

Explorations in Teacher Education

JALT Teacher Education and Development SIG Newsletter

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And Now a Word from...The Editor

Hello and welcome to the Spring edition of Explorations in Teacher Education (Volume 19, Issue 1), the newsletter of the Teacher Education and **Development** Special Interest Group (TED SIG) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

This issue of the newsletter has one interview and three articles. Our program chair Peter Hourdequin managed to get together with Steve Herder and asked him some questions about collaboration and teacher development. Steve is part of a group named MASH whose mission statement is "to bring innovative EFL educators together for professional development through collaboration." Their website (there's a link in the interview) is well worth a look. The three articles are by Ronald Schmidt-Fajlik, Hideo Kojima and Melissa Senga. The first article is by Ronald Schmidt-Fajlik and describes a workshop aimed at improving teachers' knowledge of differences in individual learners. Hideo Kojima's article is a continuation of his work on encouraging Japanese secondary school teachers in their professional development. "Do you have access to Ubiquitous Technology?" is the first in a two-part article by Melissa Senga. It is a well-researched and interesting look at technology. The second part will be in the next issue which will be the summer issue.

It has been quite a long time since the last issue came out and I am sorry about that. However, I am now in the unusual situation of having enough submissions to announce when the next issue will be coming out. The last time I did this I managed to jinx myself but fingers crossed this time. The summer issue of the newsletter should be out shortly, by the end of June 2011. Thanks to our coordinator Deryn Verity who has encouraged a few people to make submissions. Thanks should also go to one of our former coordinators, Anthony Robins, who tirelessly proofreads each issue of the newsletter and has done so for at least the last seven years.

Hope you enjoy the issue,

Simon Lees,
Editor,
Explorations in Teacher Education

Steve Herder is a university and high school English teacher in Osaka. He completed a distance M.A. in TESOL from University of Birmingham in 2006, and has become one of Japan's most active TEFL collaborators over the past several years. He is the co-founder of MASH Collaboration (<http://mashcollaboration.com>), an organization which coordinates online, and face-to-face opportunities for TEFL professional development. Here, he talks to TED program chair Peter Hourdequin about his experience with professional development and collaboration in Japan. Since much of Steve's work with colleagues takes place online, it was fitting that our interview with him took the form of an internet text chat session via Skype:

TED: Hi Steve. So you had been teaching English in Japan for a long time, more than ten years I think, before you started to get engaged in professional development. Can you describe what caused you to take this action, and how your approach changed as you became more involved with other teachers in Japan. Also what were the factors that you think kept you from engaging with colleagues for that initial period?

Steven Herder: I would say there are two parts to this answer.

a) I was developing my craft as a teacher. I wasn't willing to share my thoughts until I actually knew what they were. I was terrified of being called a fraud, an impostor.

b) I was living in a very safe cocoon. I had a high school teaching position that was pretty much guaranteed for life and there was no need to reach out and start professional development.

The thing that got me started was the realization that if my HS job ever disappeared, I only had a BA in English and no specific teacher qualifications. The MA in TEFL was the catalyst to get me going.

TED: And how have you seen your approach change as you became more involved with other teachers in Japan?

SH: My approach has changed completely in so many ways. I have had a full paradigm shift. Everything that I assumed was thrown out the window and I started over again.

It started with my beliefs. I learned what kind of teacher I was (I have a full paper on this on my website) and I developed my own THEORY OF LEARNING...

That led me to develop my own THEORY OF PRACTICE. I came up with rules for myself when choosing or creating materials

TED: I see, so the online collaboration thing really challenged your beliefs and opened you up to new ideas and ways of thinking.

SH: Yes, it was hard to get used to being open to others' ideas. I still think that I'm right (my perception of the world is right) about 95% of the time. However, I set out to surround myself with people smarter than me. Unfortunately, when there were 4 of us online, and it was 3 against me, I had a problem. I realized that while I could still be "right" they were probably "RIGHTER" in many cases.

But as I got used to letting go and opening up, I realized that my writing, my thinking, and my production increased a lot.

TED: What were the factors that you think kept you from engaging with colleagues for the many years you were in Japan before you started your M.A. ?

SH: It was scary to go to a JALT meeting or a book fair. It was scary to really engage with strangers about education. But once I got started, it was easy. The advent of Skype changed everything. Suddenly, we could be connected with the world and it was free.

My reading and forced reflection (videoing my lessons, explaining why I did what I did, etc) actually changed my beliefs the most. Having the opportunity to vocalize my thoughts in an online study group made me realize that I was among like-minded souls. I could refine my ideas and grow.

TED: What you are discussing leads to another thing I want to talk about. I know you are a fan of Scott Thornbury who recently blogged about the issue of professionalism in EFL. That is, he posed the question (which others have also posed), of whether or not this is a profession, and whether or not this matters. What is your take on this issue?

SH: I definitely think it is a profession but each individual defines that for him or herself. I take a professional approach to teaching. I believe that being a teacher means a never-ending

commitment to your own growth and learning. That is, if I stop wanting to learn or grow, I hope I'll have the sense to realize that I should leave the classroom. Especially in this lightning fast Web 2.0 world, if our students are bored out of their minds in the classroom and we don't meet them halfway with our teaching methods, then we are definitely dinosaurs.

TED: I see, and to you engagement with others who are doing the same thing is part of what keeps this fire burning. .

SH: Absolutely. Collaboration is certainly not for everyone, but for me it inspires and challenges me. I fully respect the lone wolf types who want to read and pursue self-study, but I just get sleepy and lonely if I can't interact while I'm learning. The biggest reason that collaboration works for me is that while I let myself down rather easily at times, I don't want to look stupid or let others down. Thus, my line, "Collaboration creates just the right amount of tension to get lots done."

