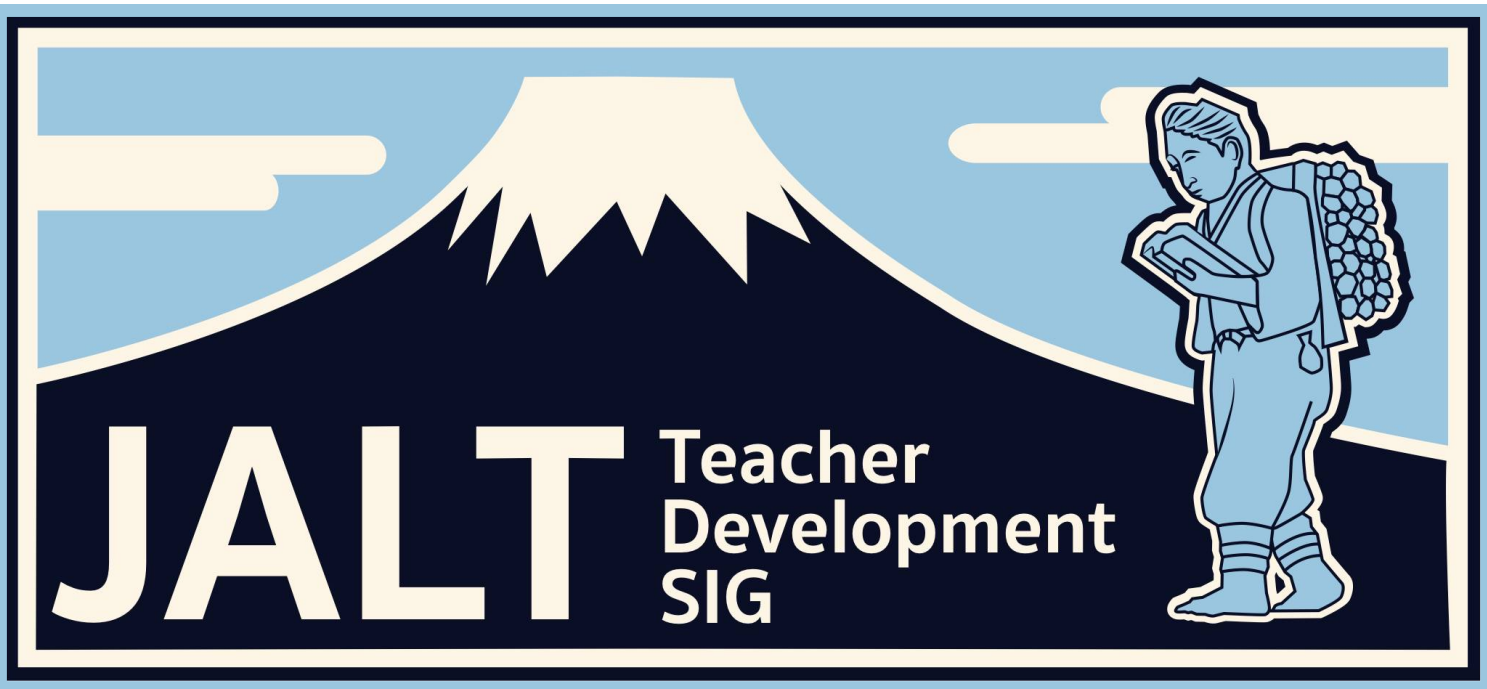

Explorations in Teacher Development

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Articles

About TD SIG

From the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Explorations in Teacher Development, volume 27, number 1! This issue contains four submissions that range widely in location, including Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States. But they share a common theme of teachers learning about themselves and about teaching from encounters with other teachers and students, and even another activity (surfing).

Sachiko Igarashi writes about how her experiences with intercultural communication (and miscommunication) in professional development have led her to understand the importance of these occasions to her own development as a teacher. She makes a case for Japanese high school teachers taking more advantage of intercultural professional development opportunities and to bring what they learn from them into their classrooms for their students' benefit.

Michael Ellis recounts what he learned from his experience becoming a non-native speaking Japanese teacher during a school exchange program in Australia. He gained greater awareness of issues facing non-native speaker teachers as well as realizing that students often see their teachers and the language learning experience differently from what teachers might think. He brought this experience back to his job in Japan in ways that have changed how the school where he works operates.

Our longtime contributor James Porcaro points to the importance of words spoken to us by others in encouraging us, motivating us, and shaping how we see ourselves as teachers through recounting five incidents from his career.

And finally, Mike Floquet writes about how the lessons he has learned from surfing have sustained him in opening his own English school in Japan, giving him the courage to take risks and develop success.

All of these stories highlight times in teachers' lives and careers that have shaped them into what they are today. I'm sure that many of our readers have similar stories, and we would love to hear them at Explorations in Teacher Development. Please consider submitting your story for inclusion and sharing with other teachers. If you wish to contribute, the guidelines for submission and contact information are provided below.

Thank you to all of those who have helped with this issue: Guy Smith, Jane Pryce, Adrienne Verla Uchida, and Deryn Verity for help with reviewing these contributions; and Daniel Beck for managing the layout and final production of the issue.

Bill Snyder

Managing Editor

This photo, taken by Stephanie Lim, was selected as the winner of the TD SIG's 2020 Photo Competition

Explorations in Teacher Development

Bill Snyder *Managing Editor*	**Daniel Beck** *Layout Editor*

Call for Papers

Explorations in Teacher Development is a journal for teachers, by teachers, where we encourage people to share their experiences and reflections.

Papers for Explorations in Teacher Development (ETD) Journal are accepted on an on-going basis. We encourage both members and non-members of our SIG to submit papers, so please share this information with your colleagues and friends to ensure a rich and diverse publication.

Following is a list of the categories and types of articles we are interested in publishing:

Research Articles (2000-3000 words)

- Narrative Inquiry
- Reflective Inquiry
- Action Research

Explorations (1000-3000 words)

- Reflections on beliefs/practices
- Learning / Teaching Journeys

Columns (500-1000 words)

- "Teacher Reflections"
- "Conference Reflections"

In addition, interviews of relevant educators/researchers as well as book reviews may be accepted at the discretion of the editors. Please contact us if interested in writing an interview piece. TD SIG also publishes the proceedings of our Teacher Journeys conference held in June as well as occasional special issues in collaboration with other JALT SIGs.

If you wish to contribute to ETD, please pay attention to the following requirements:

- All submissions should use APA style and a maximum of 12 references. Submissions that are not in APA style will be sent back to the authors for reformatting.
- Titles of papers should be 10 words or less.
- Research articles should include an abstract of 100-150 words.
- Explorative pieces do not require references but connections to the literature are encouraged.
- Column contributors are invited to submit at any time, but you may want to send an inquiry regarding your idea.
- All authors should provide their current affiliation and a contact email. A short bio and photo are optional.
- When sending in a submission, please indicate which category of the ETD Journal your article will fit under.

