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Reflective Writing on Learner Development: Introduction
学習者ディベロプメントに関する省察的ライティング：序論

This special issue of *Learning Learning* brings together nine short reflective articles by authors who presented at the Learner Development Forum on *Learner Transformation as Personal Maturation* at JALT2016 in November last year or at the informal afternoon conference *Creating Community: Learning Together 3* (CCLT3) held in December 2016 in Tokyo. Presenters were invited to write reflectively about their learner development work and research within about 2,500 words. Over three or four drafts a small team of editors worked in pairs with each writer on the reflective quality of their writing, encouraging writers to develop a personal voice, consider different perspectives on the topics explored, and take a questioning stance. Once finalised, a writer's article was shared with two reader responders who each wrote a response of approximately 500 words, connecting themes, contradictions, questions to their own learning, teaching, or research, and exploring relevant wider questions and puzzles to do with learner development. In this introduction, as the co-editors of this special issue, we look back at how we worked with the contributors to develop the reflective dimension of their writing. We also consider how our understandings of reflective writing about learner development changed through taking part in this project.

Before focusing on our approach to co-editing this special issue, we would like to share with you a story about the struggles and pressures that many people experience in writing and presenting about learner development issues.

> *A colleague was recently talking with one of us about writing about research and reflective writing. She mentioned she has a block about "academic writing" in general because it feels distant from her and from her interests as a teacher and as an "aficionado of learner development"—or teacher-learner focused on her students' development. She finds it hard to write "academically," but she is passionate about teaching and full of insights that she gains from talking with others about her students, their development, and how she is learning and also developing her practices as a teacher.*
>
> *The colleague connected our discussion to how she has been changing her way of presenting about learner development issues in the last couple of years. At first her presentations were very linear and had a uni-direction, expressing a certain view of what she was presenting about. She then tried to bring in learner voices and learner perspectives to her presentations, so that she started representing the learner development issue from different perspectives—not just a single perspective as "teacher." Next she noticed various themes and issues interconnecting, but these could be interpreted from a range of perspectives, according to the "subject positions" that she introduced in her presentations and in her writing—herself as a teacher, as a researcher, as a learner, as a writer (who had been negatively evaluated in the past), as an activist (committed to social justice), and so on. She could also see different positions for her learners—as her students, as learners with histories of being educated in particular ways, as young women, as future citizens, as future productive members of society, and so on ...*

This story made us aware of how thinking about learner development necessarily involves interdependence and mediation. Writing reflectively about learner development puzzles and issues may be closely linked to seeing anew one's own and others' experience, activity, interactions, ideological assumptions and positions, within different social worlds, systems, and arrangements of power. The story also lets us appreciate why it is helpful to

read and respond to writers' texts by moving to and fro between different "subject" positions so that we can discover new discursive spaces and reach deeper, more critical understandings.

In deciding to work on this project together, we each had different histories and perspectives about editing and responding to writers. These included:

> **Andy:** *Having worked on the previous special issue of Learning Learning, I felt it was a shame that the co-editors hadn't talked more together as a group about what we were doing at the time. For different reasons, we had all been unusually busy, which restricted the opportunities for us to reflect on together what we did as editors. I wanted to develop further my understanding of responding to writers, so I thought that it would be good to aim, from the beginning, to develop a more explicit and interactive community of practice together with my co-editors.*
>
> **Dominic:** *All too often in engaging with research, we only ever read the finished product. One of my goals in joining the other editors was to get a better insight into the processes that go into writing and thinking about learner development. Interacting with the writers and getting their responses helped me understand and appreciate how writing and editing is such a useful part of knowledge construction. Obviously, working online with writers and editors who have busy working lives presents some challenges to building up an ideal community of practice, but I think we have to be realistic about it. For me, the story above of a colleague struggling with writing "academically" encapsulates that idea—accepting some imperfections and including a variety of voices often produces better results.*
>
> **Sean:** *There were two reasons why I decided to take the plunge into the editing pool. First, I felt that I could learn a great deal from my more experienced co-editors and get a behind the scenes look at how the editorial process for an English language teaching publication actually works. Next, I thought it would be insightful to examine accounts from front-line educators and this could help me enhance the learner development in my own teaching context.*
>
> **Trevor:** *As someone relatively new to the field of research and reflective teaching, co-editing presented me a wonderful opportunity of seeing how other teachers fleshed out their classroom experiences and problems into a reflective piece. It was like being able to meet (virtually) with other teachers around the country who were in very different situations from my own, listen to what they considered very important to them professionally, and then help them to draw conclusions from their thoughts.*

At the start of working together, we used some simple guidelines that Arnold, Barfield, Murakami and Stewart (2016) developed while working on the previous special issue of *Learning Learning*. We initially thought that we should aim to encourage writers to try to make their articles include:

- the author's personal voice
- some sense of learning - both the students' and the author's
- a clear picture of the context in which the topic is explored
- an effort to understand the question/puzzle/issue from alternative perspectives
- a clear interest value (Does the article catch the reader's interest or not? Why?)

- a clear sense of audience (Does the article have a clear sense of audience, i.e., peers interested in learner development issues?)

We also agreed that writing reflectively might involve authors in raising (interesting and relevant) questions. For example, does the article interpret, problematize, or take a questioning stance about the learner development issue(s) it focuses on, rather than tending to be descriptive and distant? We were moreover concerned with guiding writers, in the closing part of their articles, to draw out key themes and pose new questions. This would, we believed, help to engender dialogue with the reader responders and the imagined readers of this special issue.

From the outset, we decided to work in pairs on writers' drafts and restrict our initial feedback to content and structure. On early drafts we would each try to limit our comments to three or four so that writers would be able to focus on particular areas of development in their writing. This limitation also enabled us as co-editors to learn from each other as we interacted with different writers. Following these guidelines, from February to May 2017, we corresponded with the writers, responding to their drafts and raising questions for them to consider.

Eight of the articles in this special issue of *Learning Learning* include two reader responses that take up issues of interest presented by a particular writer, including the development of learner autonomy through taking part in social networks, and an inquiry into how learner emotion impacts the development of communicative competence. The ninth article involves a written discussion about doing action research into learner autonomy and learner development. The interactive structuring of each article creates, we believe, a dialogic quality as well as a sense of shared exploration and questioning between writers and readers around specific learner development issues.

The first four articles come from the LD Forum at JALT2016, which had the theme of *Learner Transformation as Personal Maturation*. In the first article Yoshio Nakai (*reader responders*: Yukari Rutson-Griffiths and Huw Davies) explores how a Korean learner of Japanese develops learner autonomy and voice through taking part in social networks and constructing different situated identities for himself. In the following article Jim Ronald (*reader responders*: Elisa Acosta and Sarah Morikawa) reports on a project in which students learn about pragmatics, choose and teach a pragmatics topic to their peers, and reflect on their experiences, including the challenge of teaching itself. The third article by Hideo Kojima (*reader responders*: Shinobu Nakamura and Dominic Edsall) explores the possibilities for helping first-year English majors to develop their intercultural understanding through active learning in a flipped classroom. This is followed by Agnes Patko's (*reader responders*: Farrah Hasnain and Adrian Wagner) reflective account of setting up a bilingual correspondence project in which her students corresponded with students studying Japanese at a university in Hungary.

The next five articles bring together work by presenters at *Creating Community: Learning Together 3* (CCLT3). Nicole Gallagher (*reader responders*: Lee Arnold and Blair Barr) looks at learner emotion in a topic-based discussion class to explore the relationship between emotional awareness and communicative competence—and the role of empathy in the development of an emotional communicative competence. In the following article Koki Tomita (*reader responders*: Peter Joun and Sean Toland) reflects on an action research project that he carried out to address the challenges of teaching an English course for sports students. Reporting on an exploratory research project, Alex Shaitan (*reader responders*: Peter Collins and Martin Cater) then looks closely at different ways of providing feedback to student writers based on their needs, learning styles, preferences, and abilities. In the next

article Satchie Haga (*reader responders*: Maho Sano and Trevor Raichura) critically re-examines her own cultural ideological assumptions in relation to her students' worldviews and cultural expectations as she re-thinks how to promote learner intercultural communicative competence in English. This brings us to the final article, a reflective discussion by Tokiko Hori and Andrew Tweed about their experiences with action research (AR) and applying AR in order to understand and promote learner autonomy and development better.

Looking back in this introduction at our collaboration with different writers leads us to identify certain challenges that we faced and to recognize different insights that we came to over time.

> **Trevor:** *For me it was a challenge to think of the article completely from the writer's perspective, and then strike a balance between encouraging them to expand on what they had already explored, and challenging them to look at their reflections from different angles.*
>
> **Sean:** *Responding reflectively to a writer's work is definitely something that is much more difficult than it initially appears. Working with different authors and witnessing their ability to draw out more focused reflections from the first draft to the final product was truly inspiring.*
>
> **Dominic:** *Self-reflection is difficult enough, but responding reflectively to another person's writing is even more difficult. However, working together with the authors, it was really possible to sense the idea of writing as shared knowledge creation. I really appreciate the opportunity to have had this dialogue with the authors and know my own knowledge has increased as a result.*
>
> **Andy:** *I was intrigued by how we read the same drafts in different ways and came to make quite distinct comments to the same writer. This helped me question why we each made the comments that we did. I found on several occasions that if, early on in an article, a writer raises questions or uncertainties in a personal voice about what he or she is looking at, the rest of the article often has an intuitive flow in the way that it develops. I noticed that I tended to encourage some contributors to "narrativize" more in different places in their articles. In what different ways do teacher-researchers use narratives to reflect about learner development issues? How do we read such narratives? Why?*

Once the main articles were more or less completed, the next part in the editorial process was to provide some minimum guidance for the reader responders. We suggested they might see their reader response as an opportunity to connect themes, contradictions, questions from the short reflective article to themselves and their learning, teaching, or research. They might:

- use the opening few lines of their response to set up and structure what they will cover;
- make connections to their own work and experiences to do with learner development;
- "reflect away" from the writer's text to bring in other wider and sometimes unexpected perspectives;
- raise questions or identify issues to do with a particular concern about learner development or learner autonomy;
- focus on further (learner development?) puzzles for exploration.

The reader responders were invited to experiment and see what worked for their own reader response each time. Including reader responses has enabled a large number of SIG members to participate in this special issue who did not present at the Learner Development Forum or CCLT3 and who joined the Learner Development SIG in 2016.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the writers in this special issue for creating together a rich reflective and dialogic dimension across the whole collection. We also wish to learn from the Japanese editorial and translation team about their perspectives on this special issue:

> **Chika:** *The translation team (Yoko Sakurai, Yoshio Nakai, Koki Tomita, Tokiko Hori, and Chika Hayashi) were collaboratively involved in the developmental process of this special issue, and this created a community of learning for us also. Perhaps most teachers (especially Japanese teachers?) hesitate to share their personal experiences, feelings, and the problems they face. I have to admit that I myself was one of those teachers for a long time, but my turning point was 2012 when I engaged in a collaborative reflective dialogue with two other writers, Guy Modica and Yukiko Banno (Hayashi, Modica, & Banno, 2014). This empowered me and enabled me to reflect on the environment where I was born and raised, and the encounters I had had with various learners and teachers. I came to consider how all of them were interrelated and had affected me as a person, as well as a learner and teacher. Through that dialogic interaction, I embarked on a journey to trace my roots to my profession, as did Guy and Yukiko (I hope). Likewise, I believe the reflective dialogic structuring of this special issue, including the way the translation team has worked, has encouraged contributors not only to explore issues of learner development, but also to realise the importance of collaborating and developing new insights into our ongoing personal and professional development.*

We opened this introduction with the story of a Learner Development SIG member who struggles with academic writing. We described her as "passionate about teaching and full of insights that she gains from talking with others about her students, their development, and how she is learning and also developing her practices as a teacher." We could re-read that person's story as one of multi-engagement with learner development issues through dialogue, reflection, and writing. Similarly, from thinking over the multiple co-constructions of understanding that this special issue involves, we move again from narrative to inquiry and end by asking: *In what ways do these short reflective articles and reader responses, and the format that this issue takes, spark you to reflect, talk, and/or write about what you are learning in your own teaching and what your learners are doing in their learning? Why?*

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Learning Learning

Our pre-publication deadline for putting together *Learning Learning 24*(3), the pre-conference issue, is 30 September. LL24(3) provides PanSIG 2017, JALTCALL 2017 and JALT International 2017 presenters a great opportunity to share their research and practice with members unable to attend this year's conferences. We also invite reflective articles from conference participants. What presentations made an impact on your understanding of learner development? Why? Did you return home with new ideas, puzzles, or research questions?

For more information, please see http://ld-sig.org/information-for-contributors/ or contact us at learninglearning.editor@gmail.com.
Many thanks and we look forward to working with you!

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ABSTRACTS 要旨

How Can I Be Myself? The Life Story of a Language Learner from Korea

韓国人留学生のライフストーリーに見る日本語話者としての私探し

Yoshio Nakai 中井　好男

Reader Responses by Yukari Rutson-Griffiths and Huw Davies

Abstract

In this short paper, I discuss from an ecological perspective the learner autonomy of a Korean overseas student, "Kim," learning Japanese at a university in Japan and navigating his social world and identity in Japanese. I analyze the development of Kim's learner autonomy holistically and contextually (Aoki, 2009) by using a life story interview approach. The research reveals how Kim's learning experiences and knowledge of Japanese impede his social interactions and constrain his sense of self. It also illuminates his struggle to find a way to become "his true self" as a Japanese language user. Kim's learner autonomy story can be seen as an account of acquiring his own voice (Bakhtin, 1986) in his construction of social networks and identities (Riley, 2007). This ultimately enables Kim to adapt and achieve his own intentions and purposes, subject to the restrictions of social context that he faces.

要旨

本稿では、言語生態学の観点から、日本の大学で学ぶ韓国人留学生のキムさん（仮名）の第二言語社会と第二言語アイデンティティの構築を方向付ける学習者オートノミーについて考察する。分析にはライフストーリーインタビューを用い、学習者オートノミーを歴史や文脈の中に位置付け(Aoki, 2009)、その変遷について考察を行った。キムさんの学習に関するライフストーリーには、キムさんの学習経験や日本語に関する知識が日本語でのインターアクションと彼らしさの表出の妨げになっていること、そして、日本語使用者としてのキムさんが「本当の私」を構築していく際の苦悩が描き出された。このストーリーは、社会的ネットワークと社会的アイデンティティ(Riley, 2007)の構築をもたらす「声」(Bakhtin,1986)の獲得の過程を示しており、学習者オートノミーは、彼が直面する社会的文脈からの制約への適応とともに、その環境下で彼自身の意図や目的の達成を可能にしていることが明らかになった。

Keywords: learner autonomy, voice, social network, social identity, ecological perspective, complex adaptive system

学習者オートノミー、声、社会的ネットワーク、社会的アイデンティティ、言語生態学、複雑適応系

Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Pragmatics Instruction by Students

教えることを学ぶ、学ぶために教える - 学生による語用論教育 -

Jim Ronald ジム・ロナルド

Reader Responses by Elisa Acosta and Sarah Morikawa

Abstract

This paper is a report of a near-peer pragmatics teaching project and the creation and presenting of the poster through which the project was introduced. It is also a report of student and teacher reflections on the project. Further, it is a report of the roles the poster has played in introducing the project to students and in facilitating teacher reflection concerning both the project and the teaching of pragmatics as part of English speaking classes. Finally, this paper is a reflection on the value of written teacher and student reflections to challenge our own beliefs about language teaching and, consequently, to impact that teaching itself.

要旨

本論文は、英語スピーキングクラスで学年の異なる学生がお互いに語用論を教えあうプロジェクトおよびそのプロジェクトに関する学生と教師の振り返りに関する報告である。このプロジェクトを通して学生・教師が行ったポスタ制作が、学生にプロジェクトを紹介し、またプロジェクトやスピーキングクラスで語用論を教えることに対する教師の考えをまとめるのに役立った。また学生や教員の振り返りを文字化することが語学教育に関する我々のビリーフ、また教育そのものに影響を与えるかについて論じる。

Keywords: reflection, pragmatics, learner development, teacher development, peer teaching
リフレクション、語用論、学習者ディベロプメント、教員ディベロプメント、ピアティーチング

Promoting English-Major Students' Intercultural Understanding through Active Learning

英語専修生の異文化理解を深めるアクティブ・ラーニング

Hideo Kojima 小嶋　英夫

Reader Responses by Shinobu Nakamura and Dominic Edsall

Abstract

Today, many teachers in Japan are involved in education reforms promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) which, taking 21st century skills and competencies into account, encourage teachers to develop students' generic skills as well as their subject knowledge and skills through Active Learning (AL). In this article, I report on a study where I aimed to examine to what extent I could help my first-year English majors to develop their intercultural understanding through AL in a flipped classroom. The students, who would like to become primary or secondary school English language teachers after graduation, continued to learn autonomously and collaboratively in an Introduction to Intercultural Understanding class. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, I found that they tended to raise their intercultural and professional consciousness as teacher learners. Reflecting on this study, I conclude that we need to promote innovation in teacher education, critically exploring different issues around AL and learner autonomy.

要旨

今日、21 世紀型スキルやコンピタンシーを意識した文部科学省主導の教育改革が進展し、これに関わる多くの日本人教員が、アクティブ・ラーニング(AL)を通して、教科の知識・スキルと同様に学習者の汎用的スキルを育むことを奨励されている。本稿では、教育学部英語専修の 1 年生を対象とする「異文化理解概論」の授業で、反転学習を含む AL を通して本研究者がどの程度受講者の異文化理解を深めることができたか、を研究の目的とする。大学卒業後に小・中・高の英語教員になることを志望する専修生たちは、自律的・協働的に学び続けた結果、ティーチャー・ラーナーとして異文化理解や教職専門性への意識を高める傾向が、量的・質的データの分析により認められた。本研究を振り返って、AL や学習者オートノミーに関する様々な問題点をクリティカルに探りつつ教師教育の刷新を図ることが必要である、と結論づけられる。

Keywords: Active Learning, intercultural understanding, flipped learning, teacher-learner autonomy, teacher education
アクティブ・ラーニング、異文化理解、反転学習、ティーチャー・ラーナー・オートノミー、教師教育

Learning Together across Borders: Correspondence between Hungarian and Japanese Learners of English

国境を超え共に学ぶ - ハンガリー人と日本人英語学習者の文通-

Agnes Patko アグネス・パトコー

Reader Responses by Farrah Hasnain and Adrian Wagner

Abstract

Many foreign language learners I have met in Japan feel they do not have enough opportunities to practice English. They often do not like to read and write in the target language. Although learners would like to improve their communication skills, a great number of learners are afraid to speak because they are anxious about their mistakes. As a result, they lack confidence. I targeted the above challenges by setting up a bilingual correspondence project in which my students could experience authentic communication in English and act as native speakers. Corresponding with a foreign student of the same age was interesting and motivating to my students. In addition to improving their English, my students gained confidence and started to form a more positive opinion about their own language learning.

要旨

日本では英語を使う機会が少ないと感じる外国語学習者は多いように思われる。英語での読書や文章を書くことが好きではない人も少なくない。コミュニケーション能力をより高めたいが、間違えることが怖いためになかなか話せないという学習者も多い。これらの課題を踏まえて２言語使用の文通プロジェクトを立ち上げた。結果、プロジェクトの参加者は英語で確実なコミュニケーションを取り、母語話者のように振る舞うことができた。また、プロジェクトを通して語学能力向上だけでなく、自信をつけ、自分の外国語学習についてより肯定的な意見を持つこともできるようになった。

Keywords: language exchange, bilingual correspondence, writing skills, authentic communication

ランゲージエクスチェーンジ、２言語使用の文通、ライティングスキル、確実なコミュニケーション

Emotion and Communicative Competence in English Discussion Class

英語ディスカッションクラスにおける感情とコミュニケーション能力

Nicole Gallagher 二コール・ギャラガー

Reader Responses by Lee Arnold and Blair Barr

Abstract

Drawing on discussions I had with participants during my *Creating Community: Learning Together 3* poster presentation, in this short reflective article I reflect on the role that emotion plays in classroom language learning and use. I begin by describing how the emotional dimension of learning has informed my approach to teaching a university English discussion class. In order to improve my own understanding of emotion in learner development, I then inquire whether there is a relationship between emotional awareness and communicative competence, and, assuming there is, how empathy might play a role in the development of such an emotional communicative competence. I conclude by looking at how engaging in these extended reflections has served as a catalyst for me to think about aspects of emotion in language learning more deeply, and has led me to identify areas to explore further in future classroom research.

要旨

本稿は、Creating Community: Learning Together 3 のポスターセッションで参加者と共に行ったディスカッションから、教室における語学の学習、使用の中で感情が果たす役割についての振

返りをまとめたものである。まず、大学の英語ディスカッションクラスで授業を行うにあたり、学習において感情という側面をどのように自分のアプローチに含めていくかについて説明する。次に、学習者の成長における感情に関する理解を深めるために、感情のアウェアネスとコミュニケーション能力との関連性があるのかどうか、また、それらの関連がある場合、共感が感情的コミュニケーション能力の発達においてどのような役割を果たすのかについて検討する。最後に、この振り返りにおける取組みが、語学学習における感情の側面について理解の深化と今後の授業研究で探求していくべき分野の特定に寄与したことを述べ、本稿のまとめとしている。

Keywords: emotion, empathy, communicative competence, oral discussion, classroom research
感情、共感、コミュニケーション能力、英語ディスカッション, 授業研究

Why Don't They Listen to You? Teaching Sports Students and Challenges in Classroom Management

どうして学生は聞かないのか？スポーツ学生と授業経営

Koki Tomita 冨田 浩起
Reader Responses by Peter Joun and Sean Toland

Abstract

This article highlights the challenges in class management that emerged while teaching an English course for sports students at a university in Tokyo. When major classroom management issues rose to the surface, the author conducted action research to analyze the causes of the conflicts that he was facing. Four consecutive lessons were videotaped for analysis. Carefully examining the videotaped lessons, the author determined possible causes of the classroom management issues and re-thought the pro-learner autonomy approach that he had been trying to follow. After making changes to the way he taught the course, the author tried to gauge the impact of the modifications on himself and the students in the course. The article includes reflection on these questions, as well as discussions shared at *Creating Community: Learning Together 3*, particularly with respect to scaffolding learner autonomy over time and the need for greater educational support for university sports students.

要旨

この論文では、「スポーツ学生のための英語」を指導する中で起こったクラス経営に関する問題を取り上げる。問題の表面化に伴い、アクションリサーチを用いてクラス経営に関する問題の原因が調査された。調査を行っていく中で、4 回の授業がビデオ録画され分析された。ビデオ録画された授業を詳しく調査した結果、クラス経営に関する問題の根幹が、教員の指示の出し方、授業内容にあることが明らかになった。問題の解決方法として、指示の出し方の変更や授業内容の簡易化などの教育的介入を用い、その効果が調べられた。最後に、Creating Community: Learning Together 3 において交換されたリメディアル教育に関する教育現場の意見のうち、特に学生の自律性向上に必要な足かけ、およびスポーツ学生に対する教育的支援などが紹介される。

Keywords: remedial education, learner autonomy, action research, English for Specific Purposes, class management
リメディアル教育, 自律性, アクションリサーチ, 目的別英語, クラス経営

Academic Writing: In Search of Effective Ways of Providing Students with Constructive Feedback

アカデミックライティング：建設的フィードバックの効果的な方法を求めて

Alexandra Shaitan アレキサンドラ・シャイタン

Reader Responses by Peter Collins and Martin A. Cater

Abstract

In this short reflective article, I explore the issue of teaching academic writing skills at a university in the Kanto area of Japan. In particular, the article focuses on different means and modes of constructive feedback I deployed while teaching an academic writing course to second-year university students. Further, I will briefly describe what problems I encountered and how I tried to address them by exploring different ways of providing feedback to students based on their needs, learning styles/preferences and abilities.

