draw simple pictures of the story. Give them time to compare pictures.

Step 8: Show a model picture (Appendix B) and repeat the story to allow learners to check their understanding.

Step 9: Tell learners to prepare a similarly funny story with at least three rhyming words for the next class.

Step 10: In the next class, put learners into groups of three to five people.

Step 11: Ask one person in each group to read their funny story twice to their group.

Step 12: Tell listeners to draw quick pictures, compare them, and confirm that they understood the story.

Step 4: Ask learners to repeat this process until everyone has shared their stories.

Extension

This activity can be extended into a competition with one group reading funny stories and another identifying rhymes and drawing on the blackboard. Learners can also post their stories in an online forum for wider sharing and for confirmation of rhyme accuracy.

Variations

This activity can be completed in a single class if learners have enough time to write their lines. It can be adapted for younger learners by focusing on alliteration instead of rhyme or for advanced learners by including instruction on imperfect rhymes like those used in rap.

Conclusion

Rhyme Lines with Quick Pics is a versatile activity that encourages learners to enjoy language and

share their creativity. It is resource-light and easy to adapt for use in various classrooms. Have fun!

Reference

O'Keefe, S. H. (1989). *One hungry monster: A counting book in rhyme.* Joy Street Books.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

Movie Circles

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Quick Guide

- **Keywords:** *Extended discussion skills, media literacy, collaborative learning, CLIL*
- **Learner English level:** *Pre-intermediate and above*
- **Preparation time:** *Approx. 3 to 4 hours*
- **Activity time:** *60 minutes*
- **Materials:** *Worksheets (See Appendices)*

Movies offer nuanced insight into the most essential and mundane topics of our time and are a wonderful topic of discussion. This activity, based on the popular approach to reading—literature circles—supports students in communicating meaningfully about pertinent issues relating to growing up. As students each watch a movie and prepare according to a specific role, the subsequent discussions are effectively scaffolded to help learners explore the issues deeply. This results in authentic and lively discussions, which are intensely rewarding for students.

Preparation

Step 1: Select movies relating to a topic which are easily accessible to stream or rent.

Step 2: Create a worksheet including links to the movie trailers so students can choose a movie to watch (Appendix A).

Procedure

Step 1: Tell students they will be leading and participating in an extended group discussion about a movie.

Step 2: Share a document with links to trailers (Appendix A) and ask students to watch them all.

Step 3: Invite students to vote for the movies they want to discuss. In this case, seven movies have been chosen which have meaningful depictions of growing up. Based on voting, narrow the movie choices to four or five.

Step 4: Create groups of four or five members by asking students to write their names next to their choices on the document. Explain to students that because groups must have members who will each take a role, they may not all get their first choice.

Step 5: Explain the roles: (1) plot summarizer: must go first and summarize the plot, main events, and characters; (2) character studies: must choose a character, describe him or her, and discuss their role in the narrative; (3) scene selector: must choose a scene and discuss why they chose it; and (4) culture connector: must introduce cultural or personal connections to the movie. Each student must also introduce discussion questions based on their role and be prepared to actively talk about all the roles so that the discussion is lively throughout. Explain the rubric (See Appendix B).

Step 5: Tell students to choose their roles in their groups.

Step 6: Model the activity using a short animation if time allows.

Step 7: Tell students that as preparation for the discussion is time-consuming, they have around two weeks to prepare for the discussion for homework.

Step 8: On the day of the discussion, first tell each group to watch their movie's trailer together.

Step 9: Instruct students to start the discussion, which should last up to one hour (or around 12 minutes for each role). Monitor the discussion and provide support.

Extensions

Option 1: Ask each group to prepare and give a presentation on their movie and the topic.

Option 2: Require students to write a shared reflection about what they learned from the movie about the topic.

Options 3: Tell students to record the discussion and use this for analysis of their spoken performance.

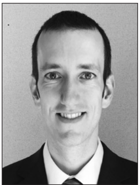
Conclusion

Movie Circles provide a stimulating method for students to engage with topics from multiple perspectives. The format can easily be adapted to any genre of movie or topic the instructor intends to approach. As the activity encourages students to consider issues in a critical way, it is especially useful for content-based instruction and CLIL- (Content and Language Integrated Learning) based courses. Students usually become so immersed in the content of these discussions that they forget that it is a graded assignment, and their communication becomes very natural. This is not only beneficial to their spoken fluency, but it also boosts their confidence.

Appendices

The appendices are available from the online version of this article at https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare

[RESOURCES] *TLT* WIRED



Paul Raine

In this column, we discuss the latest developments in ed-tech, as well as tried and tested apps and platforms, and the integration between teaching and technology. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

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Paul Raine has been a Japan-based teacher and coder since 2006. He has developed the web-based language teaching and learning platform *TeacherTools.Digital*, and many other web-based tools.

P-CHAT: Formative Self-Assessment using Group Oral Discussion Tasks

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The group oral discussion task (also known as group discussion test and group oral test) is a popular time-efficient and cost-effective solution for evaluating language learners' speaking abilities, as it prompts groups of learners to discuss a topic in their target language while a rater observes and evaluates individual speakers simultaneously (Shohamy et al., 1986). The task has been noted as a means to detect changes in speaking proficiency over time (Leaper & Brawn, 2019), and for its ability to generate positive washback in a communicative curriculum (Bonk & Ockey, 2003). Though implementation procedures and utility vary by context, the outcome for learners is often similar: a score (ideally rubric-based) and some feedback (ideally forward-focused). But what if, instead of an evaluation, learners were immediately provided with quantitative data describing their own individual performances? And what if teachers could administer the discussion task to an entire class simultaneously, evaluate individuals later, and track their progress across similar activities over time? Finally, what if researchers could easily collect a range of data types regarding such a task?

In this article, I introduce *P-CHAT*, an online tool designed to provide lower-proficiency (CEFR A1-B1) Japanese learners of English with the means to conduct meaningful formative self-assessment of their own speaking performances on a group oral discussion task. Furthermore, it allows teachers to evaluate individuals asynchronously and monitor their progress over time while also serving as a research instrument capable of collecting multiple types of data relating to L2 English conversations. Awarded "Best Moodle Innovation of 2020" by the Moodle Association of Japan, P-CHAT is described here in terms of the affordances it provides learners, teachers, and researchers.

What is P-CHAT?

Technically speaking, P-CHAT is a plugin (i.e., supplemental programming which adds specific features and functions to existing software) for the Moodle learning management system. It was funded by a JSPS Kaken Grant (19K13309) and programmed by Poodll Co. Ltd., a certified developer of Moodle-based plugins for language teaching and learning. Pedagogically speaking, P-CHAT is a com-

municative classroom activity wherein learners are individually guided through a four-step sequence of tasks that center around a group discussion. Though intended for use in face-to-face environments, it has been implemented successfully in tandem with video conferencing technology.

Figure 1

The Preparation Interface

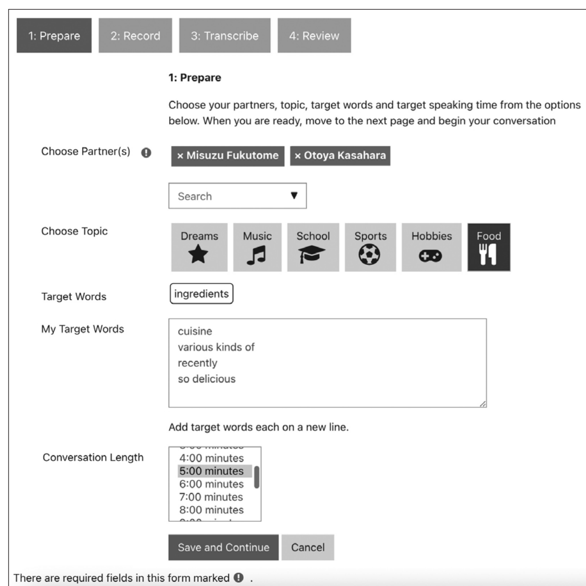
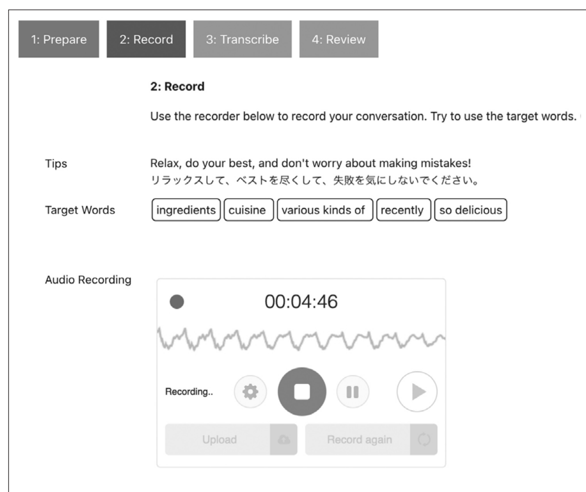


Figure 2

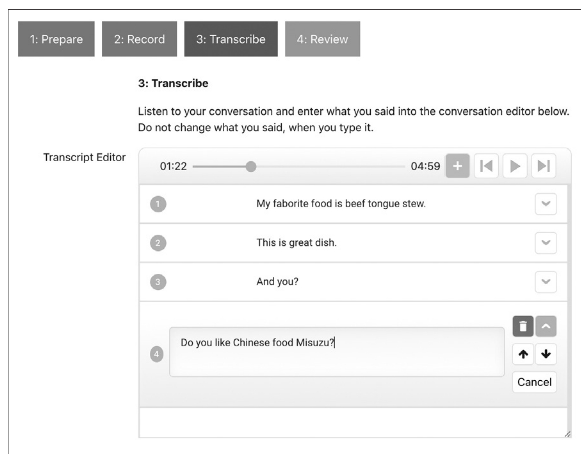
The Recording Interface



Using the P-CHAT interface on personal or classroom devices, learners first set the conditions for their discussion by confirming their partners' names, the discussion topic, and the duration of the discussion. As shown in Figure 1, they may also type a personal list of target words or phrases that they can refer to during the conversation. In the second step, learners make individual audio recordings of their own contributions to an unscripted group discussion, conducted in groups of two or three. Figure 2 illustrates the recording interface, in which teachers can also choose to display an image or video to prompt or scaffold the discussion. In the third step, learners listen to their audio recordings and individually transcribe only their own speech, using the transcription interface to divide it into conversational turns (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

