LD SIG 2017 GRANT AWARDEE REPORTS
研究助成金受賞者の報告

Takeaways and Practical Applications from JALTCALL 2017
JALTCALL 2017 における成果と実践的活用

Daniel G. C. Hougham ダニエル・G. C.・ホフム
Hiroshima University

The JALTCALL 2017 conference was held at Matsuyama University in June, and I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to attend numerous presentations there, two of which stood out to me as being of particular relevance and importance to learner development: (a) an interactive poster presentation titled *Online testing for learner feedback and development* by Blair Barr & Brett Milliner (of Tamagawa University) as part of the LD SIG Forum, and (b) a show-and-tell presentation titled *Building and learning together with Quizlet* by Blair Barr (of Tamagawa University). This reflective report will focus on what the main takeaways from these two presentations were for me, from a learner development perspective, and how I have already been able to make use of them, and plan on making further use of them to encourage learner development in my university teaching in the near future.

Learner development via online testing & timely feedback

As its title suggests, *Online testing for learner feedback and development* by Barr and Milliner looked at how online testing can be beneficial for learners by providing them with helpful and timely feedback. Sharing their numerous experiences with viewing and interacting with online test results, the presenters reported on the results of a survey of their students' (N=190) impressions of doing online tests with immediate feedback. The survey was conducted after students had completed several computer-assisted language tests either via Blackboard Learn or Google Forms, as well as M-Reader quizzes. The findings provided some fascinating answers to some very interesting questions including what the advantages and disadvantages of online tests/homework are compared to the advantages and disadvantages of paper-based tests/homework.

One of the main points I took away from the discussion was that students clearly recognize and appreciate the benefits of online testing, including convenience, ease/quickness of completion as well as the immediacy of feedback. Another takeaway for me was that many students responded that online tests are not without some disadvantages, especially their dependency on internet connectedness and the possibility of submission or input errors. Student responses also indicated that many of them see some advantages of doing paper-based tests/homework, particularly the positive effect that writing down their answers directly has on memory. Respondents also mentioned that paper-based tests have disadvantages such as time commitment, greater requirement of effort, and inconvenience.

What was of particular note was that a large majority (76%) of their students preferred doing tests and homework online (with feedback), with an equal number indicating that they have taken computer-assisted language tests again for revision or self-study purposes. In other words,

most of the students expressed a preference for online tests over paper-based tests, and many of them found online tests beneficial enough to do them again. For me, what stood out was that the use of online tests can be an effective and efficient way not only for teachers to manage assessment, homework, and other classroom tasks, but also, more importantly, for learners to receive and reflect on the timely feedback. Learning quickly from their mistakes, students are better able to become self-directed and autonomous learners.