要旨

本論では日本の大学生を対象にしたアカデミックライティング指導における問題点を取り上げ、大学２年生のライティング指導実践を踏まえた建設的なフィードバック方法に関して考察する。さらに、学生のニーズ、学習スタイル・好み、能力に応じた建設的なフィードバックの方法とその導入方法も紹介する。

Keywords: exploratory practice, academic writing, feedback, student-teacher conferencing
探究的実践、アカデミックライティング、フィードバック、学生-教師間のセッション

Uncovering Teacher Assumptions and Developing Intercultural Communication through Heightened Local Culture Sensitivity

教師の思い込みの発見と現地文化に対する文化的感受性を 高めることによる異文化間コミュニケーションの促進

Satchie Haga サチエ・ハガ

Reader Responses by Maho Sano and Trevor Raichura

Abstract

The recent official shift towards communicative approaches in English education may be seen as favouring popular pedagogies such as active learning, task-based discussions, and debate. In so far as these pedagogies embody Western linguistic and ideological beliefs, they may sometimes be applied to EFL classrooms without teachers deeply considering students' local cultural and communicative practices. In this short reflective article the author questions her "Western" teaching practices and re-examines them in relation to typical stumbling blocks that constrain intercultural communication. She then explores differences between her own cultural ideological assumptions and her students' worldviews and cultural expectations. In the final part of the article the author provides some practical suggestions about how to recognize local values and teach intercultural differences in order to promote students' intercultural communicative competence in English.

要旨

文部科学省主導による日本の英語教育は、近年コミュニカティブ・アプローチへ移行しており, アクティブラーニングやタスクを中心としたディスカッション,さらにはディベートといった教授法が好まれる傾向にある。これらの教授法は, 欧米の言語やイデオロギーを具体化したものであり、英語教育が行われている現地の学生の文化やコミュニケーションにおける慣習を深く考慮することなく EFL の授業で用いられていることがある。本稿では, 異文化間コミュニケーションの妨げとなる典型的な障害という点から, 自身の「西洋的な」教授法に疑問を投げかけ, 再検討する。加えて, 自身の文化的イデオロギーにもとづく思い込みと, 学生の世界認識や文化的期待との間における違いについて考察する。最後に, 学生の異文化間コミュニケ

ーション能力を養うため, どのように現地の価値観を認め, 文化間の違いを指導するかという実用的な方法を提案する。

Keywords: stumbling blocks in intercultural communication, teacher cultural ideological beliefs, student worldviews, student cultural expectations, intercultural differences, intercultural communicative competence
異文化間コミュニケーションにおける障害、教師の文化的イデオロギー、学生の世界認識、学生の文化的な期待、文化間の差異、異文化間コミュニケーション能力

Raising Autonomy by Negotiating Rules with Students: An Exploratory Discussion about Action Research into Learner Development and Autonomy

ルールの話し合いで学生の自主性を高める： *学習者ディベロプメントおよび自律学習に関するアクションリサーチについての探索的考察*

Tokiko Hori 堀登起子 & **Andrew D. Tweed** アンドリュー・トゥイード

Abstract
In this discussion, we reflect on our experiences with action research (AR). In particular, we focus on the application of AR in relation to promoting learner autonomy and development. We examine an AR project at a Japanese university in which Tokiko involved her students in negotiating classroom rules. Drawing on theories of autonomy and motivation, we then discuss how the increased level of organizational autonomy in the class may have been related to positive changes in students' behaviors. In closing, we briefly describe two AR projects that we would like pursue in the future, one in a classroom context (Tokiko), and one in a self-access center (Andrew).

要旨
本対談は、両著者のアクションリサーチ（AR）体験について振り返るものである。なかでも、学習者オートノミーの推進および支援に関連した AR の事例について考察する。両著者は、Tokiko が日本の大学で行った「教室内ルールを学生と話し合う」AR について、自律学習およびモチベーションに関する理論を紐解きつつ、組織内の自主性の増加が学生の学習に取り組む姿勢にどのようなポジティブな影響を及ぼし得たかについて検証した。結びに、２つの異なるコンテクスト―― 1 つは教室内（Tokiko）、もう 1 つはセルフ・アクセス・センター（Andrew）――で、今後我々が取り組みたいと考えている AR プロジェクトについて簡潔に述べる。

Keywords: action research, learner autonomy, motivation, negotiation of classroom rules, self-access centers
アクションリサーチ、学習者オートノミー、モチベーション、クラスルールの話し合い、セルフ･アクセス･センター

How Can I Be Myself? The Life Story of a Language Learner from Korea

韓国人留学生のライフストーリーに見る日本語話者としての私探し

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This presentation in the Learner Development Forum at JALT 2016 explored the learner autonomy of a Korean overseas student in Japan by using life story interviews. The story I introduced in the forum focused on the learning experiences of a 19-year-old Korean overseas student, Kim (pseudonym), who came to Japan in 2015 after graduating from high school in Korea and who has since been studying at a university in the Kansai area. Kim started learning Japanese as a second language in high school and studied it for three years. In the final year at high school, having decided to study abroad in Japan, he took the entrance exam for a university in Japan. At university, Kim was one of two students in my Japanese language class. As I got to know Kim, I decided to ask for his cooperation as a research participant in a life-story study because I saw specific changes in his behavior, such as his becoming more talkative, friendly, and relaxed in the class over one year.

My goal was to situate and interpret the development of Kim's learner autonomy in the social contexts in which he took part. Following Holec's (1981) definition of learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3), research on learner autonomy has been largely conducted and discussed from the meta-cognitive, psychological aspect. Other researchers have revealed how learner autonomy is influenced by the learner's emotion, learning space, and social environment (Murray, Fujishima, & Uzuka, 2014; Nakai, 2016). Learner autonomy leads to the development of second language proficiency, which contributes to achieving a higher degree of personal autonomy because it enhances a second language user's agency (Aoki, 2009).

In my own research I have done three time-scale case studies of Japanese language learners in different contexts to understand learning processes in home countries, learning experiences in Japan, and life experiences in Japan using Japanese as a second language (Nakai, Ou, & Wakisaka, in press). The research reveals that for those who learn Japanese, learning often occurs when trying to build a relationship with people such as learning partners, classmates, and individuals they want to interact with. This indicates the construction of "social identity" (Riley, 2007, pp. 122-123) that the individual realizes by relating to others through Japanese in the different communities/sub-groups/social networks they are part of (or wish to be part of). Learner autonomy is fostered and constrained by many kinds of factors surrounding learners, so we need to investigate not only learning processes, but also the whole social context surrounding learners.

In this short reflective paper, written from an ecological perspective (Palfreyman, 2014), learner autonomy is defined as socially mediated agency (Toohey & Norton, 2003) involving authorship of one's actions and one's own words (van Lier, 2004) relating to social identity.

Research Context

A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what the person remembers about his or her history and what he or she wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by the researcher. It includes the important events, experiences, and feelings of a lifetime (Atkinson, 2002).

Seeing learner autonomy as socially mediated agency to achieve authorship of one's actions, voice, and an enhanced second language life, my aim was to use life story interviews to better understand:

- what the Japanese language and language learning mean to Kim;
- how Kim develops his learner autonomy but is constrained in Japanese society;
- how the development of Kim's learner autonomy is socially mediated and involves authoring his own actions to construct a second language identity.

I interviewed Kim three times between November 2015 and January 2016, audio-recording and transcribing each interview. In the first interview, I focused on his learning experiences to understand how his learner autonomy was situated in different social contexts. In the second and third interviews, I showed him the life story I had written and explored further with Kim his perspectives on this reconstructed biographical narrative.

Interpreting Kim's Life Story

The first part of Kim's life story shows how he feels himself to be different from the person he used to be in Korea.

> ***"What is learning Japanese to me?"***
> *I started learning Japanese in high school because I wanted to learn social welfare in Japan where it has developed most among Asian countries, and I will not need to worry about discrimination against Asian people. I loved learning it in high school. My Japanese language proficiency is not enough, but I can often make up for it by using a dictionary and the internet. Now I'm living in Japan and have a chance to talk Japanese with members of my club and sometimes with some girls in order to look for a girlfriend. Hahaha, I need these kinds of language lessons. Because now I'm feeling something weird when talking Japanese. It is definitely different between who I am now and who I used to be in Korea. I am originally very naughty and have a sharp tongue in Korean. I thought I was such a funny guy. I can communicate with everyone in Japanese, but how I talk in Japanese sounds too serious to me now. I feel really strange. I have no difficulties to live my life here, such as buying something. I think that it is more important for me to be able to express myself even in Japanese.*

The meanings of Japanese language and learning changed for Kim after coming to Japan. He learned Japanese as a tool to enter university when he was a high school student, but after coming to Japan, the Japanese language became a tool to steer school life in the direction he wanted it to go. Living in Japan, he found that he couldn't realize what he wanted to do with the Japanese he had learned in high school. Because of this, learning came to mean acquiring Japanese phrases to express himself. In my class Kim became very talkative, funny, and entertaining as time went by, but he also thought of himself as a serious person speaking Japanese and wanted to become more of who he really is. His Japanese proficiency was high, but he was missing something to express his true self.

In the second extract from his life story Kim reveals how he tried to develop his learner autonomy in order to fill this gap, but was constrained in specific interactions that he faced in his expanding social world.

> ***"Why can't I say 'No'?"***
> *This faculty staff offered me one Japanese tutor who supports my school life. He was almost the same age as me, and was very friendly so I felt I was able to be me, and open up to him. One day, he took me to his friend's house, I thought we would have a party something like that, but it was a kind of religious meeting. After that he became persistent in inviting me to some events related to international affairs. I guess these events also had something to do with his religion. I know it is my fault that I haven't been say "No" to him. I can say "No" in Korea without any hesitation. But in Japanese, I can't help thinking saying "No" is rude because I learned it from language teachers. I tried to refuse invitations by saying "ちょっと…," but it doesn't work at all and he kept inviting me to events I don't want to go to. If I don't need to take care of our relationship, I can refuse his invitation by using various Japanese expressions which may sound rude to him.*

What Kim's story shows here is that he tried to create networks in Japan by taking advantage of the opportunity to have a Japanese tutor, but this failed against his will. Through talking with him, I came to understand from his angry face and voice that he felt betrayed by his tutor. To make matters worse, Kim couldn't say "No" to his tutor's invitations although he actually knew many expressions to do so in Japanese (and he knew how to do so without hesitating in Korean). According to Kim, this was because he felt strongly affected by Japanese language education practices and textbooks which teach learners not to deny directly but use "ちょっと" to refuse someone's invitation to avoid face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In fact, I have seen many textbooks recommending learners use ambiguous expressions to refuse indirectly. Japanese language teachers are likely to teach learners the sociolinguistic norms where indistinct expressions are preferred to clearly declining an invitation from a person with low intimacy. Kim was restricted by the simplistic nature of textbooks, as well as by the institutional relationship with his university-assigned tutor. This made him hold back his feelings of wanting to express himself. In this case, Kim's tutor kept inviting him by using the Line messaging app after a first invitation, and Kim chose to ignore his messages to overcome these barriers. Their stilted relationship caused him to avoid building networks with others. Here, Kim's learning experiences and knowledge of Japanese language norms prevented him from acting.

The next episode from Kim's life story reveals what he has been doing and trying to do to become who he wants to be by using Japanese language through adapting to complicated social situations.

> ***"Why can't I be a university student as I imagined?"***
> *Before I came here, I had an image of myself as a university student. Like my friends in Korea, I wanted to not only study but also lead an exciting campus life. I have played the guitar for many years, so I thought it is good for me to make friends who have the same hobby as me. That's why I participate in the music club and play music in a band. We have good relationships and can enjoy only playing music itself but I still feel something empty. There are many Japanese students on this campus and almost all of them are engaged in playing some sports because they are in a faculty related to sports. I am not this kind of person and find it difficult to make friends here. Now I often go out with my Korean friend in Japan. Living in Japan means nothing if I spend time with Koreans. I don't want to*

> *have any relationship with Koreans here, but I expect to make my network outside of uni with his tutor because he is an outgoing person and knows so many expressions to pick up girls… I want to enjoy school life in Japan like Japanese students as I watched them on TV in Korea. To do this, I think I need to develop contacts to know how students talk in Japanese relating to my concerns.*

This extract shows how the affordance of space influenced Kim's actions. He didn't expect this atmosphere at university, and it is different from what he wanted to be part of. He joined a music club and made networks outside of university to become the university student whom he wished to be. In other words, he exercised his agency to realize his social identity as his imagined self in Japan.

> ***"Changing classroom into his space where he can be himself"***
> *We have only two language lessons a week at this university. Here, I can meet my classmate from overseas and the language teacher. I feel like that this class is only the place we communicate naturally. We, students and teacher, are very close, so I can say anything I want. No one denies me. This is my space where I can feel safe and come out of my shell. I talked nonsense and asked how to say something in Japanese and how to act with people in Japan. I really enjoyed this, which made me feel that I was myself.*

In this short episode from his life story, Kim seemed to feel safer in the language class than the music club. He enjoyed the music club, but didn't have his own place as he described it as "empty" in the previous extract. This might be because classroom interaction differs from interaction in the music club, where there is a classmate who can understand him and relate to him as an overseas student. "*No one denies me*" indicates the importance that Kim attaches to having his own place, even in a good relationship with others.

According to my observations in the Japanese language class, Kim really behaved innocently without affectation as a result of being treated as a younger brother by his Chinese female classmate. It is conceivable that the reason why he describes the relationship with the club members as good but empty is that he probably tried to be on his best behavior in the music club in the same way that he had done near the start of the language course. In my teaching I had emphasized a positive relationship with learners in my class and invested a lot of time in having dialogue with them; at the same time I taught them Japanese following a curriculum that aimed at the improvement of their performance in Japanese. This was because I had found it unpleasant to be judged only by exams by teachers when I was a student. I believe that language is a tool of communication. It develops through real communication and affects people's relationships. Talking with his classmate and me in the classroom may have allowed Kim to find that over time in the language class he could be his true self. This let him make good use of the language class to learn how to express his true self.

Discussion

From his life story, learning Japanese for Kim means finding a way to have his own voice in constructing and using appropriate utterances or "speech genres" (Bakhtin, 1986) to achieve his intentions. He joined the music club to play music and get acquainted with people he could talk with about music in Japanese. Apart from that, Kim tried to find a Japanese girlfriend with the help of a Korean friend of his who had lived in Japan longer than him, even though he didn't want to have any Korean friends in Japan. In this way, he autonomously got acquainted with people, learning and using Japanese to imbue it with

his own intentions to construct a range of social identities (Riley, 2007) to be himself. He also had the opportunity to develop his voice in the dialogic environment of the classes that he took with me and his peer international student from China.

Learner autonomy is exercised in a complex adaptive system that can acknowledge the mutual constitution of social and historical contexts and individuals as a complex system (Sade, 2014). A complex system continually evolves internally and affects the environment, in that it is composed of interdependent components and sub-systems which continually interact with each other (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). Kim's learning has occurred in the context of a complex system that includes the people and the environment of the university, such as his tutor, a Korean friend, the members of the music club, and the sports-oriented atmosphere of the university. In this context, Kim tried to realize his imagined social identity. However, as his case indicates, not all factors always help him to foster learner autonomy and construct his social identities for himself. For example, he kept a good relationship with his tutor whom he expected to support him, but his tutor couldn't help Kim in his life in Japan. As another example, Kim's learning experiences prevented him from refusing directly even though he knew the expressions to refuse in Japanese. These conflicts led him to generate further actions on his part to adapt to the new environment around him. Thus, the complex adaptive system consists of factors that are related in non-linear ways and are not in simple cause-and-effect relationships. In such a system, events and phenomena are not simply understandable and predictable; rather, factors collaboratively create their functions and dynamically generate themselves. Kim is autonomously searching for possibilities to realize his imagined self as a university student in Japan through trial and error. His learner autonomy helps him adapt to the constraints of the ever-changing environment that he is situated in.

Continuing Puzzles

Kim's life story suggests that he needs to acquire his own voice to construct his social identities, and that this is just as necessary as learning content, resources, and language knowledge. Kim also needs learner autonomy in pursuit of his own voice, which fosters language learning and helps to situate himself in L2 society.

From Kim's story, the following questions arise: *What is learner autonomy?* and *What should language teachers do?* Following Nakai, Ou and Wakisaka's (in press) claim that learner autonomy is shaped and developed by social relationships, learner autonomy can be seen as a metacognitive ability for learning language to construct identity through adapting to ever-changing social situations. In order to foster learner autonomy, it is important for teachers to support learning itself through learning content and learning processes; it is also necessary to focus on the language proficiency that learners need in their living world beyond the boundaries of the classroom, as the classroom is an enclosed place disconnected from the social environment.

From this discussion, we can see that learner autonomy generates language learning to construct social identity in a complex adaptive system. Meanwhile, teaching might be also affected and generated in this system as well because the teacher is also one of the factors in the learner's social context. Thus, it can be said that the practice of learning and teaching are mutually interdependent phenomena related to the environment in which learners and teachers are involved. The people who support learners as one factor in a complex adaptive system need to listen to their narratives and try to bear them in mind when teaching language that will enable them to get the second language identity that they really want.

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Reader Response to "How Can I Be Myself? The Life Story of a Language Learner from Korea"

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In this article, Yoshio Nakai explores how one language learner tries to find his own voice in the social groups he is a part of or wishes to be a part of and to uncover the roles of learner autonomy in the process. Although more focus now has been paid to learners or learning itself, more practical studies on what successful language acquisition takes and how learner autonomy contributes to it from learners' perspectives are yet to be seen. What interested me in this article was that it gave insight to those questions with a real-life example by looking at Kim's case both inside and outside the classroom setting. In particular, it attempted to place the development of learner autonomy within those social contexts by taking the learner's social network and perspectives of the world around him into account.

Conducting three life story interviews, Yoshio showed how a Japanese language learner, Kim, sought ways to become his true self within the surrounding social contexts and eventually found a place (i.e., Japanese language class) to realize it. For any teacher, it is rewarding to see positive changes in students and their success in language learning. Ideally, we want to see more learners like Kim succeed, so investing in uncovering the "secrets" behind the scenes is worthwhile.

Following Yoshio's interviews and his interpretation of the student's account, however, I was left with a further question. The realization of both autonomy and identity is complex in nature. Examining Kim's situation within a complex adaptive system, Yoshio explains how small factors such as one's own experiences (e.g., instruction given by teachers) or the surrounding environment (e.g., a sports-oriented university) can influence one's actions (e.g., declining invitations to events, trying to make friends with the same hobby, and creating a network outside university) and at the same time create other situations for one to adapt to and take actions in. Voice is something Kim is struggling to find in these complex contexts, but is essential for realizing his ideal self. Kim becomes closer to his true self in his Japanese class but not anywhere else, and this can be interpreted as indicating that acquisition of voice can happen at different paces depending on the social space (e.g., class, club, relationship with a tutor). If so, how do learners like Kim develop learner autonomy and find their voice outside class?

One possible way to find answers to this question is to conduct longitudinal studies as they allow teachers and researchers to observe how learner autonomy develops or stagnates over time and to examine to what extent learner autonomy contributes to the acquisition of voice—and ultimately to successful language learning. It is remarkable that Kim opened himself up in his class in just one academic year, but it would also be interesting to see how a learner's growing repertoire of voices gradually goes beyond such limited spaces over the course of a few years. As individual learners take different courses, one case may be arguably different from another. More case studies

like this would provide a holistic view of voice acquisition, which would be valuable for the growing body of learner autonomy research, as well as informative for language learners who could learn from the exemplary paths taken by different individuals.

Lastly, as a learning advisor who provides students with one-on-one consultation sessions about their language learning, it was interesting for me to see the deep level of reflective dialogues in the interviews that Yoshio conducted. The stories that Kim told entail his exploring his beliefs and experiences. Yoshio also presented his interpretation of the stories to check his understanding, and this, I believe, led to Kim's further reflection. Extended reflective dialogues are what learning advisors use to foster learner autonomy, and in agreeing with Yoshio's last remark "[t]he people who support learners… need to listen to their narratives and try to bear them in mind when teaching language…," I do also hope more learners' stories are heard in this attentive manner for the learners themselves and for us as educators to learn more about our learners.

Reader Response to "How Can I Be Myself? The Life Story of a Language Learner from Korea"

Huw Davies
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I am very happy to respond to Yoshio's short reflective article. On first reading there seemed to be nothing for me to say, with my own views on autonomy closely matching Yoshio's. The story he tells seems to give credible answers to the questions he leaves us with ("*What is learner autonomy?*" and "*What should language teachers do?*"). However, in looking at how Yoshio answers these two questions, I hope I can add some fitting insights that will link theoretical perspectives connected to autonomy with demands learners may experience on a practical level.

Before thinking about what autonomy signifies in the field of language teaching, it is worthwhile considering why it is important in education in general. Brighouse (2006) has suggested that autonomy is essential for a productive and worthwhile life, and that it should be fostered by the education system:

> The deeper principle is the idea that education should aim at enabling people to lead flourishing lives, and the argument that education should facilitate autonomy depends on the idea that autonomy plays an important role in enabling people to leave flourishing lives. (p. 15)

Autonomy is a state in which people are able to flourish, to live a valuable life they identify with. In the context of language education, being able to flourish means being able to communicate and express oneself in the target language in order to do something personally meaningful. Therefore, a key concern for language educators is for their students to each develop their own voice. Voice can only flourish in a social environment. According to Brighouse (2006), "Individuals do not flourish separately from others; their interests are

bound up with those of other people, and their reflection takes place within a given social context" (pp. 19-20). As Yoshio suggests, learner autonomy develops in a complex system, where language learners such as Kim negotiate their place and identity with other people. Developing one's voice is therefore not a linear process, but is a struggle that requires support, self-awareness and reflection.

If language learner autonomy is viewed as the development of voice, then one role of language educators is to provide a safe space in which learners can develop their own voices. Students need to be given the freedom to experiment, and need professional support to help them reflect on the learning process and their personal development. Yoshio highlights dialogue as being central to his approach to promoting learner autonomy in his class, and dialogue offers opportunity for both experimentation and reflection.