The Transcription Interface

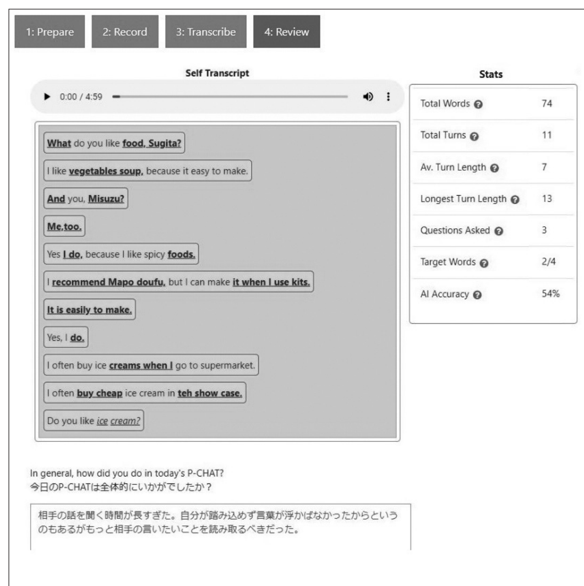


Finally, in the fourth step, learners are presented with seven numerical figures that describe their contribution to the discussion in quantitative terms: the total number of words they spoke; the total number of turns they took; their average turn length and their longest turn length (both represented as a number of words spoken); the number of questions they asked; the number of pre-selected target words or phrases they spoke; and an "AI Accuracy" percentage, which is calculated as the amount of overlap between the speaker's transcription and a separate transcription generated with automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology (specifically, Amazon AWS). Alongside these descriptive statistics, an interactive version of their finished transcription is displayed with ASR discrepancies boldfaced. Clicking on a boldfaced word in this window triggers an automatic playback of that section of audio, and a pop-up window displaying what was heard. In this final step, learners refer to this automatic feedback to answer three reflective

prompts set by the teacher, an example of which can be seen at the bottom of Figure 4.

Figure 4

The Revision Interface



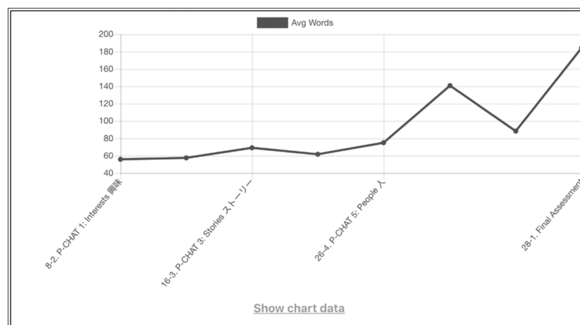
Affordances for Learners

The main intended pedagogical affordance of P-CHAT is its capacity to help lower-proficiency learners conduct actionable formative self-assessment. The provision of objective and easily understandable figures allows learners to make concrete statements about their performances (e.g., "I spoke 72 words and only asked one question.") and set tangible goals for subsequent attempts (e.g., "Next time I will speak at least 100 words and ask at least two questions."). P-CHAT also offers learners the ability to track and compare their progress over time with straightforward line charts that plot their metrics across P-CHAT attempts. As shown in Figure 5, learners who engage in this activity cycle are rewarded with an ever-increasing stat line and objective proof that they are able to contribute more to an English language discussion with their peers through continued and dedicated practice.

P-CHAT also leverages task sequencing to the advantage of the student through positive washback. Learners may spend weeks engaging in communicative tasks relating to the topic, learning and reviewing specific conversational strategies, practicing conversations with partners, generating target wordlists, and producing language that can be reused during discussions using P-CHAT. Despite the relatively low stakes of the task, audio recordings can encourage active participation and promote accountability. In transcribing themselves, learners may attend to a variety of linguistic features including phonetic production, word selection, intonation, and spelling. Finally, reflective prompts offer opportunities to not only set goals, but to engage in form-focused activities such as the identification and rectification of grammatical or pragmatic errors.

Figure 5

Sample Metric Screen of Average Words Produced Across Numerous Tasks



Affordances for Teachers

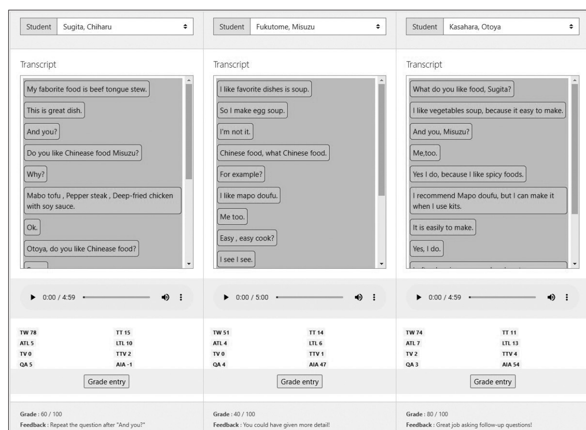
P-CHAT affords teachers with the means to conduct higher-stakes assessments, such as the conventional group oral test it was based on. Conceding rater reliability as a valid concern, Van Moere (2006) also concluded that the group oral test is "useful for making general inferences about a candidate's ability to converse in a foreign language" (p. 436). Figure 6 shows the P-CHAT grading interface which allows teachers to simultaneously evaluate all individuals of a group asynchronously. P-CHAT sessions done face-to-face produce individual audio recordings that were made in proximity, so teachers can choose to listen to one of the recordings and follow along with the three transcriptions, using an interactive and customizable rubric (toggled using the "Grade entry" button) to score each learner. Teachers looking to avoid scheduling challenges inherent with deploying performance-based speaking assessments can administer P-CHAT in a single session and save scoring for a more convenient time.

Teachers will also find the progress reports (see Figure 6) helpful as portfolio submissions, which can be referenced during consultations with individual learners. In addition to the individual progress reports, teachers also have access to similar whole-class progress reports which can help

identify larger scale trends, such as the accessibility of a given discussion topic (represented by dips in overall production) or the performance trends of different cohorts.

Figure 6

Sample of a Student's Progress Report



Affordances for Researchers

Researchers looking to collect and analyze large amounts of data will be pleased to find exportable CSV reports of individual P-CHAT attempts including audio recordings, full student- and machine-generated transcriptions, the seven descriptive metrics, scores, and written responses to reflective questions. Several on-going research projects have made use of P-CHAT as an instrument and are investigating the accuracy of student-generated transcriptions, patterns and correlations between reported metrics and rubric-based rater scores, and learner and teacher perceptions of the tool as a language learning asset. Teachers and researchers interested in using P-CHAT to conduct and participate in research activities are invited to use P-CHAT at no cost on a dedicated Moodle with consultation from the author.

Conclusion

This article has introduced an award-winning new tool for promoting learner-centered formative self-assessment of L2 English discussions. Described as a modern iteration of a conventional group discussion task, P-CHAT functions as a guided sequence of computer mediated language learning activities and a range of affordances for learners, teachers, and researchers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Justin Hunt of Poodll Co. Ltd for his enthusiasm and dedication to this project, and my colleagues for their constructive suggestions during the development of this resource.

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Listening to Unabridged Audiobooks while Reading the Original on Paper

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A straightforward and convenient way for intermediate and upper-intermediate students to progress toward advanced-level proficiency is to listen to unabridged audiobooks while reading the original book on paper. Learners can either alternate listening and reading or do them simultaneously. Combining these two sources of input provides valuable contextual learning opportunities as learners can take advantage of the different benefits of text and audio input. At first, listening to an unabridged audiobook will be daunting for language learners. Nevertheless, Moodle tools enable teachers to provide extensive support to help learners apply this strategy. This article will explain how Moodle can be used to deepen comprehension and foster contextual vocabulary learning by using an unabridged audiobook and its original paper book as the course text.

Corpus Analysis for Audiobook Selection

A corpus analysis was conducted to confirm that the students would have 98% vocabulary coverage

within the book and audiobook. This analysis helped to ensure that they would not encounter too many unknown words. At 98% coverage, learners can adequately comprehend and learn from contextual clues (Nation, 2006). Japanese students at upper-level universities have a mean vocabulary size of 4,903 words (McLean et al., 2014). However, research has confirmed that a vocabulary size of 8,000 to 9,000 words is necessary for understanding a wide variety of texts without unknown vocabulary being a problem (Schmitt, 2008). The widespread acceptance and use of the JACET 8000 in Japan is testimony to the importance of this vocabulary learning goal (Mochizuki, 2016). Using a well-chosen unabridged audiobook and its source text, students can learn vocabulary from context and make progress toward becoming comfortable with reading and listening at the 8,000-word frequency level. The techniques explained herein aim to train students to use this strategy that they can apply to other unabridged audiobooks and their sourcebooks.

A corpus analysis can reveal the lexical coverage required for texts and be conducted quickly using *Vocabprofile* at lextutor.ca. Figure 1 shows selected output from the corpus profile of the text for the course explained in this article, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 2020). Crucially, if learners' lexical knowledge is estimated to be around 5,000 words, they will have coverage of 97.91% of the words they encounter. Furthermore, adding the counts of the mid-frequency 4,000- to 8,000-word frequency bands (rows k-04 to k-08 in Figure 1) shows that learners will meet 2,982 token words in this range. Importantly, learners' vocabulary size estimates are based on their visual knowledge, which in Japan tends to be higher than their aural knowledge. An essential benefit of this strategy is that learners use their visual knowledge to help strengthen their aural ability. In sum, the corpus profile shows that learners will have ample opportunities for contextual vocabulary learning and not be overburdened with unfamiliar words.