Recently, I'm seeing the advantages of engaging with people outside of ELT as well. Take psychology or neuroscience, for instance. What they are studying is fascinating and very applicable to learning in general.

TED: I think you are right that some teachers are kind of lone wolves who work on developing on their own, and that is a choice, but others are lone wolves not by choice but by default. I think one reason for this is fear, as you mentioned, but also in terms of online interaction with colleagues, people might not know where to look, or they might be overwhelmed, and not know where to begin. For someone looking to engage virtually with the community of teachers here in Japan, what recommendations would you give?

SH: Good points...Here are a couple of ideas:

- 1) Skype me (STEVEN HERDER) and share your desire to get more involved.
- 2) On Twitter, every Wednesday night, over 100 teachers share ideas on something called #ELTchat.

Start reading blogs, and when you're comfortable, add a comment. I can tell you who some of the NICE bloggers are.

Start a Facebook page, you can become an addict or just stay in the loop until something catches your eye.

- 5) Check out our MASH online courses on our homepage. It's an excellent way to join a small community and add to your Personal Development.
- 6) Go to a JALT meeting and talk to the person sitting next to you, or even volunteer in some way.
- 7) Get on Skype and just start talking with other teachers.
- 8) Video your class and start to learn about the difference between how you think you teach and how you actually teach (or what you see and what Ss see).

TED: Through your collaborative work with others in our field, what are some aspects of EFL in Japan you are focused on improving at present?

SH: In broad strokes I'd really like to be a part of improving two things:

1) Foreigners' ability to be more involved in shaping policy and curriculum in our Japanese context. There are a bunch of us who have paid our dues, put in the time, understand the context well enough, AND want to take on more responsibility. If anyone from MEXT is reading this, please contact me. I know a bunch of serious, professional FL teacher/researchers who want to work with you. We have the commitment and we are planning to be here for the long haul.

2) I'd like the world to recognize Japan as a leader in EFL, as a completely different beast than ESL. They are apples and oranges to me - both fruit and both delicious - but very different when it comes to pies or drinks mixed with vodka. I'm working on two books right now, 'Innovating EFL Teaching in Asia' (in press for Sept 2011) and, 'Fluency in EFL' (writing now). These are huge collaborative efforts with nearly 50 authors in 12 countries.

TED: Wow, and so of course web 2.0 tools are essential I imagine. Have you been able to get everyone on the same page technologically?

SH: The technology is not as bad as I thought it might be... There are maybe 3-4 of the 50 authors who were technologically challenged, but as long as we are able to work with people on an individual basis, their attributes and efforts always outweigh any weaknesses that they might have with tech stuff.

TED: Last time we chatted, you sent me an interesting article (which you were interviewed for) on virtual communities of practice¹. One of the author's conclusions was that already established face-to-face communities of practice can benefit from virtual (online) interaction, but this requires "distinct characteristics in its members and chosen technology in order to remain sustainable, functioning, and useful to the community members." What do you think these characteristics are, and is it possible for virtual communities of practice to thrive without face-to-face interaction? Again, what do you think are the barriers and opportunities here?

SH: I had a Skype study group which met every Monday night for 60-90 minutes. We lasted for three years. There have been dozens of other groups who died a quick horrible death. I think that what these online communities need are:

- 1) leadership
- 2) trust
- 3) rapport
- 4) goals
- 5) respect

There is definitely a learning curve. It's like learning to dance together. There are certain challenges with turn-taking, pauses/hesitations, pacing and length of speech that we are used to dealing with when they happen around a table. Without the visual cues, it takes time to get used to. However, these days it is seamless for me. I have no inkling of a difference between interacting online or in person. We now joke, "Hey nice to see you (and your legs) again"...

These days with video conferencing it is getting better every day. There is still something nice about video. When I've had recent online meetings with a newcomer, we always want to insist that it be a videoconference, because it is much easier to develop rapport when you can see someone.

TED: Are you able to do group video conferencing now? I know Skype is offering it as a paid service, and iChat already has it built in . . . but it still somehow seems slow in coming to a place where people can do it easily.

1 Unpublished paper by Simon Thomas

SH: Yes, Webex, Elluminate and Skype all have videoconferencing platforms. Our MASH online courses use videoconferences in order to create a sense of community and a better connection between teachers and students. It'll be pretty cheap very soon, I'll bet.

TED: Steve, thanks very much for your chatting with me for TED SIG. It has been really interesting.

SH: My pleasure.

Multiple Intelligences Workshop for Teachers

Ronald Schmidt-Fajlik, <rschmidtfajlik(at)yahoo.com>

Introduction

Many language teachers may have heard of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI), though few may feel that they understand the theory sufficiently enough to incorporate it in their classrooms. The workshop described in this article allows language teachers to gain a better understanding of the theory and the way that it may be practically applied in the language learning classroom to address the individual differences of students.

Addressing individual differences in language classrooms is an important issue due to the variety of learners that language teachers teach. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences offers a way of interpreting individual differences based in terms of various cognitive strengths and skills. Gardner proposes eight intelligences; these being verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical-rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist (1993; 2006). He has left the door open for the discovery of other types of intelligences.

Adapting Gardner's theory in terms of its practical application in the language classroom provides teachers with a theoretical rationale for addressing the individual differences of students. The theory may also assist teachers in adapting existing lesson material or in creating supplementary material which may address these differences. Demonstrating the practical application of Gardner's theory may address the view that some teachers have that theory is useless in practical application, as found in Stern's statement that "Language teachers can be said to regard themselves as practical people and not as theorists. Some might even say they are opposed to 'theory' expressing their opposition in such remarks as 'It's all very well in theory, but it won't work in practice'" (in Alatis, Stern & Strevens, 1983, p. 23). Howard Gardner's theory provides a basis by which teachers may not only develop a better understanding of the individual differences of students in their classrooms, but also of their own cognitive profiles which may impact lesson planning. Awareness of such differences may inform teachers of ways to approach their classrooms in terms of better lesson planning which addresses a greater variety of individual differences. The following workshop serves as a way to introduce Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to language teachers and ways they may implement it in the language classroom.

