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Teacher Journeys 2020:
Experiences in Emergency Remote Teaching

Explorations in Teacher Development

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From the Editors

In many ways Teacher Journeys 2020 was, much like “anything 2020”, unique. Though we had already lined up a venue and begun preparations for a traditional face-to-face conference in the west part of Tokyo, the growing number of COVID-19 infections forced us to cancel these plans in early spring. At that time, we had a tentative back-up plan for an experimental style of asynchronous online conference, a kind of curated selection of video presentations in which teachers shared their struggles and successes with emergency remote teaching. We weren’t entirely confident that there would be much interest in presenting at such a conference, or whether the videos would ultimately be well received. Luckily, the reception far exceeded our expectations. Educators from around Japan and the world submitted 32 video presentations which were posted in weekly batches to TD SIG’s YouTube channel during the Autumn of 2020. As of June 2021, these presentations have amassed over 2,500 views and 114 hours of watch time. The videos, many linked in the papers which follow, are still available on our channel and continue to be viewed regularly. In a sense, Teacher Journeys 2020 is still continuing well beyond 2020.

In the most important ways however, Teacher Journeys 2020 was not unique. Just as in the eight Teacher Journeys conferences which preceded it, educators shared stories of growth with honesty and vulnerability while others listened and learned. This basic, teacher-centered approach to professional development through narrative inquiry is fundamental to the conference aims and reflects the spirit of Teacher Journeys, no matter the format or platform. We are thrilled to be able to further share many of the stories from the conference in written form in this special edition of Explorations in Teacher Development.

This special edition features 16 highly practical, informative, and personal narratives of issues relating to emergency remote teaching. Our aim with this collection of papers is to not only further document the unique situation that we have found ourselves in over the past year for posterity purposes, but to provide a resource through which we can learn from one another’s experiences. The papers in this special edition follow a unified format, with each

contribution opening with a short vignette to set the scene and establish the educational context being reflected upon. Following this, authors propose a set of objectives for how their stories could be used by others. The authors then expand upon these objectives by suggesting a variety of detailed practical implications, all aimed at supporting fellow teachers through offering usable ideas for the classroom or general guidance. Finally, each writer concludes their papers with a reflective statement in which they take stock of their experiences from 2020 and make plans for the future.

The publication of this special edition is the culmination of a combined effort of a large group of people. We would like to wholeheartedly thank the people listed below who dedicated their time to reviewing submissions, revising papers through copyediting, liaising with authors, or helping with development of this journal’s concept. We’d also like to give thanks to Lisa M. Hunsberger for expertly producing the layout of this journal. These have been difficult and challenging times for all of us, so we’re grateful that you could kindly dedicate a piece of your energy and commitment to this project.

In concluding, we would like to place on record our sincere thanks to our outgoing Publications Chair Bill Snyder. Over the past few years, Bill has contributed to making sure Explorations in Teacher Development has remained an innovative and academically rigorous offering, providing valuable guidance and input to contributors along the way. Towards the end of this edition, we’re delighted to announce the formation of our new incoming Publications team. We hope the new team will continue Bill’s work and help to progress the journal further.

Best wishes,
Michael Ellis
Ewen MacDonald
Matthew W. Turner
Special edition co-editors

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The poster is titled "Teacher Journeys 2020" in large white font on a blue background. Below the title, it says "Experiences in Emergency Remote Teaching" in white font on a blue background. The main body of the poster is teal and contains the text: "In place of a face-to-face conference, the JALT Teacher Development SIG and West Tokyo Chapter will curate a collection of video presentations highlighting teachers' experiences of change and growth during the pandemic." Below this text is an illustration of a desk with a clock, a shelf with books, a computer monitor showing a video conference, and a smartphone. To the left of the desk is the JALT Teacher Development SIG logo. To the right is a QR code. At the bottom, it says "proposals accepted through August 15" and "videos posted late summer/early fall". The bottom of the poster is a pink bar with the text "find more details at the conference site" and the URL "sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2020".

Teacher Journeys 2020

Experiences in Emergency Remote Teaching

In place of a face-to-face conference, the JALT Teacher Development SIG and West Tokyo Chapter will curate a collection of video presentations highlighting teachers' experiences of change and growth during the pandemic.

proposals accepted through **August 15**

videos posted **late summer/early fall**

find more details at the conference site
sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2020

Developing Teaching Skills through Teaching University Students: Creating a Deep Bond among Students under Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)

Takanori Omura
Soka University

Teaching remotely under Japan's COVID-19 state of emergency was different and much more challenging than normal face-to-face classes. The beginning of the academic year in spring is usually amazing and makes teachers and students have butterflies in their stomachs because it is their first time meeting each other. However, it was also the first time for me, and for many other educators, to meet with students through a camera. There have been various struggles felt by both teachers and students in online classes, which will be described in the following sections.

Teachers' struggles

During the COVID-19 outbreak, teaching online was challenging as only a few of my colleagues had experience of doing this before. In particular, it was difficult to evaluate students since this required a large amount of time and was tough for many teachers. When attempting to grade students fairly and accurately, there were several obstacles in various cases - specifically, students' technological situations in addition to the possible physical and mental support they required. Therefore, grading seemed to be infeasible or unrealistic because students' attendance and performance was considerably more complicated to evaluate.

Students' struggles

Meanwhile, students were also facing their own struggles regarding technology, with some students being surprisingly unfamiliar with computers. Although university students are generally comfortable with the use of smartphones and apps, when it comes to the use of computers, some did not spend enough time learning how to use them before classes began. For instance, in my case students seemed not to know how to use the Google Drive system and shared folders, and appeared unfamiliar with how to upload files.

Objectives

- To realize appropriate perspectives for overcoming unprecedented hardships as educators.
- To develop online teaching skills through the pandemic.

Practical Implications

In order to achieve the two objectives, two aspects are highlighted as follows. The first aspect is maximizing pair and group talking time and minimizing teacher explanations. The second aspect is developing the relationship between the teacher and students by sharing files in Google Drive.

1. Maximize pair and group talking time and minimize teacher explanations.
 - The main point of this is to provide the students with a safe-zone where they can relax and have a chance to talk with other students comfortably.
 - It is important to allow students to release their potentially accumulated stress from having to be homebound, and not being able to relax sufficiently or meet their friends.
 - To increase pair and group talking time, utilizing breakout sessions and dividing the class into pairs and groups is effective. Two points to implement breakout sessions are described as follows.
 - a. Ideally, more than two-thirds of class time should be assigned to breakout sessions and students should complete a task or have a conversation in English.
 - b. Check whether the opportunity for breakout sessions was sufficient at the end of the semester by administering a course survey or by other means.
2. Develop the relationship between the teacher and students by sharing files in Google Drive.
 - Fundamentally, the fact that a good relationship between the teacher and

students is more important than any other element in education should be upheld by all educators.

- Even under ERT, providing teacher feedback on students' daily reflection sheets is an effective way to develop teacher-student relationships. The procedure is shown as follows.
 - a. Create a daily reflection sheet that helps students reflect on themselves and their learning. The sheet consists of several items such as "What were the important things you learned in this class?", and students are asked to take approximately 20 minutes after every class to complete the reflection.
 - b. Set up an online environment where the teacher and students can share the same folder. For example, creating a shared folder for each student in Google Drive and sharing the reflection sheets with them so that the files in the folder can be edited by both the teacher and students.
 - c. Explain the significance and the rationale of reflecting to the students.
 - d. Have students write their reflection after every class. Then provide sufficient feedback to each student. Preferably, use the same file for the entire semester for efficiency and make the feedback visible for the student to read.
 - e. It might be time-consuming to read students' comments and write feedback to each student as feedback should be made specific and suitable for each of them. In order to make the task slightly more efficient, it is better to keep some comments and recycle them for similar statements that some students write. Although this task may look daunting, it can help educators build a strong relationship with their students.