Please note that all submissions for the research and explorations sections of ETD will undergo a peer-review process and that, if accepted, we will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Authors are encouraged to include charts, images, graphs, etc. with their articles, which will provide a visual representation to our readers. Questions and contributions may be sent to the editors at the following email address:

jalt.ted.ete.editor@gmail.com

Enhancing English Teachers' Intercultural Communication Skills through Professional Development

Sachiko Igarashi
Koka Gakuen Junior and Senior High School for Girls

English language teachers are increasingly required to serve as facilitators who are proficient in managing a wide range of roles in the communicative language classroom. This new role of facilitator has been promoted by the availability of professional development for in-service teachers, which provides thought-provoking insights into the issues for communicative language teaching. In the author's case, involvement in an online learning course and participation in a teacher seminar course have emphasized how important it is for Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) to empower their students to raise their intercultural awareness which allows for more effective intercultural communication through the medium of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in a multilingual and multicultural community. To this end, most importantly, JTEs continuously need to develop their own intercultural communication skills and incorporate their experiences or beliefs about the relevance of intercultural understanding into their teaching practices. To conclude, implications for teacher professional development are presented: these implications involve the importance of pedagogical approaches that integrate intercultural awareness with English language teaching and cultivate critical perspectives of ELF in a global context.

Introduction

Language teachers benefit from being language learners themselves and their students learn much by seeing their teachers as language learning role models (Casanave, 2012). It is vital that teachers keep learning an additional language and using it for practical purposes in a real setting, resulting in a great sensitivity to recognizing their students' problems or developing a better instructional approach. Such authentic language use can include taking part in in-service learning programs such as online learning courses or face-to-face learning opportunities, which are critical for professional growth and English improvement. Language teachers have been shifting from simply teaching linguistic knowledge to playing a wide range of roles to prepare students to participate in a multilingual and multicultural society (Crowther & De Costa, 2017; Hedge, 2000). These roles involve transmitting teachers' own experiences such as successes or failures as language learners into their day-to-day teaching practices (Crowther & De Costa, 2017). Given this shift, it is essential for them to become life-long learners with a joy of learning and have as many opportunities to use English for practical purposes as possible.

In actuality, my learning journey through professional development has broadened my horizons regarding pedagogical philosophy and instructional approaches. One of my findings is how significant it is for Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) to foster their own intercultural communication skills, taking into consideration the current landscape of the global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) used by both native speakers of English and non-native speakers. Promoting intercultural communicative competence under ELF conditions requires demonstrating the ability to deal with a huge variety of communications in multilingual or multicultural settings. However, JTEs are faced with a limitation with regard to offering rich opportunities for intercultural communication for practical purposes in the classroom. Japanese students tend to lack a sense of urgency or necessity in articulating their ideas effectively to make themselves understood, or persuading others because they are considered to be from high-context culture and thus, not required to make detailed accounts in language. That may be greatly determined by particular cultural characteristics where Japanese students are more likely to "share a high quality of commonality of knowledge and viewpoints" (Frank, 2013, p. 5). There may be few demands for spelling out their intentions in an explicit manner to get meaning across in such a context.

With that in mind, Japanese students should engage in communicative tasks focused on fostering intercultural communication skills in English by practicing making appropriate language choices according to different situations and articulating their ideas for smooth spoken communication. In addition, they need to practice writing their ideas clearly and coherently enough to convey meaning by producing written texts in a contextualized manner in a range of genres. (Hedge, 2000). These basic skills for more effective communication can be promoted even in an EFL learning environment with little exposure to ELF or diverse cultures. I will discuss some pedagogical implications as to how these skills can be cultivated in the classroom with reference to my professional development.

Intercultural Communication in ELF

As the OECD PISA Global Competence Framework (2018) puts it, "learning to participate in interconnected, complex and diverse societies is no longer a luxury but a pressing necessity." On the other hand, a 2016 report on JTEs' preferences for professional development shows them preferring to focus on developing English speaking proficiency and other pedagogical skills over developing their own intercultural awareness (Tokyo Gakugei University, 2016). Yet, in line with ongoing increases in being interconnected globally, in-service JTEs should be more concerned about the current situation where we are in linguistically and culturally diverse societies and the issue of fostering intercultural communication skills by the medium of ELF.

Additionally, it is important for JTEs to become more aware that English is characterized by its plural nature. In this case, "plural" refers to the global usage of multiple forms of English, which stands in contrast to "a monolithic ontology of English: a belief in the existence of

a single definitive inventory of correct forms" (Hall, 2014, pp. 3-4). At the present, English is still somewhat affected by native English-speaking norms (Holliday, 2018; Jenkins, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2005), whereas English is no longer a communication tool used only by native English speakers as a first language. However, a large number of non-native speakers are eager to learn, what is called, "standard English" or "the best English" constructed by American or British native speakers or follow native-speaker norms (Hall, 2014). The same partly applies for Japanese learners.

Reflecting on the recent discussions on the nature of ELF, I recognize the importance of looking beyond English education affected by a monolingual perspective. It involves considering how JTEs can hold a more holistic view of English learning within the Global Englishes paradigm (Ushioda, 2017); or what Japanese students should do to develop their linguistic and cultural competencies as global citizens with a broader perspective. While I am exploring some feasible and constructive solutions, my potential avenues may include fostering students' intercultural communication and critical thinking skills in order to prepare them to effectively use English in a wide range of sociocultural contexts with cultural awareness. The reality is, however, there seem to be many Japanese students who have never been abroad or have no chances to interact with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, languages, social conventions. They often have questions about why they should study English or culture associated with it because they are in the social context where the recognition of the world being interconnected is not so much required. I find it challenging to make a convincing and reasonable account of the issue to my students.

To design a more effective learning environment for those who have few chances to interact with people from different cultural, social, or linguistic backgrounds, it is essential for JTEs to prompt students to bring up their own issues regarding cultural topics and construct their own perspectives of culture. In addition to mastering linguistic skills, it is also necessary to offer students rich opportunities to encounter a wide variety of views about culture, compare them with students' own ideas, and develop their own critical thinking skills.

However, teachers with minimal intercultural experiences are more likely to be confronted with a couple of challenges. They may lack knowledge or skills that empower them to prepare their students to effectively use English in a wide range of sociocultural contexts with cultural awareness. In addition, such pedagogical proposals as stated above sound idealistic to them and it can be demanding for them to take concrete action on this matter. The biggest problem that teachers seem to identify is what approach to take in order to raise their students' cultural awareness in class. Menard-Warwick (2008) argues for the necessity of teacher education which focuses on developing teachers' interculturality, presenting some practical approaches or resources which help teachers to bring interculturality to their teaching.