First Session

Concept of intelligence

Purpose

The purpose of this initial session is to engage teachers in thinking about the concept of intelligence.

Method

1. Teachers are asked to brainstorm ideas about the concept of intelligence and to write down their ideas.
2. Ideas about intelligence are taken up. The ideas may be recorded on the board. A discussion or debate regarding the meaning of intelligence may be held.
3. A 'lecturette', is given on the historical background of the concept of intelligence. The lecturette is not intended as an in depth survey of 'intelligence', nor a comprehensive historical overview, but is primarily intended to give teachers a better sense of the way in which the concept of intelligence has been interpreted in order to lead to more current views in terms of Gardner's theory which will be subsequently introduced. Teachers will find that many of their views about 'intelligence' have been shared throughout history. The contents are based on Fancher (1987) who gives an excellent overview of how intelligence has been defined over the ages. The trainer should become familiar with a general understanding of how intelligences have been viewed and defined so as to better anticipate and address the teachers' views on the topic. The following views of intelligence throughout history may be mentioned.

18th century

Phrenology

- 'discovered' by Franz Joseph Gall
- brain is made up of many parts, each with a special faculty
- variations in size and shape of skull as a way to interpret characteristics of individuals
- identified 37 different powers e.g. affective capacities, sentiments such as hope and self-esteem, perceptual capacities including language and music as well as sensitivity to visual properties such as shape and colour
- considered as 'contents' of an individual

19th century

- John Stuart Mill- Intelligence due to environmental influences
- general mental ability susceptible to molding by circumstances
- Sir Francis Galton
- major psychological characteristics are inherited as well as innate

- powers of intellect estimated through sensory discrimination
such as by distinguishing among lights, weights, tones
- learned individuals characterized by keen sensory capacities

late 19th early 20th Century

- Alfred Binet
 - intelligence testing and the concept of IQ
 - used for prediction and placement
 - doubted usefulness of sensory tests
- Spearman
 - 'g' factor- single common factor in intelligence
- William Stern
 - introduced notion of the 'intelligence quotient'
- Robert Sternberg
 - how one uses intellectual abilities rather than describing them
 - a reflection of three different processes:
 - a) skills used to solve a problem
 - b) combining elements in new, unusual, and useful ways and how one reacts to new situations
 - c) 'street smarts' - getting along with others, managing to adapt

Piaget - cognitive stages in human development

Second Session

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences

Purpose

In the second session teachers are introduced to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences in a way which incorporates the theory within the training session.

Procedure

1. An informal lecturette is given on how Gardner interprets and identifies intelligence. His sources in defining what constitutes intelligence (or 'an' intelligence) in developing his theory of multiple intelligences may be described, such as evidence based on findings from brain damaged patients, idiot savants, and prodigies. Teachers are asked to keep notes during the lecturette which they will share with a partner or in a small group which entails the use of interpersonal intelligence and linguistic intelligence. The lecturette may be open to question and debate.
2. Teachers are instructed to prepare a mind map. The use of a mind map is a good way for teachers to develop their own handouts as they are "visually appealing, easy to rewrite or

reorganize if too disorderly and they provide good support for non-native speakers who can thus gain the same message in two different media" (Woodward, 1992, p. 33). The use of mind maps also provides an excellent context for visual-spatial intelligence. The teacher trainer may draw a mind map outline on the board to serve as a model. This may be in the form of a center circle with the words MI written in the centre with 8. Eight branches are attached.

3. Trainer reads-off each intelligence which the teachers add to each of the eight branches.

4. Teachers are asked to brainstorm and add what they feel defines each intelligence. They are asked to add an additional branch to each intelligence and are asked to add the types of occupations which may require a particular intelligence.

5. The teachers' mind maps are taken up and shared. Teachers may add additional information to their mind map as they are taken up. The trainer may use the following list as a reference for describing each of the intelligences to supplement the teachers' own mind map ideas:

linguistic-verbal	The ability to use language in either written or oral form. Poets, writers, orators, lawyers, or anyone with a particular skill in using language demonstrates this intelligence.
logical-mathematical	The ability to manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations. May also be expressed in the ability to reason well. Mathematicians demonstrate this intelligence.
visual-spatial	The ability to visualize the spatial world internally. The ability to manipulate visual means of representation in terms of line, form, space, and colour. Those involved in the visual arts, navigation, architecture and certain games such as chess show a particular disposition towards this intelligence.
bodily-kinesthetic	An understanding of the body in terms of physical movement and body language as well as the ability to interpret physical sensations. Those involved in the performing arts and sports demonstrate this intelligence.
musical-rhythmic	The capacity to think musically. The ability to recognize and manipulate musical elements. Sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm and beat involving musical instruments, the human voice, or environmental sounds. Musicians are an obvious example of those having this intelligence.
naturalist	The ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) as well as other features of the natural world. Botanists, farmers, and chefs demonstrate naturalist intelligence.
interpersonal	The ability to understand and empathize with other people. Skilled at working and cooperating with other people. People who deal with other people must demonstrate interpersonal intelligence. Examples of those who require and demonstrate skill in this intelligence are teachers, social workers, counselors, politicians, and salespeople.

6. Teachers are asked to create a simple symbol representing each intelligence. The trainer may ask some of the teachers to put examples on the board with other teachers guessing the intelligence represented. This addresses visual-spatial intelligence as well as intrapersonal intelligence to some extent.