Reflective Conclusion

This pandemic helped me develop online teaching skills dramatically and more importantly, helped me to once again realize that forming good rapport with students is highly essential in education. This paper is a reminder of the significance of maintaining a strong relationship between the teacher and

students. In addition, it is a reminder that we as educators should believe that we have unlimited potential for self-development under any circumstances.

The frequent use of breakout sessions during online classes is extremely helpful for students to release their stress and feel relieved as they have more opportunities to meet and talk with their peers. When students take classes, it is important that they are both physically and mentally healthy. Having the students write a reflection sheet and providing teacher feedback is effective in online classes to build a good relationship between the teacher and students. Furthermore, it is important that teachers do not limit themselves to the conventional ways of teaching when using new technology and applications. If we as teachers are flexible in our environment and have a positive attitude to keep learning with students, no matter the situation, we can survive, foster student learning, and finally elevate their motivation to higher levels.

About the Author

Omura Takanori is currently teaching English at Soka University in Tokyo, Japan. He has been teaching English for more than ten years. He studied TESOL in International Linguistic Education at Soka University and earned a master's degree. His current research areas are self-esteem, self-affirmation, European Language Portfolio (ELP) and learner autonomy.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9FjRFQX5HI>



Reflections on Teaching EFL in Japanese Universities during the Covid-19 Pandemic: From Surviving to Thriving

Pino Cutrone
Nagasaki University

Siewkee Beh
Osaka Ohtani University, Japan

The initial onset of the pandemic created great stress and difficulties for my colleagues and I, as it resulted in our institutions suddenly mandating that all classes be taught online from April 2020. While some of our smaller classes could be conducted face to face at various points when the pandemic appeared to be coming under control, most of our classes remained online throughout the entire first semester and have continued to be online intermittently as the pandemic's fourth wave is now in full effect. When the pandemic first began and classes were suddenly shifted to an online environment, institutions and teachers alike were completely caught off guard and were suddenly forced to adapt to the new environment. In addition to being ill-prepared for this, no one knew how long the pandemic would last and, therefore, how much we should really commit to learning about online instruction.

Thus, in this original state of flux, there appeared to be more questions than answers, and there existed a large discrepancy in what teachers around us were doing in their remote classrooms. Some teachers relied on asynchronous methods, which often resulted in them recording their lectures and posting them and/or other materials on an LMS (Learning Management System) for students to access in their own time, while other teachers employed a synchronous mode of instruction, which often entailed using videoconferencing software, such as Zoom, to conduct lessons in real-time. It was clear from the start that most teachers did not have extensive knowledge or experience with online instruction, and the initial nature of the ad hoc lessons reflected this. In this paper, my colleague and I, two EFL teachers in the Japanese university context, reflect on our teacher journeys during the Covid-19 pandemic. From our trials and tribulations, we learned a great deal and went from simply

surviving initially to ultimately feeling quite confident in the way we approached teaching our students remotely. In this paper, we hope to pass on some information that will help administrators and teachers in a similar context.

Objectives

- To consider how institutions and administrations in Japan could better handle the shift to online classes.
- To reflect upon how EFL teachers in Japan could better prepare themselves for success in adapting to a remote teaching context.
- To provide teachers with some practical suggestions in how to approach their online classes moving forward.

Practical Implications

First, it is necessary to consider the important role that institutions and administrators have in helping their instructors find their way. In addition to mandating clear, uniform and timely policy guidelines, it is paramount that school administrations provide their teachers with consistent and extensive training and development opportunities in the area of online instruction (Cutrone & Beh, 2021a). There should not have to be a global pandemic for institutions to initiate this training, and it should go well beyond the fundamentals of showing instructors simply how to navigate an LMS or video conferencing platform. For all its technological advances, Japan has been slow to adopt to modern trends that utilize online tools in educational settings, and the pandemic has, thus, served as a wake-up call for educational institutions that have relied mainly on traditional face to face settings.

Second, it was clear to us that not all teachers were especially keen to teach online, with many

viewing it as a necessary evil that they would have to suffer through only until the pandemic ends. Thus, in addition to the administrations they work for adapting to the times, it is imperative that teachers themselves also accept that online learning will be a valuable part of the curriculum moving forward (Friesen, 2012). As such, with more experience, as well as time, resources and support dedicated to online instruction, teachers must continue to look for ways to develop in this area on their own as well. We learned a great deal through trial and error over the past year, as well as by sharing our experiences with other teachers, reading up on this topic and exploring new pedagogical methods (Cutrone & Beh, 2021b).

Third, once teachers are fully cognizant (and on-board) with the demands of the new and ever-changing world we live in, they can begin to consider how best to approach and apply online instruction. In our opinion, when teaching remotely, EFL teachers in Japan would be wise to make a concerted effort to not only monitor students' progress but also to keep them as engaged as possible. We found that students who may be reticent in face-to-face classes run the risk of all but disappearing in an online setting (Cutrone & Beh, 2014). For this reason, we advocate synchronous lessons over asynchronous lessons in most cases. When soliciting feedback concerning remote lessons from our students, most students expressed their strong desire to be able to communicate with their teachers and classmates in real time. With this in mind, we found the most effective teaching method to be a flipped approach, in which students spent some time previewing (or reviewing) the lesson material asynchronously (and independently), and then using the subsequent synchronous class time to interact with their peers and apply what they have learned (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

Reflective Conclusion

In conclusion, while the health crisis and economic fallout caused by the Covid-19 pandemic globally are obviously tragic, some positive effects emerged over time in our teaching context. For instance, we observed how a country like Japan that has traditionally been slow and somewhat hesitant to fully embrace online practices in ELT finally began to recognize the need to adapt its practices to fit the modern and ever-changing world. Furthermore, we

saw and experienced first-hand how teachers such as ourselves were forced out of our comfort zones. By having to adapt to the changing circumstances, we were able to, ultimately, evolve our crafts and explore new and modern ways to educate students using the Internet. In addition, students were also able to develop digital literacy skills, which will, undoubtedly, serve them well in the modern, globalized world moving forward. Indeed, we feel this is only the beginning. With renewed emphasis and attention, we feel that online instruction in Japan will only continue to get better.

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About the Authors

Pino Cutrone is an Associate Professor in the School of Global Humanities and Social Sciences at Nagasaki University, Japan. His research interests include pragmatics, discourse analysis, intercultural communication, sociolinguistics relating to Japanese EFL learners, CALL and study abroad. He has published widely in the field of Applied Linguistics and Intercultural Pragmatics.

Siewkee Beh is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Osaka Ohtani University, Japan. She

focuses her research on English educational policies in Asia and is also interested in how a Task-Based Approach can promote language learning in her teaching context. She has published numerous articles in this area.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2kE1ljP8t4>



The poster is titled "Teacher Journeys 2020: Panel Discussion" in large white text on a blue background. Below the title, four panelists are featured in individual portrait boxes. From left to right: Adrianne Verla Uchida (Nihon University), Kendal Rolley (Hanoi Academy International Bilingual School), Reiko Takeda (Seijo University, Research Fellow, IERS, Int'l Christian University), and Rezwana Islam (University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh). The bottom section of the poster is pink and contains the text "Join us as we reflect on this year's online conference Experiences in Emergency Remote Teaching". It also includes the JALT Teacher Development SIG logo, the date and time "Date: Sunday, November 8 Time: 2 to 3PM (Japan Standard Time)", the text "Hosted on Zoom", and the URL "https://sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2020". A QR code is located on the right side of the bottom section, with the text "access from the conference site" below it. The left side of the poster features a vertical illustration of a desk with a laptop, a coffee cup, and some papers.