It is worth pointing out that the alternative to dialogue is a one-way "narrative" from the teacher (Freire, 1996), which is epitomized by the "*Why can't I say no?*" section in this short reflective article. Kim is unable express his agency having been trained not to say "*No*" by his previous textbooks and teachers. Having followed similar Japanese courses myself, I can fully understand Kim's frustrations. Classroom practices that promote learning through dialogue are beneficial in two ways: they situate the linguistic content in a context which is relevant for the learner, and they create an arena where deeper self-reflection by the students can be encouraged. To facilitate the development of voice the classroom should be both personalized and social.

What is striking about the voice that Kim develops during this study is that it sounds different than what he had expected: It is "too serious" and at odds with who he feels he is or who he wants to be. The gap between Kim's self-image and ideal self is something that would be worth exploring further, to see if the two converge as Kim develops as a Japanese user. What makes this area even more fascinating is the disparity between Kim's self-image and Yoshio's observations, where Kim is seen as "*very talkative, funny, and entertaining*." I am sure both interpretations of Kim are entirely valid, but reading this again makes me want to dialogue with my students about their self-image and how they are perceived by others. The views and voices of others profoundly help learners to co-construct their own voices and identities.

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Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Pragmatics Instruction by Students

教えることを学ぶ、学ぶために教える - 学生による語用論教育 -

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JALT's current slogan is "*Learning to teach, teaching to learn.*" From a teacher's perspective, these words remind us that we can keep learning and developing, and that part of our job is the promotion of learner development. My poster for JALT 2017's Learner Development Forum used the same slogan, but with primary reference to the learner rather than the teacher: language learners learning to teach and, through teaching and reflecting on their teaching, learning about the subject matter they are teaching, the importance of their chosen topic, and the challenge of teaching itself. Although this project was conceived only as a vehicle for learning and learner development, it has given me as a teacher much more than I expected. Over the past 18 months of reflection, starting with preparation for an in-house Active Learning poster session at my university, followed by the JALT 2017 Learner Development SIG Forum, and now this report, I have had a real opportunity to experience afresh both halves of this slogan.

In this short reflective article, I will begin by describing the project, with the help of the poster shown at the LD Forum. I will also address these questions: *How, one year later, did a further class of learners perceive the value of the project?* and *What may be the value of learner and teacher reflections on a project such as this?*

The participants in this project, 3rd year English Department students at a provincial Japanese university, were in the second semester of a two-year seminar course, or *zemi*. In terms of English proficiency, these students would probably be in the top third of the year's 120+ English Department students, with TOEIC scores at the time between 500 and 800. They had chosen one of the two "English-medium" *zemi* classes, and were relatively confident English users, but only one or two planned to become teachers, and all were understandably nervous about this teaching project.

In the first semester, these 3rd year students had studied some aspects of sociolinguistics, focusing mainly on language varieties and choices. In their fourth year they would be choosing a topic on which to focus, conduct research, and write a graduation thesis. In this in-between semester, there were two main objectives:

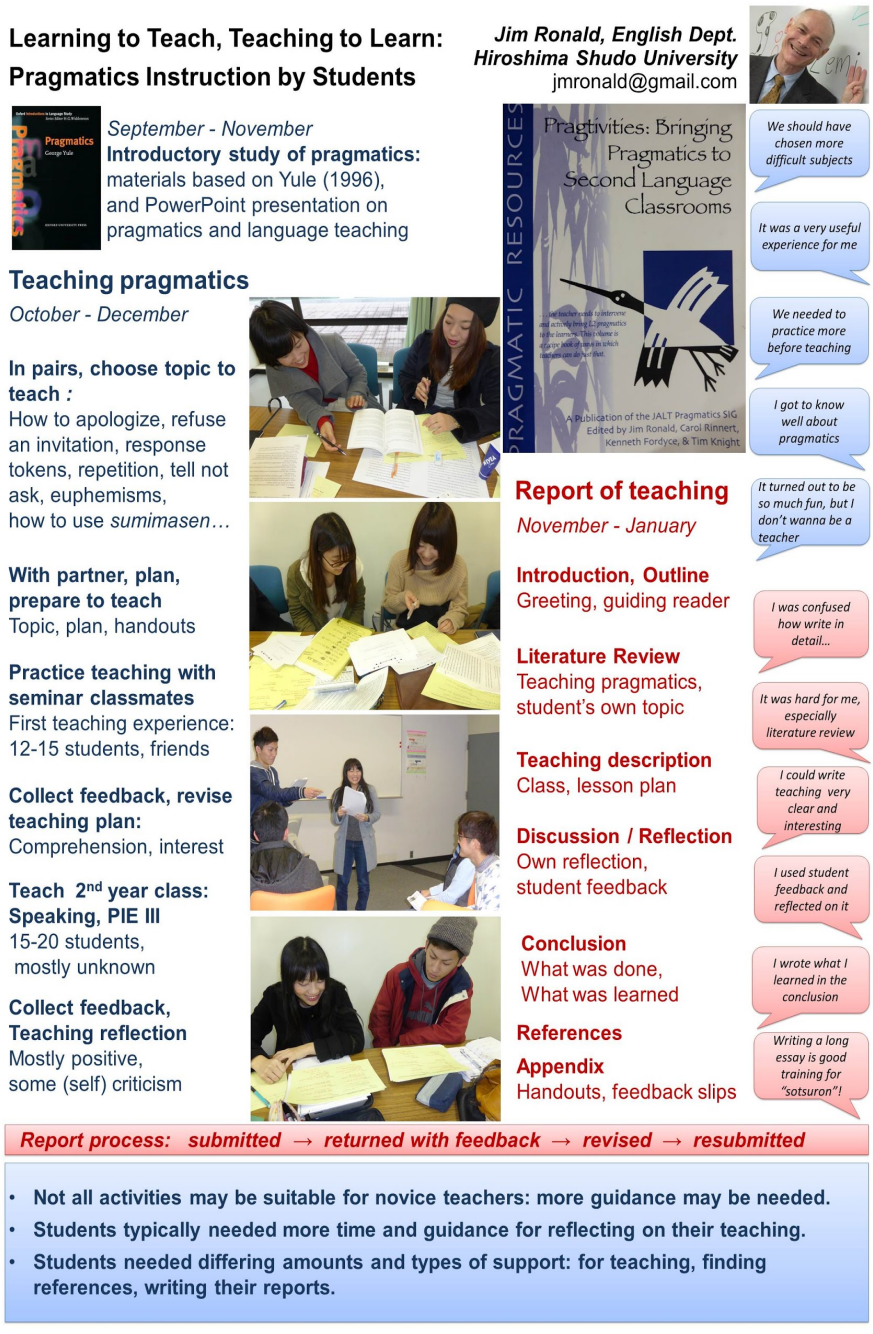
1. For students to gain a general understanding of the focus, scope, and importance of pragmatics, both with respect to their native language and culture and to English-speaking cultures;
2. For students to gain experience and ability in writing a fairly long, structured academic paper in English.

From 2011, working as co-editor of the Pragmatics SIG publication, *Pragtivities: Bringing pragmatics to the second language classroom* (Ronald, Rinnert, Fordyce, & Knight, 2012), I received a real flood of pragmatics-focused teaching activities that needed looking at, editing, and maybe trying out. Many of these were tested with this class as a way of introducing various aspects of pragmatics to the class and of demonstrating the relevance of pragmatics to the students' lives as language learners and as language users. Three years later, with the book published and well used, much of this teaching had moved from me

to them, becoming a peer-teaching project. In pairs, students bought the book and selected a chapter from this book of 64 pragmatics-teaching activities. They studied the aspect of pragmatics treated in their chapter, and then prepared to teach the activity: first to their classmates, then to a class of 2nd year students, typically one year younger than they were.

As the peer teaching project developed, so too did the report writing side of the project. As part of the two-year *zemi* class, each student spends much of the final year working on an original language-focused research project, which is then written up as the student's graduation thesis. Prior to that, by writing a similarly structured, but more scaffolded, report of their teaching project, the students gain useful practice in preparation for writing their graduation theses.

Figure 1. Learner Development SIG Forum Poster, JALT2016



Student Reflection

Student reflection has been an important part of this project. Working in pairs with a classmate, typically a friend, gave opportunities for supportive discussion and reflection throughout the project. Three times during the students' preparation and teaching, each pair receives feedback: first, from *zemi* classmates following their teaching; next, from their teacher on their teaching plan and materials as part of the preparation to teach; and finally from the 2nd year students straight after teaching them. This teaching-related feedback was among the many opportunities for participant reflection through the project. Their reflections on the teaching project as a whole were recorded in the conclusions of their reports.

Reflecting on teaching.

Many of the students' comments focused on what they learned about teaching. Here are three:

> *First, I thought this pragmatics teaching would be easy because I just have to speak and make the students understand, but this was really difficult.* (Makoto)

> *I could learn how to make which the classmate can understand easily and teaching is interesting because I could share my opinion with others.* (Moe)

> *After this class, I can get confidence to explain pragmatics, especially how to apologize in English.* (Chinatsu)

These three comments are of particular interest for the way the reflections, in different ways, went beyond reports of the activities. In Makoto's case, he reflects on the unexpected challenge of "*teaching to do*": finding a way for students to understand, and to be sure enough of understanding to respond. For Moe, learning to teach was equated with a skill beyond teaching: learning to express her thoughts in English. Chinatsu, too, reports how doing this teaching activity gave her the ability to explain and illustrate the topic of her *zemi*, something that students may well be required to do when job hunting.

Reflection on pragmatics.

Other comments focused on what the students learned about pragmatics through the project:

> *Through our teaching activity, I felt our utterances support our friendship…* (Aika)

> *For example, most students also had trouble refusing in English. I knew that and I think that this topic is an important field to learn for students who are studying English like us.* (Ruka)

Here, too, the responses reflect an increased awareness, and appreciation, of the practical value of studying pragmatics not simply as an academic subject but as a guide to the maintenance of good relationships.

Preparing the poster with a class of students going through each stage of the project.

Finally, there were also comments from students on the value of teaching as a way for them to learn what they were teaching:

> *I learned the important things from this teaching class. At first one is the ability of understanding. If I don't really understand pragmatics, I can't teach it to the students. And*

> *if the students ask me about pragmatics or contents of teaching, I need to answer which is easy to understand.* (Chinatsu)
>
> *In addition, through this activity, I thought when we had what we wanted to learn or understand, it was a good way to teach them to someone. To teach someone, first we have to research and understand it. Next we consider how we should teach so that they can understand it. Then, we actually teach and get the feedback.* (Ruka)

Both these students realized the value of teaching as a means of learning and synthesizing what was taught, and of the motivating imperative to understand the topic well that is contained within this activity.

Teacher Reflection

As a language teacher, specifically one concerned both with learner development and with the teaching of aspects of pragmatics as foreign language education, the whole project has continued to be a worthwhile venture for me. I will conclude by considering what I have learned from the whole process, stage by stage:

(a) preparing the poster over the months as a class of students went through each stage of the project;

(b) one year later, using the poster as a resource to introduce the project to a new class of students, and to serve as a guide for me as we proceeded with the project;

(c) bringing the poster to the Learner Development SIG Forum, and writing up this report, pushed and prodded by readers' comments as the report was expanded and revised.

Preparing the poster as students go through each stage of the project.

Putting together the poster as a class of students and I went through each stage of it 18 months ago rendered it a much more reflective and memorable experience than the project had been the previous year: It required more verbalized reflection on the part of the students, it had to tell a story beyond describing the project, and, to be worth doing, it had to inform the future conducting of this project. For this reason, not only were the stages of the parallel tracks of teaching and writing up recorded as part of the project description, but so too were the students' reflections on these, and my own practical recommendations for future conducting of the project.

Using the poster as a learning resource and teaching guide.

One year later, the poster served as a very useful aid for introducing the project to the following year's class: demonstrating the steps and the flow of the two sides of the students' project—the teaching of pragmatics, and the writing up of the report. It also helped from the perspective of face validity: Although most students were nervous about teaching, the poster gave them confidence, to see that the project was well prepared, that they themselves would be well prepared before their experience of teaching, and that a previous class of students had experienced, survived, and valued the experience.

Presenting, writing, responding about the project.

With the project having been already conducted and reflected on, and a poster produced, the recommendations at the foot of the poster were now "*advice to self*" that could be taken for this year's project. The advice was taken in most cases: More guidance was given to help students choose activities that were not too difficult; and there was more

support for writing the literature review. The suggestion, recorded on the poster, that more time and guidance should be provided for reflection was overlooked, although this could easily have been addressed, and will be the next time.

The distance served another important role in my own education as a teacher of pragmatics. It gave me the opportunity to realize that, however good the teaching may have been, a single teaching session encounter with the target pragmatics topic would not be sufficient for the students to learn it adequately. To give an example, learning how to apologize in a foreign language involves various types of knowledge: realization that "*sorry*" alone is no more adequate as an apology than its equivalent in the students' first language; realization that the "*contents*" of an apology can be identified and listed (admission of fact, concern for the "*victim,*" offer of compensation, and expression of intention to not repeat the accident); learning that—in this case—the contents in their first language and English are broadly the same; and learning the language to express these contents appropriately in English. This realization resulted in my continuing the students' topics in subsequent classes, and even—at the students' request—including three of the topics in the final exam for the course.

To bring the poster to the LD Forum, and then to write this report, has provoked further reflection on this project, and on the poster as a product of, and instrument for, reconsidering the project. There was, unfortunately, not as much discussion at the Forum as I might have hoped, in part because I had another presentation that coincided with the second half of the Forum and I was not able to be present for this. I did, however, receive two comments that have had a significant impact on this report.

The first was a suggestion to compare the two years of the project, and this has been done above. In fact, as stated earlier, these two years do not report the birth of this project; there was at least one complete cycle of the project prior to these. However, the first time the project was just done, with no written reflection, and only a handout outlining the stages of the project for the students' benefit.

The second comment received at the Forum is worth reproducing in full, because this whole reflective report is a response to that comment:

> *An extremely interesting project involving students in major extended activities with their peers and juniors. It would be interesting to see a meta-reflection by Jim on the first two groups to undertake, reflect upon, and report on these activities.*

Finally, the preparation of the poster and the writing of this report have both been "*pushed reflection*," with extra prods for further reflection from the two readers of this report. This pushed reflection was also a part of the students' teaching reports, and were all the better for it. Such reflection on practice may seem to be a luxury—there's often hardly time to prepare for class, to do the homework, or whatever—but this experience has been a valuable reminder of the importance for both teachers and learners to not simply teach and study, but for both to be reflective practitioners.

Reading through this report and looking forward to conducting this project with this coming year's class, I've come to realize that while some students do share valuable reflections on the project (which are included in this report), others do this very little. In order to help those who are slower in verbalizing their reflections, it may be worth preparing questions for consideration before the project, to help the learners give focused consideration of the value of what they are doing. This might reduce the impact of discovery, realizing through experience and reflection the value of what was done, but, for many of the learners, it may provide a useful framework for reflection. Questions such as the following may be useful:

- In what ways have you been a teacher so far in your life?
- In what various ways can you imagine that you may be a teacher in the future?
- Do teachers learn through teaching?
- How could the amount learning gained through teaching be increased?
- What do you imagine is easy about teaching pragmatics? What is difficult?

If these questions are printed out, the students could answer these questions at the beginning of the project, then return to these at the end, as they reflect on the value of what they have done.

Finishing this report with a list of questions may give an impression of unfinished work, yet it is appropriate that it does give this impression: *The report is finished, but the project is still work in progress. We are still learning to teach, teaching to learn.*

Reference

Ronald, J., Rinnert, C., Fordyce, K., & Knight, T. (2012). *Pragtivities: Bringing pragmatics to second language classrooms*. Tokyo: JALT Pragmatics SIG.

Reader Response to "Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Pragmatics Instruction by Students"

Elisa Acosta, Asia University

The project as a whole is a great idea especially for students who want to become teachers. It lets them notice how much preparation it takes to be able to explain topics to another person. It also enhances students' awareness of the topics they have chosen, as well as providing chances for students to practice giving feedback to each other and work together as a group. The project is multi-dimensional and serves as a way for students to learn as they teach.

One particularly positive feature of the project is that it makes students aware of what goes behind a pragmatics topic or event. Jim gives the example of apologizing and how it involves more than merely just saying "I am sorry." These events are not easy to explain. In some cases, students as teachers might have to provide extra examples to be able to make other students understand their topic. Students also need to make connections between the sociolinguistic norms of their culture and those of Anglophone cultures for apologizing. They need to understand the content very well to be able to present it successfully to their classmates. I also like the idea that the students present twice as this gives them opportunities to develop their ideas and/or add extra examples. Students give each other feedback and can make changes to the project without it affecting their final grades.

Jim, you mentioned students having problems coming up with their own reflections, especially with verbalizing their opinions. You suggested using questions. I thought it might also be helpful to have students keep a journal to collect their ideas, emotions, sources, and opinions all in one place. Anytime they work on the project students could be encouraged to take five minutes to reflect on what they did, did not do, and/or what they want to accomplish during the project. By keeping a journal students can document and visualize more easily the progress of their project. They could keep all their ideas in one place and keep track of things that worked or did not work. If the students ever felt they were stuck and needed some form of help, they could write their thoughts down and look at them later. They could also share the ideas with a classmate and get other opinions than the teacher's. The journal might even help students in the future when writing their graduation theses after they finish the pragmatics project. This could benefit both you and the students. As a teacher, you can keep track of their progress and the students can keep track on the development of their ideas. It may not be easy to implement, but if it's done with third and fourth year students it might work. I would like to hear how you and the students feel before and after the project is completed. It would also be good to know about what changes you will implement for future projects. Thank you for sharing this project with us, Jim.

Reader Response to "Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Pragmatics Instruction by Students"

Sarah Morikawa, Chiba University

In his short reflective article, Jim Ronald describes a project in which students need to research one aspect of pragmatics, and teach other students about that aspect. During the process, the students receive feedback from both students and teacher, then write a paper on their experiences of learning and teaching. In this cycle of preparation, action, and modification, reflection is an essential ingredient at each— stage both for the teacher and the students. Through reflection, teachers can revise goals and improve their input, while students can review their performance, identify paths towards improvement, and increase their motivation.

As a teacher, I would like to reproduce this type of "*zemi*," particularly in our English Support Centre (ESC) where workshops and classes are elective and uncredited. For this reason, two points in the article were of special interest to me. Firstly, practical information and ideas, such as using a poster as a tool for explanation of the course, are very helpful. I have developed courses and workshops over a number of cycles, modifying the contents and aims at the end of each semester, but have not used an introductory poster before. As Jim says, it would be very effective to show the students, in visual form, how the course or project will proceed. I was also interested in details about the students that were not mentioned in the article, such as the number of students in the class; the aspects of pragmatics students chose; and types of input and feedback. It would be interesting to find out whether/how the project could be developed in different situations, for example, in cases in which participation is entirely voluntary.

Related to this is the issue of motivation. When students use teaching as a means of learning in a university context, what motivates them? For some, it may be that they have to do the task in order to earn credits, while, for others, this may involve a sense of responsibility or the anticipated feeling of satisfaction when they have communicated successfully. Some of Jim's students appeared to be motivated to learn about their aspect of pragmatics in order to teach it to others effectively. It would be interesting to investigate the combinations of different influences on motivation, as this would be an important factor if students were not on a credited course. When it comes to reflection, Jim mentions that some students were more motivated to reflect, whereas others were less so. Jim's idea of providing a framework with questions relating to teaching in other areas of life is useful, as this would bridge the gap between class and "real life." I would tentatively suggest some more specific questions or prompts to elicit more specific information e.g., "*What did you learn by teaching pragmatics that you might not have learned if you had only studied by using the textbook?*" and "*Why do you think so?*"

In the ESC at our university, students form groups, in order to study for exams such as IELTS or TOEFL iBT. Usually these study groups decide on a group aim for the week such as improving their reading speed or increasing their spoken accuracy, work individually toward that aim during the week, then reflect on their study methods and results, before reporting back to the group. One finding from a study that I did of questionnaires completed by students is that

students in study groups do not like to spend much time on reflection about their own study methods or strategies even if they find their group members' reflections helpful. Many comments on reflection feedback sheets from our students are practical and basic, e.g., "*I could improve my speaking using these materials*." Further comments on how or why s/he improved were not included. Students may have kept reflection basic because they lacked the English to write specifically, or did not want to spend the time needed to do so. For this reason, bilingual feedback may be more productive, and clear guidelines or prompts should help students to add depth to their reflections.

All in all, responding to Jim's project has led me to consider trying out a more systematic way of encouraging students to learn by teaching on a wider scale in our centre and to investigate to what extent teaching activities impact on the students' motivation.

Promoting English-Major Students' Intercultural Understanding through Active Learning

英語専修生の異文化理解を深めるアクティブ・ラーニング

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In my presentation at JALT 2016 LD Forum, I shared my work in assisting English-major students to develop intercultural understanding through Active Learning (AL). Taking into account skills and competencies needed to survive in the 21st century, the Central Council of Education (2015) expects teachers to develop not only students' subject knowledge and skills but also their generic skills. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) is currently revising the Course of Study, emphasizing the integration of the three elements of true scholastic ability: (a) knowledge and skills, (b) ability of thinking, judgment, and expression, and (c) attitudes towards self-directed learning and willingness to collaborate with others. For this innovation in school education, MEXT (2016) encourages all teachers to implement AL (self-directed and collaborative learning for problem solving) in the classroom.

AL is now a popular buzzword in Japan. As a teacher educator, I have developed collaborative, autonomous, and reflective approaches (Kojima, 2012, 2013) where self-directedness and collaboration are essential like AL. Although I do not feel that the official line taken by MEXT is completely appropriate, I am for educational change and have introduced AL into my teaching practice.

In line with AL, I would like my first-year English major students to experience flipped learning in my "Introduction to Intercultural Understanding" class. A flipped classroom describes a reversal of traditional teaching where "students gain first exposure to new material outside of class, usually via reading or lecture videos, and then use class time to do the harder work of assimilating that knowledge, perhaps through problem-solving, discussion, or debates" (Brame, 2013, para. 1).

At the beginning of the semester, the students and I discussed the significance of intercultural understanding in English language education and how to carry out AL and flipped learning effectively. In this study, I aimed to examine to what extent I could help my students to develop their intercultural understanding through AL in a flipped classroom.

Method

Participants.

The class involved 32 first-year university students (English majors) in 2016, with low-intermediate to high-intermediate levels of English (STEP, TOEIC). The class met for 90 minutes every week during the first semester. All of them would like to obtain a teaching license to be an English language teacher in primary or secondary schools after graduation.

Materials.

In order to answer my research question "*To what extent could I help my students to promote intercultural understanding through AL?*" I used quantitative and qualitative materials: a questionnaire to survey the students' self-evaluation of their learning experiences, their

reflective comments on intercultural understanding and AL, as well as my observations and reflections.

Procedure.

Before class, as flipped learning, the students read the textbook on English language education and culture (Shiozawa, Yoshikawa, & Ishikawa, 2010) at home, and made a report on their findings. In class, based on individual reports, the students had group discussions about their findings and questions. They were encouraged to use English in discussion and to play various roles (chair, recorder, reporter, and monitor). As a facilitator of group dynamics, I advised them to consider the five key elements of collaborative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991). After group work, each group reported the results to the whole class, and then the students exchanged their ideas freely. They continued their self-directed and collaborative learning with the same textbook during the semester. Finally, I assigned them short papers to work on various topics of their choice, requiring research and some analytical thought based on the textbook or their own materials. Two-thirds of the students completed their papers in English.