Figure 1

Vocabulary Profile Output From the Lextutor Website

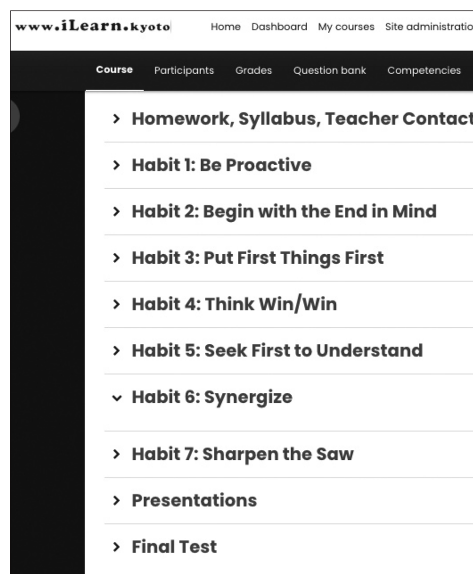
Level	Tokens	Percent	Cumul%
k-01	86,725	81.460	81.460
k-02	9,231	8.671	90.131
k-03	6,096	5.726	95.857
	coverage=>95%		
k-04	1,380	1.296	97.153
k-05	807	0.758	97.911
k-06	297	0.279	98.190
	coverage=>98%		
k-07	232	0.218	98.408
k-08	266	0.250	98.658

Encouraging Learners to Listen Extensively

Although it is assuring that learners will have adequate vocabulary coverage for text comprehension, they will nonetheless encounter low-frequency words they do not know. Such words give little value for the effort expended learning them, so it is important to teach learners to resist the temptation to spend too much time on them. They should notice unknown words and perhaps highlight, underline, or note them in their paper texts, but they are guided to work quickly through the whole text and focus on grasping the main ideas. To this end, Moodle has visually appealing course formats that enable teachers to provide a broad overview and show how learning activities connect to the text and course contents. Figure 2 shows Moodle's Topics format. Clicking the bullet point beside each topic expands it to reveal activities and learning resources. Students are frequently told that the purpose of the course is to help them understand the main ideas, engage with them briefly, and move on. I explain that much contextual learning will take care of itself as they engage with the text and encourage them to view the course as an extensive warm-up; that is, they can relisten and reread materials autonomously and repeatedly throughout their lives.

Figure 2

Moodle's Topics Format



Another essential criterion for text selection is for the unabridged audiobook to have a strong narration. Audiobooks are available at many sites,

but audible.com is the most advanced, providing listener-based narrator ratings and sample audio. Furthermore, Audible's app provides useful bookmarking and notetaking features, which can be helpful for both learners and teachers. Covey (2020) has an average 4.9 out of 5-star rating from 1,309 reviewers. The 15-hour unabridged audio is passionately read aloud by the author, and his son provides valuable insights that he has gained over many years of applying and teaching the ideas. Their strong desire to teach results in vibrant intonation, providing learners ample opportunities to practice listening to natural spoken English. In addition, the 440-page paper text has many helpful explanatory diagrams and is logically organized.

Balancing Learning Modes

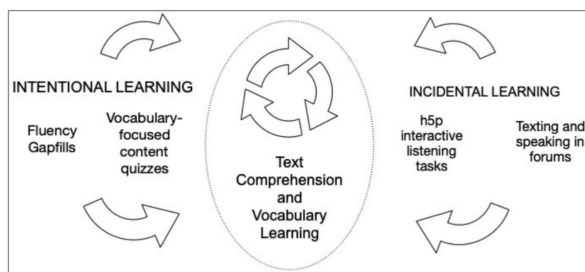
After selecting a text that matches learners' vocabulary size and has a good audiobook, learning activities should be balanced to help learners acquire strong and deep knowledge of the words they learn (Schmitt, 2008). Research indicates that developing vocabulary knowledge depth entails balancing complementary explicit and implicit vocabulary learning modes (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Another framework balances four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development (Nation, 2007). Similarly, when designing activities for developing listening skills, the teacher should balance learning activities across a range of types to ensure a variety of ways to cognitively engage with the material. The modes of listening recommended by Rost (2011, p. 183) for promoting such a variety are as follows.

- Intensive (pay close attention to what is actually said)
- Selective (extract key information to use in a meaningful way)
- Interactive (interact verbally with others to clarify and apply meaning)
- Extensive (focus on listening continuously, managing large amounts of listening input)
- Responsive (focus on response to listening input)
- Autonomous (select one's own listening tasks and monitor progress)

Figure 3 shows how Moodle activities are integrated to balance learning and listening modes in this course, to foster vocabulary learning, and to deepen listening and text comprehension.

Figure 3

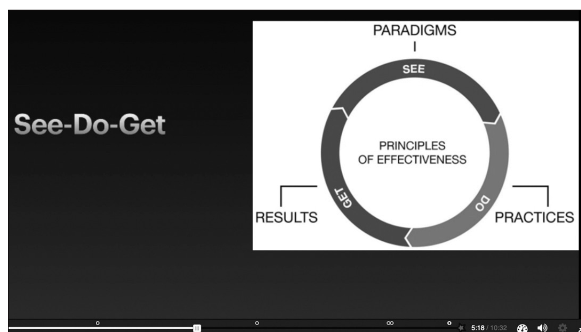
Moodle Activities to Support Vocabulary Learning



Moodle's Quiz, Forum, and h5p Interactive Video are used to administer the activities shown in Figure 3. Paper comprehension guides are given to accompany listening homework assignments, followed by open-note, in-class quizzes to monitor comprehension and encourage extensive listening. Gapfill handouts are distributed to focus learners on key 10- to 15-minute listening passages from each chapter to promote intensive listening. These are also followed by in-class paired reading aloud (one learner reads the side with blanks aloud, and the other supports them by silently reading the side with words filled in and giving hints as needed). These are also followed by in-class gapfill quizzes. To summarize each chapter, h5p Interactive Videos are created by combining a simple 10- to 15-minute PowerPoint presentation exported to video to accompany the audio with helpful visual cues to guide comprehension. The diagram in Figure 4 depicts the display, which is shown for about seven minutes while the audio plays.

Figure 4

Interactive Listening Activity Using h5p



The audio stops and learners are asked questions to consolidate each section at essential points. Figure 5 shows an example of a question in the h5p

gapfill format. As shown in the figure, learners can click on the link in each blank to get hints.

Figure 5

Comprehension Question from an h5p Interactive Video

Fill in the missing words. As hints, the 2nd letters are provided in parentheses, like this: (a).

The SEE-DO-GET framework is a simple way to understand how PARADIGMS influence our BEHAVIORS and ultimately determine our RESULTS.

The tree metaphor is helpful for understanding the whole paradigm of the 7 Habits philosophy. The roots, which are underground, represent the ______ Victory which is essential but can't be seen. Above ground, the branc... ...ctory, which can be seen by everyone. Finally, the s... ...esent ______

One word, second letter is (r). In the Seven Habits framework, this highly individual, personal part of self development is called The __________ Victory

Check

6:32 / 10:32

Final Considerations

I have found the audiobook explained in this article useful for teaching upper-intermediate communicative English classes because its topic (effective everyday living) provides abundant opportunities for students to talk about how the ideas apply to themselves. Nevertheless, other teachers may find other audiobooks more relevant for their students and teaching contexts.

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[JALT PRAXIS] YOUNGER LEARNERS

Martin Sedaghat & Emily Shetland

The Younger Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editors at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

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The Bigger Picture: Part 1 Happily Ever After: Post-Reading Projects for Picturebooks

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Picturebooks are powerful tools for language learners. They tell stories through words and pictures, which are both essential to the understanding of the text. While these kinds of books have many different labels (storybook, realbook, etc.), currently the most prevalent is the use of the compound noun 'picturebook' as it reflects the compound nature of words and pictures coming together to create meaning (Mourão, 2016). Picturebooks are a source of authentic language, motivation, and foundational literacy skills but once the story is told and the book is closed, there are still opportunities for meaningful learning to take place.

This article will explore a variety of post-reading activities for young learners, including retellings of

famous stories, books made by students about themselves, and illustrated predictions of story resolutions. It will focus on creative art projects that allow children to engage with and personalize the themes, messages, and questions of a variety of picturebook styles, such as wordless books, open-ended stories, and concept books. Key principles for choosing books and designing activities will also be discussed.

Introduction and Background

I am an English teacher and curriculum designer at a small private preschool, working with children aged 0 to 5. Since joining in 2018, I have focused on an approach that draws on communicative language teaching with an emphasis on interaction through songs, games, and picturebooks. My goals are to introduce learners to English through methods that are both motivating and memorable, while also incorporating opportunities for intercultural understanding and development of social skills, such as sharing, turn-taking, and teamwork. I have a particular interest in picturebooks and the ways that learners can interact with and learn from them beyond what is printed on the pages.

I believe that in the young learner classroom, picturebooks can be a compelling resource, often forming the foundations of lesson plans along with songs and games. By linking words with pictures, they can tell engaging stories and fulfill a number of important roles for language learning. Picturebooks are authentic materials, made for all children and not only those in an EFL or ESL context. They are motivational, and create opportunities for discussion, prediction, and reflection. Finally, they can help to build foundational literacy skills such as phonological awareness (e.g., syllables, alliteration, and rhyming) and phonemic awareness (e.g., segmenting and blending).

However, picturebooks can offer further chances for meaningful learning even after the story is finished. Post-reading activities allow learners to connect with and personalize a number of picturebook elements, including themes, messages, and visual design. This article will introduce a variety of post-reading activities for young learners, while answering three main questions: What are post-reading activities? Why use post-reading activities? How should we choose books and design activities from them?