Teacher Journeys 2020: Panel Discussion

Adrianne Verla Uchida
Nihon University

Kendal Rolley
Hanoi Academy
International
Bilingual School

Reiko Takeda
Seijo University,
Research Fellow, IERS,
Int'l Christian University

Rezwana Islam
University of
Liberal Arts
Bangladesh

Join us as we reflect on this year's online conference
Experiences in Emergency Remote Teaching

 **Date: Sunday, November 8**
Time: 2 to 3PM (Japan Standard Time)
Hosted on Zoom
<https://sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2020>


access from the
conference site

Using ARS: Promoting Teacher-Student Interaction at a Distance

Brian G. Rubrecht

Meiji University

The *Teacher Journeys 2020* presentation under discussion here introduced viewers to the Attendance Record Sheet (ARS), a downloadable document for students that I used in my remote AY2020 university courses (see Appendix for an example ARS). The ARS not only allowed me to take student attendance and check students' progress but it also provided students with a reliable method of communication with me if they had any questions or concerns throughout the year.

As many are no doubt aware, communication between teachers and students during face-to-face lessons at Japanese universities is often minimal due to teacher time constraints before and after classes, and because students may be too shy to ask teachers questions directly. When I learned in March 2020 that classes would be moving online due to COVID-19, I thought that teacher-student communication would suffer further, but after doing some brainstorming I came up with the ARS.

The ARS is multifunctional. First, it allows me to take student attendance since I required students to submit an ARS for each weekly lesson. An additional benefit of this was that I could ascertain if a student had dropped a course or was experiencing difficulties of some kind if they did not submit an ARS in consecutive weeks. Second, it allows students to communicate with me via its three separate spaces. The first space is for students to inform me that they are clear about and engaged with each week's lesson. The second space is for students to give feedback about what (if anything) was fun or difficult for them that week (e.g. they enjoyed a Zoom breakout room discussion topic, they were having computer difficulties). The third space is for students to ask questions or give comments if they had any that week. In constructing the ARS, it was hoped that this last space would alleviate student anxiety as they could easily voice concerns and be assured of prompt and pertinent responses from their teacher.

Objectives

- To introduce a tool for taking attendance while engaged in remote teaching and learning (RTL).
- To demonstrate how this tool can be used for opening and fostering effective channels of communication with students during RTL.

Practical Implications

I found students receptive to using the ARS. They quickly learned that every week, without fail, there was a teacher-student communication channel available to them, and that their teacher would view and respond to each student's ARS questions and comments in a timely manner. Indeed, it was not unusual for students to express their appreciation in the third ARS space for how clear and easy the ARS made attendance for them during RTL and how it allowed them to ask questions or give comments privately and directly.

The ARS should by no means be considered an immutable document. In fact, an updated version of the ARS was created and used from the AY2020 fall (i.e. second) semester. The changes made reflected the fact that the spring semester ARS, while useful and fully capable of fulfilling its role as an attendance-taking and communication tool, nevertheless required some modification. Experience with the ARS in the first semester helped in the construction of a clearer, more attractive, and more practical version to be used in my courses in the fall semester. Improvements included providing clearer instructions, color coding the ARS to match students' university colors, and including an ARS file name example and instructions for students regarding how to properly rename their ARS documents prior to submission. After asking students directly for their input about the ARS at the end of AY2020, further changes were made. The AY2021 version features a new "open share" space that lets students add whatever they wish. For instance, students could use this space to inform me of any new vocabulary or English expressions that they learned from that week's lesson. This space was included so that students would have additional opportunities to

reflect on their learning as they continue to study remotely.

In any event, readers are encouraged to consider the ARS and think about how it may be used for their own courses. If they find the ARS usable in its current form, they are welcome to adopt it as is. They should also feel free to modify it to better match their own teaching situations. They may of course also wish to construct their own version of the ARS to best suit their own course needs, pedagogical goals, and teaching style.

Reflective Conclusion

In the end, the ARS was meant to function as a multipurpose attendance and communication tool, and I believe that it performed its various roles well. However, it should be noted that the ARS brings with it a few potential drawbacks. Research into students' perceptions of attendance during RTL revealed that they generally found other attendance-taking methods less troublesome compared to ARS completion and submission, for instance, by their using their university learning management system's "Send Attendance" feature (if enabled) or by teachers taking attendance solely by counting weekly assignment submission (Rubrecht, 2021). Nevertheless, that research revealed that students still viewed the ARS favorably and engaged with it in a positive manner. In fact, further analyses revealed a 95% ARS submission rate for AY2020, and 55% of submitted ARSs were completed in full, that is, students communicated something in all three ARS spaces, even when they were not required to do so. The comments and feedback students provided clearly indicated that they found the ARS to be straightforward, reliable, and useful as both an attendance-taking method and teacher-student communication tool.

A further potential drawback is that teachers must expend some time and effort processing each ARS, that is, they must download them, mark each student "present" via their ARS submission, read through each one, address students' feedback, questions, and concerns as needed, and then properly file away each ARS received. I personally felt this time and effort was worthwhile as I could stay on top of my students' progress in my courses, address their questions or problems quickly, and show them that even though we were separated from each other that I was willing to go the distance to see that they

learned the course content, even considering the circumstances. These are precisely the reasons why I will continue to use the ARS in all of the courses that I am required to teach remotely.

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About the Author

Dr. Brian G. Rubrecht is a Professor in the School of Commerce at Meiji University in Tokyo, Japan. His professional and research interests include aspects of language learning motivation, identity, pronunciation, translation and interpretation, and cultural aspects that influence the learning of a foreign language.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7DmlaiZpSs>

Appendix: Example Attendance Record Sheet (ARS)

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Attendance Record Sheet (ARS)

Your attendance (出席) for each lesson is important!

Each week if you followed the **Weekly Schedule** and you ...
... attended a Zoom lesson with your teacher **OR**
... watched an on demand video for that week's lesson **OR**
... completed a class assignment for that week's lesson ...
... then please complete this ARS and email it with all class assignments for the week in one email on lesson day after class but before midnight.

This ARS = your attendance grade and it is also part of your participation grade. Use either the .docx version or the .pdf version of ARS. It is fine to send ARS information by text in an email (for special cases only). Please remember to name your ARS file appropriately. Example:

Taro Tanaka Monday 3 June 24 ARS

Name (in Romaji):	→
Student Number:	→
Class Day + Period (examples: Monday 2, Friday 3)	→
Lesson Day (example: June 24)	→
What did you learn in today's lesson (what was the topic)? Please summarize.	→
If something was fun or difficult about today's lesson, please explain.	→
If you need help with anything or if you want to tell me something, please write it here.	→

My Journey with Teaching Online versus Face-to-Face at Two Universities

Josh Norman
Shokei University

While teaching full-time at Shokei University and part-time at Kumamoto University throughout the 2020 academic year, I taught both face-to-face classes and online. Each university had a different Learning Management System (LMS), such as Google Classroom or Moodle, and different requirements for their online classes, including rules about showing one's face and which online video streaming provider was to be used, such as Google Meet or Zoom. As with many other educators, I had never used online video streaming services before, so the transition was a bumpy one at first.

Kumamoto University has been using Moodle exclusively for many years, so it was the only LMS available, and the university chose Zoom for online lessons. Meanwhile, Shokei University bought a Google Classroom license for all departments, and Google Meet was used for online lessons. After face-to-face classes began in June, teachers were requested to either provide an online synchronous option, upload a recorded version of their face-to-face lesson to Google Classroom post-class, or upload necessary materials and assignments to Google Classroom for students who couldn't (or didn't want to) come to face-to-face classes.

Objectives

- To compare Google Classroom and Moodle, and Google Meet and Zoom, and discuss which LMS and video streaming provider are the better choices from the perspective of a first-time user.
- To explain how, throughout the course of the academic year, my views on the use of technology in the classroom became more positive due to the necessity of online lessons.