Results and Discussion

In order to answer my research question, I analyzed the following quantitative and qualitative data. (I translated the students' Japanese responses into English.)

Summative self-evaluation.

For the end-of-semester course evaluation, students at my university are usually asked to answer about 15 questions the university made. Then, we teachers are allowed to add several question items of our own to each course questionnaire. This time, I focused on the following macro statements in light of intercultural understanding and AL.

Question items.

1. I could recognize the importance of intercultural understanding in English language education.
2. I could recognize teaching practice to promote intercultural understanding.
3. I could consider the future of English language education in light of intercultural understanding.
4. I could work on self-directed and collaborative learning positively.

Table 1. *Summative Self-Evaluation* (N=32)

	5 Strongly agree (%)	4 Agree (%)	3 Neutral (%)	2 Disagree (%)	1 Strongly disagree (%)	Mean $\bar{x}$
Question 1	18 (56)	14 (44)	0	0	0	4.6
Question 2	11 (34)	15 (47)	6 (19)	0	0	4.2
Question 3	20 (63)	9 (28)	3 (9)	0	0	4.5
Question 4	12 (38)	19 (59)	1 (3)	0	0	4.3

Students' ratings in response to each statement were marked on a five-point scale. Table 1 shows that the majority of the students were in agreement with the positive aspects of their learning experiences in my class. The mean scores of the four questions were all over 4.0. The question that the students claimed to have the strongest agreement with was Question 1 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.6), which stressed the importance of intercultural understanding in English language education. They enhanced their intercultural understanding in light of various issues: language and culture, intercultural communication, international understanding, language policy, the Japanese and English, and teaching culture in language classrooms.

As for Question 2, six students' responses were "neutral." This might suggest that it was rather difficult for them to imagine integrating intercultural understanding with practical teaching methods and materials. First-year students have not done any teaching practicums yet. Moreover, in high schools, many students mentioned that they had studied English only to pass entrance examinations mostly through translation, grammar drills, and rote memorization of words and phrases. In other words, they had had limited prior opportunities to develop their intercultural awareness within the exam-driven memorization-focused preparatory system for university entrance exams.

Concerning intercultural understanding, 91% of the students agreed that they could consider the future of English language education (Question 3). They understood the close connection between language and culture, and would like to teach English in the future, taking this into consideration.

Regarding AL (Question 4), almost all the students agreed that they could work on AL positively. Their positive attitudes towards AL would help them to understand the educational effect of AL on learner development and how to implement AL in their future classrooms.

Students' reflections on intercultural understanding.

In their short research papers, the students also reflected on their intercultural understanding more deeply from general perspectives. They critically commented on Japanese people's general tendencies and today's English education in Japan. Their comments are briefly summarized as follows:

- *Japanese people tend to emphasize only English and lack multicultural perspectives. We need to accept different cultures and different values.*
- *English teachers should help students to develop intercultural competence, which makes it possible for students to communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.*
- *Teaching materials should be designed to promote students' intercultural understanding and autonomous growth as whole persons.*
- *It is necessary for Japanese students to have more opportunities or experiences to promote their intercultural understanding inside and outside Japan.*
- *The languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified, taking sociolinguistic or sociocultural differences into account.*
- *Japanese people should develop their original Japanese English to communicate with native or non-native speakers and to express their ideas and values more effectively.*

Most of the students criticized exam-oriented English language instruction in Japan. Considering the close relationship between language and culture, they pointed out the significance of teaching with a multicultural perspective and developing intercultural competence. They also mentioned that as teachers in the future they expected to redesign teaching materials so that teachers could foster students' autonomous growth as whole persons as well as their intercultural understanding.

With regard to intercultural experiences, the students enjoyed exchanging different information with each other. They would like to enhance intercultural understanding in a variety of contexts inside and outside Japan. Most of them also expressed an interest in studying abroad in the near future.

Worrying about the domination of one language over all others, the majority of the students agreed that a variety of foreign languages should be offered in Japanese educational institutions. Today, English is spoken by more non-native than native speakers. Some of the students claimed that they wanted to develop original Japanese English to communicate with both native and non-native speakers.

Students' reflections on Active Learning.

For further application of AL to my university classes, I needed to analyze the students' reflective comments on AL. Thus, as an open-ended question, I asked them what they thought about AL. Only one student preferred knowledge-based instruction to AL partly because he lacked confidence in his English knowledge and skills. In contrast, all the other students' responses were positive as follows:

- *Through flipped learning before class, I could raise my intercultural awareness. This was a good preparatory stage for group work in the classroom.*
- *AL helped me to consider the contents of the textbook critically and to enhance both intercultural understanding and technical knowledge through positive interdependence.*
- *I enjoyed listening to different groups and sharing different ideas about a variety of topics in the textbook.*
- *As a teacher trainee, I need to develop teacher-learner autonomy through self-directed and collaborative learning.*
- *I would like to improve my pedagogical skills so that I can apply AL to my English language classes in the future.*

Many students thought of flipped learning as an essential preparatory stage to support AL in the classroom, through which they raised their intercultural awareness. They were not used to this type of self-regulated learning, but they gradually understood how to engage in this stage for themselves.

As for AL, the students worked on group activities designed to provide them with a deeper understanding of the topic at hand. Classroom activities were followed by some form of whole-class synthesis facilitated by me, such as discussion or a mini-lecture. This approach seemed to enhance the students' abilities to work in a team, to consider the topics of the textbook critically, to make decisions and solve problems, to plan, organize, and prioritize work, to communicate verbally with each other, and to obtain and process information. Structured discussion and debates allowed the students to examine different perspectives of a controversial issue and to formulate effective arguments to support a stance.

The students' professional consciousness also seemed to be raised through AL. As teacher trainees, they will be more involved in various pre-service teacher education programs. They are expected to develop teacher-learner autonomy throughout their university lives, and to improve their technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, as well as personal qualities. These programs will help them to promote their professional growth and to carry out AL in the classroom more effectively.

Conclusion

In this study, I have examined to what extent I could help English-major students to promote intercultural understanding through AL. By analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, I found that the first-year English majors tended to raise their intercultural and professional consciousness as teacher-learners, who are expected to continue learning how to teach.

The majority of the students recognized the significance of intercultural understanding in English language education. They claimed that language and culture should be taught simultaneously and interactively. They also criticized exam-oriented instruction and the domination of English over all others in Japan. The specific textbook we used was rather difficult, but very useful for them to enhance intercultural understanding from various viewpoints. This would motivate them to consider 21st century skills and competencies, the integration of the three elements of scholastic ability, and the growth of school-age students as whole persons.

The social context of teaching and learning could be a key mechanism for how AL produced the positive effects on the students' experiences and on their learning outcomes. AL created opportunities for the students to act as a teacher, such as reciprocal teaching and peer learning. Each student occupied an instructor-like role with respect to his/her fellow students. I hope that my students will continue to learn autonomously and collaboratively, keeping in mind that the importance of relationships among students and between instructor and student is potentially meaningful for AL.

Innovation in English language teaching should be promoted from primary through tertiary levels of education. Thus, considering the different teaching contexts in different institutions, we teacher educators should collaborate with each other and promote innovation in pre- and in-service teacher education, critically exploring different issues around AL and learner autonomy.

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Reader Response to "Promoting English-Major Students' Intercultural Understanding through Active Learning"

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On seeing the title "*Promoting English-Major Students' Intercultural Understanding through Active Learning*," I thought the article would focus on how Kojima Sensei educates his English major students who would study abroad in the future about intercultural awareness. However, as I finished reading this article, I noticed that he was trying to promote intercultural understanding to the students who are in the teacher-training course. Kojima Sensei was concerned not only with teaching intercultural understanding through Active Learning (AL), but also with conveying to his teaching license course students the importance of learner autonomy through carrying his classes out using an AL method. As an English teacher at a university in Japan, I am familiar with AL. Since my higher education was earned in the United States, I had realized that teacher-centered learning is not effective anymore, especially in foreign language classes. I myself prefer teaching my language classes more student-centered and allocating more time for students to discuss with their peers. However, I have never managed to run a well-organized Active Learning class as the author of this article did, so I was able to learn a good example of how to carry it out such as giving each student in the group a role in discussions.

As explained in the procedure section of this article, students do the reading assignment at home and write a report on their findings and questions. Then, in groups, they share what they found and talk about their questions with each other. Each group reports what they discussed in the group to the entire class. And finally, students exchange their opinions freely as a class. It seems a very autonomous classroom to me because of the author's clear and repetitive instruction. Kojima Sensei is not only successful implementing his teaching method, but his students also react very positively to his teaching content and style. For example, some of the students stated that they would like to apply AL into their teaching when they start teaching English. However, Kojima Sensei doesn't mention how he integrated intercultural understanding into teaching practice. He states that his students' reaction to questionnaire item 2— "*I could recognize teaching practice to promote intercultural understanding* —was rather neutral.

I myself sometimes refer to how I was taught in schools when I have difficulties teaching in classes. How people were taught greatly influences the way they teach. Therefore, promoting the importance of implementing intercultural understanding and AL in language classes in the early stage of English teacher education and changing teacher trainees' mind of improving the way they were taught English in junior and high school could have a lasting impact on future English education in Japan. Although the participants received their English education in a rather traditional way in public schools, they are fortunate to have these kinds of opportunities to learn and experience new ways of teaching and learning. Now that the participants have been

exposed to a new way of teaching, I would like to see how these students preserve the teaching/learning method they acquired through Kojima Sensei's class and utilize it in the future teacher training courses or in their own English classes they will teach in the future.

Reader Response to "Promoting English-Major Students' Intercultural Understanding through Active Learning"

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As Hideo Kojima mentions, Active Learning (AL) is the current buzzword in Japanese education and Kojima offers a definition covering a very large area of pedagogy: self-directed and collaborative learning with a focus on problem solving. Whenever I hear the term "Active Learning," I am reminded of a poster for a recent conference in Kyushu about AL in the physical sciences. The poster showed a photo of a group of teachers sitting in fixed rows of seating listening intently to a professor. The irony of the photo is the passive way in which we as teachers often learn about AL, and this mirrors the irony of MEXT dictating that teachers should teach students to work collaboratively and with self-direction.

Like the teachers in the photo, many of us who attempt to implement AL have to work around physical and social barriers within the classroom, such as those rows of bolted down seats in the photo, student and teacher expectations, and the exam-orientated education system here in Japan. Kojima mentions this last barrier as being an important factor in student reflections on AL and the flipped classroom. In my own teaching, I have found that students are not inclined to prepare for a lesson and I think many teachers hesitate to flip their classrooms because of this, so I would like to know more about how to prepare students for this shift in focus from homework being proof of knowledge acquisition to being self-directed knowledge exploration.

Other reflections included student recognition that as future teachers they needed to understand and develop approaches to AL and student autonomy. As experienced teachers who have worked in the real world, I am sure we have all met (or been) teachers who just pay lip-service to AL. In the extremely busy working lives of teachers in the Japan, many find themselves teaching in ways that they do not prefer for the simple reason that they are too busy to overcome all the barriers. How might these ideal methods be adapted for such everyday high school realities? Initially, teachers and teacher educators need to work together on making AL more accessible as an everyday teaching method, thereby bridging the divide between theory and real practice.

The final question that I want to raise relates to the one student who did not prefer AL. Was his preference really just because of a lack of confidence? As social animals, we all like to say what is expected of us—what pleases our

teachers. I wonder if this specific student stated a lack of confidence in his skills because he did not want to be seen as being critical of his teacher. There is something reassuring in fixed answers that are obtained by a specific method. This question goes to the very heart of Active Learning because AL requires a certain level of discomfort and risk-taking, which are keys components of problem solving and self-direction. This one student might provide a wealth of further information by being a rare outlier in the data and is worth exploring further.

Learning Together across Borders: Correspondence between Hungarian and Japanese Learners of English

国境を超え共に学ぶ - ハンガリー人と日本人英語学習者の文通-

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The Learner Development Special Interest Group's Forum at the 2016 JALT International Conference was a very positive experience for me. As always, it was organized in a friendly and welcoming way, so members as well as first-timers could join easily. The title of the forum, *Learner Transformation as Personal Maturation*, invited us to recollect our own memories of learner transformation and maturation and called our attention to our learners as individuals, each of whom have their own needs, goals, and challenges, as well as ourselves as learners who always find new puzzles that keep us busy after classes. My presentation focused on a bilingual correspondence project that I set up with my students, but before coming to that, let me start from a bit far, with my own story of transformation and personal maturation.

A Story of Transformation and Personal Maturation

The situation of English language education in Hungary is similar to that of Japan: English is seen as a foreign language, even though there are minorities whose mother tongue may not be Hungarian, 99.58% of the population speak Hungarian (Kozponti Statisztikai Hivatal, 2011), and there is no obvious daily need for most people to speak a foreign language. However, contrary to Japan, Hungary is surrounded by land and has seven neighbouring countries (Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia). Whichever direction one may take, one will be out of the country within three hours' drive, so it is effortless to travel abroad. Although there are many Hungarians in the neighbouring countries, the official language is different in all of them, so it is easy to experience the need for foreign language competence.

I had been learning English for at least five years before I ever had a chance to use it. Back in Hungary where I grew up, I was a member of a folk-dance group and we were invited to participate in an international folk dance festival in Germany. I was about 12 then. All the participants in the festival were around this age, and we had a few events where we could meet each other. I was mature enough to know people from other countries do not speak Hungarian; however, I am not sure now whether English was a deliberate choice for communication or I simply tried to answer in a language that others were using to talk to me. Whichever the case was, I ended up talking to people in English. When we did not know how to say things in English, we tried to use gestures and body language. Trying to communicate was amusing. We also taught songs to each other and danced together. At the end of the festival, we exchanged addresses and started corresponding. When I received the first letter from Finland, I was amazed by the beautiful handwriting. It was different from Hungarian cursive writing. I loved receiving letters, and I always spent a lot of time choosing the paper and envelope, and writing my letters neatly. Sometimes we sent pictures to each other.

Corresponding was a means to learn and practice English. My pen friends' English was much better than mine. I clearly remember looking up words so that I could understand

their letters and express my own thoughts. Reading and writing letters also helped me to keep up my language learning motivation. I wanted to be as good as they were and to become able to write about everything that had happened to me. I often introduced my everyday life and topics that interested me then. I was also very curious about their lives. Due to my pen friends, I became interested in foreign cultures and languages.

All in all, corresponding with foreign people of the same age had a huge impact on me as a person, as well as a learner and later as a teacher. It taught me to try hard, concentrate on what I *can* do, be persistent, and not be afraid of making mistakes.

A Correspondence Project with Students in English and Japanese

Remembering the good times of having pen friends when I was a teenager, I wanted to provide an opportunity for my students to experience something similar to what I had done when I was young. So, I contacted my teacher from my university in Hungary and asked him if he would be interested in a correspondence project between our respective students. He was, and so together we set up a correspondence project for our students.

The participants were nine of my second-year students at Meisei University with pre-intermediate level English; eight Hungarian students with beginner level Japanese and intermediate or higher level of English; and a British-Belgian adult, a colleague of mine who agreed to help out as there were not enough participants from Hungary. Participation in the project was voluntary. The correspondence was bilingual: English and Japanese. My students wrote their letters in English first, then translated them into Japanese. This is how I could make sure they did not use overly complicated vocabulary items or sentence structure in their mother tongue. The Hungarian students, whose target language was Japanese, read the Japanese letters first and checked the English only when they needed help to understand a writer's specific meaning. Whenever my students got a reply from their Hungarian pen friends, they first read the English letter and then wrote their replies in English. In most cases I only gave them the Japanese after they had written their reply in English. This provided the opportunity for meaningful communication in the foreign language. They could experience the struggle of understanding someone`s letter and replying to it. Reading the Japanese at the end ensured they did not rely too much on their mother tongue, and allowed them to check their understanding and make changes in their reply letters if they had misunderstood something or used too complicated language in the Japanese version of their letter.

Questions and Puzzles

Before the project, my teacher and I had to think about how to execute it. The first problem we faced was the differences in the academic year in Japan and Hungary. In Japan, the school year starts in April, and the first semester ends at the end of July. The second semester is between mid-September and the end of January. However, in Hungary the academic year starts in early September and classes finish before Christmas, with the second semester running from February to the end of May. Therefore, the time during which both countries' students attend classes, especially in the Spring semester, is short. Finally, we managed to finish three rounds of correspondence in each semester. However, I have to mention that in the Spring semester, the Hungarian students continued their participation in the project until July, even though they had finished the school year. The Autumn semester was easier to coordinate as the overlap is longer between the two school years.

Time difference and online translation programmes.

Another question we faced was whether to use e-mail, chat programmes, or offline language exchange. These days a large number of online chat programmes and communication software offer the possibility of real-time language exchange; however, with a time difference of 7-8 hours and set timetables, it would have been hard for both of us to use such technology in class. As a result, real-time chat was discarded. There is also e-mail, which would expedite communication. However, especially with Japanese students, the risk of using online translation programmes instead of creating their own sentences and texts was high, I therefore decided to ask my students to handwrite their letters, many times in class. Their first reactions to this were not utterly positive, but they quickly realised that it also provided them with a chance to decorate and personalise their letters more easily.

Pairing.

A third issue was to do with pairing the students. As we did not know each other`s students, and I had just started teaching mine, we decided to pair them on the basis of their interests, which students introduced in their first letter. My Japanese students wrote the first letter, so the pairing was done by my colleague in Hungary. He had known his students for at least half a year by then, so after reading my students` letters, he knew which Hungarian student had the same interests or hobbies. Pairing this way helped to ensure that there were topics which were mutually interesting to the students.

Late response – absences.

Another question was how to deal with absences and late responses. Although students agreed to keep the deadlines for writing their letters, in reality, this did not work out perfectly. During the Spring semester, it was the Hungarian students' participation during their summer holiday that kept the correspondence alive until the third round. Originally, we planned to give two weeks for students to write their letters and hand them in to their teacher. However, when a student was absent and received the letter after a delay, this often resulted in a late submission of the reply letter. Delays also happened when someone missed the class of the submission deadline or lost their letter on their way to university. Consequently, the two-week response period could not be kept. There were delays on both sides, which meant that the semester had ended and the examination period had already started in Hungary when we finished the three rounds of correspondence at the end of June.

How to keep the conversation going.

The most serious issue we had to work through was how to keep the correspondence going without too much intervention or too many adverse effects, such as losing the authenticity of communication or students losing interest. It is not easy to correspond with someone whom one has never met. It is all about sharing and inquiring. Some people like to talk about themselves and easily ask questions, but others need time to develop the bond and talk, or here write, about themselves with ease. Some of the pairs turned out not to have much in common, which hindered communication. In addition, some of the participants were not good responders, that is, they did not react to or were not interested in what their partner wrote about, so some students did not write about or continue a topic proposed by their partner. Asking questions seemed to be difficult for many of my students also. They simply wrote about something and expected their partner to ask for more

details, but they did not try to facilitate the communication by asking questions themselves. The length of the letters varied, probably affected by the topic and the amount of free time they had. Naturally enough, when students had tests, they tended not to spend much time writing their letters.

As a result, by the time the summer holiday started here, most pairs had reached a point where they did not know what else to write about. To solve this problem, in the second semester I decided to impose topics for the letter writing. This was easy to do for my students, as I chose from the textbook that we were using. One of the most interesting topics was superstitions. First, students collected information and ideas about Japanese superstitions using the Internet. They then shared and discussed what they had found. A few students even tried to test some of the beliefs in their free time. They chose the superstitions they liked the most and introduced them in their letters, asking what their partner thought of them and what superstitions they believed in. When the replies came from Hungary, my students had a good time reading about Hungarian superstitions (for example, if one accidentally bumps their elbow on something hard, it means they will get an unexpected visitor soon) and checking if they worked. (Try to imagine how students attempt to bump their elbows on the desk by accident.) This way, they had the opportunity to learn about the topic in class, discuss it with their classmates, learn new words and expressions, and only then write to their Hungarian penfriend. This helped to keep the communication going and introduce new perspectives regarding the issues.

The question may arise here, "Where is learner autonomy if the topic is set by the teacher?" Obviously, I did not restrict the whole letter to be about the topic I set each time. Students were still free to add other things and continue ongoing conversations about other topics, I simply asked them to add another topic too. As a result, students not only managed to write more, but they also became able to use more complicated vocabulary items and grammatical structures.

Student Feedback on the Project

My students wrote their last letter before the winter holiday. In class, we talked about Christmas traditions around the world and what they were planning to do for Christmas. As it was the last letter, I did not tell them what to write about; however, most of them wrote about their plans for Christmas and included their reflections about corresponding. Here are a few quotes from their letters:

> "*(…) Thank you for exchange letters with me. I was glad to talk with you ☺, I want to talk to you more (…)*"
>
> "*(…) This is a last letter. So sending letter is very good experience for me. Thank you ☺(…)*"
>
> "*(…) This is the last letter I send. I`ll miss you so much ….!! I enjoed and learned a lot of things to write letters for you. Your Japanese is very good! So, you will be good speaker more than now! (…) I hope you spend lovely life! Thank you so much!!! (…)*"
>
> "*(…) This is my last latter… I was glad to talk with you ☺♥ I'm interested in learn about other country's culture, so I learned about Hungary. I want to keep talking with you. (…) I hope you spent great holidays. (…)*"

Interestingly some of the extracts from the students' letters resemble oral conversation. They use phrases that make us feel as if they had been actually talking to each other. I see this as a positive result, as students had started to bond directly with their penfriends.

During the project, they got to know each other and learnt about each other's cultures. My students sometimes drew pictures to illustrate their letters. These all helped them gradually feel closer to one another. In addition, the fact that they included their personal reflections without being told to do so seems to indicate that they enjoyed the project.

Learner Transformation as Personal Maturation

The very first letter in the Spring semester and the last letter in the Autumn semester were written in class. It was a task for all students in the classroom. Project participants addressed their letters to their partners, while the rest of the class wrote to each other, to a friend, or Santa Claus. The speed of production was measured on both occasions, and a comparison showed that those who participated in the project increased their speed of production more and could make decisions about the content more quickly than those who did not participate. The structure of students' letters also improved: They had introductions, body texts with at least two paragraphs, and closing paragraphs.

Comparing the letters in the Spring and Autumn semesters, there was some increase in word count, namely from an average of 130 words, to an average of 140. Normally, students wrote their letters at home so they had as much time as they needed. The style remained friendly all through the year. The letters in the second semester also displayed the use of more complex grammar and an increased number of language functions, which, on the other hand, resulted in more mistakes. While there were very few mistakes in the Spring semester, most of which were spelling mistakes, in the second semester most of them became grammar related.

The post-project survey revealed that students enjoyed the project and felt their English had improved. Compared to the results of the pre-project questionnaire, they reported a higher willingness to strive to use the language learnt in class, rely less on automatic translation software, and look up words in the dictionary more often. Their letters showed the use of more complex language structures and vocabulary items in the second semester compared with those of students who did not participate.