7. Teachers are asked to use gestures or actions to represent a particular intelligence. Their partner or group members may guess the intelligence being conveyed. This addresses bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

8. Teachers may be asked to think of a simple chant for each intelligence or musical interpretation. For example, doing a chant as a duo in pairs may represent interpersonal intelligence, a whimsical melody may represent intrapersonal intelligence, or a repetitive rhythmic melody depicting dance music may represent bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.

Third Session

Methodology

Purpose

To introduce the practical application of multiple intelligences theory in the classroom

Method

1. It is suggested to teachers that methodological approaches to address a broader range of intelligence profiles in the classroom may involve either adapting currently used lesson material or supplementing it.

2. The trainer prepares cards on which an intelligence is written and corresponding activity cards. Teachers may work in pairs to match the intelligence with the suggested activities. Alternatively, teachers may be given a card with an intelligence written on it while another teacher has the corresponding activity card. They may then mingle to match the cards. This activity allows for the use of interpersonal, linguistic, and to some extent logical intelligence.

The following is a list which may be used by the trainer to create the card match-up. A copy of the list may be provided after the activity for reference. The list may be used to generate ideas for adapting as well as supplementing lesson material.

linguistic-verbal	Activities involving this intelligence include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This may be in the form of stories, poems, recordings of authors, conversation activities, and word games.
logical-mathematical	Sequential word/story games e.g. 'What happens next?,' mysteries, word problem activities, language analysis, planning schedules, giving and receiving change in a variety of situations involving the exchange of money.

visual-spatial	The use and creation of maps, charts, illustrations /artwork, films, videos, posters, overheads, models.
bodily-kinesthetic	The use of 'hands-on' craft materials. Listening and moving according to instructions. Drama/role-play activities.
musical-rhythmic	Tapes, records, CDs of songs, ballads. Musical instruments may be used to accompany stories, poems etc. Students may write and perform their own songs. Students may listen to musical passages and discuss/and or write about feelings and images which are invoked
linguistic-verbal	Activities involving this intelligence include reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This may be in the form of stories, poems, recordings of authors, conversation activities, and word games.
logical-mathematical	Sequential word/story games e.g. 'What happens next?,' mysteries, word problem activities, language analysis, planning schedules, giving and receiving change in a variety of situations involving the exchange of money.
visual-spatial	The use and creation of maps, charts, illustrations /artwork, films, videos, posters, overheads, models.
naturalist	The study of various types of living things such as plants and animals. Field trips to parks and/or shopping malls where students identify and categorize things.
interpersonal	Activities involving students working cooperatively with each other. Lesson material may be adapted in ways which require working with a partner or in small groups such as interviews, jigsaw tasks, and 'missing information' sheets. Activities which require the interpretation of another person's feelings or personal perspective. Drama and role-play activities may also be of benefit.
intrapersonal	Projects and activities which require students to assume responsibility in terms of planning and independent research. The exploration of one's own feelings. Fantasy-type activities. Show and tell involving presentations of one's interests and hobbies.

3. In order to consider ways that lesson material may be adapted to address multiple intelligences, teachers are asked to bring in samples of lesson material they are currently using (such as a lesson from a textbook). Alternatively, the trainer may bring a sample copy of a lesson from a textbook.

4. Teachers are asked to adapt the lesson material in a way which addresses a variety of intelligences. This is done by assigning each teacher an intelligence area to consider when adapting material such as visual-spatial, musical-rhythmic, etc. Depending on the number of participants in the workshop, the teachers may work in pairs or in groups in discussing ideas about how to adapt the material based on their assigned intelligence area.
5. The ideas may be taken up individually or in a jigsaw manner with ideas for each individual intelligence area being taken up. Participants may take down ideas in note form. This will provide teachers with a list of ideas for each intelligence area for the lesson material under consideration.

Feedback

A course feedback sheet may be provided in order to gain better insight into the participating teachers' views as to how they felt about the workshop. The feedback sheet contains questions incorporating a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to gauge the teachers' impressions of the workshop as well as more open-ended questions where further opinions and suggestions may be expressed. The scaled questions serve as a way in which to gain a sense of the participants' impressions of the workshop in terms of their level of satisfaction, while the more open-ended questions serve as a way to express views as to the content of the course. Responses may be used in considering future planning of the workshop. The following is an example of the feedback sheet that may be used:

Course Feedback

Please fill out the following information about your experience of the course.

1. How interesting was the course?

1	2	3	4	5
not very				very

2. How useful was the methodological material to your lesson planning?

1	2	3	4	5
not very				very

3. Please add any comments on how the material could have better addressed your teaching situation.

4. How well do you now understand Gardner's theory?

1	2	3	4	5
not very				very

5. How clearly was the material presented?

1 2 3 4 5

not very

very

6. Please add any further comments.

Conclusion

The described workshop serves as a way to introduce Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences to teachers so that they may have a better understanding of the theory and how it may be applied in the language classroom. The practical application of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences provides a basis by which teachers may better address individual differences in their classrooms. The application of Gardner's theory in terms of methodology also provides a way for teachers to expand and develop their teaching repertoire. It provides teachers with a way to give students the opportunity to use skills which they may be naturally predisposed to in the language learning process.

The course has been presented in a style consistent with MI theory in terms of the variety of approaches used to present the material, such as the visual-spatial basis of mind maps, collaborative expert groups involving interpersonal intelligence, reflecting upon one's own knowledge involving intrapersonal intelligence, a charades activity involving bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. This serves to support the credibility of the workshop in that "teacher educators should practise what they preach" (Wallace, 1991, p. 18).