Practical Implications

Comparing the LMSs I was required to use, I found Google Classroom to be the easier of the two to learn. It has an easy-to-use interface, and its simple features do not overwhelm new users, whether students or instructors. Online lessons with Google

Meet are easy to start with a few mouse clicks from the user's Google Classroom class list. Additionally, homework is easy to assign, grade, and return to students.

Compared with Google Classroom, I felt the learning curve was steeper for Moodle. It is very much text-based with extraordinarily few graphics, and it can be quite difficult for a beginner user to know what to do at first and how to go about doing different tasks. Writing simple announcements and uploading files are relatively easy, but the sheer number of options available when trying to assign homework can be overwhelming. Beginners will likely feel frustration while advanced users may enjoy the wide range of choices available. From my own experience as a first time user, Google Classroom is my clear preference.

Both online video streaming services that I used have very clear video, easy-to-use chat functions, and the ability to share one's own screen. There are, however, a few key differences between the two. Firstly, Zoom has more options, including the "breakout rooms" feature, which is hugely popular with users since it allows for easy pair or group work. There are also a large number of options available to help hosts customize their meetings. However, these options can overwhelm beginner users, so there is a learning curve to figure out where and how to change one's settings. Also, sessions on Zoom are only free for up to 40 minutes, which is not ideal for educators who have classes longer than that and do not have access to a paid account. This time limit can be worked around by ending the meeting and re-starting it, but some might find this tedious or unprofessional. In comparison with Zoom, Google Meet has fewer options overall, but I believe is simpler to use for those who only need to lecture or record their classes to upload later for students to watch.

Although both platforms have positive points, I feel Zoom has a slight overall advantage with its genius invention of breakout rooms. This feature is helpful not only to language educators, but also to

hosts of any type of group meeting as it allows participants to brainstorm ideas and discuss topics in a more intimate setting.

Reflective Conclusion

Since starting my university teaching career 15 years ago, I have almost exclusively used textbooks for my classes. Although I consider myself very computer-literate, before this academic year I had never used any online LMS or video streaming service, mainly because I had never felt a pressing need to do so. Until the past year, I had been able to give detailed written feedback for homework assignments by paper and pen, which had suited my teaching style. However, the necessity of doing online classes had a lot of unexpected surprises for me.

First, my part-time classes at Kumamoto University, which were all done completely online, showed higher attendance rates and homework completion rates, both at almost 100%, than I had ever previously experienced in any of my face-to-face classes. At my full-time position at Shokei University, I found that having an online option available, even when doing regular face-to-face classes, can be extremely valuable, as long as it does not put any extra unnecessary burden or stress on the instructor. For example, I used my iPad to stream my face-to-face classes for students who were sick at home, or could not physically come to school due to the heavy rain the Kumamoto area experienced last July, which in turn caused train lines to run irregularly or stop altogether. I was happy to see motivation on the part of students to join my classes even when they could not be physically present, and likewise the students seemed grateful that I could accommodate their requests to do classes online so they would not fall behind in their studies.

Starting this past spring, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced teachers across Japan to adapt to new ways of teaching. Although many thought this was a temporary situation, a large number of universities have already announced their intention to stay online heading into the beginning of the 2021 academic year. In addition, although a small number of tech-savvy instructors made the transition to emergency remote teaching quite easily, the majority of instructors, especially part-timers and including myself, had many troubles trying to navigate what to do. I hope this article, which compared two LMSs

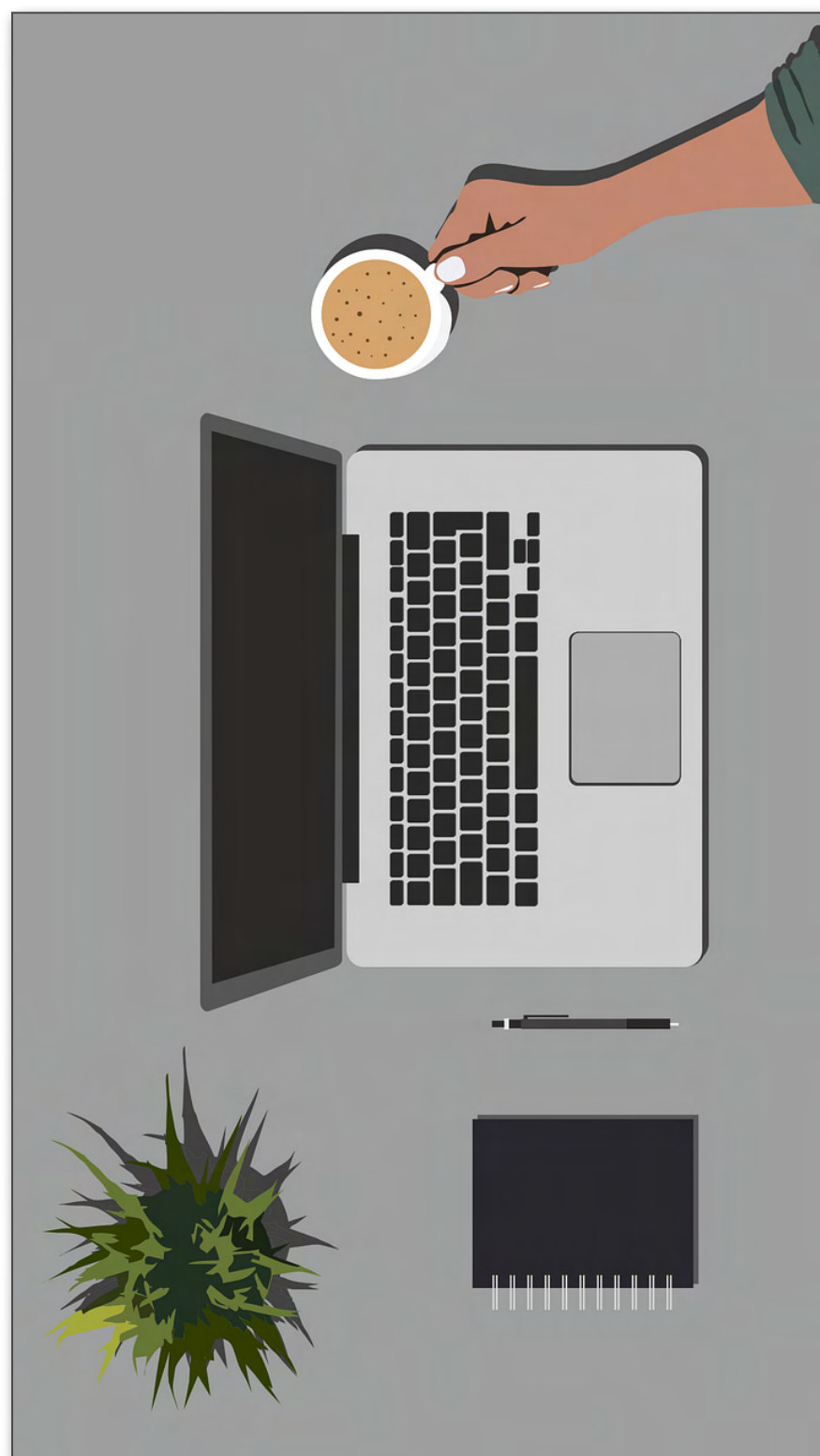
and two online video tools, can help fellow teachers make their online classes more enjoyable and their own lives more stress-free.

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wmrw-QNeAic>



English Language Teachers' Continuous Professional Development through Reflective Practice

Krishna Chaitanya

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology

With the unprecedented pandemic ongoing across the globe, a lot of unforeseen changes have taken place in the lives of English language teaching professionals. I feel the lockdown period has given uninterrupted personal time for teachers to introspect about their teaching. Further, it has provided space from their busy schedules to experiment with new Edu-tech tools for online teaching. In my presentation, I will be narrating my exciting self-reflective journey of transformation from low-tech teaching to hi-tech teaching with an exclusive focus on four tech tools: Nearpod, Floop, Flipgrid, and Screencast-O-Matic.