The project also provided the opportunity for my students to act as native speakers, and as a result they discovered a new self. As native speakers of Japanese they wanted to be models, and they tried to use correct and easy-to-understand language. Even though the Hungarian students made mistakes, my Japanese students did not mind them, as they concentrated on the meaning. In addition, they appreciated their partners' efforts to learn and communicate in Japanese. Consequently, my students gained confidence, which I consider the greatest positive effect of the project. They now understood that one does not need to speak—or write—perfectly to be understood and they were much less anxious about their mistakes even in oral communication. Their attitude to their own L2 learner self changed and became more positive.

At the Learner Development SIG Forum, I managed to talk to people from various universities about this project. They all seemed interested. A few teachers who came from overseas institutions reported they had implemented similar projects in their beginner-level English course curriculum and had observed similar results. Although the correspondence took place between the students, we all found that teacher assistance, such as setting topics, fostered student communication.

I believe that projects like this can enrich the curriculum. Students get the opportunity to use their target language in authentic communication, learn about other cultures, discover their own culture from new perspectives, and make friends with someone thousands of miles away. Students' attitudes to language learning may change as they see

the usefulness of the foreign language, and their motivation may also increase. Collecting and distributing the letters, as well as encouraging students to keep the deadlines creates extra work for the teachers; however, it is very much worth it. I would love to continue the project at my present workplace as well and extend the project to oral language exchange also.

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Reader Response to "Learning Together across Borders: Correspondence between Hungarian and Japanese Learners of English"

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The voluntary pen-pal program that Agnes Patko initiated allowed her students to communicate with English speakers abroad and motivated them to use English to maintain their relationship with their partners. In her reflection on the letter exchange, Agnes empathizes with her students' potential limitations by drawing on her own experiences with exchanging letters after her trip to Germany. Since she had had a parallel English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) experience, she was able to avoid many potential mishaps and ensure that her students would receive many benefits from this letter exchange.

The students' previous education may be strongly related to why they find writing in English difficult. As an ALT in a public high school, I notice that English writing assignments are generally not assigned as often or are as long as they are in other countries. The Ministry of Education's policy for secondary English education does not provide specific guidelines for writing assignments, so the amount of prompts would vary depending on the school. I imagine that Agnes' students probably had a wide range of writing experiences. Public high school English instructors usually assign 2-3 writing prompts on average per semester. Each assignment would be only one paragraph long for low-level schools, two paragraphs long for intermediate schools, and 2-3 paragraphs long at the higher-level schools.

Although my students had the opportunity to write in English under my supervision, I did not know at first how to motivate them to write on topics beyond self-introductions. I decided to assign topics for their writing prompts. The topics would range from rhetorical questions (e.g., "If you had a super power, what would it be?") to responses to short foreign videos with English subtitles (e.g., a response to a *Buzzfeed* video featuring non-Japanese people trying Japanese food for the first time.) The prompts would flow as if they were conversations, and the theme would change every 2-3 weeks. Like Agnes, I also had them peer-review each other's prompts and write comments in English. By the end of the year, the students were able to express their thoughts more clearly and confidently. Based on these assignments, I learned that continuity is one of the main aspects to learner development.

By providing different topics for the students, instructors initiate the conversation for the students, but also allow room for progression. There was a sense of continuity in Agnes' pen-pal project and students could use English to expand their own insights on the assigned topics. This is mainly because they were exposed to different views and were able to familiarize themselves with the person reading their letters. My students' experiences were similar in that they were anticipating a response from someone else, and used that as a main motivator to develop their skills in the target language.

There are many features of this project that can be easily adapted to support the development of students' reading and writing abilities in other educational contexts. Introducing topics/themes and continuing them throughout the semester can help students retain and reflect on information. Instructors can also be more hands-on in the beginning to help students branch off into more complex themes and concepts. ELF could be utilized between teachers and students so that the students would come to use English as a tool for communication more actively. Since Japan is relatively close to other countries in Asia, I wonder if it would be possible to implement a similar pen-pal project using ELF with an Asian partner school or university. I am also curious about how these objectives could be adapted for larger classes as well. Interactive assignments such as Agnes's support the students' development by providing the key element to communication: a response. Knowing that someone is genuinely listening to and reading a learner's work can motivate them to express themselves as naturally as possible.

Reader Response to "Learning Together across Borders: Correspondence between Hungarian and Japanese Learners of English"

Adrian Wagner
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The first thing that struck me in this short reflective article was the author's memory of her own language learning history, "I had been learning English for at least five years before I ever had a chance to use it." Connecting our own learning experiences to those of our learners is a pertinent starting point for considering learner autonomy and language education in general from the perspective of both learners and educators. The differences and connections between language learning and language use are certainly matters that we all should consider.

As educators endeavouring to support the development of our learners, perhaps we feel that we are creating opportunities for students to use the target language in our classroom. We design communicative activities, give assignments, and facilitate discussions. Of course though, from the perspective of learners, this can be seen, and often is seen, as merely *study* or *practice*. Perhaps it is never real language *use* when it is only in the "safe space" of a classroom. It is using the language for the purpose of learning. Perhaps, only when language use has a purpose beyond the goal of language learning, outside of the confines of a classroom does it really become *use* in the eyes of some learners. Students are often told about globalisation and the international community without being given opportunities to participate in it.

The author of this short reflective article had a wonderful opportunity at the age of 12 to communicate with people from different cultures in a shared second language. It is clear that this shaped her perspective of language learning and instilled the value and opportunities that come with being able to use another language. Now as a teacher, in facilitating this exchange program,

the author creates a similar opportunity to the one that she had. Furthermore she has her students physically send their language outside of the classroom, forcing a transition from language learning to language use.

For me, an outstanding and completely unexpected aspect of this project was the use of both Japanese and English. Of course this added benefit for the students of Japanese in Hungary, while also ensuring the complexity of language used in either language was controlled so as not to be daunting or demotivating to participants in either country. From the perspective of the Japanese students, communicating with foreigners in Japanese would also broaden perspectives on the journey of second language acquisition. They could understand that even if an individual's skills in a second language were not advanced, if there is a willingness and effort to communicate, then valid exchange of ideas and information is possible.

I also appreciated the way the author dealt with two questions that I often struggle with while setting up autonomous learning programs for my students. Whenever assigning homework, research projects, or anything requiring submission of writing, I am in constant battle with the temptation translation software poses to students. The "old school" back-to-basics approach to letter writing by hand employed in this project was a neat side-step.

This project also successfully negotiated another tricky aspect of trying to foster autonomy; as facilitators, how much should we scaffold or steer the students in their choice of learning materials or output content? While it seems the author was somewhat reluctant about imposing topics to be written about the selection from the class textbook of the theme, superstitions, was a great choice as it could stimulate broader cultural as well as individual responses and was an effective way to both keep the conversation going, and shift the language use of the students away from the textbook and out of the classroom.

Overall, I was inspired by this short reflective article. It has encouraged me to think from the perspective of language learners and consider the differences between language learning and language use. Furthermore, I believe it shifted the perspective of the participants as it allowed Agnes's students to engage meaningfully with peers in a different country in both their native language of Japanese, and in the shared second language of English.

Emotion and Communicative Competence in English Discussion Class

英語ディスカッションクラスにおける感情とコミュニケーション能力

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Every day we experience a range of emotions in our interactions with different people and from the stories we see in the news. We all implicitly understand to some degree that these emotions can affect our moods, motivation, and actions. When it comes to the language-learning classroom, however, not much attention has been paid to how emotions may affect classroom learning (Benesch, 2012). At *Creating Community: Learning Together 3* (CCLT3), I had an opportunity to reflect on the emotional dimension of classroom learning and its connection to interactive oral communication. While my classroom experiences have informed my belief that an emotional dimension to communication is always present and plays a role in how learners were communicating in my classes, I was unsure of how to frame my own practice-derived ideas of emotion and communication to wider understandings in the English language teaching (ELT) field. In my poster presentation at CCLT3, I talked about my own classroom experiences with learner emotion and the approach I have taken to incorporating my own understanding of it in my teaching practices. I was especially interested to hear what other participants thought about the following puzzling questions: "*How is emotion connected to oral communication in an English language learning context?*" and "*Is being empathetic a good way to frame an emotional communicative competence?*"

In this short paper, I describe my own classroom observations of learner emotion and how it has altered my approach to teaching in my current context. I then present the framework of communicative competence and empathy that I looked at in the poster presentation. I also discuss some of the ideas that other participants put forward at CCLT3.

Observing Emotion in Classroom Learning

My recent interest in the relationship between emotion and communication originated while teaching a university course dedicated to developing English discussion skills for L2 learners in Tokyo, Japan. The curriculum of this English discussion class aims for students to be able to share their beliefs with others in English (Hurling, 2012). Each class lesson is organized around a given discussion topic and communication skill, with the course emphasizing output and interaction to encourage fluency and communication skill development. The course has a unified curriculum, and so each weekly discussion topic is determined by the syllabus described in the in-house textbook. While instructors can modify discussion questions, and learners have some choice as to which questions they want to discuss, each lesson is expected to adhere to the topics established by the course curriculum.

After a year of teaching the course, however, I recognized that in some classes, students were better able to manage certain topics over others, and that discussion topics evoked a range of emotional responses from students. I have observed learners looking happy, interested, and excited to discuss a particular topic, while other times they seemed reticent, unhappy, and sometimes even annoyed, frustrated, or dismissive. In other words, learners sometimes displayed emotions that suggested they were comfortable, and at other times,

they displayed feelings of discomfort. It seemed that less controversial topics such as university life, or university entrance examinations typically evoked the former emotions listed, while more challenging topics, such as those that intersected with identity, social position, and power, would sometimes evoke the latter. For example, several of the more challenging discussion topics focus on marginalized individuals in society, such as *hikikomori* (reclusive individuals who withdraw from social life), or the homeless. In a few sections of the course this year, some learners reacted by being dismissive or annoyed when discussing these topics, while others showed discomfort or frustration with their classmates' dismissive attitudes or ideas. These expressions of emotion were important because however students felt in a given lesson affected class interaction and environment. Learner emotion interacted in the class to create many different kinds of atmosphere and interaction patterns, and would colour ensuing discussions, affecting class dynamics. After observing various kinds of emotion displayed in learner interaction, I wanted to deepen my understanding about how learners can manage these scenarios better, and what I can do to facilitate a more meaningful exchange of ideas between learners.

Incorporating an Emotional Understanding in my own Teaching

Hargreaves (2000) argued that teaching and learning are "always irretrievably emotional in character, in a good way or bad way" (p. 812). Therefore, it seems vital to have a consideration of emotion reflected in our teaching practices. From my perspective, there are several reasons to consider learner emotion in my teaching, the most obvious one being that the classroom should be a comfortable space for learners. Second, by trying to grasp learner emotion, teachers will be better able to perceive learner experiences and develop the background information required to aid them in their learning goals. Piccardo and Aden (2014) suggested that emotion "helps us understand the depth of personal and cultural implication involved in language use and in the process of language learning" (p. 240). By reflecting on learner emotion in my own teaching context, I can learn from my students how to acquire a more robust understanding of language learning in my classroom, which in turn can inform a more nuanced approach to teaching. Third, incorporating an understanding of emotion in the classroom can help to further the stated aims of the course by creating more meaningful, rich discussions, and helping learners develop their communication abilities in English.

Recently, I have been adapting two aspects of my teaching practice based on my observations of emotion in the classroom: discussion topic presentation and materials, and learner skills development. In order to encourage learners to engage in a more critical analysis about a topic, I try to expose them to relevant information that can help learners develop balanced opinions. For instance, if I predict that some learners may not be aware of some knowledge on a given topic, like homelessness in Japan, I provide some background information as scaffolding. As well, I usually brainstorm with my colleagues about how to present topics in ways that encourage learners to have a more holistic understanding of social issues. The classroom materials might include information in the form of evocative images, short fictional narratives, or pertinent facts and statistics. The end goal of this scaffolding is that learners can reach well-informed opinions and achieve a better understanding of a range of positions possible on various issues. Presenting adequate scaffolding can reduce anxiety towards unfamiliar topics, and will give learners the tools to discuss a range of perspectives more effectively. Emotionally, this would likely reduce discomfort and make some learners less dismissive of unfamiliar perspectives.

Learners also need opportunities to improve their ability to manage difficult discussions effectively. I often try to encourage learners to understand opinions that differ from their own. In class, we talk about the importance of clarifying ideas by using follow-up questions

as a means to understand each other's ideas more deeply. We also exchange views on why it is useful in discussions to demonstrate active listening through reactions and body language. Sometimes everyone in the class will share ideas about what makes for a good discussion, and usually they find it easy to distinguish between good and bad discussions. Another useful activity is to have learners consider various points of view on an issue. For example, in a class on crime and punishment, we discuss what is the appropriate punishment for murder. In that case, I will have the students brainstorm different perspectives that would be important to consider in the discussion. Sometimes I will suggest viewpoints that I think are missing, such as the executioner's point of perspective, or the innocent person's point of view. By implementing activities that focus on building communication skills in a discussion context, I can guide learners on how to manage their own feelings towards different ideas or behaviours in class through providing tools to navigate discussion more effectively.

The Emotional Dimension of Communication Skills

Reflecting on the students in my classes, I have often thought that there is an element of emotional awareness inherent in good communication. While it is clear that there are certain learners who are quite skillful at expressing their opinions on challenging topics, there may be other learners who demonstrate a strong interpersonal awareness, exhibiting an ability to communicate well in group communication settings like discussions. For example, some learners exhibit a willingness to try to understand others' ideas, are open to considering different perspectives, or are good at listening to others. Considering those learners who are especially skillful in interactive communication and discussion, it often seemed that their actions reflected an emotional awareness of others. While I have found this challenging to explain theoretically, I am interested in understanding how a learner's emotional awareness may be connected to communicative competence in an ELT context. This is what I was interested in discussing at the CCLT conference, which I outline in the next section.

Theorizing Emotion's Relationship to Communication: Empathy and Communicative Competence

During the poster presentation, I spent a lot of time discussing the idea of communicative competence and how it connected to emotion. I asked other participants, "*In what ways might emotion interface with communicative competence?*" Some participants had interesting comments about alternative ways of framing communicative competence to include an aspect of emotional awareness. A couple of suggestions included strategic competence, or sociolinguistic competence as aspects of learning a second language. Another idea that emerged was that emotional awareness could be better framed as part of a general academic literacy. In other words, the idea that emotion may not only interface with language learning itself, but may be part of a larger cognitive skill that is both included in and transcends the second language learning context. I find this idea particularly compelling because it suggests that such a definition of communicative competence could be developed by drawing on other related fields, such as psychology or education studies, which examine relationships between communication and emotion in the classroom. It may also be useful to isolate differences between second language learning and other academic subjects, where student interaction and communication is emphasized. While I have not arrived at any conclusions about how emotion informs communicative ability in language learning, my poster presentation suggested ways to explore these notions more deeply.

One idea that has intrigued me since I started to think about emotional awareness and communication is the idea of empathy. When I reflected on learners who were adept at handling a range of topics and worked well with others, I often thought that their success could partly be attributed to empathy. They were empathetic listeners and communicators and could tolerate a variety of opinions. Despite this, one puzzle I have faced is how to teach empathy and whether it can necessarily be taught. It is also unclear how it connects to a learner's communicative competence.

During the presentation, I provided two ideas about empathy from Piccardo and Aden (2014). These ideas were interesting to me because the authors conceive of empathy as both an attitude and an ability, which could potentially connect empathy with the idea of a communicative competence. They describe empathy as an attitude that can be taken when there is a breakdown in communication. By being empathetic, "one must put oneself in the place of the other, essentially taking control of one's emotions" (Piccardo & Aden, 2014, p. 247). This suggests that empathizing involves a conscious decision to foreground the experience of the other, and so the "empathetic learner" is enacting a kind of self-control. In other words, empathy may help learners to manage their emotional reactions in order to communicate more effectively. Piccardo and Aden (2014) also describe empathy as an "ability to analyze a situation by accepting another's point of view, at the moment when this point of view is experienced or considered, which in turn may change one's reaction to the situation" (p. 247). The ability to accept another's point of view suggests a willingness to be open to changing one's opinion. Both of these ideas suggest that empathy requires learners to make decisions about how they will react to difficult situations and opinions that differ from theirs.

During the poster presentation, other participants agreed that empathy perhaps played a role in good communication in the language-learning classroom. It seemed that everyone could imagine this relationship between being a good communicator and being empathetic. However, there were no strong arguments about whether empathy would be the appropriate way to frame an emotional communicative competence. In discussion with several participants, I expressed my frustration with the difficulties of defining learner emotion and empathy in concise, concrete ways that connect it to other ideas in the field of ELT. One participant commented that he thought this is the nature of emotion in the classroom; it is inherently difficult to pin down. This comment was useful for me in that it reminded me that the difficulties of emotional description, including deciding on appropriate terminology or definitions, reflect the complex nature of emotion itself and its relationship with language and learner experience. While I need to do a more in-depth literature review on emotion, empathy, and communication in the classroom, it seems possible that empathy could be one aspect of a more global communicative competence that attends to emotion and the emotional dimension of learning.

Looking Forward: Future Classroom Research on Emotion

Presenting at CCLT3 provided a valuable opportunity to hear different opinions from other conference participants on how to connect emotion to communication. The experience has encouraged me to think about the relationship between learner emotion and communication more deeply. Next, I intend to explore the ideas of empathy and emotion in the communicative language-learning context through conducting in-class research. To deepen my understanding of this dynamic, it would be fruitful to gain a richer description of learner emotion, which I intend to research by looking at reflective in-class writing. Following an action research model, students will have a chance to write reflections on their feelings and experiences at the beginning and end of every class as a reflection paper. I have called this in-class activity "The Before and After Paper." I will

collect the student papers every class and provide them again at the end of the semester for students to reflect on their progress. By examining student self-reflections on their classroom experiences, I hope to improve my understanding of the complexity of emotional experience in the language-learning classroom. I also hope that the activity provides opportunities for students to become more aware of their emotional states by giving them an opportunity to reflect on their feelings on classroom involvement. I look forward to sharing my classroom research and engaging in an exchange of ideas about emotion and communication with other members of the Learner Development SIG in the future.

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Reader Response to "Emotion and Communicative Competence in English Discussion Class"

Lee Arnold, Daito Bunka University

This was interesting to read as you're raising some crucial questions that go beyond language learning and into psychological areas of maturation and the impact such areas have on communication. It chimes in with much of my interest—the subjective side of language learning and acquisition. In my response, I'd like to focus on two points you focus on in your short reflective article—the development of communicative competence, and empathy.

In relation to observing emotion in the classroom, you noticed how topics that center around questions of identity, social position, and power may make some learners uncomfortable. I'm wondering if this is because such topics may be hitting too close to home about their emerging identities and particular social positions. The discomfort may come from a sense of powerlessness given the array of socio-economic forces affecting them and their futures. They are doubtlessly aware of these realities but perhaps are not yet able to articulate or fully grasp them.

These realities impact learners' lives and will have a bearing on how much they are willing to engage in discussion, perhaps in the L1 as much as the L2. But is all this together the only answer? Is it also possible that students might want to avoid dealing with the discomfort of others about these issues? Some learners may be ready to face these "heavy" issues, but are also aware that some of their classmates may not be.

If this is the case, what you are seeing may be the growing pains of communicative competence as a whole in the L2 and possibly the L1 as well. You seem to intuit this where you say "the idea that emotion may not only interface with language learning itself, but may be part of a larger cognitive skill that is both included in and transcends the second language learning context." So, in broader terms, you may also be seeing how the emergence of these communicative competences is tied into a larger ontological framework, in which learner language development is one part of a scheme of maturation that is transforming them as whole beings with nascent adult selves. Perhaps the resistance to certain topics in discussion is evidence of a conflict within that change, a realization of a departure from adolescence into an "adult" life condition that does not necessarily confer power in dealing with harder social and economic realities.

This reaches to the point of empathy. Is it possible that what you're observing in your learners is an empathetic emergence out of concern towards their more sensitive classmates? They perceive that some are not ready to grapple with these issues, and where you discuss emotional understanding in your own teaching, you seem to touch on the possibility of an empathetic pedagogy. This term might be a useful way to characterize an approach to mature classroom learner engagement that reviews content that some learners may be uncomfortable with. It could also include broaching difficult issues and engaging with learners who may not seem to be ready for engagement, but who also may break through to such topics within an empathetic peer-and-teacher environment.

I would be very interested in what you explore further and what approaches you decide on, which, as you show, will require nuance and a gentle persistence.

Reader Response to "Emotion and Communicative Competence in English Discussion Class"

Blair Barr, Tamagawa University

Having had a chance to talk with Nicole during her poster presentation, I really felt that I could empathize with her motivation as a teacher trying to facilitate discussions on complex topics that trigger emotional restrictions to speaking. Several years ago, in an adult discussion course based on events in the news and media, I had issues engaging learners with topics such as *hikikomori*, the homeless, and other political and social topics. However, I felt that I was successfully able to change the teaching approach to help learners discuss these complicated issues of identity, society, and power with greater engagement by giving them more time to prepare with guided tasks. In this reader response, I will attempt to summarize the changes that I made while also considering Nicole's use of empathy as a part of communicative competence.

Regarding the students' feelings of annoyance and frustration when approaching complex topical discussions in real time, there are at least three reasons why university-aged English language learners might experience these emotions. For one, they must deal with a cognitive load that is difficult to discuss for any speaker, regardless of their first language. In fact, learners may have never even considered some of these topics in the past, so their lack of knowledge prevents them from carrying on a discussion with a peer even in their first language. Second, as language learners, they may also lack the lexical knowledge to express their thoughts on the topic. Thus, they would need to be primed with some of the language required to carry out the task. Finally, there may also be social or empathetic barriers to discussing complex topics about society and power with peers. Outside of class, these learners may typically discuss softer topics such as holidays and popular culture. Expressing strong views on society and politics could potentially affect relationships outside of the class as well, so learners may ultimately choose to remain neutral or disinterested. Although this last issue may be more complicated to resolve, I have found that we can successfully help learners with the cognitive and linguistic restrictions.

For myself, my own motivation to change the approach to complex discussion topics came from Willis and Willis's (2007) approach to what they classified as *problem-solving tasks* (pp. 93-99). For them, they suggested that there is a need for an extended priming stage to manage complex discussions. Nicole certainly makes a great effort to prime learners with images, narratives, and facts; however, learners also need the benefit of time, and some directed priming work to help them deeply engage with the topics independently before they can confidently carry on discussions. Much in the same way a teacher will often research their topics more deeply before presenting

materials in the class. My own approach involves research tasks assigned for homework that are often based on targeted yes-no questions that force learners to consider supported reasoning for opposing viewpoints. Once learners complete the homework, they generally return to class with a great deal of content to discuss, and they have primed not only their language, but also their opinions regarding the topics. In the end, the learners have improved their competence to deal with the subject matter and language. However, Nicole's concern still stands as not all learners come to empathize entirely with their peers or participate in discussions.