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Promoting Japanese Secondary School EFL Teachers' Professional Development from within

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In recent years, the need for strengthening teacher education and teacher quality has been debated in Japan, leading to the establishment of the Teacher Certification Renewal System (TCRS) in 2007. Through periodically obtaining innovative skills and knowledge and maintaining needed quality and competence, Japanese teachers are expected to have more confidence and pride in teaching and to gain the respect and trust of the general public. Since 2008, my university has implemented a variety of programs for TCRS, where I, as a program instructor, have helped secondary school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) to be able to develop their quality and competence. This is a follow-up study on Japanese secondary school EFL teachers' professional development and their roles in developing learner autonomy in the social contexts of teaching practice (Kojima, 2008). This sort of in-service teacher education may be a good opportunity to promote EFL teachers' professional awareness-raising and their cognition of learner and teacher autonomy in their teaching contexts.

Purpose of the study:

In order to develop students' autonomy as well as communicative competence in EFL learning, Japanese secondary school EFL teachers need to enhance their technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities through continuing professional development. This study, which is based on my instruction in the 2008, 2009, and 2010 TCRS programs, aims to promote EFL teachers' professional development from within and to explore their roles in developing learner autonomy in Japanese secondary school contexts. I believe that we teacher educators are expected to contribute to the development of learner and teacher autonomy in Japan. My research question is: How do we explore the roles of secondary school EFL teachers in developing learner autonomy in the social contexts of teaching practice?

Method

Participants

The study involved 72 Japanese lower/upper secondary school EFL teachers, who participated in the TCRS programs at my university in 2008/2009/2010. In my 12-hour training program on "Innovation in EFL Education: Theory and Practice," the participants learned and discussed the theoretical and practical aspects of learning-centered EFL instruction, including professional awareness-raising, autonomous development of learners and teachers, and collaboration among teachers in the community of practice.

Materials

In order to examine the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards anti-autonomous forces, their roles in developing learner autonomy, and collegiality in their teaching contexts, I observed and analyzed their discussion about these issues in my TCRS programs. In addition, I analyzed their narratives about teaching experiences that reveal their beliefs in autonomous learner and teacher development.

Procedures

As a teacher educator, I organized the TCRS 2008, 2009, and 2010 programs, where Japanese secondary school EFL teachers learned the key concepts of innovation in English language teaching (ELT) and considered new approaches to teaching practice in the learning-centered classroom. At the beginning of the program, I asked the participants, "How do you believe people become good EFL learners and teachers?" This helped them to uncover their tacit beliefs about EFL learning and teaching, and to restructure their professional thinking. Teachers' beliefs about what learning is tend to affect everything that they do in the classroom. The majority of the participants seemed to recognize the paradigm shift of ELT from teaching-centeredness to learning-centeredness, the new guidelines for ELT in Japanese secondary schools, and the significance of learner and teacher autonomy in language learning and teaching. During the 2-day intensive program in each year, the participants listened to my lecture, discussed some important issues, reflected on their teaching practice, responded to my questions, and finally evaluated the program.

Results and Discussion

At the beginning of the program, we considered the characteristics of good language learners and teachers. Many participants had not thought of good language learners and teachers very seriously, but tended to emphasize the importance of motivation in language learning and the role of teachers as a motivator. As Ushioda (2011, p.15) suggests, "motivation needs to come from within and be internally regulated rather than externally regulated by teachers." Dörnyei (2001, p.108) insists on increasing student motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy and advises us to: 1) allow learners real choices about as many aspects of the learning process as possible, 2) hand over as much as we can of the various leadership/teaching roles as functions to the learners, and 3) adopt the role of a facilitator. Promoting autonomy enables teachers to "facilitate the alignment of individual student motivation with the broader goals and values of the educational process" (Ushioda, 2011, p.18).

I introduced a list of attributes of a good language learner (Rubin and Thompson, 1982) to the participants. I also offered a checklist of good language-teaching characteristics (Brown, 2001).

Almost all the participants had never seen such a checklist. This was a good opportunity for their professional awareness-raising. I encouraged them to use the list as a self-check to determine some areas for continuing professional development.

Regarding the concept of learner autonomy, when I also asked the participants, a few of them answered, "Being in control of ones' own learning" or "Learning without a teacher." I introduced one of the familiar definitions of learner autonomy in the form of the 'Bergen definition' (cited by Dam, 1990:17), where learner autonomy is characterized by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning and a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others. Moreover, as one of the most comprehensive definitions, I introduced Sinclair's 13 aspects of learner autonomy (Sinclair, 2000). The participants reconsidered the concept of learner autonomy and asked themselves, "What are anti-autonomous forces in ELT in Japan?"

Anti-autonomous forces

In my previous research (Kojima, 2008), I discussed various constraints on autonomous learning. It is important to be mindful of them. Here are three major anti-autonomous forces claimed by the participants in this study (my translation):

- I feel that students do not like English because of the way English is taught to them. I have implemented examination-oriented instruction, where students are encouraged to learn English through translation, grammar drills, and rote memorization of words and phrases to pass university entrance exams. Students have been accustomed to this kind of learning, and some of them are not interested in autonomous language learning (Teacher Y, 2008).
- Individual students have different cognitive and affective factors in language learning. In knowledge-based, teacher-centered instruction, teachers have not paid much attention to these individual differences. Thus, many students do not notice their own learning styles, and they do not know how to learn English inside and outside the classroom (Teacher N, 2010).
- Learner autonomy should be developed in school/university education as a whole from primary through tertiary. Unfortunately, many Japanese teachers have paid no attention to autonomous learning. They might find it difficult to promote learner autonomy through education in a variety of school contexts (Teacher H, 2009).

The anti-autonomous forces mentioned above might be typical ones recognized by teachers in Japanese secondary schools. In order to improve the present situation, the participants reflected on their instruction and discussed a variety of new roles for teachers in promoting learner

autonomy. Even if teachers can understand the concept of learner autonomy, they may be confused about their roles. Indeed, almost all the participants wondered, “How can I teach students to become autonomous learners?”, “How can I implement learner autonomy in my large classes?” and “What are teacher roles in developing learner autonomy at my exam-oriented school?”