Objectives

- To narrate my reflective practices, self-awareness, and professional development that I attained through online teaching.
- To motivate teachers to learn and use some of these effective tech tools to improve their classroom teaching.

Practical Implications

In the initial days of online teaching, I was concerned about whether my students were able to comprehend what I expected them to. After assessing a few tools, I decided to use Nearpod because it made my e-lessons interactive and boosted learners' participation through polls and game-based quizzes and helped me monitor the progress of my students. Nearpod further provided scope for customizing certain teaching materials on vocabulary (synonyms and antonyms) and to correct students' writing samples. For instance, I designed a vocabulary activity to define and pronounce words through direct method, i.e. demonstration/lecture method, to introduce confusing and unfamiliar words. While attempting the vocabulary activity, students completed a gap filling and cloze test activity in Nearpod. Moreover, the vocabulary activities challenged learners' ability and reinforced their understanding of the words. Nearpod being an

innovative and convenient tool enabled my students and I to enjoy it thoroughly.

One of the problems I encountered in virtual teaching was how to conduct formative assessments besides giving them regular feedback. During an informal discussion with colleagues, they suggested a tool called 'Floop' which saved time during assessments and provided feedback to students instantaneously. This tool was particularly helpful for me in giving interactive feedback virtually on students' scanned copies of assignments uploaded online. While correcting essay writing assignments, I was able to mark-up scripts, give feedback and answer students' questions privately. Additionally, Floop promotes social learning, i.e. learners can collaborate, view others' submissions and give and receive feedback from their peers and the teachers.

The experience of using Nearpod and Floop was highly satisfactory, though I felt I needed virtual video discussions with my students to make classes more interactive and engaging. Necessity is the mother of invention; fortunately, I found Flipgrid, a free online tool, fulfilled my requirements in many ways. In order to use it, I set up an account and created a few prompts (topics/assignments on describing places/people/events) for my students. In response, many of them made and uploaded short videos (one to two minutes long) on their favorite prompts. After watching these, the students and I gave feedback in the form of video responses. For language teachers, this provides ample room for their students to engage in real-time discussion and to fine-tune their communicative competence. It was a thrilling experience for everyone to generate video based discussions through Flipgrid.

In addition to Floop and Flipgrid, modern ESL/EFL teachers need an exclusive video making tool to maximize learning within and beyond the four walls of the classroom. One such tool I used was Screencast-O-Matic. It is a video recording tool I used to design video lessons for a few classroom topics on an experimental basis. After sharing them with students, they gave positive feedback and

suggested the incorporation of relevant captions, images, animation effects and background sounds. Being a newbie to technology, I was a bit worried initially. However, I was able to incorporate most of the suggestions through Screencast-O-Matic to improve students' interaction and engagement. Using Screencast-O-Matic has given me a great sense of satisfaction because of its user-friendliness and scope for technology driven teaching. By creating videos, I have provided comfort and equal opportunity for all types of learners to learn at their own pace, place, and time. Moreover, the instructional videos have greatly helped with increasing the retention and comprehension of content while captivating students' attention and boosting their learning experiences.

Reflective Conclusion

During this lockdown, I have made step by step progress in adapting online tech tools into my teaching. The whole experience was challenging and exciting for me and my learners. By integrating technology, I recorded, modified, and improved my classroom lectures from time to time. It further equipped me in creating a lot of interactive presentations on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and a host of other topics which also contained quizzes, polls, videos, collaboration boards, and more. Further, I have reviewed my video lectures, elicited students' feedback and used them for systematic self-reflection on the aspects of quality of content, the relevance of illustrations, and clarity of language. Such critical reflections have provided me with deeper insights into the process of teaching and learning and motivated me to improve myself regularly to keep pace with the changing times.

As time passes by, I have become more self-aware and self-conscious with an aim to progress. My ability to focus on my thoughts, actions, decisions, and emotions has gradually improved. Being self-aware and self-conscious has prompted me to objectively evaluate myself as a teacher, assess my teaching material, elicit my learners' views, strive to improve every session, and manage my emotions. Being self-aware has helped me in gauging my own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and it prompted me to turn weaknesses into strengths.

Self-reflection through feedback from students has been a common practice for many teachers whereas in my case, during the lockdown, it has become

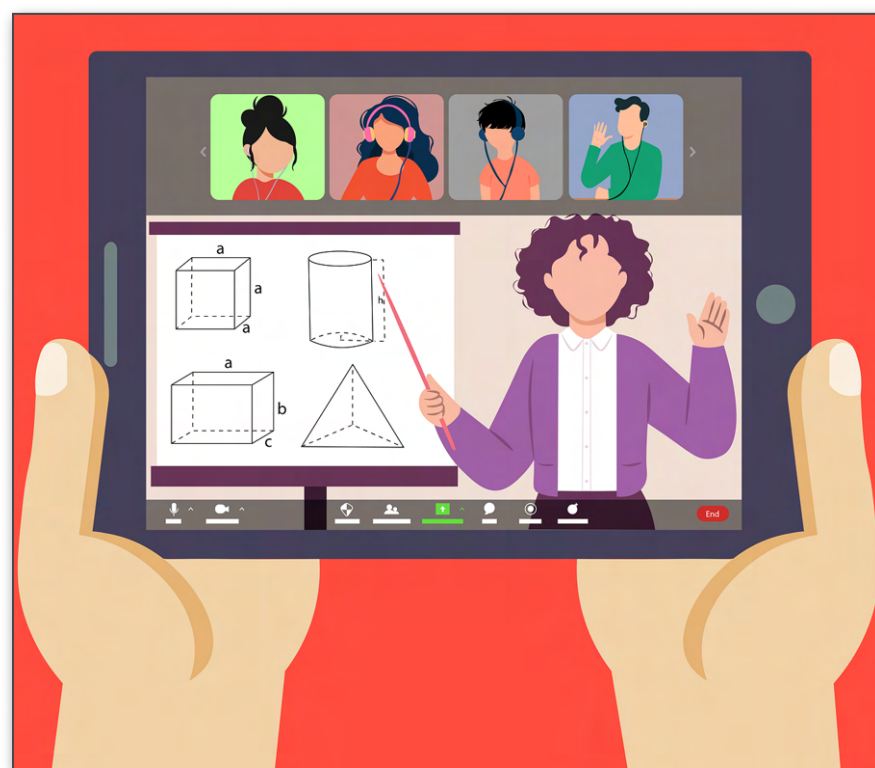
more organized and meticulous. It helped me to focus and elicit the learning insights and expectations of the students as a necessity to customize my teaching as well as learning. Therefore, I consider every online class that I have delivered has prompted systematic self-introspection and it has resulted in opportunities for my continuous professional development.

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d67rG6JW5Pg>



The New Normal: Using Online Teaching Experiences as a Catalyst for Change

Sammy Woldeab
Toin University of Yokohama

Like many educators out there, I, too, found myself in a raft out to sea with nothing but a spoon for a paddle in April 2020. My duties as an instructor at a university included planning after school English lessons for the adjacent elementary school, Grades 3 to 6. These hour-long, face-to-face lessons were supplementary to the curriculum covered at the school and geared towards giving students more opportunities to speak and interact in English as opposed to the traditional focus on reading and writing. Despite the absence of usual curricular pressure, these face-to-face lessons were no walk in the park. The main challenges across all grade levels included a lack of motivation and difficulty focusing among students, which I quickly learned were brought on by the timing of the lessons. Students were attending these lessons after a full day of classes, and no amount of games and fun activities—in English, at that—were going to distract them from how restless they were feeling.