The approach is not a magic solution for all learners, as the social barriers to discussing certain issues may remain for some people. Despite the increased engagement and interest from many learners after an extended priming stage, I still find that some learners are reluctant to participate or do research. This may relate to Nicole's concern about an inability for some learners to empathize as a part of communicative competence. For these learners, perhaps the experience is crucial for true empathy. Lacking the personal experience to empathize, they would rather express disinterest in complex topics, and generally prefer to stay silent. This disinterest and silence may result from a cognitive and linguistic barrier, but it could also be a defence mechanism to avoid social and political conflict in their own real worlds. However, from my own experience teaching adults, a few people even blamed their inability to engage with topics on a lack of time, thereby reinforcing my belief that time is a crucial factor needed for learners to reflect on and engage with complex discussion questions. In the end, I have found that the majority of learners can alleviate their cognitive and linguistic frustrations with these topics when they have been given the time to investigate the topics independently, but certainly more work needs to be done to understand the emotions of those who continue to resist.

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Why Don't They Listen to You? Teaching Sports Students and Challenges in Classroom Management

どうして学生は聞かないのか？スポーツ学生と授業経営

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In participating in the *Creating Community Learning Together 3* (CCLT3) event hosted by Learner Development Special Interest Group (LD SIG) in December 2016, I was very curious to see how my audience would react to my teaching experiences with 25 students in the baseball team. The presentation itself went relatively well. Some people were interested in the teaching practices and what the results of my action research offered to overcoming the challenges that I had faced in teaching the course. However, in closing the presentation, I was feeling a slight contradiction about what I had just presented.

Let me begin my story by explaining what I had felt before taking part in CCLT3. Before the 2016-2017 academic year started, I strongly believed in (and still do) the importance of remedial education offering level-appropriate learning for those students in sports teams. Sports students' low academic profiles shape their feelings of incompetence and turmoil while they are in class; hence, they tend not to attend classes, sleep during the lectures, and use mobile phones, for example. I hoped that I would be able to get agreements from other university teachers to do something about this at my university.

For a number of teachers, instructing a mixed level class is a big challenge. Often, athlete-students are mixed up in a class with students who meet the academic standard of the university; hence, the sports students are supposed to be "equally" taught and graded. Luckily, the students in my course were all in the baseball club, and I did not have such particular teaching or grading issues. Plus, I had a great deal of teacher autonomy in designing this course, so it was possible for me to set up the course level appropriately.

Over the 2016 academic year, I had to invest quite a lot of time in designing this course. The course development process was not as easy as I had expected because I had to make the curriculum motivating for the students with low academic profiles. As a former soccer player myself, I had failed entrance exams because of my devotion to three years of intensive high school soccer practice. Based on my own experiences of academic failure, I wanted my students to at least find the meaning of being in the class and experience the joy of using English at most. So, I decided that the themes for the course would be *motivating* and *interesting*, and these are the two keywords that I kept in my mind in developing the course.

Course Structure

I had two main concerns in creating the course. The first was improving students' English proficiency to allow them to talk about baseball in English. Based on the pre-course questionnaire, many students wanted to learn baseball-related content which would improve their motivation to learn English. Second, given that they would have a chance to use English outside of the baseball field in an English-speaking country, general English (still related with baseball) had to be taught.

Speaking of their English proficiency, I need to take into serious consideration the wide range among the students. In broad terms, they were at junior high school graduate level.

Misuse of basic grammar expressions could often be found in their answers. They had many spelling errors that emerged from discrepancies between written and spoken language. There were a couple of students who couldn't spell their name using the alphabet. However, as far as I observed, their willingness to communicate was very high compared to "normal students" at the same level of English proficiency. The only-baseball-students situation worked to reduce their anxiety and stress about speaking in front of the class and making mistakes. This emotional advantage allowed me to include more communicative aspects in the course in the end.

Addressing Challenges in Classroom Management

The biggest problem for me in teaching this course has always been classroom management. This was the very reason why I joined my department's Action Research (AR) group although this project started when almost half of the final semester had finished. (And this is how I came to present on my struggles and practices to solve the issues at CCLT3.) There were four members in the group which was formed after Anne Burns—a specialist in action research—conducted a Professional Development (PD) session at my university in early November. In the PD session, Anne talked about the underlying principles and logistics of conducting AR and shared concrete examples of AR conducted in different contexts. At the end, she encouraged the PD participants to form an AR group and test it out by exploring the challenges that they were facing in their different courses. Following her suggestion, we formed a group to grapple with the unique classroom issues that we each had. AR is usually conducted with the sequence of "*planning*," "*action*," "*observation*," and "*reflection*" (Burns, 2010). For this project, I videotaped four lessons and had two project members observe two lessons in the course to go through the action research process. This became the major turning point for me to reflect on my way of teaching the course.

Before participating in this project in November in 2016, I was sure that something was not going well in managing the class. Students' energy level, attention span, and lesson tempo were far below what they used to be, but I wasn't able to detect the causes of the uneasy feeling growing in me.

Moving the clock a little further back to May 2016, my biggest classroom management issue through the year had been students' constant chat during lessons. I do not agree with the idea that the typical teacher-oriented learning environment in Japan—the teacher serving as a purveyor of knowledge, with students merely listening to what the teacher says—is effective in language education. As a researcher of learner autonomy, I believe that students can learn from each other once they work in a group where students share their strengths to cover each other's weaknesses (Murphey, 1989).

According to this principle, I created groups of four and had the students work on activities for a couple of lessons. The result was a big failure because they were too comfortable with being in the groups made up of familiar faces and couldn't stop chatting. Eventually, I lost control, ended up breaking up the groups, and made the traditional "*everyone-looking-at-the-teacher*" setting. This surely worked in controlling the class, and I felt that I had overcome the chatting issue, but I was feeling guilty about using this method for the peace of the class because this was not a teaching principle that I believe in. After a few lessons, I started looking at the bright side. I realized that I had succeeded in making an environment in which actually language learning could finally take place rather than a chaotic uncontrolled classroom. I also remembered that autonomy is a continuum, meaning that I can start from a teacher-centered classroom and transform it over time to a more learner-centered classroom where students can exercise their autonomy.

Participating in the Action Research Group

Participating in the AR group, I watched the videotaped lessons to analyze my teaching practices and students' attitudes during the lessons. I became aware of the causes of my worries that I had constantly felt while instructing the course in November. Probably I had paid too much attention toward getting things done during the lessons and taking care of those "good" students who finished the given tasks or activities. In other words, some of the students had been left behind in the classroom and had gradually lost their motivation to learn proactively. What I had witnessed in the recorded lessons was that students with lower proficiency were chatting, fooling around with each other, and falling asleep while I was giving instructions. Not only that, but the partners sitting next to them also got affected. Seeing this, I realized that this was the source of my unpleasant inner feeling during each lesson.

I started analyzing the causes that led them to behave in that way by using *Classroom Observation Tasks* (Wajnryb, 1992), which offers different points of view to examine lessons. I also began searching for solutions by asking AR group members to observe my lessons and look at the videos. The main reason for my students falling asleep during the classes was their devotion to baseball practice. The students were physically tired because of their everyday baseball practice. They nearly always came to my lessons after finishing full baseball practice and some classes for other registered courses. To solve this issue, I confirmed with them a policy that they could move their bodies during lessons or even go outside to get fresh air. During the class, I talked to those sleepy students to make sure that the series of options were available for them to take.

Second, I realized that the baseball-related English dealt in the course was beyond their ability to work on. This might have resulted in reinforcing their sense of failure and taken away some of the students' willingness to participating in the lessons. Because baseball-related English was context specific, it required them to remember and utilize unfamiliar baseball specific vocabulary and phrases on top of basic English structures and vocabulary items that they should have learned in the first place.

Specifically, the biggest demotivating factor for some students probably was the conversation tests taking place at the end of each lesson. I set up this 1-minute test to assess their performance in producing conversation structures they had learned in the previous lesson. I often shifted lessons to the speaking test three-quarters of the way through a 90-minute lesson. This was part of the autonomy-enhancing elements that I wanted my students to develop while taking my course. It leads to a learning cycle where students leave the class, check their strengths and weaknesses in producing the target conversation structures, and spend their own time practicing the structures. In this way, I thought that students could prepare themselves for the test based on their needs.

The pitfall that I didn't expect (or should have expected based on my experience) was that the lower students' proficiency level was, the less often they prepared for the speaking tests. Well-prepared students came to me to take the test and left the class early. As far as I had observed the behaviours of the lower proficiency students, they did not prepare for the test while they were waiting for their turn to come. Thus, they stayed the whole 90 minutes in the class but left the classroom without taking the test.

Acting on advice from my colleagues, I made two new changes to the baseball related English section although the changes took place right before the end of the semester. First, I took longer for scaffolding each activity. Second, I made baseball-related conversations way easier and simpler. Both more proficient and less proficient students benefited from this revision to the course. After the change had been implemented, the number of proactive lower proficiency students increased. In the meantime, the number of "*non-test*

takers" decreased in the last few weeks of the Fall semester. Higher-level students had previously kept their heads just above the water. Now with the change in the content, they had some room to help less proficient learners.

The third cause of the classroom management issues was my failure in getting their attention before and while I was giving instructions. Some of the lower proficiency students were not able to keep up with the pace of the lessons due to the difficulty of the activities. On the other hand, higher proficiency students started chatting or fooling around with other group members because they had finished their tasks already. Thus, the classroom was very noisy as the end of each activity was approaching. Observing the videotaped lessons with my AR group, I could realize how soft my attention grabbers were. Before watching the videos, I thought that I was making good transitions from one activity to another. However, the reality was that half of the students were not following me.

As for the solutions to this issue, I started using a microphone to make sure my voice reached all the students. With the videotaped observation, I was bewildered that my voice was not loud enough to be heard by the students sitting at the back of the class. Another solution I tried was to make a long pause to give a sign that the lesson was transitioning to the next phase. This solution was proposed by a project member because she noticed that I often gave a weak attention grabber and started instructions without stopping students' conversations.

After the Educational Interventions

After applying all of the educational implementations discussed above, I started feeling that my emotional burden was gradually fading away. The rhythm of the lesson became much smoother as the number of proactive and disciplined students was growing in each lesson. After a while the number of the "*non-test takers*" dropped over the weeks, and surprisingly some of them came to me to finish the speaking tests that they hadn't finished at that point.

The educational interventions were successful in two ways. First, students were able to boost their confidence in working on activities. I witnessed this through the level of students' attitude toward working on activities and willingness to share their answers with classmates. As each student built up their successful experience by completing the activities that were slightly higher than their levels, every successful moment led to pushing up the group confidence level. Second, I contributed to nurturing their attitudes toward taking English lessons. Compared to mid-November, I felt in December that they are more focused, responsible, and hence prepared for taking English lessons. With the different classroom management issues that I have experienced in teaching this course, I can pass the record on to the teachers who teach those baseball students in the next school year.

CCLT3 and the Future of Remedial Education

Now, I would like to address the reasons for that sense of contradiction that I felt as I finished my presentation at CCLT3. First, I was happy because my struggles in classroom management and proposed solutions had gained participants' attention. In the reflection circle that followed the presentations in my room, the classroom issues in my baseball class sparked heated discussions regarding struggles when we teach students with lower proficiency.

The greatest challenge shared in discussion was keeping the balance of "*disciplining*" students' behaviours in the classroom. We all agreed that university is not a place like Japanese junior/high school where teachers control the class with absolute power, and students follow the given rules. More likely, university is a place where students can

exercise their autonomy to learn because we expect our students to behave as adults and we treat them in that way. But the truth of the matter is (and my next claim might sound a little biased) is that a majority of the discussion participants reported the connection between lower proficiency and reduced accountability for students' behaviours. What I learned from this sharing was that teachers need to clarify their expectations and consequences for misbehaviours in the beginning of the semester and gradually loosen up rules as time goes. Such a statement might sound a bit naive for autonomy-promoting educators who try to push the idea of students taking responsibility forward. But again, learner autonomy is a continuum, and students who have grown up in a Confucian culture need scaffolding to take their own responsibilities in language learning.

My frustration—and this is the source of the contradiction that I felt in closing the presentation—was the limited amount of educational support offered to sports students in Japanese universities. The discussion group members agreed that Japanese universities should reach out more to sports students who are struggling from falling behind in class. Universities need to put more human capital and resources into academically supporting sports students in the same way that US universities, for example, have been doing for baseball, basketball, and American football students.

In closing this short reflective paper, taking part in CCLT3 gave me so many opportunities to look back on my teaching practices and philosophies. As I mentioned, I experienced the use of teacher power to bring peace to a vulnerable class situation in exchange for giving up the promotion of learner autonomy. I still don't know whether my decision was right or not, but I will try to look for ways of learner autonomy-enhancing classroom management which raise students' awareness toward their progress in language learning, foster a sense of ownership toward the content, and establish learning communities where students can learn together.

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Reader Response to "Why Don't They Listen to You? Teaching Sports Students and Challenges in Classroom Management"

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A group of student-athletes in one's classroom can potentially be the greatest gift one could hope for (well, in any case athletes can be a source of positive activity—more on this later), or one's worst nightmare. Student-athletes are often "the boss" in secondary school, and other students have often been conditioned to make way for their robust counterparts. An instructor who is outwitted, or worse, intimidated by student-athletes will invariably lose both control of and the respect of the class. Indeed, Tomita Sensei confessed that his biggest issue was classroom management, and that he did indeed lose control of his class, which led him to join an action research group at his university formed to address issues instructors were having with their classes. Videotaping and then observing the lessons with his colleagues allowed him to zero in on the core problems which led to the usual hiccups, i.e., tilting the presentation of the lessons in favor of the stronger students. Luckily, with the support of his colleagues, Tomita Sensei was able to admit that he was neglecting his student-athletes, and therefore made adjustments which brought dramatic improvements even though they were introduced after more than half the semester had elapsed.

Specifically, this included adding more scaffolding to his activities, making classroom tasks easier and simpler, and using a microphone in order to establish the authority of his voice and focus the students' attention. He thereby succeeded in addressing the student-athletes' hidden fear of being embarrassed on account of not being able to complete tasks beyond their level of understanding, while simultaneously legitimizing his leadership. For those of us who have participated in team sports, one of the unstated rules is that respect is only garnished to those who demonstrate courage and the willingness/ability to make others shine. By implementing the steps outlined above, Mr. Tomita was able to demonstrate he was an authentic leader, one who was capable of doing whatever it takes (even admitting he was wrong) in order to include all the students in the flow of the classroom activities, and making this imperative the strongest voice in the class.

His experience resonated with my own experiences in dealing with "problem" students over the years. Upon reflection I have found that invariably the root of the situation usually resided in students' anxieties at being shown up or losing face in front of others. After realizing this is generally the case, I have made it a point to structure the class in such a way as to include the lowest member in the flow of the class activities, even if this means using the student's native language when doling out activity instructions so that every student can participate on a level playing field in a timely manner. Regarding student-athletes, I have found that they can be a huge asset if their sense of competitiveness is tapped into. Creating quizzes and activities with points awarded to the winner has on more than one occasion resulted in transforming once motivation-challenged/"English class=sleeping time" third basemen and shortstops into vocabulary-devouring maniacs hell bent on stomping the

opposition, with the upshot that the so-called "good students" (often used to cruising in mixed-level classes) have on more than one occasion been moved to "up their game" to deal with these unexpected developments.

Where I once sought to minimize damage, I now look forward to working with lower-level students and affirming the great strides they are capable of if given the chance and the appropriate support, and my faith in that proposition has on more than one occasion been rewarded. Of course it needs to be balanced with a willingness on the part of the teacher to be firm if challenged by the insolence of youth, as well as with the ability to bring to heel the occasional saboteur. In Japan it is still largely the case that the instructor is the central figure in the classroom. Embracing this role and leading lower-level student-athletes to a place of security and mutual respect can be an enriching learning experience, a sentiment which perhaps Tomita Sensei would now also subscribe to.

Reader Response to "Why Don't They Listen to You? Teaching Sports Students and Challenges in Classroom Management"

Sean Toland
Nanzan University

This reflective article provides readers with a realistic window from which to view your struggles to create and teach a communicative English language course to a group of disenchanted Japanese university student athletes. While your reflection is situated in a higher education context, it will nevertheless resonate with teachers working in a wide variety of learning environments. My response will focus on the following three important themes that emerged from your article for me: the role of genuine critical self-reflection for teacher development, the concept of control, and the powerful effects of a group-based Action Research (AR) approach.

Many English language instructors would agree that examining their own actions under a critical spotlight is not an easy thing to do. Carefully scrutinizing your own teaching performance takes time, and it can generate a significant amount of discomforting friction. Perhaps that is why many teachers have a tendency to downplay any thorny situations they encounter in their professional practice. In contrast, you have embraced critical self-reflection and used it to look closely at yourself as well as areas that can be enhanced in your classroom. There were a number of striking similarities between the learning environment you described and a class of university athletes that I previously taught. Like you, I also had to devise strategies to deal with the constant chatterers, slumbering students, clandestine texts and tweets, as well as competing comedians, so your experiences were most insightful.

Your reflection raises the issue of control (i.e., "*Eventually, I lost control …*"; "*This surely worked in controlling the class*"; "*a chaotic uncontrolled classroom*"). Do educators put too much pressure on themselves to keep their students on a tight rein? If a teacher relinquishes control, will a classroom turn

into a chaotic circus? How can educators provide guidance without assuming control over the students' decision-making and learning? Can language learning take place in a *controlled chaotic environment*? Undoubtedly, many people would respond to these questions by focusing on an instructor's personality and teaching style. For example, "a teacher who does not mind a high-energy atmosphere with noise, kinetic movement, and group synergy will be less concerned with control than someone who appreciates a more structured classroom environment." While this explanation may sound rational, it is nevertheless simplistic as it sidesteps the most important issue, which is finding ways to enhance students' control over their own language learning.

You addressed the problematic pitfalls you encountered in your professional practice by joining an Action Research group. Are group-based AR projects common in Japanese universities? Why or why not? You did a great job of highlighting the advantages of this collaborative research approach. Did you encounter any unforeseen problems? Was trust an important element amongst the members in your research group? It is obvious that the video-supported self and peer reflective feedback helped you tackle a number of significant classroom management issues and improve the quality of your teaching. How did your learners react to a video camera tripod or cameraperson being present in their classroom? Was it difficult to provide critical feedback after watching your colleagues' videos? I thoroughly enjoyed reading your reflection and would be very interested to learn more details about your fascinating AR project.

Academic Writing: In Search of Effective Ways of Providing Students with Constructive Feedback

アカデミックライティング：建設的フィードバックの効果的な方法を求めて

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What is exploratory teaching? Who is the exploratory teacher? Research shows that it is not a new concept, but the one that has been around for a long time. The book "*Focus on the Language Classroom*" by Allwright and Bailey (1991) promotes the concept of exploratory teaching as a practical reality that mirrors what goes on in the classrooms. The authors define exploratory teaching as "teaching that not only tries out new ideas but that also tries to learn as much as possible from doing so" (Allwright & Bailey, p. 197). This book focuses on three basic points pertaining to exploratory teaching:

- there is a great deal to be learned from the results of the research that has been carried out so far;
- there is even more to learn from the procedures of classroom research;
- teachers, researchers and learners have a lot in common and therefore can learn a great deal from each other.

The main tenet of exploratory teaching is that "the teacher is the researcher's link with learners, and also the learner's link with research" (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. 197). This book served as a trigger for my exploratory teaching practice in search for effective ways of teaching academic writing skills to Japanese university students.

Teaching Context

I teach academic writing to second-year students at the tertiary level at a number of universities in the Kanto area. While the requirements at each university vary, I will focus on one class in particular at a university in the Tokyo area where students are required to write their graduation thesis in English. For such students, knowing the mechanics of English academic writing is essential for graduating.

The overall aim of the academic writing curriculum at this university is to help students develop their academic writing skills in English, (i.e., by being able to utilize English for expanding their knowledge in critical thinking, research skills, as well as the development of logic and cohesiveness). Students are asked to research topics including social, political, and global issues, and present their critical understanding in writing. Teachers are to help students develop their ease and confidence in using English, mastery of the research process and content, clarity in expressing ideas in speaking and writing, and critical evaluation and comprehension of issues. To better develop academic literacy, key activities are usually reinforced through repetitive cycles, (i.e., individually, in pairs, or in groups of three). These include but are not limited to:

- explaining notes
- brainstorming
- outlining
- mind mapping
- identifying issues and questions for research

- presenting key points and issues from research
- paraphrasing and summarizing information sources
- making and re-organizing notes on information sources
- writing journals.

Throughout the 2016 academic year, students were required to produce two well-researched academic papers of different genres (e.g., persuasive, argumentative, comparative) of approximately 1000-1200 words in length. The topics that students chose to research and write about ranged from English education in Japan and Korea, refugees in the EU, nuclear energy in Japan and Germany, voting age in Japan, women's rights in Saudi Arabia, the gender gap, and so on. The students' finished products (two academic research papers) were further exposed to multiple reading audiences: peers and the instructor. To sum things up, the process approach to writing lies at the heart of this writing course and curriculum: *Prewrite*, *Organize*, *Write*, *Evaluate*, *Rewrite*.

Working Puzzles

All of the 24 students enrolled in the 2016 academic writing course described in this short reflective article were second-year undergraduate students. During their first year of university studies, they had taken a writing course that focused on the development of academic writing skills. At the start of the second year, most of the class members could be ranked as upper intermediate to advanced in general English proficiency.

While I have usually aimed to create an effective learning environment for students enrolled in an academic writing course, I have often found it challenging to provide them with feedback based on *students*' needs. This may mainly be attributed to my assumption that students would be properly equipped with academic writing skills from their experiences as first-year university students. However, this is a myth rather than the reality. So, my main puzzles with this class were: (a) identify students' abilities and types of training, (b) identify the most effective way(s) of providing students with constructive feedback on their drafts/final academic paper, and (c) explore means and modes of feedback students felt most comfortable with. In this short reflective article, I will briefly describe how I tried to use feedback as a teaching tool to support students' academic writing development.

Student Needs

To understand the students' needs, I conducted a survey in English at the beginning of the first semester. I aimed to elicit students' responses to a variety of questions covering (a) general areas of improvement; (b) types of feedback they expect their teacher to provide them with; (c) their research interests (topics); (d) their confidence and skills in writing academic essays/papers; (e) skills they would like to enhance; (f) their use of English/L1 in class, and so on. I designed the survey to find out what my students' needs and struggles were and to explore how to better assist them with improving their academic writing skills. All the students expressed an interest in improving their academic writing skills and in learning how to better incorporate researched data in their writing projects. Further, fourteen of the 24 students had emphasized that the areas they wished to improve most were coherence and cohesiveness in English writing, a lack of academic vocabulary repertoire, and using complex sentences in their writing. Some also reported that they wanted to overcome a tendency to "use simple words" in their final written products, and become able to identify reliable sources for their research.