What Are Post-reading Activities?

Post-reading activities are small-scale projects carried out with learners after reading picturebooks, for the purpose of reflecting on the story. Many of these activities are art-based, using crayons, pens, scissors, paper, and other media, to extend the experience of the picturebook beyond the initial reading. Picturebooks often have specific themes and perspectives that are of value to young learners, and by carefully planning out these projects, teachers can create a space for their students to explore these elements.

Why Use Post-reading Activities?

There are a number of benefits to using post-reading activities in the young learner classroom. They can be useful for checking comprehension, as well as focusing on and creating a deeper understanding of a picturebook's core theme or message. Many young learners are still developing in their first language, and artistic post-reading activities can allow learners to reflect on their reading experience in a non-linguistic medium. Beyond reading and language skills, post-reading activities can be useful for developing important social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, and collaboration, as learners may need to work together on projects or share materials. After completing the activities, learners' works can be displayed at school and discussed in later lessons, then subsequently taken home. This is a good opportunity for learners to share both their creations and their thoughts about the stories with their families, linking language learning at school with their home life. The key to successful post-reading activities for younger learners is to connect language use to creative and memorable experiences.

Choosing Books

When choosing books to share with learners and use in post-reading activities, the age level and maturity of the learners must be considered. For young learners, short and simple books are often best, emphasizing pictures over text. Picturebooks with a clear theme, visuals, and/or interactive aspects, such as cut-out or pop-up elements, lend themselves well to engaging projects. Additionally, a variety of picturebook types should be introduced to learners, including concept books, wordless books, and non-fiction, to show them the wide range of books available and stimulate their imagination.

Designing Activities

After a picturebook is chosen, there are a number of questions to consider in the planning process of a post-reading activity. What is the central theme or element of the book? Is there a unique character or perspective that learners can explore? What is the most important message from the book that you

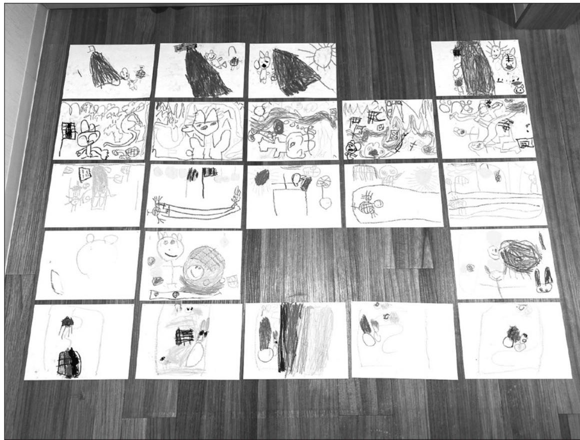
want learners to reflect on? Is there an art or design style that would be interesting for learners to experiment with? By asking questions like these, teachers can focus on the key parts of each book and design activities that will allow their learners to effectively connect with the books.

Examples of Post-reading Activities

Retelling a Story

Figure 1

Learners' drawings for The Tortoise and the Hare



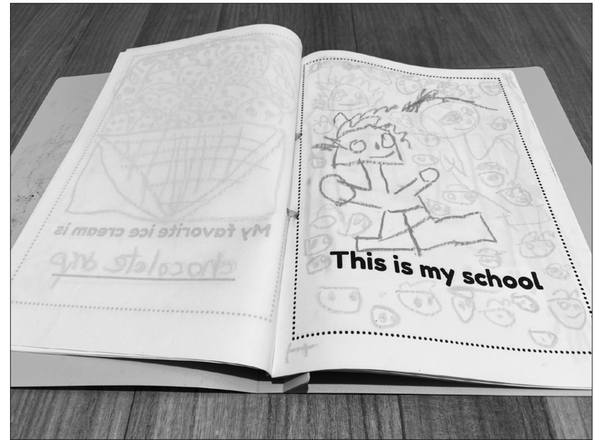
Retelling a story can be good practice for learners to break down a picturebook's plot into more manageable and comprehensible chunks. For this activity, a story should be told to learners verbally, without the use of the book's illustrations, over the course of several lessons or days. After each part, learners draw a picture to show that scene. Once the story is completed, one picture can be chosen from the learners' work for each page (Figure 1) and bound into a book, so that all learners have their artwork represented in this collaborative project. Short and simple stories work well for this activity, such as *The Hare and the Tortoise* by Brian Wildsmith (2007).

Student-made Books

Some picturebooks lend themselves well to activities in which learners can follow a theme and create their own original books. Matt Lamothe's (2017) *This Is How We Do It* illustrates the daily lives of seven children from seven different countries, with each double-page spread focusing on one aspect such as breakfast, the classroom, how they play with friends, or how they help their families at home. Looking at one topic at a time, learners can be encouraged to observe and comment on both the differences and similarities between their own lives and those of the children in the book. Then they can create a page on the same topic with drawings of their own, before putting them all together in a folder (Figure 2) to share with each other and their own families. This can be a powerful tool for introducing cultural literacy to young learners by giving them opportunities to view and reflect on the lives of children from a variety of countries and cultures through the window of the picturebook.

Figure 2

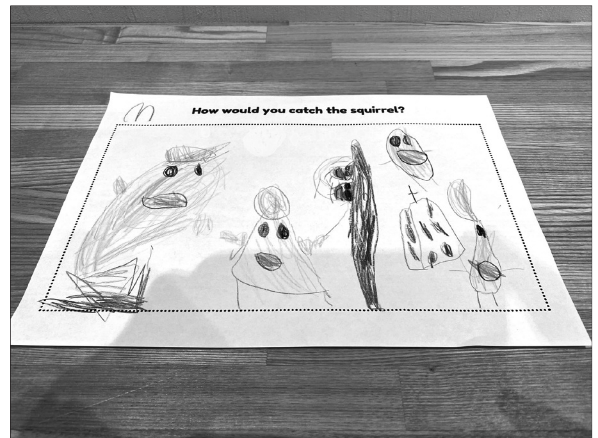
Learner Book about Themselves



Making Predictions

Figure 3

Learner Drawing of their Conclusion for Shh! We Have a Plan



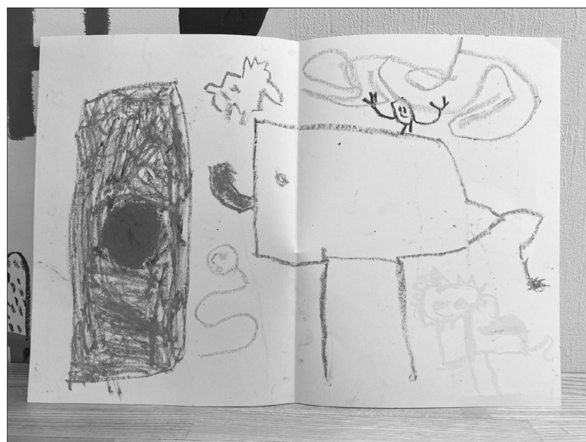
Guessing outcomes and thinking creatively are vital skills for young learners to develop, and there are many picturebooks that feature open-ended conclusions, inviting readers to finish the story themselves. After reading a book like *Shh! We Have a Plan* by Chris Haughton (2015), learners can be given

paper and asked to imagine their own ending (Figure 3). Picturebooks that are not open-ended can also be used, by stopping the read-aloud at a chosen point, asking learners to create their original conclusions, and then comparing their ideas with the ending in the book. Jon Klassen's (2011) *I Want My Hat Back* is an example of a picturebook that might be used in this way, pausing before the final reveal of the hat to speculate on the fate of the rabbit.

Exploring a Central Theme

Figure 4

Learner Drawing Using the Button from Don't Push the Button



Many picturebooks feature a central element that the entirety of the story is based around. These elements are often well-suited to post-reading activities as they offer a clear visual theme to build around. *Don't Push the Button* by Bill Cotter (2013) teases readers with the mysterious eponymous button and the unpredictable results from pushing it. Learners can be encouraged to draw their own button and illustrate what happens when it gets pushed (Figure 4). Similarly, Eiko Konishi's (2020) *Sandwich! Sandwich!* follows a simple theme of what goes into making a sandwich. For post-reading, learners might use paper, felt, and other materials to create the ingredients that they would put into their own sandwich.

Reimagining Elements

Beyond a core theme, some picturebooks focus on physical alterations to the page, such as pop-up elements or cut-out shapes, to progress the story. These can be very interesting for learners to experiment with in their own artwork. *Green* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger (2012) and *The Secret Birthday Message* by Eric Carle (1986) both use novel cut-out shapes and patterns to explore color and movement. After reading, learners can be presented with paper that has various cut-out parts (e.g., a circle, a square, a zig-zag line) and asked to draw and color around these shapes, using their imagination to form the surroundings (Figure 5). The papers can be collected, arranged, and bound to create a class book, with learners discussing and deciding on their own story to go along with it.

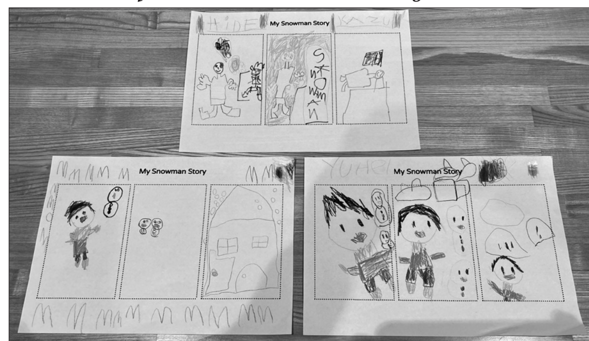
Figure 5

Learner Drawing Using Cut-out Elements

Sequencing

Figure 6

Learners' Sequential Narrative Drawings



Sequential narrative is a style of storytelling employed by some picturebooks, using frames to separate scenes and create specific moments. These types of books are effective for children learning the flow of a narrative, how to understand and talk about events that have happened, are happening, and that may happen in the future. *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs (1978) is one such picturebook, and

learners can follow the reading with a paper split into several frames, inviting them to imagine the further adventures of the snowman and create their own scenes with a beginning, a middle, and an end (Figure 6).