Fast forward to the unexpected turn 2020 took and suddenly having to move everything online. My colleagues and I found ourselves having to make the switch to online classes in a matter of days with little assistance. However, we had to face some uncomfortable truths before beginning. First, our students, no matter how comfortable they were at home, were not going to be able to sit in front of a screen and participate in a lesson for an hour. Additionally, creating opportunities for a class of 20 students to have a chance to actively participate on Zoom would be challenging. It required us to make some substantial changes to our lesson delivery and teaching practice.

Objectives

- To facilitate the integration of technology and promote sustainability with a conceptual framework.
- To use the online medium to enhance and/or transform processes of teaching and learning.

Practical Implications

Puentedura's (2012) SAMR model is one example of a framework for the sustainable integration of technology in education. The four areas of the model—substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition—provide a taxonomy with which to evaluate how technology enhances or transforms tasks. Using a framework such as SAMR to identify how teaching practice can be enhanced or transformed ensures that technology is utilized with a specific purpose in mind rather than for the sake of fulfilling an integration requirement. As a result of referring to the SAMR framework, I was able to focus on how the use of technology could improve both teaching and learning and what that meant for future practice.

The lesson outline below focuses on student output via a guided online lesson. The following plan was created as a 25-minute online lesson, with a maximum of 5 students per session. The applications used were Zoom, PowerPoint, and Flippity.net.

Warm-up

Greet students and ask them each a question. This segment often turns into students doing an informal show-and-tell of an interesting item of theirs, or a pet.

Vocabulary

Run through the vocabulary using PowerPoint, asking students to raise their hand (real or virtual) in order to identify the word before revealing it and practicing pronunciation. Limit this section to about eight to ten words, as students can lose interest if too repetitive. Run through once more at a faster pace, calling on students in a specific order to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak.

Activity

Flippity.net is a great resource for activities. Playing a round of memory, for example, allows students to review vocabulary once more in an interactive manner. Moreover, since the teacher has

control of the cards and students themselves are not able to select them, they must communicate with the teacher to flip the card over. There is an option to display a number on the back of each card, so this becomes a great exercise for reviewing numbers, too. More importantly, it creates an opportunity for the situational use of English with a clear objective in mind (i.e. asking to flip over specific cards), going beyond the set vocabulary and target language.

Target Language

Use the vocabulary from the previous sections to introduce a question or phrase appropriate for students' grade level and/or ability. Be as creative as you like. For example, I sometimes use the reaction buttons on Zoom as designated "yes" and "no" buttons for students to answer a question using the vocabulary.

Roleplay

Create a visual guide/script in PowerPoint for a short fill-in-the-blank role-play using the target language. Assign one student the role of A and another the role of B. For example: if the target language involves the phrase "I want to...", student A would use the phrase in combination with a verb learned during the vocabulary section. Then, student B reacts ("Really?", "Me too!"). Repeat until all students have had a chance to speak.

Reflective Conclusion

Although not all educators can speak positively about their experiences teaching online, there is an increasing amount of literature exploring the effectiveness of the online format compared to face-to-face lessons (Moskowitz, 2016). As educators with differing knowledge and experiences, we might begin by reflecting on what aspects of learning could benefit from an online format. Moreover, how can the practices we form in response to online teaching be incorporated into our teaching repertoire? By starting anew online, my colleagues and I were afforded an unparalleled opportunity to address and improve on the issues we were already facing and establish a new pattern of practice.

Through my experiences, I was able to see that the reconfigured online format is not a band-aid solution to language education during a public health crisis. It took reflecting on my previous knowledge, experiences, and creativity to deliver content that

improves on face-to-face lessons. Although the online format is by no means a one-size-fits-all solution, the feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive, with most appreciating the smaller, more tight-knit class sizes that allow their children to focus on output. In fact, the school has decided to keep the lessons online for the foreseeable future, which has, in turn, validated our efforts of rebranding the program. While the shift initially had my colleagues and I lost at sea, the sustainable changes have completely transformed our way of delivering lessons, allowing us to navigate uncharted territory with confidence alongside our students.

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFj3Rj1w8Ls>



Reflecting on My Reflections from My ERT Journey

Adrianne Verla Uchida

Nihon University College of International Relations

The morning of April 1, 2020 was a memorable day for me. It represented my return to work after an eight-month long maternity and childcare leave, and my daughter's first official day at daycare. The spring of 2020 also marked an increase in Covid-19 cases in Japan. My university responded by postponing the start of classes until mid-May, and eventually, announced that the semester would be conducted online. Then the local daycares were closed.

May brought about what I called the "awakening". My initial confidence and optimism were replaced by exhaustion and determination as I prepared for lessons, taught my students, and graded assignments all while caring for my daughter at home at the same time. Thankfully, in June my daughter was able to return to daycare, but by sending her there every day, I teetered between feeling guilty that I sent her back and fear that she was exposed to so many people and might get sick.

As the semester came to a close in August, I felt relief that I had survived the experience and gratitude to the daycare staff who had kept my daughter safe. I also felt trepidation because my university announced the fall semester would also be conducted online. My presentation concluded the same way my classes had, by looking back and reflecting on what I had done, why I had done it, and what I could do differently or better going forward.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of the challenges mothers face trying to balance their responsibilities regarding work and childcare.
- To highlight the importance of connections and communities, especially when working and teaching remotely.

Practical Implications

To survive the world of ERT as a mother of an infant, I would love to say that I developed a recipe for success, but there was no time for that during ERT. That being said, here I share my top four tips for survival.

1. Keep it simple

I realized that there was no need to use multiple apps or have high-tech videos for lessons. Students appreciated my simple, detailed instructions and repetitive routines. Many of my students wrote in their reflections that they thought the structure of my class was easy to follow thanks to the materials that I provided.

2. Become involved in your communities

Staying connected with my communities was vital for my wellbeing during ERT. Most days, I did not venture outside of my home and had only my daughter to talk to (and she couldn't talk back). Strengthening connections with others through online Facebook communities like Online Teaching Japan (OTJ) and trying to support my colleagues, especially part-time lecturers, through Zoom training and reflective practice opportunities, proved to be an indispensable experience for me. Learning from others, connecting with colleagues, and knowing we were all in this together made the situation more bearable.

3. Create a welcoming classroom community

Online learning can be a lonely experience for everyone. I was mainly teaching first-year students who had not met their classmates face-to-face. For many, they had not even visited the campus yet, so providing them opportunities to feel like a member of a community was an essential goal for my classroom. Regardless of the lesson format, providing opportunities for students to interact with each other, and hopefully, see each other's faces, will foster an English learning community. Snyder (2019) stresses that our "ultimate goal" should be to foster "a collaborative classroom community" (p. 142). As only a handful of my classes were held synchronously each semester, Flipgrid, a video recording site and smartphone application, allowed my students and I to build a warm and welcoming community for everyone by posting, watching, and replying to each other's videos during our asynchronous classes.

4. You don't always need to be working

This was the hardest idea for me to accept during my experience. I often felt that I was constantly working. With my dinner table as my desk, there was no clear way to separate my workday from my private life. There was always more that needed to get done. More videos to record, more assignments to check, and more time needed to care for my daughter. I continually tried to be vigilant with scheduling to meet the needs of my family, my students, and myself, often in that order. Though I rarely achieved the balance that I desired, I somehow always managed to get everything done.

Reflective Conclusion

Looking back on my experience, I understand ERT was a new experience for me, but it was not unique to only me. Undoubtedly, other parents and caregivers were facing similar situations that I faced. In the end, I can say with confidence that I am satisfied with how my classes were designed and implemented, given the time and resources that were available. Using mainly Google Classroom and Flipgrid with occasional Zoom lessons allowed me to help my students develop a class community. While some students felt nervous recording their face and voice for others at the beginning of the semester, by the end of the semester, many students realized that my rationale was not just for their English proficiency but also to help them make friends and feel a part of a community.