However, there is still a paucity of practical proposals to address these problems, as research suggests a lack of interculturally-oriented teaching materials or pedagogical approaches which incorporate culture into the English language classroom (Galloway & Rose, 2017). A growing number of proposals for improving current ELT approaches have been made, whereas there remains a lack of studies on concrete suggestions for creating tasks to raise students' intercultural awareness of how to communicate in English effectively in lingua franca settings. The challenges or confusions of JTEs could be solved if professional development is properly given to them.

Developing Intercultural Awareness through Professional Development Opportunities

In an effort to facilitate students' intercultural communication, one key component is that JTEs can provide their students with a variety of their own experiences, knowledge, or skills that represent cultural contents in their language classroom. That can be successfully accomplished by participating in learning programs for in-service teachers such as online or face-to-face learning opportunities for professional development. While teacher development opportunities may take different forms, this article includes three case studies reflecting my learning experiences. These examples might help teachers know about how professional development activities can be put into practice.

As one instance in my actual experience of intercultural communication dysfunction, I experienced a failure while engaging in a professional development program for in-service English teachers with diverse backgrounds. A peer review process with an English teacher from a different cultural background did not work properly when I was doing a task for an online learning course on TESOL delivered by a university in the U.S. My peer-review partner gave no concrete nor immediate feedback on my written products. I told my peer that I wanted to get feedback from him, but he simply emailed me sometimes to show his apology of his inactive engagement with the peer review. My instructor provided continuous support in addressing this problem by prompting my peer review partner to communicate with me in a timely manner. In spite of the instructor's encouragement, the collaborative task ended up failing. That made me become fully aware that cross-cultural communication could be challenging on a number of levels.

I wondered whether or not my peer review partner fully understood the peer review system, which required reciprocal help of learning; he simply may have not been responsive. Sticking to the assumption that language should transmit a clear meaning from one to another, I saw his behaviors as inappropriate and disappointing for my expectations of participating in the online course as a mature learner. My belief was that the course participants were responsible for creating meaning in the online learning community through mutual assistance as Vlachopoulos and Makri (2019) mention. In the same vein, the culturally mixed groups of the participants were supposed to work collaboratively, showing respect or empathy of each other's teaching situation in pursuit of making effective interaction or facilitating some cognitive

outcome. I am seeking out more feasible solutions to this cross-cultural-related challenge still now by connecting my personal experience mentioned above to relevant research.

In order to deal with this kind of communication breakdown, it may be of some help to refer to literature focusing on incorporating theoretical perspectives about ELF into teachers' knowledge or beliefs. For example, applying the conceptual framework of intercultural competence proposed by Byram (1997), there is some relevance for some skills necessary to prompt interactive communication in an online learning platform: to employ different modes of communicative practices or to use various questioning strategies in order to elicit connotations or assumptions from interlocutors from diverse cultural backgrounds (Belz, 2007). Intercultural communicative competence may serve a crucial role in addressing a communication deficit by adjusting expectations to an interlocutor's norms or taking another form of action or adopting an appropriate one out of a range of alternative options.

Another instance for facilitating my intercultural awareness through professional development is that I gained a valuable experience of face-to-face intercultural communication by winning a scholarship for in-service JTEs. Attending a two-week teacher training course in the summer of 2018 in Cambridge, UK helped me to realize that my communications through ELF in the program apparently lacked the ability to utilize communicative resources or strategies effectively. Most importantly, I should prompt myself to develop my intercultural competency for successful communication in ELF. Such a skill will result in encouraging my students to gain intercultural competence with critical thinking skills.

Contrary to my expectation, I was often faced with some challenges in intercultural communication while engaging in discussions or tasks with English teachers from different backgrounds. I became fully aware that intercultural communication on a variety of occasions during my stay were characterized by different variations of English or communication styles. I have found it necessary to find more effective ways of getting meaning across through English that could make language more understandable to audiences with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. One way to promote successful intercultural communication is to improve one's own intelligibility in terms of pronunciation when conveying meaning in English.

While participating in the course, I often wondered why I sometimes had trouble in catching what is being said in English. Basic vocabulary used for everyday communication was also challenging for me to pick up immediately because it has multiple meanings, which may vary depending on the context. English phrasal verbs comprised of simpler words can be semantically confusing. For non-native speakers who struggle to identify semantic distinctiveness in English, phrasal verbs can have various meanings or semantic ambiguity (Strong & Boers, 2019). To be more specific, it is daunting for non-native speakers to associate the combination of a verb and a particle with the meanings (e.g. find out is equivalent to discover, while carry on corresponds to continue). My incorrect inferences or slow grasp of phrasal verbs may have stemmed from this linguistic divide or L1 interferences, which non-native speakers may face in acquiring or using them during instantaneous communication. Conversely, there were several times when infrequent academic words or vocabulary derived from Latin could make me more comprehensible.

There was another intercultural-related opportunity of deepening my realization around how local cultural dimensions to language are shaped in the local communities. As Baker (2012) presents as a pedagogical implication, exploring the traditional arts through English can be applied to analytically evaluate how English is learned in local communities. For example, I went to see the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival as an extra-curricular activity while participating in the teacher training course in the U.K. It was a unique experience in that sense. Performances take place in the summer in the university's garden in Cambridge. I heard that so many tourists from across the world as well as local people were attracted by the performances. It was impressive that many families with small children enjoyed watching the play. I realized that the famous performances of one of the national art cultures are offered for those of all ages partly for educational purposes. This cultural encounter provided me with a chance to reflect on the relevance of language to culture and made me realize further that it would be conducive to developing an understanding of sociocultural contexts associated with language, English in this case. That may include an understanding of culture for intercultural awareness by making comparison to one's own culture.

Learnings from Professional Development

As already pointed out, it is important for JTEs to go beyond English education affected by monolingualism or native-English speaker norms. However, JTEs may wonder what approach to take in order to raise students' critical perspectives of culture and language associated with ELF. As regards to their challenges in how to promote students' intercultural communicative competence in ELF communication, JTEs should be aware of how ELF can be used in a global context. Specifically, there is a possibility of meanings not having been taken appropriately under ELF conditions (Baird, 2018). It is significant for ELF users with different cultural backgrounds to understand how their values or beliefs are shaped and both are reflected in their behaviors. Promoting intercultural awareness also involves pragmatic competence; successful intercultural communication concerns appropriate language choices and awareness of oneself as a cultural being.

Some learnings obtained through several professional development opportunities have led me to think about how JTEs can foster their students' intercultural awareness or how important it is for their students to construct their own critical view of how they use English in the multilingual and multicultural society. Inspired by those learnings, I have been able to see my teaching practice from totally different perspectives and have

started to seek more effective ways to help develop my students' positive attitude towards flexible and negotiated communication.