Encouraged by these insightful and promising results, as well as the helpful related information that Milliner and Barr (2017) have recently published, I am glad to report that I have since been able to conduct some online tests and quizzes using some of the methods they introduced, namely Google Forms and Google Sheets with the add-on applications Flubaroo and FormCreator, with much success and positive student feedback. After several weeks of doing weekly vocabulary quizzes via Google Forms, I anonymously surveyed in the spring of this year two classes of English majors (N = 45) at a private university regarding the extent to which they agree with the statement: *"I like the Google Forms system which lets me know my score and answers by email soon after doing each online vocabulary quiz" (*Google Forms で Vocabulary(語彙)クイズをした後、メールですぐ、点数や答えを知るシステムが好きだ。). Students responded using a Likert-style scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 4 *strongly agree.*
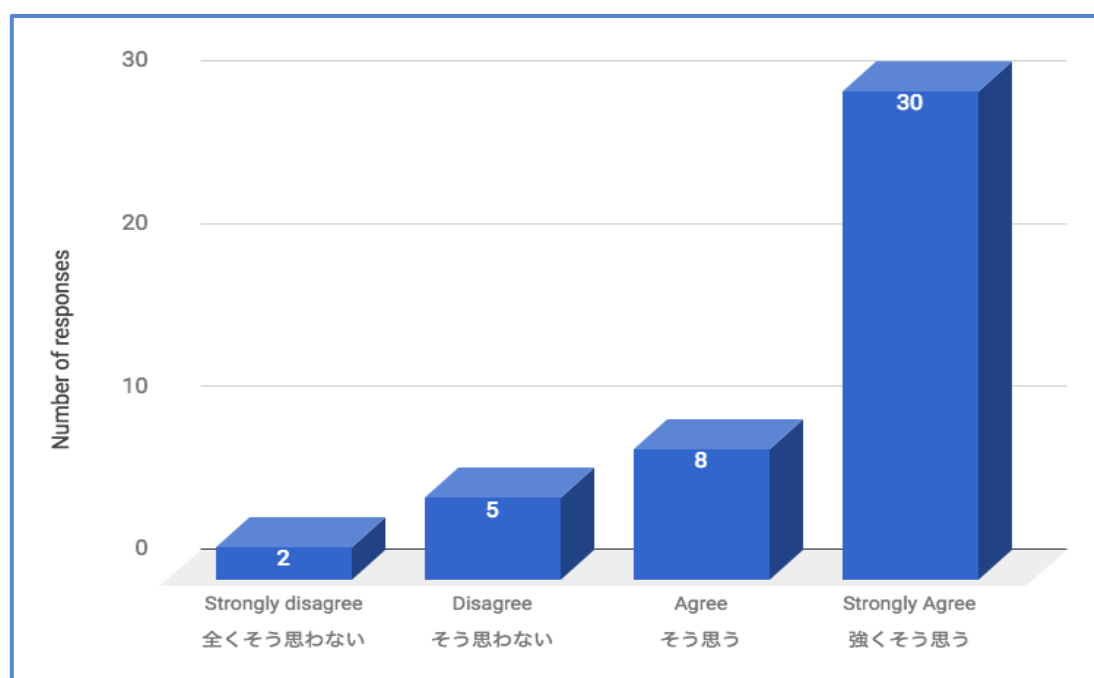

Figure 1. Student feedback about online testing (vocabulary quizzes) (N=45)

Figure 1 shows that a very large majority (84%) of my students agreed or strongly agreed that they like the online testing system that was used to conduct quizzes and provide immediate feedback.

In addition, after conducting various online listening tests via Google Forms in the spring semester, I surveyed 3 classes of non-English majors (N=94) at a prefectural university with a similar question. Using a Likert-style scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 4 *strongly agree,* students were

asked to what extent they agree with the statement: *"I like the Google Forms system which lets me know my score and answers by email soon after doing* *an online listening test"* (Google Forms でリスニングテストをした後、メールですぐ、点数や答えを知るシステムが好きだ。)
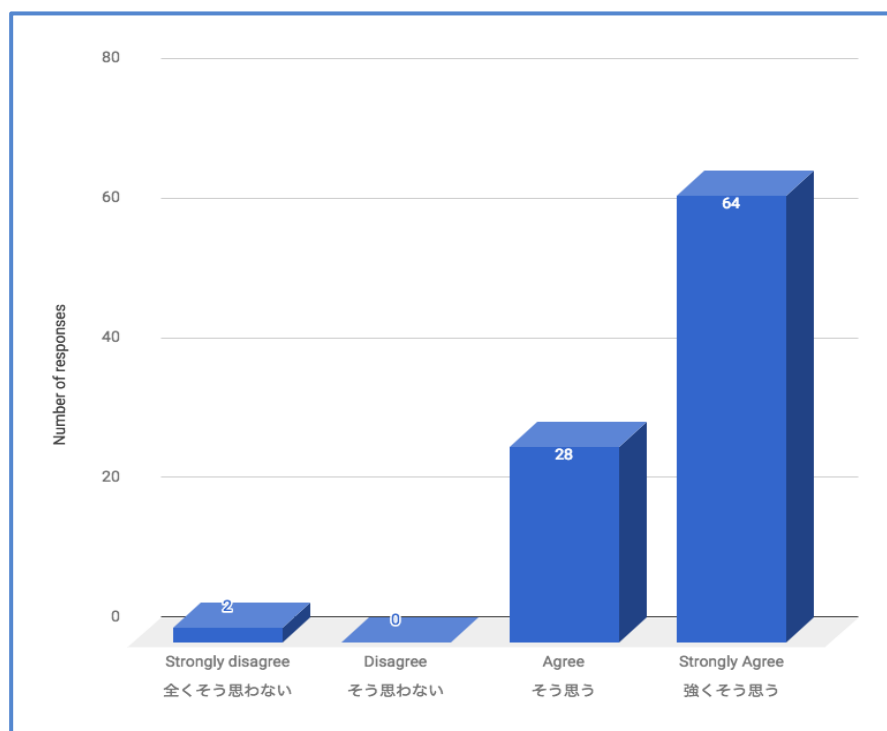