Teacher roles

Taking anti-autonomous forces into consideration, we discussed the roles of teachers in developing learner autonomy in school classrooms. The participants recognized the importance of learner autonomy in language learning and shared their ideas about teacher roles in daily classes. They claimed that they would like to (my translation):

- 1) collect information about students (e.g., needs, abilities, learning styles).
- 2) help students to identify their needs and goals.
- 3) help students to raise awareness of their learning styles.
- 4) help students to learn how to learn (e.g., strategy training).
- 5) help students to take charge of their learning.
- 6) help students to reflect on their learning (e.g. reflective journals, learning portfolios).
- 7) help students to evaluate their learning (e.g., self-evaluation, peer evaluation.).
- 8) help students to feel secure and confident in the process of learning.
- 9) help students to continue autonomous learning inside and outside the classroom.
- 10) facilitate group dynamics in language learning (e.g., pair work, group work).
- 11) respond to students' cognitive, emotional, and linguistic needs.
- 12) develop tasks and methodologies for autonomous learning.
- 13) understand the learning context and its constraints on developing learner autonomy.

Their claims above lead to a variety of roles of teachers such as information-gatherer, decision-maker, trainer, guide, motivator, facilitator, counselor, designer, and collaborator. As Sinclair (2000) points out, learner training involves a good deal more than strategy training.

Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the learning strategies that suit them best and which are appropriate to their learning context, so that they may become more effective learners and take on more responsibility for their own learning (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989, p.2).

Moreover, scaffolding is a “teaching/learning strategy where the teacher and learners engage in a collaborative problem-solving activity with the teacher providing demonstrations, support, guidance and input and gradually withdrawing these as the learner becomes increasingly independent”

(Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.466). The participants took interest in scaffolding and agreed that scaffolding would be essential when developing learner autonomy in language education.

Regarding innovation in ELT, we must take care not to be too idealistic in the real teaching context. Reflecting on their EFL instruction, the participants shared the following perspectives on promoting learner autonomy between “fantasy” and “reality” (Sinclair, 2010) (my translation).

- I have thought that teachers should promote students' autonomy after teaching them enough knowledge and skills. However, now I understand that complete autonomy does not exist. The goal is to help students to become more autonomous than before. Even young children can learn how to learn. Learner training is a long and winding path from the beginning of formal education (Teacher S, 2008).
- Learner autonomy is essential for students to be able to survive in the global community. They need to be responsible for living and problem-solving autonomously. Today's students tend to lack this ability. We EFL teachers must help students to foster social skills as well as language skills and their positive attitudes towards life-long learning after school/university education (Teacher T, 2009).
- It is said that autonomy has a social as well as an individual dimension. We need to pay more attention to developing learner autonomy through positive interdependence. Many students cannot learn independently. Learner autonomy often means learning and interacting with others, including teachers. Teachers need to encourage experimentation with, and reflection on, cooperative/collaborative learning processes (Teacher S, 2010).

Autonomy is not necessarily innate (Sinclair, 2000). This means that we are able to promote autonomy through education. The majority of the participants thought of learner autonomy as an idealistic goal, but they hoped to promote learner autonomy in EFL education in Japan. The concept of learner autonomy seemed to be more popular among the participants in this study than those in my 2008 study. I have expected teachers to enhance autonomous learning depending on the degrees of autonomy. In the social learning environment, students are more likely to “make meaningful choices and decisions within that setting, so that they experience a sense of personal control or autonomy” (Ushioda, 2011, p.18). We need to verify that cooperative/collaborative learning has the potential to develop Japanese students' autonomy in different teaching contexts. Promoting autonomy through positive interdependence might lead to life-long learning in the global community. In addition to recognizing the aims of learner autonomy and the roles of teachers, we need a realistic understanding of the learning context and its constraints (Sinclair, 2010).

Collegiality in teaching contexts

Today, autonomy seems to be a universal in language education. However, different contexts may

interpret learner autonomy in different ways (Sinclair, 2000). The majority of the participants worried about the constraints on promoting learner autonomy in their teaching contexts, where collegiality might be a very important issue.

I know that collaboration among teachers is essential in developing learner autonomy, but I lack confidence in collaborating with the other teachers at my school. In general, their teaching style is teacher-centered and knowledge-oriented. The principal is a figure of authority, and we are expected to accept his top-down administration. I wonder how we can collaborate to develop learner autonomy in our school classrooms (Teacher N, 2008).

These days I often worried about the relationship between assistant language teachers (ALTs) and us EFL teachers. ALTs should make efforts to understand Japanese culture, school systems, and students'/teachers' characters, and to develop pedagogical skills in the classroom. I wish that I could collaborate with ALTs to develop learner autonomy in the classroom (Teacher A, 2009).

Nobody knows how to shift our teaching from "teaching-centeredness" to "learning-centeredness." EFL teachers need to collaborate with one another to investigate the effectiveness of learner autonomy in our ELT context, taking into consideration various requirements from students, parents, and communities. In this situation, we must develop teacher autonomy as well as learner autonomy (Teacher K, 2010).

Our students at an evening high school tend to lack intrinsic motivation to study English. They claim that they are not good at communicating with others even in Japanese. In the social context of cooperative/collaborative learning, we teachers might be able to promote their communicative competence and autonomy. We teachers need to collaborate and share our ideas about how to implement cooperative/collaborative and reflective learning in the classroom (Teacher M, 2010).