Peer Feedback

Some students commented that it was a waste of time reading and responding to each other's papers. In addition, students with weaker writing skills reported that reading their peers' papers was challenging and time-consuming. They explained that they had to constantly refer to a dictionary in order to understand what their peers had written, which somewhat slowed the process and made the task too difficult to accomplish. In such cases, students simply wrote a couple of sentences commenting on the length of the paper rather than on its content. A quote from a male student enrolled in the course illustrates this point aptly: "*I think this paper is good because it shows the problem and solution for it clearly*, *and has good reasons to make this solution. Moreover*, *it has some objective opinion and data. However, this paper is difficult to read; therefore you should use more understandable expressions.*" (Yuki's peer response)

Another important finding was that students were not used to openly criticizing each other's papers as it is not a common practice in Japanese educational institutions. Hence, some comments were very general and did not necessarily provide constructive and valuable feedback for revising and developing their papers. I also noticed that both male and female students were very careful not to hurt each other's feelings. Empathy was a driving force in formulating peer comments, which may be attributed to Japanese social norms in communication. The following quote illustrates students' attitudes toward giving feedback to their peers: "*Your paper is clear and easy to understand, and includes much information. I can know bad and good points of the topic. In the introduction, you wrote what you discuss clearly, so it is easy to understand and interesting.*" (Masayuki's peer response)

To change students' beliefs about giving and receiving peer feedback, I decided to provide the students with some training on how to write constructive feedback so that their classmates could make relevant changes, if necessary, in their drafts: They read and responded to other students papers' by reviewing research papers and problem-solution reports written by students in previous classes (anonymous sample papers written by students from previous years). I explained to students that the main goal of the feedback was to assist each other in finding pitfalls (if any) in their drafts, and also to provide each other with ideas and comments about

- what THEY thought could be interesting to add to the researched topic;
- what questions they thought could be addressed in their writing;
- what part of the essay should be improved (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion, references, citation in the work, tables/graphs).

In the first three weeks of this training I devoted 40 minutes of the class time to work out the mechanics of peer feedback with my students. While advanced students were able to read the sample papers quickly, others required more time to read and understand the content of the papers. Students were provided with a peer response sheet (adapted from Oshima & Hogue, 2013) and made relevant comments accordingly. They were asked to write their comments in either their L1 or L2. Their comments were then discussed in the class where each student had a chance to report on his/her peer response. The training sessions continued weekly during the first seven weeks of the semester with a gradual decrease in the second half of the semester. The results of this training created a positive atmosphere for students to comment on each other's papers without fear of losing face or hurting each other feelings.

During the first seven weeks of the course, students commented on all three drafts, thereby providing multi-audience feedback, rather than teacher-only feedback. With students working in pairs and groups of three at times, each student was able to receive feedback from two or three peers and me. To my surprise, through examining students' peer responses, I found that students' comments were more straightforward than my own

feedback as the teacher of this class. Students had commented that they wanted their peers to make relevant revisions so that when they have read it the second time around, it would be more interesting to learn about the issues that the writers had researched. In sum, the training in providing peer feedback to each other had a crucial impact on students in that it addressed the importance of feedback, its meaning, and value in the planning, revising, and the writing process.

Questioning Teacher Feedback to L2 Student Writers

When I provided my own feedback to students of this class, I always tried to include praise to raise students' motivation and encourage those students with weaker writing skills. The reason for including praise in my comments was based on a student survey response (mentioned above) where a male student reported, *"I need my teacher to praise me. If I am praised I can do my best and my motivation to improve is always high."* (Yuki's survey response) Yet students already had built-in preconceptions that if their written products lacked any grammar mistakes, their written work would meet the criteria to get an "A" grade for the course. I provided students with a variety of feedback, employing coded comments on grammar and collocations, focusing on global rather than local errors, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of the organization and structure, advising students how to make the papers reader-centered, and identifying research questions related to the discourse of a genre in question. I discovered that some students lacked the metalinguistic knowledge to comprehend my feedback and make relevant corrections or revisions in their future drafts. I also found that even advanced students occasionally could not follow the comments that I had provided them with on their earlier drafts. To solve this problem, I decided to use face-to-face conferencing where I could provide oral feedback to my students on their progress.

Exploring Teacher-Student Conferencing

Research in EFL writing indicates that, to be effective, feedback should be provided in a variety of modes, be focused on individual variables and preferences, and serve as the pedagogical tool for learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Peterson, 2008). The axis around which teacher-student conferencing revolves is the Vygotskian concept of *scaffolding*, providing a solid platform for the dialogue between a teacher and student. To ensure efficient learning outcomes as a result of this dialogue, teacher-student conferences should be carefully planned and delivered. One of the most salient issues that Ferris (2006) addresses is the right timing for the conferencing. She insists that earlier teacher-student conferencing is more productive and efficient in that students can make revisions and corrections during the process of writing rather than waiting for the final draft.

So what has worked in my class? Prior to the conferencing, students were given a rubric asking them to prepare a list of questions pertaining to their piece of writing. Some students in my class asked me whether they could use their L1 during the meeting in case they could not make themselves understood in the L2. Surprisingly, most students felt comfortable using the L1 during the conferencing, reporting later that it was easier for them to use L1 metalinguistic knowledge to clarify comments and feedback provided by the instructor. As the class was comprised of 24 students, each student was given 5-7 minutes to discuss issues related to their writing. Throughout the two semesters, each student had four chances to have a conference with the instructor. Those students who could not attend the sessions were asked to have a teacher-student conference after classes. After the conferencing, students were required to reflect on the outcomes and record their reflections in their *learning journals* (a note-book accounting for 30% of their final grade), which were a part of the assessment portfolio.

During the conferencing, I usually made notes about each student's individual learning variables; however, I did not have enough time to talk to a student and make notes simultaneously. As a result, I asked my students in English and in Japanese if I could possibly audio-record our sessions using a voice recorder. I also informed them that the recordings would be used for keeping record of their academic progress and kept safely in my house until after the semester ended. After that, the recordings would be deleted. As no student objected to my request, I recorded the sessions, which turned out to be more effective than the written feedback I provided them with on their first drafts. I could easily transfer the files to my personal computer and keep the record of each student's conversations. These records helped me to prepare for the next meeting and also see how each student progressed throughout the course. That is to say, I wanted to see (a) if students followed up on agreed points of discussion we had had during the teacher-student conferencing, and (b) if they made changes/revisions (if necessary) to their second drafts.

Continuing to Learn from L2 Student Writers

Developing English writing for academic purposes is highly challenging for undergraduate students, particularly when they are writing in an L2. I fully realize that finding the most effective way(s) of teaching L2 learners how to write English academic essays and/or research papers is not an easy task, as each student follows a different pathway of development and so requires a different set of responses from the teacher to help them develop further. What I am striving to do ~~is~~ to explore what works and what does not work with the L2 student writers that I teach. While some pedagogical techniques are successful at times, others require modification, adaptation, and adoption of eclectic approaches to teaching based on students' abilities, needs, and development of academic skills necessary to graduate from a university. In a word, I am learning from my students how to be a better teacher. The journey is an ongoing process of exploration with my students, in relation to research in the field. The puzzles that I'm interested in exploring next are how and why the deployment of writing journals may have a beneficial effect on developing students' fluency skills in writing in English for academic purposes.

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Reader Response to "Academic Writing: In Search of Effective Ways of Providing Students with Constructive Feedback"

Peter Collins, Tokai University

The experience of writing an academic paper can be an exhilarating one. When we have a passion for a topic, when we've learned about and drawn conclusions about it, and have a burning need to share a message with a receptive audience, academic writing can be a deeply satisfying process. On the other hand, writing a paper simply because we are required to can be a confusing, tiring, and, in the end, discouraging struggle.

As someone who teaches academic writing to Japanese university students myself, I'm particularly interested in Ms. Shaitan's efforts to see that her second-year students have the former, positive experience. Her practices include a prewriting survey inviting students to reflect on their own areas for improvement, training in peer support, and carefully timed teacher-student consultations. There are more things I would still like to know, however, about how these three components impacted students' attitudes toward writing as well as the quality of their writing.

A prewriting survey such as the one Ms. Shaitan administered is a valuable step for students to go through; their first-year course seems to have helped them identify areas for improvement in their own writing. Still, since she found that she had overestimated the writing skills they had built in that first year, I'm curious as to what extent the first- and second-year courses are coordinated; it seems there's room for improvement.

Ms. Shaitan describes her experiences with some of the perennial challenges of peer feedback, including students who seem overly concerned with discouraging each other with negative comments. The weekly training sessions help nurture a supportive classroom atmosphere, but I'd like to know whether, by the end of the course, students felt that their critical thinking skills had evolved. My own students have little experience even differentiating between facts and opinions in English texts; this makes it difficult for them to evaluate whether the arguments they read are sufficiently supported.

These students experienced writing for multiple readers, with both their teacher and their classmates responding to their papers. I'd like to know more about whether they kept this particular "audience" in mind when choosing their topics, clarifying their writing purpose, and developing their writing. My Academic Writing students represent a variety of departments and tend to choose topics specific to their own academic interests. Thus, they are unlikely to be familiar with each other's content; a marketing major researching and writing about stealth advertising, for example, may get only limited feedback from students majoring in architecture or tourism. As part of the prewriting phase, I have students discuss their topics and positions in groups. Through gauging classmate's understanding (or lack thereof), students will hopefully come to understand two things. First, their paper's message needs to be understandable to a relatively wide audience, and second, this understanding requires that the message be supported by clear organization, flow, and language. I'm curious about whether Ms. Shaitan's students felt that they were able to overcome knowledge gaps through the student interactions she set up.

Ms. Shaitan's idea of having students practice providing peer responses with papers from previous classes strikes me as an ingenious way to provide student writers with experience looking critically at others' writing. I agree with her that giving and receiving constructive comments is challenging for students whose educational culture places relatively little value on peer feedback. I would like to know more, however, about whether her students, initially reluctant to criticize and be criticized on writing, were able to synthesize peer feedback with the insights they gained from the series of teacher-student conferences.

I've enjoyed this overview of Ms. Shaitan's exploratory teaching, and would like to hear more about how the routines of peer and teacher feedback she established in her classes influenced (a) her students' comfort with English academic writing, and (b) their writing itself. On her pre-writing survey, they identified very specific target areas for advancing their academic writing; did she—and did they—see improvement?

Reader Response to "Academic Writing: In Search of Effective Ways of Providing Students with Constructive Feedback"

Martin A. Cater
J. F. Oberlin University

In her short reflective article, Alex describes her struggle to provide constructive feedback to her students. The problems she discusses are issues that many language teachers have to deal with. I can certainly relate to these challenges, and feel a little better knowing that I am not alone in looking for ways to help students become more autonomous through developing feedback and review processes for themselves.

Last year was the first time for me to teach writing at a Japanese university, and initial exploratory practice sessions revealed a real lack of learner enthusiasm towards any kind of peer review: similar to Alex's learners, many of mine strongly believed that it was strictly the teacher's job to provide feedback; others also expressed a reluctance to criticise the work of their peers. As sophomores, the learners had all had some experience of peer review in their previous year, yet any training, if it had been given, had not resulted in them feeling positive about their experience. Due to this feedback, I limited the scope of peer review work in class and spent quite a substantial amount of time marking work at home. This was possible because I had a limited university workload that year; were I to have had more writing classes, such an approach would have been impractical. Students responded well to face-to-face feedback in class although the time available for such sessions was very short, like Alex's, averaging just over five minutes.

Although my students had made it clear that they felt it was not worthwhile, I feel that my decision to minimise our focus on peer review actually denied learners the opportunity to develop valuable skills. The practice of peer feedback, when done well, should foster a sense of community in the language classroom. Being able to critique the work of others in a polite but effective way is not only an important academic ability, but also useful in the

workplace. As learners begin to value the input of their peers, the role of the teacher changes, allowing space for a genuine autonomy to develop. It is clear to me that Alex was right to include this in her lessons, and spend time focusing on how it could be effectively nurtured.

As I begin a new academic year teaching writing at a different institution, I am looking to take a fresh approach to implementing peer feedback in class. Although my new group is at CEFR A1 proficiency, the benefits of conducting the activity are applicable to all levels. This year, I plan to get learners to do a number of short, collaborative writing tasks. This work will then be shared with other groups, who will provide feedback with the help of an instrument focusing on specific aspects of organisation and target structures related to syllabus objectives. It is my hope that the collective nature of creating and evaluating written work will make it easier for students to give each other constructive criticism. A collateral benefit of reducing the volume of output will also allow me more time to give my own feedback. I fully intend to take on board Yuki's response regarding the importance of praise, and will also validate learner comments by echoing them in my own feedback.

As a fellow believer in exploratory teaching, I am sure that my new approach will create additional puzzles as well as address problems for me and my learners. But through a continued process of exploration, reflection, and learning with my own peers such as Alex, I am optimistic that small advances can be made.

Uncovering Teacher Assumptions and Developing Intercultural Communication through Heightened Local Culture Sensitivity

教師の思い込みの発見と現地文化に対する文化的感受性を 高めることによる異文化間コミュニケーションの促進

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With the official shift away from teaching prescribed linguistic forms to incorporating them as a part of a broader repertoire for communication (Amano, 1999; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2013), I, like many English teachers in Japanese universities, teach "English for communicative purposes" courses. However, when I began teaching them, I would often become discouraged and frustrated when I set up communicative activities and students would only use a minimum amount of English, and then either stop the activity and say "*Finished*," or revert to Japanese. When I discussed my frustrations with one of my Japanese-American friends also teaching at a university in Tokyo, she suggested that Japanese students need more structure. She gave me an example of a conversation activity that worked in her class where she used vocabulary cards containing target verbs and nouns, and the students would have a conversation flipping over the cards. I have used similar activities to introduce or promote vocabulary acquisition; however, in her case, the purpose of the cards was to assist the students' conversation. For example, on the topic of global warming, several vocabulary cards would be laid out, and students would discuss the topic with question prompts that were in the textbook. They would answer the questions while looking at the cards, and use the vocabulary in the conversation. When they used the vocabulary they replaced it with a new card. She found that students were able to discuss more when they could see the vocabulary in front of them. In other words, by *directing* and *limiting* the linguistic focus of the conversation activity to the specific set of terms in her vocabulary card activity, she found that her students were able to communicate *more*.

For me, this was an entirely novel idea. Up until that point, I thought that limiting the focus to specific vocabulary would stifle student conversation. However, when I spoke about this activity with a non-teacher Japanese friend, their response was, "*She understands how Japanese like to learn. Free conversation is very difficult for us.*" This comment caused me to start to re-evaluate my teaching practice. I realized that perhaps I was not thinking about my learner needs as deeply as I should have been. Like other teachers, I over-simplistically attributed students' reticence in conversation activities due to their low English proficiency (Tsui, 1996), or their lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes or being laughed at—not to lack of structure.

As I thought this over further, I started to reflect upon my own assumptions as a non-Japanese university teacher. I am Canadian and completed my Masters at an American university; I wondered about the influence of my North American education on my expectations for my non-North American learners. I looked to Barna (1994) who suggests six "stumbling blocks" that can affect intercultural communication. Of the six, I realized that *assumptions of similarities* and the *tendency to evaluate* may be the two blocks that teachers are the least aware of. *Assumptions of similarities* refers to the taken for granted, unquestioned belief that people share similar values and beliefs as ourselves. The *tendency to evaluate* refers

to the tendency of approving or disapproving the statements or actions of the other person based on our framework rather than making an effort to understand it from their worldview (Barna, 1994, pp. 341-342). I realized that I had succumbed to these stumbling blocks—I had been expecting my students to conduct the communicative activities as Western students without deeply considering their existing values and communication style.

I decided that as a window and a model for intercultural communication, before imposing my values onto my students, I should first make an effort to understanding their worldviews. It was only when I approached teaching with a heightened local cultural sensitivity—to understand and respect the students' background schema, and adjust my teaching to meet their expectations—that I began to see them take great strides in developing their communicative ability.

In this short reflective article, I will first share questions from my teaching practice and then examine the research to reflect upon classroom intercultural concerns. I will conclude with future considerations about my learner development practices.

Understanding my Students' Worldviews

In order to deepen my knowledge about my students' perspectives, the questions that I wanted to answer were: *How do my students best learn? What kind of classroom and activities are comfortable for them and will promote their learning? How do they communicate? What communication techniques do they use in Japanese that they can learn in English?* and *What is different for them about communicating in English compared to communicating in Japanese?*

Learning in Japan: Expectations of teachers and students.

In Japan, like in many Asian cultures, the teacher's role "has socially been prescribed as that of a model, a knowledge transmitter, a learning guide, an authority, an expert, a nurturer and a virtuoso, and the student's role as that as a receiver, a follower, an apprentice and an audience" (Li, 2003, p. 74). This is in contrast to Western education systems that tend towards teachers acting as facilitators where questions and discussions among students are encouraged (Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). Students are viewed as co-creators/facilitators in the learning process and the teacher can be wrong. Expatriate teachers with TESOL training often are prepared with activities that focus on a learner-centred classroom, the development of learner autonomy, meaning focused input/output, and encourage unplanned discussions (Li, 2003; Saito & Ebsworth, 2004). However, Western concepts such as autonomy, spontaneous discourse, and a democratic learning environment may often be unfamiliar to the Japanese learner and can be met with resistance. As I started to think this over more, I understood my friend's comment now that "*Japanese students need more structure.*" I began to look for patterns and create formulas for students to remember and develop. For instance, instead of introducing a topic, teaching them the vocabulary and then giving them discussion questions, I started with how to give an answer to a question that promotes more discussion. One effective pattern I introduced to them is an "Answer-Add-Ask" (AAA) pattern, where lower-level students focus on pragmatics such as turn-taking and higher level students can engage in developing and expressing opinions in a modified Response-Opinion-Ask pattern.

In order to meet student expectations of providing them with models for them to frame their output, I gave them many examples of English discourse markers that they could use to structure their conversations. Additionally, I used Bloom's taxonomy of questions (Anderson et. al., 2001) as a framework to provide the learners with many examples of

English question stems. In student reflections, a common sentiment shared by all levels is that they initially find creating their own questions and continuing a conversation to be very difficult; however, remembering the examples made it easier. After discussion activities where students were required to discuss one topic for 5 to 10 minutes, students frequently commented that the structured patterns they learned in class helped to maintain the momentum of communication and extend their conversations beyond their expectations. For instance, Kotaro, a second-year student, was surprised at how long they could talk about one topic and now wanted to talk more than the time allowed, while Atsumi, another second-year student, observed that asking questions was very helpful for her to keep the conversation going. Moreover, students felt that their English ability had progressed. For example, after a discussion activity, Shoei, a first-year student, commented, "*I feel my English improved a lot*," while Yu, a second-year student, felt he "*could speak more than usual*." Teppei, a second-year student, observed that using the ready-made phrases helped with communicating more fluently, and Saki, another second-year student, found the phrases so useful that she wanted me to prepare more that she could memorize and incorporate in her conversations.

Regarding values, Western, including English-speaking cultures, tend to be classified as *individualistic* with self-determination to achieve personal (individual) goals. This is in contrast to Eastern collectivist values that tend to emphasize a sense of self that is interconnected with others and the harmony of interpersonal relationships (Hofstede, 2011). For Westerners**,** being different and having unique ideas is highly regarded. However, for Japanese**,** being part of a group and being similar is seen as desirable. In my case, I recognized that students liked to work together, but I had thought that this was due to it being easier to complete the assigned tasks rather than a cultural preference. However, I now started to recognize the cultural implications of collectivist values on their communication. For example, in discussion they were much happier when they shared the same opinion than if they disagreed (i.e., happy shouts of "*Me too*" vs. silence).

In order to facilitate familiarity with new types of communicative activities as well as promote solidarity amongst the students, I now consider the first month of the year as an extended "ice breaker." In the first month, I have students do tasks working in pairs and groups with the primary purpose of finding similarities and becoming closer to one another. For example, they would form teams with team names based on one thing that everyone in the team liked (e.g., "navy blue" or "sleep"), and they would share their reasons for choosing this university. They would work on projects that they would present to the class and vote on. The secondary objective of these activities was for them to become familiar with interactive activities. Advancement of their English skills was a third objective, so while I structured the activities to use English I was not strictly enforcing English usage at this point. In student reflections, they made comments about how they came to class more eagerly because they had friends and wanted to communicate with their friends. They also mentioned that, because others were trying harder, they also wanted to make more effort themselves to communicate in English.

Promoting English communication while maintaining Japanese values.

An important concern for collectivist societies is the concept of *face*. Research has found that individualists have high *self-face* concern that leads towards dominating conflict strategies, while collectivists have high *other-face* concern that results in avoiding conflict and high *mutual-face* concern that lead to cooperating conflict strategies (Oetzel et al., 2001). As such the free-flowing style of discussion and debate commonly practiced in North America or Europe is unpractised in Japan because people prefer to avoid the risk of

offending other people. Rather**,** Japanese spend more time finding similarities or common ground through which they can develop their relationships.

Recognizing this concern, I began to teach discourse markers, strategies, and patterns that helped to promote *other-face* and maintain harmony in a discussion. For instance, in order to "save face" when disagreeing, the response in the Respond + Opinion + Ask/Pass pattern should be positive (e.g., "*That is a good point.*"), before stating disagreement (Positive Response + Disagreement + Pass). Students find disagreement much easier to give and receive when adding this positive statement.

Face-saving discourse markers and strategies cannot be taught in one lesson, but need to be practiced throughout the term in various fluency activities. By the end of the school year, at all levels, most of my students successfully structured their opinions using these patterns and there were significantly fewer silences in their discussions.

Most students mentioned that due to the frequency of practice in the class they could use the phrases more naturally. However, there were comments regarding how the psychological difficulty of voicing disagreement affected participation in the discussion. Rei, a second-year student, observed that while it was easy for him to discuss when he could agree with other people, it was difficult to disagree because he did not want to "oppose" others. Being afraid to disagree made it difficult for him to convey his opinion and therefore he was less active.

Other students commented that using the patterns helped encourage more honest communication. For instance, Haruki, a second-year law student, pointed out that by starting a response with a positive statement about the other person's opinion people felt more comfortable about sharing their true opinions. Shuma, another second-year student, commented on the Japanese value of *ocha wo nigosu,* which is to be ambiguous as a means to preserve good social relations. He mentioned that, although he felt that this "virtue" was comfortable for Japanese, it made it difficult to understand people's true opinions. For Shuma, using the ready-made phrases combined with the patterns that positively recognized the other person's comments helped to make an atmosphere where it was both comfortable to talk, and easier to understand people's true feelings about a given topic.

Some students even mentioned that they wanted to use the patterns to promote communication in Japanese. For instance, Chihiro a second-year student, stated that it was difficult at the beginning to use the phrases and patterns, but after using them in the class, they became natural and she started "*to think that I can use this way in Japanese discussion, too. If I say 'I agree with you' or 'I can understand what you said' before describing own idea, I can show how I think people's idea and give the reliefs. Therefore, I would like to use this [sic] discussion phrases in Japanese discussion.*"

Explicit teaching of intercultural differences.

Another way I was able to deeply understand my Japanese learner perspective was for me to not only learn about differences between English and Japanese communication, but to become able also to explain it in a simple way for my learners to understand.