Figure 2. Student feedback about online testing (listening tests) (N=94)

Figure 2 shows that the vast majority (97%) of students (N=94) agreed or strongly agreed that they like the online testing system that was used to conduct listening tests and provide timely feedback on those tests by email.

One of the reasons why the students and I strongly like this system is that we have been able to gain immediate insights into their scores and vocabulary development. Figure 3 shows an example of a summary of "insights" (Google uses the term "insights" here to mean test results) that was automatically and instantly generated by Google Forms after the students had completed their online quizzes.

I was able to display this summary on the overhead projector so students could see information such as the average score, median, and range as well as a bar chart showing how many students scored how many points. Another good thing about this system is that, with the add-on app Flubaroo, I was able to see at a glance more in-depth information, including whether any questions were low scoring and which, if any, students were struggling. Flubaroo also enabled me to privately share individual feedback with each student by email in a timely manner, after grading them manually. More recently, I have also learned how to use Flubaroo's "Autograde" feature, which not only automatically grades each test or quiz, but also automatically sends each student's test score to their individual email inboxes as soon as they have submitted their answers, thus further streamlining the feedback process. "Autograde" is an advanced feature which requires a few extra set-up steps prior to each implementation,

but it makes it possible for students to receive their scores very soon after submission and see which, if any, of their responses were incorrect, thus creating the opportunity for them to very quickly learn from their mistakes.

Based on these encouraging and promising results, in the near future, I plan to continue using these methods and tools for online testing, designing, and implementing a wider variety of quiz and test question types, to encourage students to deepen their vocabulary knowledge by becoming familiar with more examples of use. Also, I aim to increase the quality and quantity of feedback to students, by providing them with personalized reports such as those described in Unser-Schutz (2017).
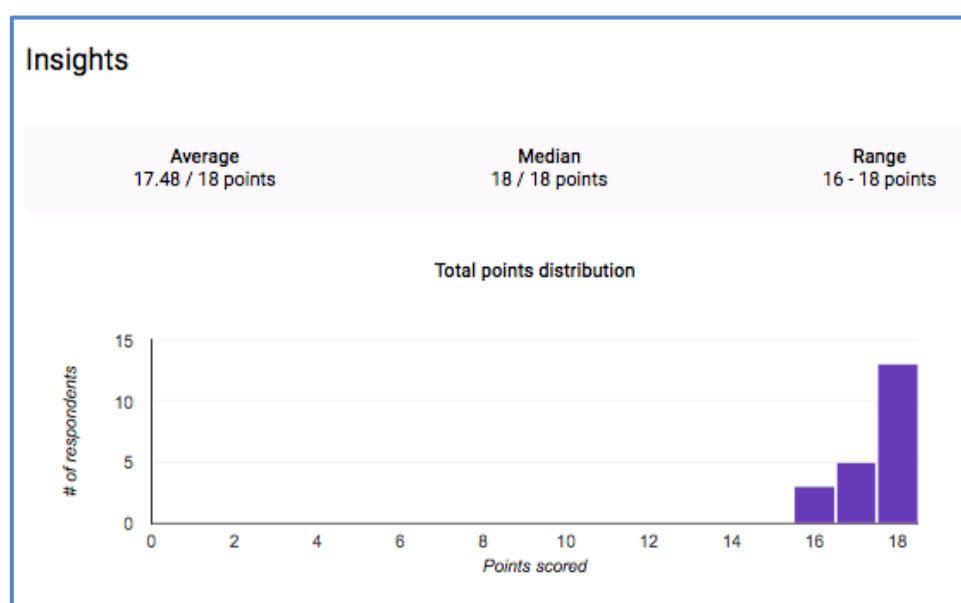