Linking to Other Subjects

Figure 7

Close-up of Learner's Moon Created with Textured Materials

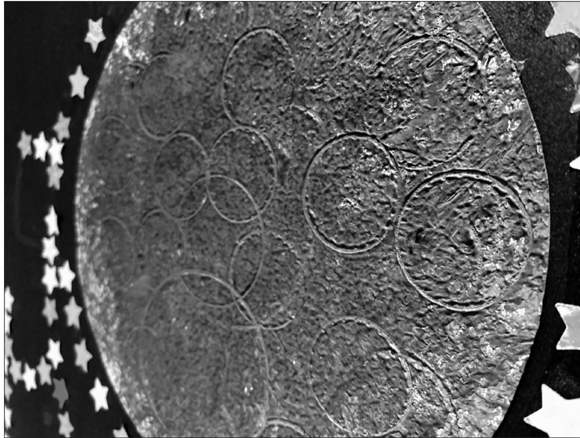
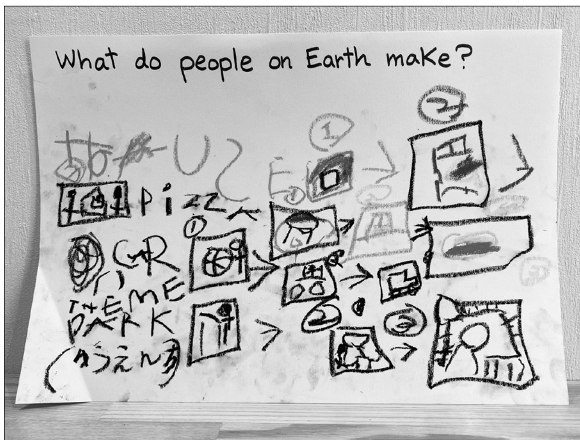


Figure 8

Learner's Question and Illustrated Answer about Earth



Picturebooks can be wonderful sources for learning about a variety of topics, such as culture, geography, and natural science. With carefully planned post-reading activities, learners can be introduced to these subjects in meaningful ways. Eric Carle's (1991) *Papa, please get the moon for me* features depictions of the moon in Eric Carle's signature style, and can be followed up with an opportunity for learners to paint their own moons with different materials to create texture (Figure 7), leading into discussions about the moon's surface and craters. *Here We Are* by Oliver Jeffers (2017) presents itself as an illustrated manual for living on Earth, with plenty of prompts for rich discussion. Post-reading, learners might imagine they are aliens visiting Earth for the first time and think of questions they would have about this planet, which could then be answered visually on paper (Figure 8).

Conclusion

As discussed above, picturebooks offer a variety of opportunities for compelling post-reading activities. Learners can retell classic stories with their own artwork, create books about themselves, make predictions about a story's end, explore a picturebook's theme, reimagine cut-out shapes and patterns, learn about sequencing and story flow, and connect with topics beyond language skills. Letting learners focus their full creativity on projects like these can deepen their engagement with and enjoyment of the picturebook experience.

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Martin Sedaghat is an English instructor and curriculum designer at the Niigata University of Health and Welfare International Preschool. He is currently studying for his TESOL MA through Birmingham University. His research interests include young learners, picturebook usage in the classroom, and game design for young learners.

Robert Taferner

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received *column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.*

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This month's column features Richard Thomas Ingham's review of Unlock Listening and Speaking Skills 2 (2nd Edition) *and Joel Post 's evaluation of* Shape It! It's Your World 1.

Unlock Listening, Speaking & Critical Thinking 2 (2nd Edition)

[Stephanie Diamond-Bayir and Kimberley Russel with Chris Sowton. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp. 223. ¥3,520. ISBN: 978-1-107-68232-0.]

Reviewed by Richard Thomas Ingham, British Council

Unlock Listening and Speaking Skills 2 is an English for academic purposes (EAP) textbook, providing focused skills development for learners within academic contexts. It forms part of a five-level series that has been developed using Cambridge's corpus and provides up-to-date and relevant academic language whilst developing critical thinking skills. The book features accessible unit topics, with each student book enabling access to the Cambridge Learning Management System (LMS). Throughout the textbook, the units begin with a focus on receptive listening skills, progressively moving towards a productive speaking activity at the end of each chapter, for example, a presentation or debate.

Each unit opens with an *Unlock Your Knowledge* section, where students are provided with a picture prompt and a number of questions to promote discussion around the theme of the unit. I use this textbook with freshman students at a foreign language university, and they generally responded to these questions well. However, since the books have not been designed for monolingual classes of Japanese students, it was sometimes necessary to use supplementary material or scaffold the questions to help students discuss the topics in more detail. This first section is followed by the *Watch and Listen* section, featuring a short video and a number of related language exercises that were well received by my learners.

Each unit contains two listening sections that are designed to improve students' listening skills within academic contexts. The first section provides information about the topic and pre-listening, while listening, and post-listening activities. This section includes a useful focus on pronunciation (e.g., linking, vowel sounds), and I often employed these exercises so that Japanese students could practice sounds that they often find problematic (e.g., /ʃ/ and /s/). The following language development section provides practice of the vocabulary and grammar introduced in the first listening section, whilst also pre-teaching the vocabulary and grammar for the remainder of the listening chapter. The second listening section presents a further exercise on the same topic, which serves as a model for the later speaking task. Van de Meer (2012) notes the importance of note-taking skills within academic environments because test performance has been shown to positively correlate with the quality of student notes. I have therefore found the scaffolded note-taking activity included in this section to be useful practice for students who wish to study abroad in academic settings. One note of caution here is that the audio material for both listening sections is often quite long (sometimes in excess of five minutes) and may take up a considerable amount of class time. As such, I would sometimes elect to only play part of the audio in class or assign it for homework.

The next section of the textbook focuses on speaking exercises, with the end goal of a productive speaking task or group activity. These sections begin with a critical thinking component designed around Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956). I

find this particularly useful, as it supports learners in a structured fashion, from lower order thinking skills, such as *understanding*, through to the higher order thinking skills, such as *evaluating* and *creating*, thereby enabling students to analyse information, develop their own ideas, and express themselves effectively. A scaffolded section for the speaker's notes also lends support during this activity, helping to clearly organise ideas and information. In addition, a task checklist reminds students of the target language and key focus of their presentations.

Mezirow (1981) notes the importance of reflection in deeper learning, and each unit ends with an objectives review, which enables students to reflect on how well they have mastered the skills studied. I particularly liked this section, as it provided a pause for students to consider what they have learned before proceeding to the next unit. I would often ask students to complete this section as part of their homework and then compare their ideas as a warm-up activity in the next class.

The textbook is further supplemented by activities included in the LMS. It provides learners with a learning environment in which they can access the book's audio and video files. It also contains extension activities for further language practice and assessment. It is easy to set up, and the automatic grading proved to be a useful timesaving feature. Alternatively, the LMS can also be used for self-study for those who feel they may benefit from additional language practice.

Overall, I have found *Unlock Listening, Speaking and Critical Thinking 2* to be a well-structured, engaging, and easy-to-use textbook for teachers seeking to improve their learners' academic skills.

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Shape It! It's Your World 1

[Claire Thacker, Daniel Vincent, & Melissa Wilson. Cambridge University Press, 2020. (Teacher's books, workbook, project book, and digital resource pack available) p. 144. ¥3,200. ISBN: 9781108847018.]

Reviewed by Joel Post, Junior and Senior High School of Kogakuin University

Shape It! It's Your World is a four-level series of English as a second language (ESL) books for advanced beginners to proficient users (CEFR A1+ - B1+) that aim to improve reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills. Many of the activities and readings are designed around global topics. This highly adaptable set of textbooks is designed for high school students, but it can easily be used at the college level. Our school has been using it at the junior high level with some success. The series makes available a student's book, teacher's book, workbook, project book, and a digital resource pack. The student's book also includes a digital activation code. Teachers can set up a class on the *Cambridge One* online learning platform and have students join to get extra practice and assignments.

Each textbook has 10 chapters (one review/welcome chapter and nine regular chapters). Each regular chapter consists of twelve pages broken down into two introduction pages, two vocabulary, two grammar, a reading, a listening/conversation, and a writing page. The end of each chapter contains a review page that includes a short self-assessment for the students. Each chapter has four to five videos. The grammar videos are particularly helpful as they use teenagers to model how the grammar is regularly used in real life, and there are practice questions at the end to allow the class to try answering together. Alternate chapters include a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) project that encourages the students to use the language topics and phrases learned in the textbook to make projects, often incorporating other subjects (Genesse & Hamayan, 2016). The remaining chapters have an *Around the World* section that has a reading and video to develop cross-cultural awareness. This section has a culture project idea, so there are plenty of

project-based learning (PBL) and peer-instruction learning (PIL) opportunities throughout this series. The book also has many *Learning to Learn* sections that help students develop metacognition and give tips on how to become more efficient language learners (Haukås et al., 2018).

Our school has been using this series in our junior high for the last two years. The series uses a spiral structure as topics get harder throughout the courses, which allows students to revisit grammar that they might not have mastered the first time around. For example, in Unit 7 in the level one book, simple past tense is introduced. This grammar point comes up again in the level two book with a few more nuanced example sentences. This gives lower-level students a chance to reinforce language while maintaining the interests of higher-level students and reinforcing their skills.