McGrath (2000) suggests that constraints on teacher autonomy can be broadly categorized under the macro (decisions taken outside the institution, over which teachers will normally have no control) and the micro (institution-internal decisions, which the teacher should be in a position to influence). Under the macro, for instance, EFL teachers are required to follow the new guidelines for study by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), although there are often big gaps between the MEXT guidelines and EFL teachers' real instruction. Most of the constraints on collegiality claimed by the participants were under the micro, and they would like to develop "teacher autonomy as freedom from control by others" (McGrath, 2000). Moreover, in order to negotiate various constraints in their schools, they would like to demonstrate the capacity and freedom for self-direction, that is, "teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development" (McGrath, 2000). However, I was afraid that too much proactive teacher autonomy might foster a volatile working context (Sinclair, 2010). Thus, I encouraged them to consider various constraints on collegiality in the real school contexts, and to promote learner autonomy as

much as possible through positive interdependence among the colleagues, including native English speakers.

Regarding promoting teacher autonomy, in relation to teacher cognition, Borg (2010) advises teachers to: 1) develop pedagogical repertoires, 2) link theory and teaching, 3) examine educational biographies, 4) articulate and review beliefs, and 5) examine practices and rationales. As a teacher educator, I should promote EFL teachers' professional awareness-raising in the TCRS program, and help them to develop their professional cognition and autonomy so that they can work with colleagues in the supportive and intercultural community. I hope that the less experienced will learn from the more experienced and promote professional cognition and autonomy in the symbiotic relationship.

Conclusion

The Central Council for Education in Japan is currently continuing studies on the ideal role of professional graduate schools in teacher development and on the introduction of the certification renewal system. Through my instruction in my TCRS program, I have promoted secondary school EFL teachers' professional development from within and have explored teacher roles in developing learner autonomy. My research question was: How do we explore the roles of secondary school EFL teachers in developing learner autonomy in the social contexts of teaching practice? "Classroom practices that promote autonomy encourage students to speak as themselves, express their own preferred identities, participate actively, explore and exploit opportunities, make choices and decisions, negotiate, take responsibility, share experiences with one another, evaluate these experiences, and self-regulate their learning and their motivation" (Ushioda, 2011, p.22).

In Japan, it seems unrealistic to expect language learners to achieve and maintain a steady state of high autonomy when faced with the realities of teaching-centered, knowledge-oriented language instruction. Considering various anti-autonomous forces in the social contexts of language education, the participants recognized the importance of developing learner autonomy, and proposed a variety of teacher roles such as information-gatherer, decision-maker, trainer, guide, motivator, facilitator, counselor, designer, and collaborator. They shared perspectives on promoting autonomy in the real teaching contexts, and in order to negotiate various constraints under the macro/micro, they claimed to promote learner and teacher autonomy through positive interdependence among people in the community of learning/practice. EFL teachers in Japan are expected to collaborate with one another to develop professional autonomy and competence as reflective practitioners and researchers, even if there might be various constraints on collegiality in each school context.

For further research, I need to listen to more EFL teachers' real voices and to examine the relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in various education settings. Moreover, I will continue developing effective in-service teacher education programs, where I help teachers to develop learner autonomy, to foster their professional autonomy and competence through reflective teaching cycles, and to promote collegiality through collaborative action research.

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Do you have access to Ubiquitous technology?

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Part 1

Have you heard of u-Japan? What about ubiquitous technology? I hadn't heard of either until I was doing some research and came across an article about it (Zhang, 2008). Probably I should have been aware of this new buzz word "ubiquitous", but it doesn't yet seem to have reached the universities in Nagoya where I teach. This is probably because the technology hasn't reached there yet either. The really surprising thing though, is that according to the Japanese government, we should all be using it all the time, both in our teaching and in society in general.

In 2001 the Japanese government realized that Japan was falling behind in the technology race and the Japanese Cabinet launched the "e-Japan Strategy" (Cabinet Office, n.d.). In 2005 this was replaced by the u-Japan Policy put out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC, n.d.). The "u" in the u-Japan Policy is for ubiquitous which can be defined according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "existing or being everywhere at the same time," "constantly encountered", and "widespread" (Merriam-Webster n.d.). When applying the concept to technology, the term ubiquitous implies that technology is everywhere and we use it all the time.

The Research Center for Educational Technology at Kent State University defines ubiquitous computing environments as "learning environments in which all students have access to a variety of digital devices and services, including computers connected to the internet and mobile computing devices, whenever and wherever they need them..... (it) includes the idea of technology being always available but not itself the focus of learning." (Kent State University n.d.)

The motto for the u-Japan Policy has been "Working towards realizing the ubiquitous society by 2010 in which anyone can easily access and use a network anytime from anywhere and from any appliance." It also expands the "u" to include the characteristics of the network – universal, user-orientated and unique (MIC 2005). In the ambitious and aggressive governmental initiatives, higher education was expected to play a critical role in the creation of a seamless ubiquitous society through research, development, implementation and dissemination of mobile technologies in teaching and learning. The national efforts in developing and utilizing the information and communication technology (ICT) have made technologies widely available to the Japanese people (Zhang 2008).

If you teach in Japan I'm sure you are aware that Japanese students are very competent with their

cell phones. In fact, Japan leads the world with the number of subscribers to high function cell phones. Most cell phones in Japan use 3G or higher telecommunications technology with multiple functions including internet, GPS navigation, digital camera, video recording, TV and some even have a body fat calculator, (Telecommunication Carrier's Association 2010) and most young Japanese own at least one cell phone with multiple functions. According to the latest available statistics (April 2010) from the Telecommunication Carrier's Association there were 112.7 million cell phone subscribers and 97% of these were for 3G or higher phone technology. Japanese students on the whole are more than comfortable using their cell phones for the Internet, contacting friends, taking photos, finding their way, Internet shopping and listening to music. Why then are most of the students I teach not interested and unaware of other important technologies, even when the government says it has been aggressively promoting their accessibility and use for over 10 years? This paper explores some of the possible reasons for this. Part 2, in the next issue, will look at one example of what can be done to try and improve students' interaction with technology in the relatively low-tech environment that most of us work in.