Porto's (2019) suggestion is to design a learning environment which encourages students from diverse language backgrounds to work on a transnational project collaboratively. Likewise, as Baker (2012) points out, such a communicative practice may relate to an increased understanding of differing cultural contexts and interactional styles through discussions or reflections on the collaborative project. One of the possibly feasible steps is that we can move forward by building a network with teachers from diverse backgrounds through creating or sharing new ideas of our instructional approaches with them. That may include asking for a partnership with various schools on a global scale to promote students' intercultural interactions or designing a learning platform which allows them to do interactive tasks with partner students collaboratively. Having seen a similar practice planned and implemented by the US Embassy into secondary schools in Japan, a telecollaborative project may be a potentially achievable and noticeable approach.

Considering the orientation of ELF, interactions through ELF may cause misunderstanding or confusion. Interlocutors are required to make a considerable effort to establish successful communication or reach mutual agreement, as Margić (2017) has summarized. In this regard, there are a couple of pedagogical suggestions for successful implementation of instructional approaches to develop students' intercultural communication skills along with intercultural awareness. To be precise, Baker (2012) gives the key three skills that are required for ELF speakers to be involved in intercultural communication in an effective manner. These include *accommodation*, which encourages them to accept language or culture that is not familiar to them. *Negotiation* and *mediation* aim to cultivate abilities to deal with the situation properly where some communication breakdown or misunderstanding may occur by improving respect and empathy for people from different cultural values, practices, or expectations. According to the nature of ELF, for non-native speakers, communicative efficiency should be taken priority over appropriate English use prescribed by native-speaker norms.

Noting that both native and non-native speakers have an equal responsibility for communicating effectively and preventing misunderstanding (Margić, 2017), "adjust[ing] their habitual modes of reception and production" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 487) is essentially inevitable for native English speakers who use ELF. According to the findings of Margić's study (2017), "enunciating clearly, using fewer idioms and colloquial words, speaking more slowly and simplifying sentence construction" are the strategies most frequently adopted by native speakers in order to avoid misunderstanding or communication breakdown or build solidarity among interlocutors (Margić, 2017, p. 44). Native speakers' positive or generous attitudes towards such accommodation strategies can be of great help to achieve more effective communication in ELF.

Another important point is to provide students with tasks which encourage them to critically evaluate information, texts, or documents relevant to culture study or intercultural communication in order to foster the skills for successful intercultural communication. Furthermore, another avenue is to get students writing papers coherently based on the understanding and interpretation of the sources, or giving an oral presentation of their ideas. To this end, materials or resources, including textbooks or media, should be designed in such a way as to help students from different cultural backgrounds recognize how culture can be perceived within a contextualized learning setting (Crowther & De Costa, 2017). Likewise, JTEs also need to aim to promote students' pragmatic and strategic competences, which require their cultural awareness and critical thinking skills for authentic intercultural interaction. A further approach is to present students with some potential challenges closely related to intercultural communication issues as case studies and offer them an opportunity to explore some solutions. An important achievement of this approach focuses on how students would manage different types of potential problems in a specific situation through engaging in a case study or role-playing task. This approach can be incorporated into both speaking or writing tasks in a regular classroom.

Conclusion

The above discussions indicate that JTEs should transform from mainly transmitting linguistic knowledge to demonstrating multiple roles in a communicative language classroom. In an attempt to bring about a transformative effect on the current traditional teaching practices, JTEs are continuously required to apply their language learning or intercultural communication experiences into their teaching practices through the use of expertise, knowledge or skills gained during their professional development opportunities. I would recommend that JTEs upgrade their current teaching practices with their own actual intercultural experiences as well as a theory of learning. JTEs' steady and conscious efforts will help Japanese students to construct their own critical perspectives of how they should or can use English as a lingua franca in the globalized, diverse society. As a result, Japanese students will enrich their communication repertories with a wide range of linguistic competences and be equipped with the knowledge or proficiencies vital to actively participate in global contexts.

An expanding language teacher role of raising students' awareness of "the dynamic relationship between English and its diverse sociocultural settings" (Baker, 2012, pp. 69-70) needs to go beyond the norm of simply teaching linguistic knowledge of lexis, grammar, phonology in a decontextualized manner. For that purpose, it is more essential for JTEs to strive to cultivate their own intercultural understanding through ELF communication; they need to be actively involved in a wide range of tasks or practices in multilingual and multicultural learning communities for professional development. If JTEs take consistent advantage of such opportunities, then this will lead to providing their students with a variety of cultural sources or valuable knowledge and skills which they can apply to any contexts outside of the classroom.

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Becoming a Non-Native Speaking Teacher:

Reflections as an American Teacher of Japanese in an Australian High School

Michael Ellis

International Christian University High School

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of nuance in the dichotomy between NESTs (native English speaking teachers) and NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers). However, even as the complex definition of a native speaker is scrutinized and explored, it can still be difficult for those who identify unambiguously as a NEST or NNEST to understand the strengths and challenges of the other group. As a NEST from the US, I had a chance to bridge this gap when offered the opportunity to teach Japanese language classes in an Australian high school. Over a two week period, I taught beginner level classes to three groups of thirty 7th graders and one group of twelve 8th graders. In this paper I offer reflections on the experience and explain how it influenced my English teaching practice by helping me to better understand the position of NNESTs in Japan.

The native speaker fallacy, also known as native speakerism, is one of the most pervasive problems in language education, especially English language education today (Holliday, 2006). This fallacy is the false notion that native speaking teachers (NSTs) of a target language are inherently better equipped than non-native speaking teachers (NNSTs), regardless of experience or qualifications (Canagarajah, 1999). English education in Japan reflects native speakerism in the jobs that native speaking English teachers (NESTs) and non-native speaking English teachers (NNESTs) tend to be offered and their relative status (Houghton & Rivers, 2013).

In recent years, this fallacy has been challenged as we better comprehend the strengths and value of experiences of NNSTs, as well as the difficulty in accurately defining nativeness. As a result of globalization, it is more and more common for people to speak multiple languages natively, or to achieve contextual nativeness. A child who grows up in a Japanese speaking family while attending English language international school in China for example, may be quite proficient in Japanese for daily conversation and English for academics, but struggle with the reverse. Furthermore, many foreign language learners study to an advanced level and become functionally native, indicating that nativeness is not a clear and simple binary as was previously believed. However, even as we better understand the nuance of nativeness, it can be difficult for teachers who identify unambiguously as NSTs or NNSTs to fully appreciate the skills and struggles common to the other group.

I was offered a rare opportunity to bridge this NST and NNST gap when I, an unambiguous American NEST, taught Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) classes at an Australian high school. In this study, I reflect on this experience and what it helped me understand about NNESTs in Japan.