Although the organization of the textbooks and the activities are appropriate, a point needs to be raised about the reading sections. The texts are often too advanced for the students or outside the students' previous knowledge. For example, in the first level of Shape It!, there is a chapter that includes vocabulary about towns with beginner vocabulary (e.g., hospital, post office, etc.). The next page contains a 4-paragraph online travel article complete with a few user comments describing a town in Argentina that was abandoned because of flooding, all using advanced vocabulary. Our students found both the content and the reading level difficult to follow. Teachers would do well to supplement the chapters with easier outside readings. Another small criticism is about the writing activity at the end of each chapter: The teacher's edition has a worksheet to help students complete their writing, but the content and structures are often different from what is required for that activity.

The extra practice and assignments on the Cambridge One platform are well-designed and interesting to the students (Stanley, 2013). Each assignment includes approximately ten questions that often have different formats, some being multiple choice, gap-fill, and even listening items. The students can receive medals according to the percentage of correct answers they get. The site allows students to retry sections if students make a mistake, but many of our staff complain that the site does not give the correct answers, even after several attempts. Teachers must find answers in the *Teacher's Resource* section of the site or do the assignment with students to give them the correct answers.

Overall, the Shape It! series is good for teachers and students. Most students said the textbook was manageable, but it was not their textbook of choice. The large visuals and interesting global topics keep the students' attention. The textbooks and digital resources are easy to navigate. The workbook and online resources give students enough opportunities to practice what they have learned in class.

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Recently Received

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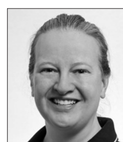

A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers is available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to Julie Kimura at the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison postal address listed on the Staff page on the inside cover of *TLT*.

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Books for Students (reviews published in *TLT*)

Contact: Julie Kimura — jaltpubs.tlt.pub.review@jalt.org

Penguin Readers—Penguin Books, 2019. [Penguin Readers is a series of classics, contemporary fiction, and non-fiction, written for learners of English.]

* *A Christmas carol*—Dickens, C. [Retold by K. Kovacs. Ebenezer Scrooge hates Christmas and is angry that people are not working. He meets the ghost of his former partner. Can Scrooge become a good person before it is too late? Level: 1, CEFR A1.]

* *Private*—Patterson, J., & Paetro, M. [Retold by N. Bullard. Jack Morgan has a company called Private. He helps people. Sometimes. He helps the police, too. Now, Jack's friend is dead and Jack has to find the killer. Level 2, CEFR A1+.]

* *The great Gatsby*—Fitzgerald, F. S. [Retold by A. Collins. Everybody wants to know Jay Gatsby. He is handsome and very rich. He owns a big house and has wonderful parties there. But does anyone really know who he is? Level 3, CEFR A2.]

* *Women who changed the world*—Leather, S. [This graded reader consists of ten chapters on some of the women who have fought to be equal to men as well as their achieve-

ments in education, science, sports, and politics. Level: 4, CEFR A2+.]

* *The spy who came in from the cold*—le Carré, J. [Retold by F. MacKenzie. Alec Leamas, a British spy, is worn out and ready to stop working. But he has to do one last job. His boss wants him to spread false information about an important man in East Germany. Can Alec retire and finally come in from the cold? Level: 6, CEFR: B1+.]

! *Teaching and learning haiku in English*—McMurray, D. The International University of Kagoshima, 2022. [The practice of writing haiku in second language classrooms is demonstrated in this English language education text for students from elementary school through high school. The book provides examples of how students can learn to write English in the classroom, suggests ways to teach haiku in English using information and communication technologies (ICT), and explains how to organize contests by and for students.]

* *What's that you say? Bright ideas for reading, writing, and discussing in the English classroom*—David, J. Nan'un-do, 2023. [This book takes a student-centered approach and provides students with topics and activities designed to foster language learning and practical use. There are 15 units in which students can engage in vocabulary and reading activities, as well as engaging follow-up activities including trivia questions and famous quotations.]

! *Writing a graduation thesis in English: Creating a strong epistemic argument*—Smiley, J. Perceptia Press, 2019. [This book helps students prepare for the main task of their academic careers. Students will develop an understanding of argumentation and develop a robust relationship between self and knowledge. The teacher's guide is available through the publisher's website.]

! *Teaching English in secondary school: A handbook of essentials*—Siegel, J. Studentlitteratur, 2022. [This book provides a summary of the fundamental concepts in the field of second language acquisition. Topics covered include communicative language teaching and the psychology of language learning, as well as the four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This book serves both as an introduction to novice second language instructors and as a reference for practicing teachers.]

[JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE

David McMurray

Graduate students and teaching assistants are invited to submit compositions in the form of a speech, appeal, memoir, essay, conference review, or interview on the policy and practice of language education. Master's and doctoral thesis supervisors are also welcome to contribute or encourage their students to join this vibrant debate. Grounded in the author's reading, practicum, or empirical research, contributions are expected to share an impassioned presentation of opinions in 1,000 words or less. Teaching Assistance is not a peer-reviewed column.

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In this issue of Teaching Assistance, a recently hired teaching assistant from China shares his trials and tribulations coping with large classes and unfamiliar lectures material at a private university in Japan.

How Teaching Assistants Can Prepare You for Undergraduate English Classes

Zheng Yuanhang

The International University of Kagoshima

When I first entered graduate school in Japan, I planned to focus on writing a research paper and defending my thesis during presentations and examinations. However, because I had chosen to major in English education, instructors soon started asking me to observe and take part in undergraduate classes during my first semester. I was hesitant to accept a part-time job as a teaching assistant (TA), but I became intrigued by a job advertisement at my university. The salary was good, the work location was on campus, and the job offer was calling for graduate students who were conversant in English for various 15-week courses including: *Overseas Internship*, *Business English*, and *Japanology*. Interestingly, the Japanology course comprised three lessons of haiku in English. I signed up for all three.

I thought the work would be limited to easy-to-accomplish responsibilities, such as unlocking the classroom doors, setting up the ICT equipment, taking attendance and handing out textbooks. The *Overseas Internship* class was challenging because it was not offered for three years due to pandemic restrictions on travel. The cohort included twenty students, who all wanted to intern at hotels and travel agencies in Taiwan. The travel and hospitality industries have changed quite a bit. There has been a tremendous turnover of staff. Travel agencies and hotels have gone bankrupt, or been sold to new owners. Regional airports that used to have international terminals are currently offering only domestic flights. New online booking technology has replaced conventional methods

for making reservations, so I had to research new flight schedules and discover whether hotels were still in operation. I prepared new handout materials and updated PowerPoint slides. There were fifty students in the Business English class, so I was kept busy with attendance and handing out worksheets. Additionally, I began providing translations for ten Chinese students who were struggling with both English and Japanese languages. Based on the needs of the students, I found myself giving short speeches about pronunciation and debating skills to all the undergraduate students. The Japanology class was even more challenging. I knew poetry from my high school days in China, but I had never encountered haiku before coming to Japan.

To prepare for the first lecture on haiku in the Japanology course, I searched online for the meanings of keywords that the professor would likely be using in class. Japanology is the study of Japan, its language, culture, and history. Haiku in English is a poem written in the form of a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world. Nonetheless, my first TA class went terribly wrong. I did not realize that the classroom would be packed with 180 attendees (Figure 1).

Figure 1

A Daunting First TA Class With 180 Attendees

It was my first time speaking in front of so many people, so I was very nervous at that time and my brain went blank, and I lost my ability to talk for a moment. I struggled to use a microphone to explain the meaning of keywords and to recite a traditional Chinese poem by the poet Li Bai about the moon that I had memorized as an elementary school student. When the class ended, every student handed in a written daily journal (Figure 2). Despite having the option to use electronic software for reports and grading for online classes at the university, the head instructor felt that during face-to-face lessons, getting hand-written notes was more efficient and enhanced communication between students, the teaching assistant, and the head teacher. I was amazed to find that almost every one of the 180 students had written a haiku in English as well as comments about what I had said in the class during the lesson (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Sorting Daily Journals After Each Lesson

To better prepare for the second class, I checked online education journals. According to McCarty (2008), haiku is literature, and it is critiqued in literary journals around the world, such as TESOL Journal, JALT Journal, and TLT. Chen (2013) was a teaching assistant who also wanted to read haiku and learn how to write haiku in English. She suggested teaching assistants turn to a page in Higginson's (1992) *The Haiku Handbook* in which he wrote, "The primary purpose of reading and writing haiku is sharing moments of our lives that have moved us" (p. 7).

Figure 3

At the Chalk Face

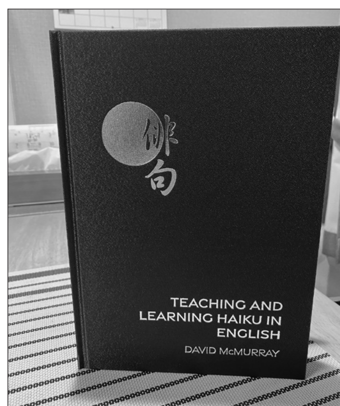
To find a more recent source, I visited the research office of the professor of the class. David McMurray (2022) has written many books on haiku in English, including *Teaching and Learning Haiku in English* (Figure 4). I was informed that I would be called upon to introduce a haiku in the second Japanology class, so I got a copy of his book from the library. I needed to learn how to create a haiku, but I also wanted to learn new writing techniques in the field of literature. The book contains ample sketches, illustrations, and 10 pages of color photographs. I leafed through the chapter on how to teach haiku, with sections for elementary school teachers, for junior high school teachers, for high school teachers, for university teachers, and for company staff, and the chapter on teaching and learning haiku through technology. The book includes plenty of examples of haiku, including:

> the red maple leaf
> returned to the library
> on page 69

On page 69, there is a waxed and pressed maple leaf. According to McLuhan (1964), who is considered to be a prophet of the modern media age, "[I]f you turn to page 69 of any book, read it[,] and like the page, you should buy the book or borrow it from a public library" (p. 8). Based on this prophetic discovery, I decided that this would be the haiku I would read aloud during my second class as a TA.