Figure 3. Screenshot of a summary of "insights" generated by Google Forms

It is well worth noting here that Google offers free online, self-paced, guided courses aimed at growing the practical technological skills that teachers can use in the classroom. I recently completed the *Google Certified Educator Level 1* certification and, through doing so, gained know-how and a working command of some of the best strategies for integrating Google tools, such as Google Forms and Sheets, in the classroom. Milliner's (2016) helpful article introduced me to Google's free, online training for the classroom, and I wholeheartedly recommend that language teachers who want to improve their computer- and mobile-assisted language learning/teaching skills consider taking full advantage of what Google offers. One of the most helpful and enjoyable things about this course is that, at the end of each short lesson, there is a short quiz that serves to self-check whether you have understood the main points of the lesson. After answering each quiz question, you can immediately get feedback by clicking a button to check your answer and see whether it was correct or not. If it was not correct, you can immediately try again and make sure you get the correct answer. It is also noteworthy that, fortunately, Google has made this free, online training available not only in English, but also in many other languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish, thus making it widely accessible to educators worldwide. To

learn more about it, go to: https://edutrainingcenter.withgoogle.com

In addition to Google tools, some other online and mobile learning tools have been steadily gaining popularity in classrooms. One such tool that has seen consistent success and growth worldwide is called Quizlet. This has greatly impacted my own development as a learner of Japanese, helping me to achieve greater success on my Japanese Language Proficiency Tests (level N3 and N2). The instant feedback provided by the customizable self-test feature in Quizlet's mobile app has been particularly useful in enabling me to develop as a self-regulated learner. Moreover, recent studies have found that Quizlet can help students improve their language test scores (e.g., Milliner, 2013; Barr, 2016), and that the in-class team-based Quizlet Live game can create very high levels of excitement and positive feelings among learners who feel that it helps them actively learn vocabulary in an enjoyable way (Wolff, 2016; Hougham, 2017). Let us now turn to how Quizlet can be useful for learner development in the classroom.

Building and learning together with Quizlet

Building and learning together with Quizlet by Blair Barr presented several of Quizlet's features for classroom use, one of which was Flashcards. Barr showed that Quizlet can be used for Q&A, with the Flashcards function being an excellent way to display discussion questions and sample answers. He explained that this helps because you can include a picture with the question and you can flip the card to reveal sample answers when necessary. Additionally, you can change partners, shuffle the deck, and redo the discussions to recycle language.

Another key feature Barr presented was the in-class team-based learning game called Quizlet Live, which involves learners working together using their mobile or other devices in a race to correctly match a Quizlet set's terms and definitions. Barr described several ways to get learners involved in the development of Quizlet flashcard sets to help deepen their learning, support the learning of their peers, and reap the interactive benefits such as the motivational excitement that Quizlet Live generates. In particular, he showed how to collaboratively create, edit, and interact with class sets that can then be used together as a group. It is possible to make Quizlet sets visible and editable by certain classes, so that only members of certain classes can use and edit certain sets. I am glad to say that I have since tried out this technique, to extend a language-focused learning activity in a course book, asking each of my students to work with a partner and add one English adjective together with its Japanese translation to a Quizlet set in class. We enjoyed collaboratively creating a set together as a whole class, practicing the set together using Flashcards mode, and then playing a few rounds of team-based Quizlet Live, so much so that I certainly plan on using this technique again in the future. Once students become familiar with the procedure of adding items to a shared set, I plan to ask them to do so for homework so that we can make the most of our class time together.