Most importantly, I believe that on the days my daughter had to join our lessons due to daycare closures or a random fever that my students could see firsthand the challenges women face working full time while being mothers. It is challenging, but it is not impossible and allowing students to share in that experience was one benefit of ERT.

Finally, I hope that through reading about my experience, other parents feel a sense of camaraderie with me. I also hope that everyone understands the importance of connections both inside and outside of the classroom because wherever you teach, face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online, the relationships and communities that you help foster form the heart and soul of teaching.

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About the Author

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbaT4cFYOCA>



Reflections on a University Reading Course Taught Remotely

Yukie Saito
Chuo University

The spread of Covid-19 required me to teach university classes online suddenly and a reading course for first-year university students was one of them. Imagining that the students who were forced to take the course online were deeply discouraged, I hoped to motivate my students to learn English with clear goals in their minds, so I shared the following course objective in the first class:

In this global society, students should be able to use English as a tool for global communication. In this course, students are expected to think critically and objectively and convey their thoughts and ideas in an organized manner through pair work, discussions, and presentations in English based on what they read related to the latest topics from TED talks. Students are also expected to be able to use technology such as PCs effectively, which is another essential skill that they need to acquire in the 21st century. Students need to complete assignments before each class to participate in activities based on the completed assignments.

To achieve the objective above, I created many opportunities for the students to interact and work cooperatively with classmates through making discussions and presentations. I was able to see the students who had looked depressed at the beginning of the course enjoy talking with their classmates. Although the classes went reasonably well, I faced many challenges during the course. The first main challenge was that I had to change Learning Management Systems (LMSs). Although I was planning to use Google Classroom, several students could not log in because they used different email accounts instead of their university email accounts. Thus, after the second lesson, I decided to change from Google Classroom to the university's LMS.

The second problem I faced was that I gave them too many assignments. I flipped classes by having them do assignments beforehand and make discussions based on their understanding of the assignments. While talking with them, I found out

that they were being assigned so many assignments that they had no time for other things. Thus, I decided to reduce the number of assignments, though I kept the main class activity discussions.

Objectives

- To share the course objective explicitly with students.
- To make numerous opportunities for students to use technology.
- To help students build rapport with classmates in online courses.

Practical Implications

To share the course objective explicitly, first, it is important to make it clear. In the reading course, the main goal was for the students to learn English as a tool for global communication. I explicitly shared this objective several times in the classes and included activities for the students to express their opinions through pair work, discussions, and presentations in English. By sharing the course objective and incorporating activities to reflect on it, the students can understand the activities' meanings.

To make numerous opportunities for students to use technology, I propose including the specific goal of using technology as part of the course objective. As introduced, I explicitly explained "Students are also expected to be able to use technology such as PCs effectively" as one objective of the course to the students. In the course, I integrated activities where they used technology, including watching TED talks, making individual and group presentations using Zoom, finding useful websites to learn about world heritage sites, and using the LMS effectively to manage their learning. By explaining the course objective and integrating activities to use technology, students can understand the importance of using technology in this global society, especially in the society with/after Covid-19.

To help students build rapport with each other in online courses, making plenty of time to interact with classmates in English rather than listening to my speech is important. I had students talk and discuss

in a group using the breakout room function of Zoom, which was effective for them to build rapport with their classmates. The students who were required to take the course online unexpectedly were depressed, so supporting them mentally by having them talk with classmates is the most important thing when teaching classes online.

Reflective Conclusion

It was challenging to teach the reading course online; however, the questionnaire survey I conducted at the end of the semester showed that students could “use English as a tool for global communication” by making discussions and individual and group presentations using Zoom and technology effectively. It was quite impressive that the students who had not been able to use PCs well first made a group presentation to propose solutions to deal with Covid-19 related problems.

The following students’ comments helped me reflect on the course: (1) “It was the only class where I could see my classmates every week, and the group presentations helped us get to know each other even better.” (2) “Through TED Talks and presentations, I learned about various social issues, and listening to my classmates’ opinions in discussions helped me to deepen my thoughts on social issues. I think our generation needs to tackle with the social issues in the future, so I want to make the most of this experience and do my best.” It was pleasant to know that the classes became the place where they could get to know each other better, and they were able to have a positive attitude to learn English as a tool for global communication.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, I could achieve the course objective to a large degree. The most successful key to teaching an online course that I can share with other teachers based on my experience is to prioritize motivating students by having them interact with classmates and creating a positive atmosphere for learning English. To offer the same course online again in the academic year of 2021 more effectively, now I am reflecting on my classroom practice using Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. I hope I will have another chance to share my reflection.

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About the Author

Yukie Saito teaches at a private university in Tokyo. Her main research interests are teachers’ cognition and classroom practice, the application of CEFR in teaching contexts in Japan, and the integration of EdTech into university English classes and its effects.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lv6JlfKc7bs>



What is the 'Something' that Online Teaching Lacks and How Can We Make Up for It?

Tamiko Kondo

University of the Ryukyus

This paper is about what I learnt through my first experience of online teaching during the 2020 spring term. Although platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams were very helpful, I realized that something was missing in online teaching and was eager to identify what this was and how to compensate for it. Reflecting on my practices in two courses, I analyzed how student narratives and interactive research helped to fill this void. Chase (2018) explains that "a personal narrative" includes:

meaning making through the shaping of experience; a way of understanding one's own or others' actions; of organizing events, objects, feelings, or thoughts in relation to each other; of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions, events, feelings, or thoughts over time. (p. 549)

In order to find this missing component, I began a required first-year class in basic academic skills with an Emotional Graph Sharing activity (Deguchi, 2020). In this activity, students reflected on their emotional ups and downs since starting university life and told stories during this pandemic using their emotional graphs (see Figure 1). The aim of this activity was to make students aware that their classmates also experienced emotional ups and downs, which might help them feel better and build relationships with their classmates and teacher in this difficult time. In addition, I organized Microsoft Teams so that students were able to post their thoughts on the pandemic.

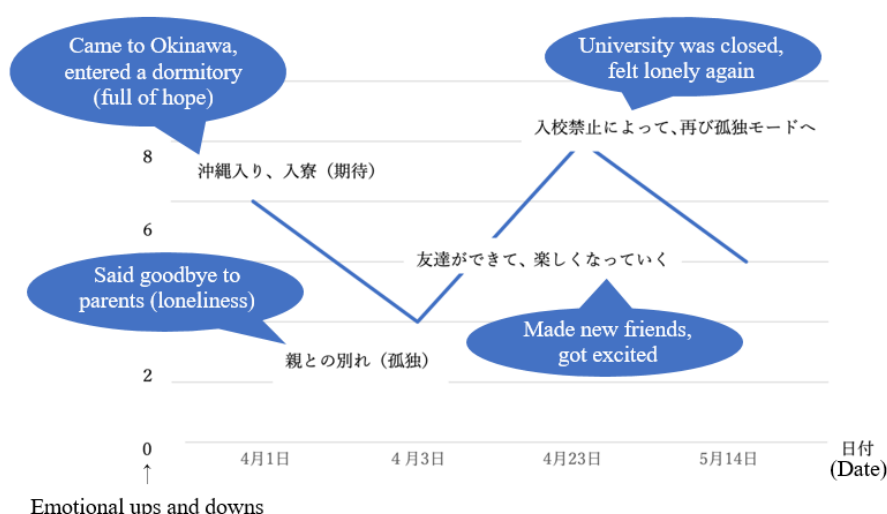


Figure 1. Example of an Emotional Graph

Next, I explored how to help students develop meaning and inform their actions. In a required third-year class for students to develop specialised knowledge, students picked one "dead-end" statement from the class textbook, such as "people think in language" (Hall et al., 2017), they then explored the statement in connection with their own experiences, before sharing their research stories and realizations through this activity. Their presentations were followed by some comments from their classmates and myself. After the class, both the students and I posted comments on all the presentation slides uploaded on Microsoft Teams, which led to reflections on their presentations.