Figure 4

Textbook Cover



Perhaps the greatest challenge was reading a series of collaborative haiku in my third class. Below are four haiku excerpts from pages 85 to 88 that I was asked to read aloud to the class, one penned for each season and perfectly arranged in a 5-7-5 syllabic structure in both English and Japanese:

> mountains of blossoms basking in morning sunlight the pagoda's tip
> 相輪に 朝日を浴びて 花の山 (*sourin ni asahi wo abite hananoyama*)

> restless to begin the skipper unfurls the sail hazy morning sun
> そそくさと 船長帆あげる 朝曇 (*sosokusa to senchou ho ageru asagumori*)

> first autumn morning sunlight shines bright on the plane wings destined to soar
> 今朝の秋 機は陽光に 翼ゆだね (*kesa no aki ki wa youkou ni yoku yudane*)

> birds the first to see skyscrapers appear through clouds this winter morning
> 冬の朝 先ず鳥が見る 摩天楼 (*fuyu no asa mazu tori ga miru matenrou*)

To help exchange her opinions with her instructor, Chen (2013) kept herself informed on developments in the international haiku community by reading newspapers that regularly printed articles on haiku in English, such as the *Asahi Shimbun*, the *Mainichi*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. The English versions of the Japanese newspapers are no longer in print, so I turned to newspaper websites, such as the *Asahi Digital* (https://www.asahi.com/ajw/special/haiku/) and the *Mainichi Interactive* (mainichi.jp/english/english/features/haiku).

In conclusion, I would like to recommend that graduate students who are thinking about becoming teaching assistants in Japan prepare a lot before entering their first classroom. It helped me to read and understand the content of the lecture the instructor in charge would give. Although there are several approaches to conducting research (e.g., searching for information, paying attention to details, taking notes, etc.), communicating the research results in an easy-to-understand way for undergraduate students is the goal for any teaching assistant. Time management is an essential skill for teachers, especially for lessons in Japan that are only 90-minutes long. Instructors of large classes can easily use up most of that time, so when given the chance to elucidate a key point or to provide a translation, the TA has to think and respond quick-

ly. That can be stressful—Being nervous in front of a classroom is normal, but overcoming the stress of public speaking is the most important thing for TAs. The need to answer students' questions while maintaining a cool and confident composure should not be taken for granted. Communicating with all the students in the class through the use of written daily journals as well as exchanging opinions with the instructor in charge keeps everyone motivated. As a TA, I have learned and expanded my views on advanced levels of study: It is enjoyable to learn new things that I never knew before, such as haiku.

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[JALT PRAXIS] WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Jerry Talandis Jr. & Rich Bailey

The Writers' Workshop is a collaborative endeavour of the JALT Writers' Peer Support Group (PSG). Articles in the column provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for consideration, please contact us.

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Conjectures on the Writing Process From Stephen Krashen

Paul Tanner

Faculty of Economics, Shiga University

Say what you want about Stephen Krashen. He is a lightning rod for criticism and praise. He has a devoted group of followers and is recognized for his work in second language acquisition (SLA), bilingual education, and reading. He has published more than 500 articles and books and is a frequently cited scholar in the field of language education. He has been active in SLA since the 1970s and is still in demand as a conference speaker. On the other hand, he has drawn criticism as long as he has been publishing. McLaughlin (1987), Long (1983), and Swain (1993) have been notable critics.

Still, Krashen is a prolific writer and has explained many techniques for how writers can improve and develop their craft in salient and pragmatic ways. This article explains some of his most useful and practical ideas about writing based on his lectures and published work. He provides a different perspective by describing his own thoughts and experience with the writing process. Krashen (2005) admits some of his ideas should be seen as "conjectures," since they lack empirical evidence. On the other hand, he cites scholarship and research to support them when he can. Read with an open mind—You can benefit from the words and experience of Stephen Krashen.

The Importance of Flexible Planning

Krashen believes that flexible planning is important, particularly in the early stages. He suggests that writers start with a direction or map but should resist being static and unwilling to change. With rigid planning, new ideas become an annoyance rather than an intellectual discovery. Concerning the necessity of change in the writing process, Krashen (2005) cites Elbow (1973) when he claims that "meaning is what you end up with, not what you start out with" (p. 15). Good writers are willing to change their plans as they work. Thus, consideration of the audience ought to be delayed until the paper is nearly finished, rather than overly focusing on meaning before starting (Elbow, 1981; Krashen, 2021). Although there is no empirical research to support this, Krashen suggests starting writing before doing a literature review because it is easier to write when knowing less about a topic, since this helps avoid "research paralysis." Thoughts change as you write, which allows you to arrive at a deeper understanding.

Know When to Deal with Grammar and Form

Krashen (2005) suggests that writers not stop to consider minor details and form while working on ideas and to delay editing until after a draft has been written. As Elbow (1973) advises, "Treat grammar as a matter of very late editorial correcting… Never think about it while you are writing" (p. 137). Lee and Krashen (2002) argue that premature editing and writing blocks are related. For example, excessive concern with form or "correctness" in the drafting or discovery stage can be very disruptive (Krashen, 1993).

Read More to Write Better

Krashen (1993) argues that writing more will lead to better form is a myth, as there is no relationship between quantity and quality of writing. Improved writing form is the result of reading. Those who read more, write better; they spell better, have larger vocabularies, better grammar, and a more acceptable writing style (Krashen 2021, 1993; Smith 1988; Wang 2022). Krashen asserts that we write for ourselves, to clarify and stimulate our thinking. Citing Elbow (1973), Krashen (1993) notes that when we write down ideas, the "vague and abstract become clear and concrete" (p. 31). With thoughts on paper, we see relationships between them and are able to come up with better ones.

The Revision Stage is Key

Following a general consensus, Krashen (2021) also believes that rewriting is core to the composition process. Revision means you are about to learn something new. In the eloquent words of Hemingway (as cited in Samuelson, 1984), "The first draft of anything is shit" (p. 11). Writers come up with new ideas as they write—In the revision stage, they discover problems and solve them. As a result, revision can help writers solve problems and become smarter (Wang, 2022).

The Role of Incubation

Krashen (2021) observes that incubation is an important element in the writing process. This is time spent away from the writing task to provide opportunities for reflection. He suggests writers allot time for writing and incubation. Moments of insight pop into the writer's head while doing other, often mundane, tasks. For him, incubation occurs while he washes the dishes. Creative breakthroughs "come at a time of mental quietude" (Tolle, 1999, p. 20).

Write Regularly

According to Krashen (2021), the real composing process consists of writing, encountering blocks, taking breaks, and solving problems. Inspiration comes from writing, not the opposite. Published authors keep regular hours and have daily writing quotas. Binge writers are not as successful or productive. Good writers believe that writing requires regularity as it promotes incubation between sessions, greater attunement to problems and new ideas, and keeps the writing fresh. When writers do not write regularly, they lose their place and their enthusiasm.

Reread Frequently

Krashen (2005) cites Beach (1976) in mentioning that good writers frequently reread what they have written. It helps keep them in their place and allows them to re-evaluate what they have done and then make improvements. In other words, rereading helps the writer maintain a sense of the entire composition as a "conceptual blueprint."

Avoid Academic Jibberish

Krashen warns against the use of "stylized talk," or "academic jibberish" containing excessive length and overly complex vocabulary (Krashen 2012a; Wang, 2022). This supports the myth that if the text is difficult to understand, it must be profound. This type of writing does not add to research or practice but does impress those with little self-confidence. Jibberish has the effect of deflecting criticism because using it makes it easier to hide. A number of negative consequences come with writing academic jibberish. For one, readers often skip the dense prose, instead jumping to and accepting the conclusion, which gives bad ideas a better chance of surviving. In addition, some good ideas and possibly important results will be lost underneath complex language and ideas. Similarly, Krashen argues that shorter papers are needed. He believes long papers waste readers' time, obscure issues, and lack clarity (Krashen, 2012b).

Conclusion

In offering his thoughts and suggestions on writing, Krashen sometimes follows the norm and recommends conventional practices. He holds that rewriting is at the core of the writing process because it helps solve problems and makes the author smarter. Incubation is also essential because reflection time often leads to insights and creative breakthroughs. Rereading is another core function

as it allows for re-evaluation and keeps the writer on track by avoiding distracting tangents.

In other areas of the writing process, Krashen takes unorthodox positions, which leads to some surprising advice. Although stressing the importance of flexible planning is conventional, he suggests authors not consider the audience until late in the writing stage, which is an uncommon bit of advice. He also encourages writers to avoid editing until late in the process. Additionally, Krashen warns against writing for writing's sake. Reading, rather than writing, is what ultimately helps develop writing form. Although he notes that good writers write regularly, doing so actually promotes incubation between sessions and review, thus making authors more attuned to their work. He believes that writing leads to inspiration and not vice versa. Finally, Krashen warns against academic jibberish, which is needlessly complex prose that obscures the true meaning of an article. The result of this unnecessary complexity is that meaning and quality are lost, fakery is sometimes rewarded, and the unproductive practice perpetuates.

Stephen Krashen is a man of many opinions. Whatever you may feel about his research or his beliefs about reading, there is no doubting the influence his ideas have had on EFL theory. The thoughts of such an influential and prolific author concerning the writing process can help authors rethink their way of writing and provide some creative alternatives to tired constructs.

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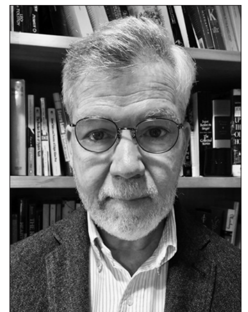

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JALT's Mission

JALT promotes excellence in language learning, teaching, and research by providing opportunities for those involved in language education to meet, share, and collaborate.