My Language Learning and Teaching Background

In order to contextualize my reflections as a JFL teacher on this program, it will be useful to quickly review my background as a language learner and teacher, and to examine how this experience has shaped my views on a teacher's nativeness in the target language over time. I identify three distinct phases in the evolution of these views.

Full on native-speakerism: Student of Various Languages

The first phase is when I studied foreign languages at high school and university. In six years of French studies, I had four different teachers. All were NNSTs and three had PhDs in French language or education. In four years of Spanish studies, I had four different teachers. To my knowledge, none had higher degrees, but all were NSTs from Spain or various places in Latin America. Although I recognized that the French teachers were all experienced, qualified and capable, I would have preferred NSTs, and was grateful to be taught by NSTs in my Spanish classes, though I understood even at the time that on average they were not as skilled as my French teachers. I cannot explain the reasoning for this preference. It just seemed natural to assume that NSTs were inherently *better* teachers. I knew at this time that I wanted to pursue a career as a language teacher, and chose English by default as I was not confident I could achieve native level proficiency in any other language. At university, most of the Japanese classes were taught by NSTs, but there was at least one section taught by a NNST, and I was relieved to not have been placed there. There were no NSTs of Latin, but if there were I am sure I would have requested to join that class. At this time, I subscribed enthusiastically to the native speaker fallacy, even as a student conscious and critical of foreign language teaching practice.

Relaxing prejudices: ALT and Eikaiwa

I began to question native speakerism when I started teaching language myself. My first full time teaching job was as an ALT at a junior high school in Miyagi prefecture through the JET Program. I had studied mainly theoretical linguistics at university and had very little training in teaching. Despite this, the Japanese teachers I worked with all treated me as an expert in the field and gave me more credit than I felt I deserved, particularly in front of the students. It was not uncommon, for example, for a teacher to give me free, unvetted rein over a full class or two each week even when I had only a basic understanding of the curriculum and effective teaching methodology. Some of this behavior may have resulted from politeness, laziness or a combination of the two, but it still alerted me early on to my privileged position as a NEST.

My understanding of this position deepened when I moved to Tokyo two years later and began working at an

eikaiwa school. This school had simple posters to introduce the teachers by the doorway. It troubled me how the Japanese NNESTs were introduced with their language learning background and qualifications, while the NESTs were introduced with our interests and hobbies. NESTs were also forbidden from ever using Japanese during class for any reason. In this context, I felt constrained as a NEST rather than privileged. My background and skills were irrelevant, or at least secondary to my NEST status. During this time, my native speakerism began to relax, but I still thought that the ideal teacher is a NST, but only one with proper training and a healthy amount of autonomy.

Conceptual understanding but lack of empathy: Masters program and high school EFL

Simultaneous to entering the eikaiwa school, I began pursuing an MA TESOL degree. In a compulsory course on classroom practices, our teacher introduced literature on the native speaker fallacy. I also had brilliant NNEST classmates who helped to show me the potential of all educators, regardless of nativeness. Around this time, I developed a conceptual understanding that native-speakerism is wrong but lacked empathy for NNESTs and the tools to address the inequality in our field. The high school where I started teaching at this time had strict teacher categories of native (all non-Japanese NESTs), bilingual (all Japanese NESTs who have studied as children in English speaking environments) and grammar (all Japanese NSTs). Though these categories felt limiting to me based on my experience and training, I did nothing to push back against them. This passive attitude changed through my experience teaching JFL, when I entered a fourth phase.

The Program

In the summer of 2018, I chaperoned ten 10th and 11th grade students from our high school on a study abroad program to a public school in New South Wales, Australia. For three weeks, the students lived with Australian families and attended school daily. In addition to normal classes, they had two hours of ESL every morning, taught by the coordinating teacher at the school. This teacher was an Australian teacher of Japanese language and her normal morning classes were disrupted by these ESL classes during this time. I offered to cover the Japanese classes that she missed and she enthusiastically accepted.

I taught beginner level classes to three groups of thirty 7th graders and one group of twelve 8th graders, a total of eight 70-minute lessons. The goals of these classes were to enable students to use basic Japanese grammar and vocabulary and understand important features of Japanese culture. I was given broad topics to teach, such as weather, numbers 101 through 1000, particles *kara* (from) and *made* (to/until), and complete autonomy in my approach. In the following section, I identify and explain five key reflections that came up during this program.

Reflections

Reflection 1: Students are often interested in their teachers as individuals, regardless of nationality or nativeness

I planned to use the first five minutes of the first class with each set of students for general question and answer time about Japanese culture and my life there. Anticipating questions about obscure parts of Japanese culture, I reviewed a travel guide the day before to brush up. I was conscious of my non-nativeness and concerned about coming across as a knowledgeable ambassador. The students were so excited to ask the questions, we ended up using about 15 minutes in each class. The following list is a representative sample of the kinds of questions that they asked.

- Did you leave America because of Trump?
- Did you leave America because of all the shootings?
- Do you think in English or in Japanese?
- What's the weirdest thing about Japan?
- What's your favorite thing about Australia?
- Can you do an Australian accent?

Surprisingly few questions related to Japanese language or culture at all, and a significant number were just about Australia. In reality, the students seemed to be much more interested in me and my lived experiences, to the point that I had to nudge them to ask questions about Japan. This is encouraging to NNSTs, as it demonstrates that we do not necessarily need to be experts in the target language culture to engage our students.

Reflection 2: Students aren't always as interested in learning the target language as we hope

The students in the compulsory classes had not chosen to study Japanese but were randomly placed into Japanese or Chinese language classes. As such, the level of motivation varied widely. Behavior and classroom management were constant issues, confounded by my limited experience with large unruly classes. For this reason, I particularly enjoyed teaching the smaller, 8th grade elective class for students who chose to continue their Japanese studies from the previous year. Even in this class however, behavior was a problem. One student constantly spoke to her classmates about unrelated topics during the lesson. I assumed that she took the class not because of an interest in learning Japanese, but rather a lack of alternatives. However, during our last class, I happened to see her notebook full of beautiful illustrations of various aspects of Japanese culture (see Figure 1).

This sparked a conversation after class about the specific places she hopes to visit and things she hopes to do, see and eat there. Learning the language does not seem to be a priority for her, but that does not mean that she has no interest in the target language culture. As a linguist this way of thinking was quite surprising to me, but it is perfectly sensible. Students' interests are not

limited to the target language, so a teacher's status as a NNST in no way hinders our ability to connect with students about those goals. In some ways it may actually help, as in a lesson I describe in the third reflection.