Background

So why aren't my students ubiquitously aware?

Although Japan seems such a technologically advanced country, in reality, until 2002 the proportion of households with computers was considerably higher in the United States than in Japan. In fact the number of computers in households in Japan remained lower than in most OECD countries throughout the 1990s. Similarly, Internet use in Japan lagged behind the US and only reached similar rates at the beginning of the 21st century (OECD 2001). It seems this slow uptake has had a knock-on effect up to our current students. While in 2003 in schools in Japan the average student to computer ratio was 5.3 students to a computer for 15 year olds, the usage rate, which is how many students used a computer a few times each week, was only 26%. In comparison the US had a student to computer ratio of 3.3 students to a computer, the lowest in any OECD country, and a usage rate of 43%, one of the highest in the OECD (Human Resources and Skills Development n.d.).

Differences in the skills required to use computers and the costs of acquiring them may also have contributed to these patterns. According to the Economic Planning Agency (EPA 2000) of Japan, computer and internet penetration rates in Japan were initially lower than in the United States in part because of higher costs of hardware, software and telecommunication fees.

That computers and the Internet predominantly rely on the English language also played a role in Japan's slower adoption of ICT. Over 90% of online content is English (OECD 2001) but most

Japanese still do not have sufficient English skills to participate in this global exchange. That English is still a distant foreign language in Japan is a significant handicap in the adoption of computers and the Internet. The same is true for the supply side of ICT. Developers must make additional investments in hardware and software in order to make their products compatible with the non-Roman-alphabet languages in Asia. This is believed to be one of the key reasons why Internet applications and e-commerce in Asia continue to lag behind the West. In addition, although the typewriter was a common feature in offices, schools and homes in the pre-computer era in the West, no comparable counterpart to the typewriter existed in Japan, and therefore most people in Japan do not know how to type. Also, because Japanese is still the dominant language used on computers in Japan, all users must go through the extra stage of transforming the English alphabet into Japanese characters. Thus the introduction of computers was, and continues to be, a major adjustment for users in Japan. (Ono & Zavodny 2005)

Conversely, the opposite has happened with Japanese cell phones but with the same results, that of cutting Japan off from the rest of the world's international communications technology. Japan's cell phones set the pace in almost every industry innovation: e-mail capabilities in 1999, camera phones in 2000, third-generation networks in 2001, full music downloads in 2002, electronic payments in 2004 and digital TV in 2005. Indeed, Japanese cell phone makers thought they had positioned themselves to dominate the age of digital data. Unfortunately these innovators were a little too clever. The industry turned increasingly inward. In the 1990s, they set a standard for the second-generation network that was rejected everywhere else. Carriers created fenced-in Web services, like i-Mode. Those mobile Web universes fostered huge e-commerce and content markets within Japan, but they also increased the country's isolation from the global market. Then Japan quickly adopted a third-generation standard in 2001. The rest of the world dallied, essentially making Japanese phones too advanced for most markets.

At the same time, the rapid growth of Japan's cell phone market in the late 1990s and early 2000s gave Japanese companies little incentive to market overseas. From 2007 however the market started shrinking significantly, hit by a recession and a graying economy; makers shipped 19 percent fewer handsets in 2008 and even fewer in 2009. Despite their advanced hardware, handsets in Japan often have primitive, clunky interfaces, consultants say. Most handsets have no way to easily synchronize data with PCs as the new smart phones do (New York Times, 2009). This adds to the lack of familiarity with computers.

In addition, while there are computers in schools, the way the Japanese education system is structured does not encourage their use, especially at the more academic schools. These schools are focused on preparing students for entrance exams to prestigious universities and so there is no

perceived need to ensure that students are familiar with technology at this stage of their lives. The less academic schools do try and attract students with their technology, but unfortunately a lack of teacher training in cross-curriculum use of technology and the fact that entrance exams have a more important and far reaching effect on students lives, sees computers and technology in general being relegated to the background of high school studies.

However general computing skills and Internet literacy to navigate the Web, are essential for life and to interact with the global community. In an increasingly digital world, young Japanese who wish to succeed, can not ignore the outside digital world, and will need to cultivate these skills in English as the English language still dominates information on the web.

How do we encourage our students to do this? Is it possible to motivate low-level students with little background knowledge or interest in computers to learn to use Web 2.0 technology and enjoy doing it? Stay tuned for Part Two where I will give you an example that demonstrates that it is possible and not even too technically challenging for the teacher.

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Notes

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Articles – sharing your research with other teacher educators. Up to 3000 words.

Essays – your opinion or ideas about a topic relevant to teacher educators based in Japan. Up to 2500 words.

Stimulating Professional Development series – teacher educators are often quite professionally isolated. Write up about your teacher education activities, and the institutions that you work in. See previous issues for examples. Up to 3500 words.

Conference Proceedings – did you give a great presentation recently? Write up your presentation. Up to 2500 words.

Conference Reviews or Conference Reports – did you attend an interesting conference? Share your thoughts with the TE SIG members. Up to 2500 words.

Book Reviews – have you recently read an interesting book related to teaching, teacher education, language acquisition, or education? Up to 2000 words.

Font: Arial 11 point, single spaced, one line between paragraphs, SINGLE space between sentences.

Notes: Please include a catchy title, your name and professional affiliation, an e-mail address to go at the top of the article, and a 75-100 word bio-data for the end.

Deadlines: ongoing. Submit by e-mail to Simon Lees <simich(at)gol.com>. Attach as a Word document, titled with your surname, such as 'croker.doc' or 'robins.doc'.

Also, please cut and paste your article into the body of the e-mail, in case the Word document does not open.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor if you have any questions or ideas.

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Explorations in Teacher Education

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