使命（ミッション・ステートメント）全国語学教育学会は言語教育関係者が交流・共有・協働する機会を提供し、言語学習、教育、及び調査研究の発展に寄与します。

ARTICLES | JALT PRAXIS • WRITERS' WORKSHOP | JALT FOCUS

Michael Phillips

Collaboration, in all its forms, is a cornerstone of JALT activities and the same goes for SIGs. JALT currently has 30 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of what these groups believe and do. Past SIG Focus *columns are available at* https://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news • Email: jaltpubs.tlt.sig.focus@jalt.org

The Testing and Evaluation SIG

Nathaniel Carney

Coordinator (2020-2022)

The Testing and Evaluation (TEVAL) SIG was founded in 1996, and our ongoing mission is to be a community of language educators dedicated to sharing ideas, resources, and opportunities related to our field in Japan. At TEVAL, we share an interest in related topics and issues that every language teacher is engaged in at some point in their careers. Testing and evaluation can evoke images of large-scale multiple-choice tests and the quantitative analysis that contributes to their design and interpretation. However, we are interested in all types of evaluation that pertain to language teaching, from those large-scale, high-stake tests, to small-scale classroom quizzes, and to those questions about how we might evaluate and assess learners' language skills in a fair and practical way.

TEVAL Newsletter

One of our enduring SIG activities is publishing our biannual online journal called *Shiken* (https://hosted.jalt.org/teval/node/9). *Shiken* has been published since 1997 and continues to represent a quality publication for those researching and publishing in our field in Japan. David Allen of Ochanomizu University is the current *Shiken* editor and TEVAL Publication Chair, a position he has held since 2019. Allen (2020) has written an excellent overview of *Shiken*'s history and his hopes for its future, noting some unique aspects of the publication including the many published interviews with widely known, international scholars of language testing and education. Further, J. D. Brown's *Statistics Corner* Column appeared in every issue of *Shiken* from its inception until 2019. Recently, TEVAL published a compilation of Brown's columns as a book (*Statistics Corner: Questions and Answers About Language Testing Statistics*) which is presented to each new member when they join the SIG.

Aside from these, each issue of *Shiken* includes full-length peer-reviewed research articles that are also indexed in Google Scholar, making them easier to find. Since 2020, articles also have had individual DOIs. We encourage both early-stage and established scholars to consider publishing their work with *Shiken*. Details for submitting articles appear at the end of each issue, and all are downloadable from our newsletter's website (https://hosted.jalt.org/teval/node/9).

Other Activities

Prior to the pandemic, TEVAL was well-engaged with the national and international testing and evaluation communities, sponsoring talks by scholars, maintaining liaison with other like-minded organizations, and sponsoring forums and regional conferences in Japan. After the pandemic hit, it became more challenging to organize events, leading our officers to seek new ways to support members and continue building our community.

One such way has been sponsoring or participating in PanSIG TEVAL Forums. In 2021, for example, David Allen organized and participated in a forum, *The Use of Four-skills English Exams for University Entrance Admission in Japan*, along with Tatsuro Tahara and Kingo Shiratori. And, for the JALT 2022 conference, Officer at-large (and former Publication Chair) Trevor Holster presented a forum titled "An Introduction to Test Item Analysis Using jMetrik."

Collaboration with other SIGs and chapters has also been very important to us, so we were quite happy to co-sponsor an online presentation by Jerry Talandis Jr., with JALT Gunma, in August. The presentation was well-received with an attendance of around 50 people. Based on this, we welcome future opportunities to collaborate and cooperate with other JALT SIGs and chapters.

Two new initiatives taken by TEVAL during the course of the pandemic have been the creation of new grants and a monthly, online get-together. The grants include research and conference grants, both

of which have deadlines of March 1, 2023. Further details can be found on the TEVAL website (https://hosted.jalt.org/teval/node/108). Further, monthly get-togethers, known as TEVAL Talk Time, usually occur on weekday evenings and are an opportunity for members to meet on Zoom to discuss their current projects, ideas, or interests in an informal setting.

As TEVAL continues into the future, we maintain our core interests in giving value back to our members and being the default community for the discussion of testing and evaluation issues in English for language teachers in Japan. We always welcome communication from members and non-members alike, so feel free to send us an email (teval@jalt.org) or to join us online so that we can share our interests in testing and evaluation together.

Reference

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JALT Community

Meetings and conferences sponsored by local chapters and special interest groups (SIGs) are held throughout Japan. Presentation and research areas include:

Bilingualism • CALL • College and university education • Cooperative learning • Gender awareness in language education • Global issues in language education • Japanese as a second language • Learner autonomy • Pragmatics, pronunciation, second language acquisition • Teaching children • Lifelong language learning • Testing and evaluation • Materials development

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- AJET—The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching
- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—The Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Societies
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. *The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal* 等の出版物が1年間送付されます。また例会や大会に割引価格で参加できます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥13,000
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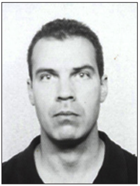

Scott Gardner *jaltpubs.tlt.old.gram@jalt.org*

Game Night at the Sarcast-o-drome

Well, the soccer (aka football) World Cup is over. And what a thrilling tournament it was! The eyes of the world, all focused on those sprightly, victorious lads from (*Dear Ed., please insert winning soccer country here, thx)*! Weren't they terrific? Watching the matches at home on TV was so exciting, it left a pool of adrenalin on my sofa. My three cats won't go anywhere near it.

Actually, I'm not much of a sports spectator. It's difficult for me to spend two to three hours focusing on uniformed runners/jumpers/throwers thrashing wildly about inside massive, floodlit, human corrals. Seeing the players battling over their artificial objectives, following their contrived rules, I get self-conscious, particularly when a "significant" occurrence happens and everyone in the stands starts cheering over what seems to me—in the larger scheme of things—an ultimately pointless achievement. I start to wonder: If we are so easily caught up in the ecstasy of these elaborately invented games, what are the chances that all of us are in fact merely taking part in a giant, life-spanning team sport, maneuvering around in our more-or-less hedged off spaces of the spaces of the world? What if we are engaging in what seem to us like meaningful actions with—and against—hundreds of other players—actions that might or might not be adding points to a metaphysical scoreboard somewhere? If so, is my team winning? Is the game an important one, or is it just a friendly with no consequences for the season? Is it halftime yet? Should I be wearing my mouthguard?

I realize I'm hugely overthinking what is really nothing more than a bit of fun among disturbingly rule-driven and competitive people. Still, I find that if I'm going to enjoy a "sport" of some kind, it has to be more simply designed, more rooted in reality. As a child, one of the few sports I remember going crazy over—apart from our neighborhood cream soda snorting contests—was Olympic skiing. It's hard to imagine a more straightforward contest than athletes sliding down an icy hill as fast as they can. No role divisions, no tag teams, no "offsides" or "zone defense." Skiing is one person in a primal struggle against two forces far greater than her or himself: a mountain and gravity. (Maybe I should add a third force: subzero temperatures.)

Of course, if you wanted to, you could tear down my "skiing is simple" argument by pointing out the technically advanced equipment (boots, skis) on the athletes' feet, or the artificial obstacles (slalom markers, moguls) strategically placed on the run. But it still seems like a purer endeavor to me. It's purer for the spectators as well. Skiing events don't provide air-conditioned, roof-of-the-stadium suites with complimentary binoculars and open bars serving people dressed like they're at the opera, who pay only scant attention to what's happening on the field and instead talk about how much they are going to ask in trade next year for their all-star striker. Skiing spectators have to stand out in the cold getting runny noses and frostbite just like the athletes do. They experience the essence of skiing even if they themselves are not racing down the slope. And if they're lucky, they can be recipients of the "victory wave," when a skier makes a well-sliced final turn and shoots an arc of snow into the crowd.

Skiing is an egalitarian sport. Everyone doing it basically does the same thing. Soccer, on the other hand, is so large and complex that players have to specialize; two players on the same team may have roles almost completely alien to each other. A midfielder back passing to his own goalie might even have to make an appointment first! Imagine, though, if in the name of "teamwork," other sports decided to create team versions of themselves: synchronized weightlifting! (Would they choreograph their pre-lift hand chalking ritual?) Golfball! ("What position do you play on the golfball team?" "Second string left sand trapper.") Team sumo! ("OK, Taro, you go deep and cover Hakubo in the west dohyō. And watch for the fake!")

These are just a few observations I have made about sports from my aforementioned spot on the sofa. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go play some three-on-one fuzzball with the cats.

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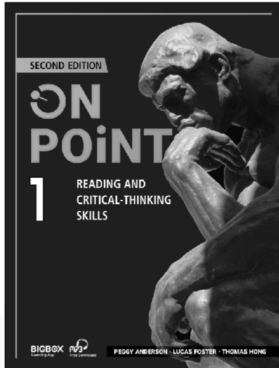

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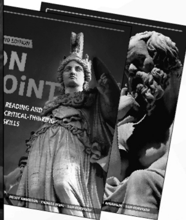

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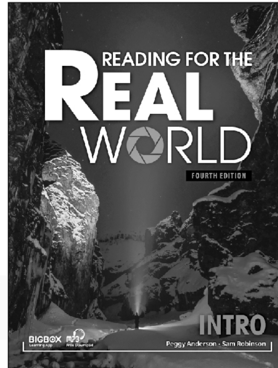
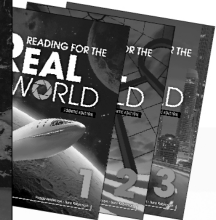
Downloadable Materials:



RRW 4e preview QR



LEVEL B2 - C1 Upper intermediate - Advanced

RRW 4e is a four-level series designed for intermediate to advanced English learners looking to improve their academic reading fluency and comprehension.

Features:

- Introduces students to social, historical, and trendy topics discussed
- Main passages cover both fiction and nonfiction reading types
- Paired chapters provide better practice of all four language skills
- Summary activities and graphic organizers for helping students understand passages better
- Interactive application for extra practice

Downloadable Materials:

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