Figure 1: Student notebook with illustrations about Japanese culture

Reflection 3: As NNSTs, we can relate to our students as models of their ideal L2 selves

I practice photography as a hobby and tend to carry my DSLR camera with me everywhere I go. When introducing new vocabulary in these classes, I used slideshows with high resolution pictures I had taken in various parts of Japan, which often led to anecdotal stories about my travels and experiences. The students reacted very positively to this. It was my feeling that they felt a stronger connection to the target language and concepts because they were introduced to them through my eyes as a NNST. I expect that images from a textbook, or even from a NST would not have elicited the same reaction, as the connection to the students' lives would be weaker. If I can climb Mt Fuji or brave Tokyo commuter trains as evidenced with photographs, what's stopping them from doing the same one day?

On the last day of the program, one student in the elective class asked me some detailed questions about how I began working and living in Japan. This student had stood out as the strongest in that class, with her quick retention of target vocabulary and grammar, and astute questions about Japanese linguistic rules. She reminded me a bit of myself as a language learner, so I was thrilled to hear that she might be interested in pursuing a similar career. In this case, my status as a NNST helped a student by providing a model that she may follow one day.

Reflection 4: We can be better at explaining the target language than we realize

The night before the first class, I knew that I was going to get tricky questions about the intricate usage of particles ha and ga, a topic which troubles even advanced learners of Japanese. I was wrong, and most of the questions that the students asked were well within my ability to explain. Based on my experience teaching in English grammar, I reminded myself to not hesitate to say "I don't know. Let me check and get back to you tomorrow." when confronted with tough questions. Surprising to me, this was never necessary, and I actually found myself more comfortable answering the students' questions about Japanese grammar than I generally am about English. This is likely because I had used a similar textbook to consciously learn those same rules as an adult. In this way, I could speak with authority about tricks and advice for learning the target language, unlike in my English classes which require more deliberate effort to sympathize with EFL students.

Reflection 5: Good teaching is good teaching

Although I made many mistakes in these classes and would love the opportunity to do everything over once more, this experience taught me that ultimately good teaching practice is good teaching practice, regardless of the course content or teacher's nativeness. During this program, I was able to utilize many of the tools and principles that I have cultivated in my English classes, such as needs analysis, explicit goals and assessment, task authenticity and variety, maximization of student interaction, and reflection. Though I have taught some content classes in Japan, the main goal has always been English language, so I feared that I would start from square one in a Japanese class. Luckily this was not the case. As teachers, our skills are readily transferable to different course content.

Conclusions

Some readers may find these reflections obvious. In retrospect, many are things that I understood intellectually before this opportunity but did not fully appreciate. It frustrates me that I had to personally experience work as a NNST to develop a level of empathy for NNESTs in Japan. I hope that this study can substitute as an experience for other NESTs like me to better understand the positions of NNESTs.

Since this program, I have taken an active role in weakening the boundaries between the categories of teachers at our school. This year, for the first time, we hired a new "bilingual" teacher who was educated in Japanese, and only studied in English at graduate school. Normally, a teacher with this background would only be considered for a "grammar" teacher position. However, in the short time that she has been here, she has contributed a great deal to the program with her fresh perspective unique from the NESTs in the team. We are now actively discussing how to further blur the lines between these categories in the future. I hope to keep drawing on this experience as a NNST of JFL to continue diversifying the teachers in our English program and utilizing our individual strengths to the fullest.

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The Teacher Development SIG at PanSIG 2021

Developing an Intercultural Understanding as Teachers

Friday, May 14, 19:00-20:30

Language teaching involves a commitment to, and interest in, intercultural communication. In providing language learning instruction, practitioners are not merely sharing linguistic knowledge and skills in a one-directional manner, but are continuously negotiating and learning from their students' dynamic experiences, repertoires, and identities. As English is a lingua franca, which facilitates communication across cultures, a sensitivity to the intricacies of interaction between groups from different speech backgrounds is essential. In an era characterised by division and remoteness, language educators' roles have become even more paramount in upholding and promoting intercultural mindsets. However, these skills may be overlooked or complicated to build and hone.

This forum is a collaboration between the Teacher Development (TD) and Intercultural Communication in Language Education (ICLE) SIGs. Featuring a panel of invited speakers from the SIGs, each presenter will explore a different element of what developing intercultural practice, understanding, and principles as a foreign language educator entails. Following the presentations, the panellists will interact about points of interest and resonance, and there will be an opportunity for audience participants to share their reflections and contribute to the dialogue. It is hoped that this session will provide guidance for developing intercultural teaching approaches and language learning environments.

Invited speakers:

Prof. Helen Spencer-Oatey (University of Warwick & GlobalPeople Consulting Ltd.)

Prof. Stephen R. Ryan (Sanyo Gakuen University)

Prof. Yoko Munezane (Rikkyo University)

Words Matter: Instruction, Encouragement, and Affirmation in 5 Episodes

James W. Porcaro
Toyama Kokusai Gakuen

Words matter.

The world was created by the words of God. At the creation God said, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

Words are alive and they have power. The Japanese term *kotodama* (言霊) means the spirit which is present in words.

"Words are containers of power... Words motivate or deflate thoughts, hopes, dreams, and actions. Words have the power to excite, inspire, elate, sadden, frighten, anger, or give hope" (Baldridge, 2018).

Words indeed can structure our lives. Even as I continue to work at the chalkface at age 75 I reflect more and more on the past half-century of my teaching career and experiences which have shaped me as the teacher that I am. Following are five encounters with words spoken or written to me at important moments during that period of time which have had a lasting impact even to this day.

In November 1967, as part of U.S. Peace Corps training for my assignment in Uganda, I did practice teaching at Washington Irving High School in New York City, then an all-girls school. My supervising teacher was Mr. Bret Schlesinger, a brilliant, master teacher of history and social studies. At that time he was teaching the Age of Enlightenment. One of his lessons which intrigued the students was an introduction to the ideas of Rousseau. I observed for one week and then stepped in front of the class for the following two weeks. I had had no previous classroom teaching training or experience, so it was quite a daunting task and I struggled. I don't remember how I picked up on the sequence of his lessons or what I actually did but I know it was not good as I somehow tried to imitate Mr. Schlesinger. Thankfully the students were kind and tolerant at least out of respect for him. In our conference one of those days Mr. Schlesinger told me, "Jim, you can't be me. You must be yourself." I don't remember how I adjusted my lessons for the remaining days and I hope I got better at it, but those instructive words were to guide me through the coming years and to this day. Indeed, soon thereafter, in Uganda, at a secondary school in a very remote part of the country, where I wound up as the sole teacher of mathematics, I had no choice but to be myself and find how to teach in my own way. And I got good at it.