In order to raise student awareness I began providing examples using visual aids. For instance, I found that most students believe that English is more direct, but they do not know why. I introduced Hall's (1959, 1976) work on *High Context* and *Low Context* cultures. In High Context cultures, such as Japan, the onus is more on the listener to understand. This is in contrast to Low Context cultures such as English-speaking America, Australia, Canada or the UK where the onus is generally on the speaker to make themselves understood. I prepared a slide show where I explain and give examples of High Context

and Low Context communication. Additionally, I used cartoons with Japanese speakers and English speakers that visually highlight various intercultural differences that can affect communications. Some explicit learning points include the difference between waiting to be asked for one's opinion vs. proactively stating an opinion, and cultural expectations about the way to communicate an opinion. For instance, in Japanese, it is common to say the background first and then end with the main point. In English, the opinion comes first and then the reasons. By understanding differences from the learner perspective rather than simply saying "*In English we do this, in this way*," I have become able to provide more comprehensive suggestions and explanations to my students, and, in turn, they have become more motivated to try different models of communication.

Future Considerations

For teachers like me who are from a culture that is different from their learners, the role that we language teachers have provides an opportunity for us to view our own values through an introspective lens whereby we can deepen our intercultural awareness. In order to develop intercultural communicative competence in our learners, it is important for us as educators to understand that our worldview is limited due to the assumptions that we either consciously or unconsciously hold. We must first seek to understand our students from their worldviews and then bridge the gap. The end result may be that our students do not communicate in ways that we expect. However, our purpose should not be to meet *our* expectations, but rather to empower our students to communicate *their* intentions authentically. We can do this by being mindful of our students' individual and cultural needs as we foster their communicative competence. Looking forward, I would like to pursue more research into learner intercultural communicative competence and develop activities that use more authentic examples of Japanese and English. In order to raise awareness and uncover teacher assumptions about how students from different cultures should engage with their pedagogy, I would like to develop a practical model that educators can use to identify intercultural concerns within their classroom. I am looking forward to exchanging ideas with the Learner Development community about these issues in the future.

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Reader Response to "Uncovering Teacher Assumptions and Developing Intercultural Communication through Heightened Local Culture Sensitivity"

Maho Sano
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Satchie discusses why intercultural understanding is substantial for both learners and teachers. She shares her struggles in teaching her Japanese students communicative English and explains different changes she made to her approach after a friend of hers said that providing more structured speaking activities was more in line with what Japanese students expect. That was in contrast to Satchie's assumption that more control over students would hamper the development of learners' conversation skills in English. This caused Satchie to realize that she was teaching through the lens of western educational values.

Reading Satchie's article brings to mind remarks that my students' have made like: "*My English is poor, so if I speak, that will be troublesome to my classmates*." and "*It is embarrassing to make mistakes*." I used to try to promote more open-ended speaking activities, hoping that my students would improve their speaking fluency. However, my students were reluctant to speak. From reading Satchie's article, I can see that I inadvertently ignored my students' cultural value of *face* saving. Students' lack of linguistic knowledge was one cause of their reluctance, but lack of knowledge resulted in reluctance rather than in having many students talking with inaccurate English.

Reflecting on this teaching experience, I think that teachers should be aware of intercultural differences whether or not they share the same culture with their learners and respect learners' own culture or not. In retrospect, I feel that I have unconsciously adopted teaching styles that are often seen as western, even though I was educated in Japan and got used to exam-based cramming until going to university. I came to believe that trying to speak without being afraid of mistakes and less-controlled activities were more meaningful. I got trapped by the "*assumptions of similarities*" referred to in Satchie's article: Our belief that people share similar values as ours.

Understanding learners' cultural values and communication styles is essential, but teachers should not let students stick exclusively to their own cultural values. For example, a student may constantly refuse to disagree with someone to save the person's face. This communication style may work on certain occasions, but the student will face communication troubles in another context. Our job, in terms of intercultural awareness raising, is to encourage students to go beyond their comfort zone, and be exposed to and understand different values and communication styles without downplaying their own cultural values. How to do so in terms of learner development in language education is worth exploring.

In encouraging students to be open to different cultural values, one thing we should keep in mind is that no student is on one end of the continuum of Western vs. Asian values. Learners, even from the same culture, stand on

various points on the continuum. Therefore, the danger of ignoring individual differences could be a risk whenever teachers categorize students into distinct groups of "Asian" and "Western" based on stereotypical views of the respective cultures. However, culture is definitely an essential variable; understanding and considering intercultural differences can contribute to the creation of a learning environment where learners can prepare themselves to communicate successfully in authentic communication settings.

Reader Response to "Uncovering Teacher Assumptions and Developing Intercultural Communication through Heightened Local Culture Sensitivity"

Trevor Raichura
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How much do we place our own expectations about what entails a good discussion (based on our cultural background and life experience), instead of properly understanding how communication takes place in our students' cultures? I could certainly relate well to the discouragement and frustration Ms. Haga originally felt, and this short reflective article gave me plenty to reflect upon concerning my own teaching situation and how students in my classes communicate and discuss.

What challenges me the most about this short paper is figuring out how I can integrate some of its ideas into my own teaching. In particular, I teach a class on debate, and as Ms. Haga suggests, using strong language to disagree with others (let alone crushing the logic behind their arguments) is highly counter-intuitive in Japan. Is it possible (and desirable) to have students preface their rebuttals with words of affirmation? Is it acceptable to reject the conventions of debate, which encourage contention? I suppose an initial answer to these questions would need to be fleshed out by looking at the course outcomes more closely, and perhaps giving them an overhaul. In the end, the skills that learners develop in the course should match their perceived future needs. In what cultural context will they need to develop arguments? What kind of disagreements and counterarguments can they expect to hear? Do they feel they will need to be able to affirm other people's opinions before offering their own (preserving "other-face"), or will they need to make their own arguments clear, convincing and superior to others' arguments ("self-face")?

As I thought through these questions, I couldn't help but wonder how practical it is try and help students develop a more informed understanding of communication in "English cultures." With the global expansion of English education, is it even true that interaction in English globally can be restricted to low context culture norms? Perhaps English communication in countries like Singapore or India is more "high context," making it more similar to Japanese communication than one might think. For that matter, as Japanese English begins to emerge as a legitimate form of the language, perhaps high context

communication in English will also become a valuable tool for students to acquire.

Speaking of Japanese English, the increased adoption of English into Japanese society will hopefully give more and more people in Japan a greater sense of ownership of the language still referred to as "foreign." The general attitude towards English that I often encounter in Japan is that "*it is spoken by people in other countries, but is completely unnecessary for everyday life in Japan*." On one hand, there is merit to this viewpoint. Most Japanese people conduct their business and social lives without ever having to speak a word of English. Besides that, the foreign population (the majority of which is Chinese and Korean) is still under 2% of the whole. International business can be either delegated to the few who speak English, or assisted by professional interpreters. However, this attitude towards English may not always be the norm—especially in light of the Ministry of Education's endeavors to increase the number of "Super Global Schools" (which will ideally enable more Japanese people to play active roles in the world, presumably in English). It may take years or even generations to see a marked difference in the overall attitude towards English in Japan. However, should English become a greater part of the Japanese identity, communication may *stylistically* come to resemble Japanese, while *linguistically* patterning itself after western norms of communicating in English. In other words, Japanese English may follow the grammatical rules of western English, but use a more roundabout way of expressing opinions, such as leaving the onus on the listener to understand the speaker's feelings. It will be interesting to see how perceptions of the importance of English evolve in Japan, and how those involved in language education adapt to the newly evolving practices in English use. I am also interested to see how learners develop communication practices that sit somewhere on the spectrum between traditional western and traditional Japanese communication styles.

Reading Satchie's article, reflecting on it, and writing this reader response have helped me to recognize the importance (and responsibility I have) of better understanding my students' worldviews, cultures, experiences, and perceived future needs, and to better meet my students in their contexts of use. As a result, I am trying new ways of making open-ended communication activities meaningful for my students, and I also hope to integrate some of these ideas into the overall structure of my debate class in the coming months.

Raising Autonomy by Negotiating Rules with Students: An Exploratory Discussion about Action Research into Learner Development and Autonomy

ルールの話し合いで学生の自主性を高める：
学習者ディベロプメントおよび自律学習に関するアクションリサーチについての探索的考察

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Andrew Tweed: Tokiko, how about if we begin by explaining how we each became interested in action research?

Tokiko Hori: I'd heard about the term "action research" (AR) sometimes; however, I did not have any specific knowledge about it until I attended a faculty development forum at Soka University in which Anne Burns shared her experiences with her career as an AR professional. (She was a visiting professor at my university and was teaching TESOL students at that time.) I was fascinated by the stories of teachers who conducted AR, improved their teaching skills, and got a lot of fruit from that. When Anne suggested trying a project at the end of her lecture, I put up my hand. As a novice teacher, I promised myself to try every opportunity to develop myself as an educator/researcher as much as possible. I did not have any knowledge about AR (sorry to admit this), and I had never read Anne's books beforehand and really was not sure what it would be like.

At the time I had several challenges with classroom teaching and management, especially managing a classroom of 25 freshmen with mixed motivation and English proficiency levels. So it was easy to decide where I would take action and conduct research.

Andrew: You are very fortunate to be able to learn and get support from Anne Burns. I led some workshops on this topic with a group of teacher trainers in Cambodia, and we used Anne's book (Burns, 2010) on Action Research (AR). When I met Anne a couple of years later she said that she had wanted to write the book in a way that made it easy for teachers new to AR to try it out.

I think it was a good decision to employ AR in your situation. While teaching a group with varying levels of motivation and English language proficiency is a common issue, in this case, using AR would help you to understand the differences in your particular group. Two of the trainers I worked with in Cambodia were concerned with a similar issue—this is briefly discussed in a chapter I wrote about AR (Tweed, 2014). They taught large classes of over 50 students, their students had very different levels of English, and some of them participated much more than others. The question that they explored was how they could get students to speak more in their classes. What was the particular question that you asked in your AR, Tokiko?

Tokiko: My questions were related to my classroom rules. The course was a mandatory English class for freshmen, twice a week. Students were allocated to the class based on their TOEIC scores and supposed to be in the same class during Spring and Fall semesters. My university surveys students about courses at the end of each semester, and as a reflection on the results of the Spring semester questionnaire, I decided to introduce three rules in the Fall semester classroom. However, I was not sure whether those rules were really good for my students, because they did not seem to work well. In particular, the rule about "unnecessary smartphone usage" had not worked as I expected. So I wondered what I should do with those rules to improve the learning environment.

We, AR project members, were in Anne's office brainstorming what we could do for our AR attempts. I admitted my concerns about classroom rules, and Anne suggested involving the students in solving these problems. I was very lucky to have such helpful advice from her, and I decided to negotiate about the existing classroom rules with my students.

The first step I took was to allocate 30 minutes of class time for this negotiation. I started by explaining that those rules resulted from reflection to their responses to the semester-end questionnaire. I told my students that university students have more freedom and responsibility for their own learning, just as they have rights of voting and marriage because they are already regarded as adults. Discussion took place in small groups of three or four, which were randomly assigned. After 10 minutes, each group shared their opinions. Surprisingly, their responses were basically the same. There was more variety of opinions when they were discussing in groups, but no one disagreed or asked for any change to those rules. I wondered whether this was because of peer pressure or the well-known Japanese cultural norm of group-oriented behavior. At the time, I thought that this negotiation had failed, since there were no changes and no critical or creative opinions, which I had expected to hear from my students.

Andrew: It sounds like you got started off in a good direction. One of the key points of AR is to select a problem, issue, or puzzle that you would like to explore for the purposes of making some positive change. I like the idea of involving students in discussing issues. Sometimes just letting them know that there is an issue can make a difference, as students and teachers focus on different things and have different perspectives on learning when they come together in a classroom. Having these discussions with students can raise their awareness of issues they had not previously considered. In your case, however, the students did not suggest any new ideas. That must have been frustrating. I'm curious about the three rules that you mention. What were these three rules and why did you decide to focus on them?

Tokiko: The first rule was allowing students to sleep in classroom. There were 30-45 minutes of free reading and/or watching time almost every class. Especially when the lesson was conducted in the CALL room once in a week, students were to choose materials by themselves. Books with CDs and some DVD titles were provided, and they were also allowed to watch YouTube videos. We call this "*free reading*" and "*free watching*." Since this involved independent activity, some students fell asleep or struggled not to sleep. I know many teachers hate students sleeping in the classroom, but I believe people need so-called "power nap" sometimes, and set up this rule. The second and third rules were purely in response to my students' comments. A couple of students were upset that a few students were checking SNSs or web comics on their smartphones in the classroom. Those kinds of behaviors distracted other students, so the second rule addressed that. The third rule focused on students going out of the classroom during the lesson. The three rules that we agreed on are shown in Figure 1.

Andrew: I think it is interesting that you and your class agreed on these rules. While there are also classroom rules that might be related to academics (e.g., percentage of L1 vs. L2 spoken during class; homework lateness policies, etc.), these rules are related to students' individual rights in the classroom. I imagine that the students felt that they were respected and treated like adults because you involved them in making these rules and allowed some flexibility.

Figure 1. Negotiated Rules

Sleeping in class:
You are allowed to sleep 15 – 30 mins in class.

Your partner should set the timer for 15 mins and then wake you up. Sleeping more than 30 mins = absent.

Unnecessary smartphone / cell phone usage:
If you are spotted unnecessarily using your smartphone for things like LINE or games during class, it will be counted as **1 out.**
2 outs = 1 absence.

* You may use your smartphone if you ask the instructor first, or if the instructor indicates you should use it.

Leaving the classroom:
You may leave the classroom to go to the toilet if you ask the teacher before you leave the classroom. However, 30 mins or more out from classroom is regarded as an absence.

Now I'm wondering what you did next. Anne Burns and others talk about the cycle of AR, and that this cycle does not always move in one direction. Sometimes things do not go as planned so we have to go backwards. What did you do when your students didn't give you any new ideas regarding these three rules?

Tokiko: That's so true. When people notice that there is a problem, it raises their awareness of the issue and sometimes solves the problems. According to my memo from Anne's lecture, I understand that there are four phases in AR: *Plan, Act, Observe,* and *Reflect.* Once I had taken *action*, I didn't do anything about that. Instead, I *observed* students' behavior with a slight hope of it changing.

About two weeks passed, and I was wondering why students in that particular class started to submit their homework much more than students in another class. Regarding the classroom rules, I could see that their awareness of those rules had grown slightly and that their behavior had changed a little—but not so much. However, I was surprised to see more and more students in that class starting to submit homework regularly, especially for the vocabulary development project, which was due by the end of semester. That project consisted of five worksheets of word lists that students should learn and master at their own pace. In contrast, regarding the other class (who were also freshmen, had the same proficiency level, but were from a different faculty), their attitude during class time was always good, but few students had submitted their vocabulary worksheets. It is important to point out that I had not negotiated any classroom rules with this other group.

This made me wonder whether there might be a connection between negotiating rules and the increased submission rate. I hypothesized that negotiating rules raised students' ownership of the class. Accordingly, the sense of ownership resulted in an increase in the

students' autonomy. In the end, I found an article that helped me to understand this situation. Stefanou, Perencevich, Dicintio & Turner (2004) propose three types of autonomy support:

- organizational autonomy support
- procedural autonomy support
- cognitive autonomy support,

and argue that varying combinations of those autonomy supports lead to different classroom outcomes. In my case, it seemed that, by negotiating rules with students, the class had become high in organizational autonomy support. Both of my classes were already high in both procedural autonomy support and cognitive autonomy support, so the difference between the two classes could, from this point of view, be attributed to the level of organizational autonomy support.

Andrew: I agree with you that these rules are related to organizational autonomy, but I still have some questions. What is the relationship between these changes in organizational autonomy and the changes in the students handing in the vocabulary homework? Do you have any data which points to a link between these two changes?

Tokiko: Before explaining my understanding about these changes, let me introduce those three categories of autonomy support and associated strategies by Stefanou et al. (2004):

Table 1. Strategies Associated with Different Features of Autonomy Support (Stefanou et al., 2004)

Organizational Autonomy Support	*Procedural Autonomy Support*	*Cognitive Autonomy Support*
Students are given opportunities to: ● choose group members ● choose evaluation procedure ● take responsibility of due dates for assignments ● participate in creating and implementing classroom rules ● choose seating arrangement	Students are given opportunities to: ● choose materials to use in class projects ● choose the way competence will be demonstrated ● display work in an individual manner ● discuss their wants ● handle materials	Students are given opportunities to: ● discuss multiple approaches and strategies ● find multiple solutions to problems ● justify solutions for the purpose of sharing expertise ● have ample time for decision making ● be independent problem solvers with scaffolding ● re-evaluate errors ● receive informational feedback ● formulate personal goals or realign task to correspond with interest ● debate ideas feely ● have less teacher talk time; more teacher listening time ● ask questions

According to the table, participating in creating and implementing classroom rules is under organizational autonomy support as I mentioned above. Likewise, my classes

included procedural and cognitive support such as choosing the way of demonstrating competence and receiving cognitive autonomy support. For example, during "*free reading*" and "*free watching*" time, students made notes in a "*study report*" about what they learned from the material they chose.

As their teacher, I encouraged students to write down their reflections, including difficult words or phrases, and questions or opinions about the contents and/or language. Students were allowed to write both in English and Japanese. English was recommended but not forced. So some students wrote totally in English, but other students preferred to write in Japanese. Some even drew pictures to illustrate what they learned from the books she read. At the end of the activity, students shared their study reports with each other. Later, students received my comments on their reports as well as responses to their questions. However, in most cases, those responses were useful information or strategies to find the answers by themselves, which could be regarded as a form of "*cognitive autonomy*" support.

To come back to your question, Andrew, in terms of actual data, I don't have specific numbers now. However, more than half of the students of that particular class handed in vocabulary homework while only a few students in the other class did when I noticed the differences between the two groups. As I explained already, both of my classes had a lot of procedural and cognitive autonomy support. The only difference was the negotiation of rules (in other words, additional organizational autonomy support for one group). As a consequence, I hypothesized those increases in handing-in rate were connected to raising their autonomy, but I was not sure.

This also led me to reflect on my personal beliefs about language learning and teaching. After 10 years of working professionally as a freelance translator, I really knew well that grammar-translation methods have limitations with regard to language acquisition. I first came across extensive reading about seven years ago, and experienced language acquisition with minimal L1 support. That experience increased my interest in implicit language learning (i.e., extensive reading/listening, and casual speaking/writing), so I conducted some research on longitudinal implicit language learning of adult learners. My teaching beliefs are also rooted in value-creating (創価=soka) education, which my university is named after (Makiguchi, 1972). Value-creating pedagogy argues that the "happiness" of students is the purpose of education, and that the meaning of student happiness is the capacity to develop oneself and contribute to society by creating "values" (Ikeda, 1996).

Based on those beliefs, I designed the course to guide students to be users of English rather than learners of English—especially a user of English who can contribute to others using English as a tool of communication. So, I put greater emphasis on students' active learning and fluency development. For example, students engaged in quick writing (for five minutes, because they were basic level) for fluency development. Speaking practice starts from preparing to express their own opinions or information to lower their affective filter and to personalize their learning as much as possible. On the other hand, the textbook was used for language-focused learning, especially when grammatical items were explained. To practice those grammatical items, students were engaged in various games, pair work, and group activities, which is common in active learning classroom. Furthermore, I gave "*Express Yourself to the World*" as the theme of their final projects. For this project students were to find the way to connect themselves to the world by using English as a communication tool. I prepared two online platforms (a class blog and YouTube channel) for them to present their projects, allowing them to use other ways too if they wanted to.

So one student made a beautiful pamphlet of Japanese castles for international students, and another student made a picture book for kindergarten children.

Andrew: Your students were very lucky to have you as their teacher! What you describe is a very interesting approach towards conducting an English course. Fukuda and colleagues (Fukuda, Sakata, & Takeuchi, 2011; Fukuda, Sakata, & Pope, 2015) took a similar approach. They argued that many Japanese university students have been made to learn English, for example, to pass tests, and have lost interest and motivation to learn. In response to this issue, as well as in recognition of the belief that a focus on autonomy promotes lifelong learning, they decided to create a course in which the students have the freedom to set their own goals, plan what they would do, select their own learning activities and materials, and evaluate their own learning. And just like with your class, this was still a required class. In addition to promoting self-directed learning, the instructors actively supported students' needs, in terms of autonomy, relatedness, and competence, which are the three needs emphasized by Ryan and Deci (2000) to help students become self-determined, or, motivated. Fukuda and colleagues did not measure gains in language proficiency, but they did measure students' changes in motivation by employing validated questionnaires measuring levels of "*amotivation*," "*extrinsic motivation*," and "*intrinsic motivation*." They reported a general trend of students moving in the direction of intrinsic motivation.

To return to your AR project, let me see if I understand the outcome and your conclusion. You negotiated rules with one class. By involving your students in making these rules, which were about going out of the class, sleeping in class, and smartphone use, the class had more *organizational autonomy*. After these rules were agreed on, you noticed a change, which was that students were taking more responsibility for turning in their vocabulary worksheets. The task of students doing their vocabulary worksheets can be classified as both *procedur*al and *organizational autonomy*. You also noticed an increase in students doing more extensive reading and joining which could be labeled under *procedural autonomy*. While another class you were teaching was a good class, you did not negotiate classroom rules with them, and you did not notice the same kind of changes in their behaviors. As a result of your observations, you hypothesize that by negotiating rules with students, which is classified as *organizational autonomy*, these students began to exhibit greater autonomy, which is associated with *procedural autonomy*. Does this sound accurate to you?

Tokiko: Yes, I think you articulated all the points I discussed above. And the work of Fukuda et al. (2011, 2015) has given me other insights to improve my teaching. Thank you, Andrew.

Andrew: I don't think it is a leap to say that one kind of autonomy can influence another kind of autonomy. Going back to self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2000) claim that autonomy-supportive teaching can lead to more internalized forms of motivation. Considering that perspective on your findings, it is possible that your autonomy-supportive teaching was motivating for the students, and that this motivation led them to be more proactive and take more responsibility for their own learning.

I'm glad that we have had the opportunity to have this discussion about AR as I am also interested in interventions related to learner autonomy. I currently work as a learning advisor in a university self-access center. In this work environment, self-directed learning is the norm. However, one of our key challenges is to provide the appropriate amount of structure and support for the students while the learner still remains in control of the learning process. Another concern of mine, which many EFL educators in Japan share, is how to increase student motivation, which is so important for students learning in self-

access centers. I would like to undertake AR that explores alternative ways of offering structure and support to students in self-access centers as well as new methods for increasing student motivation.

How about you, Tokiko? Do you have any plans to for any future AR projects?

Tokiko: As you mentioned, balancing structure and support while allowing students to take responsibility for their learning is very challenging. Now I have all data from those classes and noticed the gap between the lowest and highest scores of TOEIC is much bigger in the class where I negotiated the three rules. Even though more than 20% of the students in both classes increased TOEIC scores by around 100 points, the scores of several students in that particular class noticeably dropped. Why did this happen? According to Stefanou (2004), the combination of "*low in organizational autonomy support*" with "*high in procedural and cognitive autonomy support*" leads to the best performance outcomes. I am therefore planning to re-design the course next academic year with better structure, and more powerful procedural autonomy support and cognitive autonomy support to decrease the gap. So, my new question at this point is "*How can I decrease the gap among students' performance outcomes by constructing well-organized, but flexible and individualized language learning in and outside of the classroom?*"

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