Encouraging learners to get involved in the collaborative creation of word cards that can be used with Quizlet Live nurtures their motivation and interest. It also introduces them to Quizlet's most useful features including "Auto-define" and "Add image." "Auto-define" facilitates the creation of word cards by enabling students to use definitions that have already been added by other Quizlet users, while "Add image" enables them to add an image from the millions available in Quizlet's image gallery. From a learner development perspective, the main takeaway from Barr's presentation was that the advantages of Quizlet Live can be harnessed as a way to

train students to become familiar with Quizlet's useful flashcard creation and self-regulated learning capabilities, in hopes that students will gain know-how to make use of Quizlet to take more control of their language learning independently.

There is however a need for attention to accuracy. Some recent classroom research (e.g., Wright, 2017) has found that, although students can create Quizlet sets within a reasonable amount of time, the accuracy of the sets they create may well be an issue that needs to be attended to by spending some class time on error-correction.

Concluding reflections and suggestions for future research

The online testing and online/mobile learning tools described in this report have great potential for facilitating learner development, and the presentations and results that have been discussed are very encouraging. I feel much encouraged to make further use of these tools in my classes, and I plan to continue to do so, with a view to exploring the impact that they can have, especially from the learner's perspective. There is a particular need for collaborative research between teachers that explores online testing with Google Forms, and learner training with Quizlet. Building and learning together with Quizlet has great potential for encouraging learners to develop and make use of a very useful learning tool they have at their disposal, especially with the ingeniously designed mobile app in their smartphones. I encourage you to attend a JALTCALL conference in the future and learn more about how Google and other digital tools such as Quizlet can be used to facilitate learner development.

References

Barr, B. (2016). Checking the effectiveness of Quizlet as a tool for vocabulary learning. *The Center for ELF Journal, 2*(1), 36-48. Retrieved from http://www.tamagawa.ac.jp/celf/research/pdf/celf_journal_final2-1.pdf

Hougham, D. C. G. (in review). Active learning (and real fun!) through Quizlet.

Milliner, B. (2013). Using online flash-card software to raise business students' TOEIC scores. *Annual report of JACET-SIG on ESP, 15,* 52-60. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283332447_Using_online_flash-card_software_to_raise_business_students%27_TOEIC_scores

Milliner, B. (2016). The Google Educator accreditation process for language teachers. *The Language Teacher*, *40*(3), 22-24. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/node/27/articles/5164-google-educator-accreditation-process-language-teachers

Milliner, B. & Barr, B. (2017). Computer-assisted language tests for the English classroom: Blackboard® Tests and Google Forms. *The Center for ELF Journal, 3*(1), 67-79. Retrieved from http://libds.tamagawa.ac.jp/dspace/handle/11078/474

Unser-Schutz, G. (2017). Increasing feedback for students with personalized reports and

Google Forms. In P. Clements, A. Krause, & H. Brown (Eds.), *Transformation in language education.* Tokyo: JALT. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/node/4/articles/6072-increasing-feedback-students-personalized-reports-and-google-forms

Wolff, G. (2016). Quizlet Live: The classroom game now taking the world by storm. *The Language Teacher*, *40*(6), 25-27. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/node/27/articles/5528-quizlet-live-classroom-game-now-taking-world-storm

Wright, B. A. (2017). Transforming vocabulary learning with Quizlet. In P. Clements, A. Krause, & H. Brown (Eds.), *Transformation in language education.* Tokyo: JALT. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/node/4/articles/6075-transforming-vocabulary-learning-quizlet

Daniel Hougham teaches at Hiroshima University, where he is a Visiting Lecturer. Originally, from Vancouver, Canada, he has taught English in Japan for 10 years and earned his MA in TEFL/TESL from the University of Birmingham. His research interests include extensive reading and learner development through computer/mobile-assisted language learning.
Author correspondence: d.hougham@gmail.com
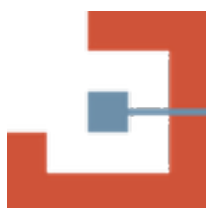
JALTCALL 2018

The JALTCALL SIG's 25th Anniversary Conference

"New Directions in Educational Technology"
8-10 June 2018
Meijo University, Nagoya, Nagoya Dome-Mae Campus

Call for Proposals deadline: 31 January 2018

For more information <conference2018.jaltcall.org>