After returning to the U.S. from Uganda and completing a master's degree in African Area Studies, for the 1973-74 school year I was a daily on-call substitute teacher at Los Angeles inner-city junior and senior high schools. Though usually my assignment at any school was for just a day, I committed my best to every lesson and to every student in my classes. Rare among substitutes, I always came to a school with a prepared lesson and I expected the students to attend to the lesson. Furthermore, I made it a point to establish my moral authority and legitimacy as the teacher in charge of the class. Students see through everything we are and do in the classroom. As Lemov (2010) makes distinctly clear, it is utterly false to think that warmth and strictness in the classroom are opposites. The teacher must be both; indeed, often at exactly the same time. "When you are clear, consistent, firm, and unrelenting and at the same time positive, enthusiastic, caring, and thoughtful, you start to send the message to students that having high expectations is part of caring for and respecting someone. This is a very powerful message" (p. 213). Once I covered a class for an absent teacher for a full week. It was a difficult-to-manage junior high school class and I did the best I could. That was not unrecognized. One day a student spoke out in class, "You care about us more than Mr. Ivory [their homeroom teacher]." Her words struck me deeply at that time and have endured in my mind for decades. They were a satisfying affirmation of my understanding and practice that the path to meaning is responsibility, as Dr. Jordan Peterson (2018) avers is essential for our lives. And I have always followed that good counsel.

Meanwhile, in September 1973 I had started to teach ESL at a community adult school in Los Angeles, again as a substitute teacher. I had a one month assignment, four nights a week, for a teacher on maternity leave. Just the month before I had completed a summer course (with Evelyn Hatch) in TESL methods and materials at UCLA Extension. I had never taught an ESL class before and with that very limited knowledge and no textbook or syllabus for the course, and no one in charge to guide me, I had to rely on my own creativity, instincts, and effort. I spent many hours at home before each lesson deciding what to do and how to do it while preparing the lesson papers and materials. Mr. Schlesinger's words still rang in my head. Well, I greatly enjoyed the one month with the class and had reason to feel pleased with the response of the students to my lessons but I was very uncertain as to how well I had done. When I came to the school again about a week later to sub for someone else, I met Ms. Lula Hobbs, the teacher for whom I had subbed for the month. She came up to me with a confident smile but in a tone of faux indignation asked, "What did you do to my students? They told me they wanted you to come back and teach the class." Those words of encouragement meant everything to me at that time. I knew then for sure that I had found my career, though I recognized the very hard work it would take to become a good ESL teacher. And a good one I became.

But it was a new ballgame for me when I came to Japan in 1985 as an instructor at, then, the premier foreign language college (*senmon gakkō*) in the Kansai region.

Teaching English as a foreign language in this new sociocultural context, I had to approach classroom instruction in some new ways, consider new meaning for my work, and refine my identity as a teacher. Some years later Jim Cummins (2003) essay, "Language and The Human Spirit", clarified for me what I had been doing. He observed that "there is an inseparable linkage between the conceptions of language and human identity that we infuse in our classroom instruction." In the context of the instructional choices we make, he noted that we must examine "the extent to which the classroom interactions we orchestrate build on and affirm the cultural, linguistic, intellectual and personal identities that students bring to our classrooms." In Japan, my aim has been to address this humanistic educational endeavor. But in the first year here I wondered if I was on the right track. Then, in May 1986, the new Academic Director, Mr. Bill Wolff, a veteran educational administrator, without prior notice came to one of my classes for a formal observation and evaluation. His very comprehensive and detailed report concluded with the remark, "A first-class performance by an expert teacher." Those words mattered so much to me as an affirmation of the efficacy of my work in this new environment and gave me a great boost of confidence to go on with it. And two years later I succeeded him as the Academic Director for the following nine years.

While in charge of a fine staff of native English-speaking teachers in Osaka, I made more than 100 classroom visitations to observe their lessons. I followed each visit with a discussion with the teacher about the lesson along with my evaluation and advisement. I thought I knew how to work smoothly and successfully with my fellow teachers, but doing so with Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) was to be another matter. After I had come to Toyama as a university professor in 1999, I served for six years (2004 - 2010) as a member of the SELHi (Super English Language High School) advisory committee for the university's attached (*fuzoku*) high school. A few times a year we would observe classes of the JTEs and then meet in conference with everyone for discussion. But out of frustration with their seeming inability to progress much in their teaching ways, I was too harsh and negative at times in my comments to them. After one such meeting in 2007, the chair of the committee, Prof. Masao Niisato, in response to the expression of my feelings in an email, kindly but directly asked me to speak to the JTEs at the meetings with a softer tone and more constructively and to "always keep in mind that all of us are learners ... and [the JTEs] are learning new things daily like us all about how to teach students." His words were spot on and were expressed to me as a model of the way I should address the JTEs. With his instruction I became a much better advisor. And over the next three years the JTEs, in fact, made remarkable progress.

Words matter. They have the power to create and to influence our work and our lives. We must use them with care, with compassion, and with purpose.

"And God looked upon all that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

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Sharks and Ladders:

What Surfing Has Taught Me About Starting an English Conversation School

Mike Floquet
FLOW English

"One can choose to go back toward safety or forward toward growth. Growth must be chosen again and again; fear must be overcome again and again." - Abraham Maslow

Gazing out from the parking lot at the waves breaking a few hundred metres away they didn't look so big. Upon comparing the size of the white water exploding when they broke to the ant-sized people trying to ride them, I realized they must be fairly large. Not being a particularly high-level surfer myself, I knew it would be a tricky undertaking to catch any that day. Getting in, the water chilled my exposed hands and feet, and made me wheeze when it snuck into my wetsuit and down my back. Getting out to the back beyond the breakers was already a harrowing experience. By hitching a ride on the rip current running along the tetrapods one can get past the breaking waves with relatively little effort, but you need to stay within about arm's length of these giant pieces of concrete in order to do this. I happened to stray slightly off and into the path of the breaking waves which sent me and my brand new board tumbling towards the tetrapods. For a couple of brief moments I sweated under the water as I expected to hear the sound of my board being shattered. Resurfacing and getting back on the board I was hugely relieved to see it all still in one piece.

I eventually made it to the backline, recovered my breathing and prepared to have a go at catching a wave. As I watched more experienced surfers riding the waves, I inched towards the take-off zone. After making a couple of half-hearted attempts I found myself in the area where the waves break, the danger zone. Looking out I saw the next wave approaching and I knew I had to paddle hard to avoid annihilation. Head down, digging my arms deep into the water in a race to beat the break, I looked up to see a 10-ft high, greyish green wall bearing down on me. It was going to be close. I travelled up the face, reaching almost vertical, and as the nose of my board punched through the lip of the wave I thought I was going to make it. Then came that stomach-churning feeling as I was dragged back and over the falls. The next part was the "washing machine". Having not surfed for a long time I wasn't yet back in the habit of holding my breath, but instead blew it all out my nose to prevent water going in, as I would do when swimming. I was probably only underwater for about five seconds, but being tumbled around with no air in my lungs there was a moment when I thought I might not make it. Bursting through the foam after those few terrifying moments I sucked the air in like a vacuum on full power and was glad to still be alive.

After a few more pummelings I finally caught one! For a few moments I was flying. I was the king of the world. I whooped and hollered with delight as I turned around and made my way back into the fray. It made it all worth the effort.

Unconsciously I've taken the lessons the sea has taught me and used them in other pursuits, such as opening my own English school. Upon reflection though, the parallels between the challenges of learning to surf and starting a school have become apparent. I started off on the road to becoming a teacher back in my university days when I offered tutoring in maths and science to make some pocket money. A little further on I joined the JET programme and became an ALT purely for the sake of adventure. Just like learning to surf, it seemed exotic, daring, and out of my comfort zone. I didn't realize it then but I had set out on a career path that I had never intended to follow.

I have faced some hurdles along the way. First of all, I had no formal teaching qualifications. I've often felt out of my depth because of this, a feeling which has haunted me throughout my teaching career. As an ALT I considered my main roles as being an international ambassador, a game machine and a human tape recorder, therefore my lack of teaching skills wasn't really a problem. However, it registered clearly when I became more fully responsible for my students' success, or lack thereof, in acquiring English. Although I've been running my own English conversation classes for almost 6 years and teaching English for almost 15, I still feel a fair amount of imposter syndrome calling myself a teacher. I realize I yet have much room for improvement, just as with my surfing.

The second major hurdle for me was that I couldn't speak, read or understand Japanese when I arrived. Communicating with most of my coworkers and people around town came down to gestures and pointing, or grunting. Staff social events were particularly difficult. Everyone is expected to communicate in this situation, and it led to many awkward silences when communication reached its limit...

Coworker: *Konbanwa* (Good evening).

Me: *Konbanwa*.

Coworker: *Kanpai!* (Cheers!)

Me: *Kanpai!*

Coworker: (while gesturing enthusiastically): *Anata wa hashi ga jozu desu ne!* (You're very good with chopsticks!)

Me: *Arigato*. (Thank you).

Coworker: ...(awkward silence).

Me: ...(more awkward silence).

At least we had the universal language of alcohol to ease the tension, so I mostly resorted to getting inebriated to avoid feeling awkward.

Gradually I got on friendly terms with my fellow teachers and occasionally got invited to their houses. One particular evening stood out in my memory as a token of

my integration. It was at an intimate gathering of teachers from my school. I was practicing what Japanese I had learnt, like a baby first learning to walk. They were patient while listening to me speak, and spoke slowly to me when replying. Luckily, Mr Kanbe, the English teacher, with whom I got along very well, was there to translate when I got stuck. While we feasted on a giant sushi platter which the host's wife had brought out for us, I looked over to see his two young sons watching a rather rude cartoon called *Crayon Shinchan*. The main character, a preschool boy named Shinnosuke, likes to ingratiate himself with pretty, big-breasted women, and pull down his pants to show his backside every so often. I was a bit shocked. Before long the boys started imitating Shinchan and were mooning all of us. This too was rather shocking to me, but neither the parents nor the other guests seemed bothered at all. We had a little chuckle together and I realized our cultures are quite different. And yet I felt quite at home.

Before starting my own business I was coming to the end of a five year stint as an ALT, on top of my two initial years in Japan. I was growing gradually more intent on having the freedom to set my own working hours, being my own boss and getting away from the 5th and 6th grade classes at one particular elementary school who were draining my soul. One day a week I would be filled with dread at having to do those four classes, one after the other. My function as an elementary school ALT, as I understood it, was to create a fun and relaxed atmosphere for learning English through the use of songs and games. Songs in those classes usually involved me forcing a smile, and clapping or dancing at the front of the class, while 30 deadpan faces stared blankly back at me. I could see some kids wanted to join in and enjoy themselves but they were generally silenced by the buzzkills around them. Games were slightly better because the students were forced to join in, although many gave the impression they'd rather be gnawing their own arms off. I was starting to become the walking dead myself. I needed to get out. With no savings and no venue decided upon to start a school, I gave my notice. It was time to brave the sharks and jump in the water.

Less than a month before my job came to an end, I found a little community centre that allowed the use of its premises for financial gains, which is a rare find. As my daughter was graduating kindergarten at the same time, I managed to net a handful of her classmates as my first students, and together with a mishmash of other jobs I was able to make enough to survive. It was a hectic period but I was flying on the freedom of being a business owner.

Business increased steadily for a few years before reaching a plateau. I had grown stagnant. As a surfer you need to move around and adjust your position to be in just the right place to catch the next wave. After teaching in several locations concurrently for 4 years—a community centre, a family park building, two kindergartens, students' houses, my own house and even a temple for a short time—I was intent on centralizing my operation by having my own premises. Although I had been keeping busy and paddling around I was no longer in a position which allowed growth. It was time to make a move and get into the take-off zone.

I spent an agonizing half a year or so in which I struggled to find an ideal venue for my new school. Many times I felt helpless and was ready to give up on the dream. I was that inexperienced surfer getting battered by the waves, wondering what I was doing in that position. Why didn't I just go back to being an ALT? I could have the stability plus all the other benefits that come along with it. But I knew that would be moving backwards instead of forwards, and I wouldn't be able to accept it. When you're on the wave you need to stand up and ride! I kept hoping, and as the end of the school year drew closer, I finally found a place. There was one last torturous week while I waited for the landlord to decide between me or a couple of other applicants, but in the end it was me who got the nod. Once again I was standing high and moving forward, feeling elated and extremely grateful.

Although running an English conversation school was never something I dreamed of, or even imagined doing, it's the path I've chosen, and I'm happy with my choice. Maybe it was my calling all along; it just took traversing a long, winding path to realize it. As Walt Whitman (2008) wrote, "Not I, nor any one else can travel that road for you. You must travel it for yourself. It is not far, it is within reach. Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not know. Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land."

I'm in the sea and I can either sink, swim, or paddle hard and catch the wave. I know which one I choose.

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Author Bio

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JALT TD SIG

The JALT Teacher Development SIG is a network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping others teach more effectively. Active since 1993, our members teach at primary and secondary schools, universities, language schools, and in various other contexts. New members are always welcome to join our conversation and share their experiences with other teachers. (Please note that the name was officially changed from Teacher Education & Development SIG in early 2016.)

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TD is a special interest group (SIG) of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT). To join TD, you must be a JALT member. Information on joining JALT is available on the JALT web site (jalt.org). If you are already a JALT member, you can also add a TD SIG membership to your existing JALT membership. Please see the JALT membership page for information on joining in the TD conversation.

Benefits:

Joining TD connects you to a network of teacher colleagues who are interested in growing professionally. Members receive the most current issue of TD's Explorations in Teacher Development (ETD) Journal by email, and can participate in our mailing list. TD also sponsors and co-sponsors events throughout the year to help teachers gain experience in mentoring and presenting.

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