Objectives

To recommend activities that assist teachers in achieving the following:

- Finding ways to form and deepen social connections among students.
- Scaffolding mutual learning which could lead to students' autonomous learning in an online teaching environment.

Practical Implications

The following is a post from one first-year student on the Emotional Graph Sharing activity:

Although I was not able to start campus life as I expected, I would not have realized how important family are to me and how much support I have been given by others without this pandemic. I feel inconvenienced in online classes since I am not yet used to using a computer and cannot communicate face-to-face. However, there is no other way but to believe this experience will be helpful to me in the future. (Student A)

This student was trying to look on the bright side and wrote that this tough experience would be helpful to her future career. That is, the narrative might show she made meaning through giving shape to her tough experiences during this pandemic, as

Chase (2018) defines. Further, the following are from third-year students' written presentation reflections:

Listening to the classmates' presentation about the same topic encouraged me to look into it more deeply. (Student B)

One classmate talked about how a first language affects second language learning, which I have realized through working with international students and got interested in. I am now planning to write about this topic (in my final report) in connection with my experiences. (Student C)

Students' written reflections suggested they found ways of understanding their own and others' experiences, ways of organizing their thoughts in relation to each other, and ways of connecting and seeing the consequences of thoughts over time, as Chase (2018) defines.

Finally, I would like to refer to what I learnt from the presentation of an elementary school principal about their online learning programme through a blend of digital and analogue approaches (Sawa, 2020). They conducted a strawberry-picking excursion online in which a strawberry farmer, a homeroom teacher and pupils communicated via Zoom. Also, the homeroom teachers regularly visited the pupils' homes to deliver some learning materials, and soon after the excursion, delivered some strawberries as well. The principal said these two approaches, digital and analogue, complemented each other. It might be that the strawberries delivered to the students' homes helped them realize that the activity was not limited to some distant location, giving them personal and tangible connections to the class activity which led to the relevance and completion of the excursion.

Reflective Conclusion

As the above-mentioned students' narratives may suggest, exploring a topic in light of their own experiences, sharing stories and developing their thoughts while giving significance to them might lead to students' understanding of the relevance of the activities and promote autonomous learning. This could possibly lead to a generation of personal and tangible connections to class activities and classroom dynamics, and thus make up for what was previously lacking in online teaching, even without an analogue approach as a complement to a digital approach as suggested by Sawa (2020). Given the

implications presented here, the process of the generation of classroom dynamics might be relevant to what is missing in online teaching.

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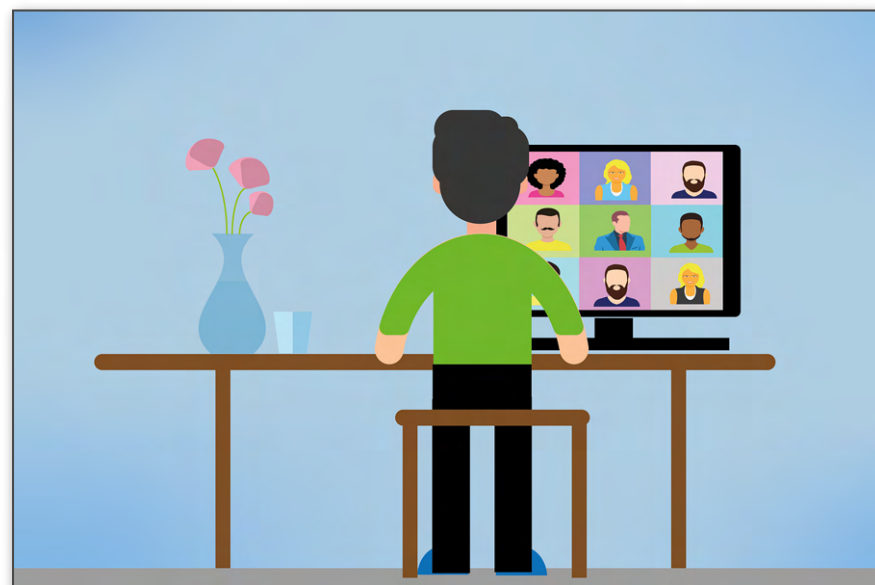
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About the Author

Tamiko Kondo is a lecturer of English language education and applied linguistics at University of the Ryukyus, Japan. Her recent research interest is the smooth connection from elementary to junior high school. She won Professor of the Year 2019 in recognition of being highly rated in an institutional course evaluation survey by her students.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3LPIBmIXNc>



Emergency Remote Teaching in Hanoi: Reflections and Opportunities for Growth

Kendal Rolley

Vietnam was one of the first countries to lock down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the institution I worked for quickly realized that we would need to begin our second semester teaching online. As I witnessed more and more institutions facing the challenges of emergency remote teaching (ERT), I was able to take time to reflect upon how we as an institution had progressed, and how successfully (or not) I had been in applying my core principle as a teacher - creating a student-centered environment with fun and engaging activities, careful staging and one-on-one attention in this new environment.

I am the Professional Development and Quality Assurance Coordinator for a K-12 Bilingual School in Hanoi, Vietnam. That means part of my role is evaluating the methods we use and supporting teachers to develop their practice. Luckily for the teachers at our institution, our students generally have access to both devices and a stable internet connection at home (with the exception of some pesky sharks biting undersea cables).

Ultimately, while I don't feel our three months or so of online teaching had quite the same value as face-to-face instruction, I wasn't quite as ready to discount it entirely as others I saw were doing. While we all struggled to cope with this changed paradigm, there were also opportunities, not just in 'dealing' with ERT but finding new methods to engage students, especially those who may otherwise not thrive in a 'typical' classroom environment.

Objectives

- To investigate Synchronous vs. Asynchronous learning, and the potential benefit of a hybrid model for younger learners to allow for more socialization.
- To consider the importance of balancing tools used, with trade-offs between time spent learning how to use tools vs. student engagement.

Practical Implications

In Vietnam, at the time of writing, we have just commenced another stage of social distancing, and are back teaching online. There are a number of key principles that I have to manage, based on my previous experiences.

1. Lesson planning and 'stepping back':

I have found Google Apps for Education extremely useful in organizing my lessons. I plan out the stages of my lessons, usually into 6 or 7 stages in a document. Once I am done, I schedule my stages as posts on Google Classroom, grouped together using the 'topic' function (setting the topic as the lesson date). My first task, usually a "random" attendance question scheduled to post slightly before the lesson start time, allows me to sometimes start a debate / conversation on Google Chat, where I have a room set up for my class, and separate rooms if necessary to act in the same way group chats would work in a classroom.

Students work their way through the lesson stages, and estimated completion times are provided for each stage to allow students to manage their own time (our school policy is that they have until midnight the same day to complete tasks).

It can feel strange to teach asynchronously, as it often doesn't mirror our experiences in the classroom. Teachers can feel uncomfortable, or a sense of guilt that they are not really "teaching". However, I believe allowing for more independent learning is essential in remote teaching, and even provides opportunities for this that aren't generally present in a classroom environment.

2. Principles of assessing student work:

One element that caused a great deal of stress for many teachers in my institution during the previous period of ERT was attempting to mark and provide written feedback on every piece of work created by each student. With students submitting work late at times, this became extremely messy and demanding for

teachers. With lines already blurred between work and home life, this led to many late nights of marking. This time, we have decided to select one stage of a lesson, be it a response to a Google Form, Quizizz result, contribution in Google Chat or similar, to mark and provide feedback on. This helps to make it manageable for teachers and ensure we are able to look after our own workload, despite lessons sometimes taking longer to plan.

Setting clear deadlines for students and sticking to them is more important than ever. If students need an extension for work, there can always be allowances made. But if knowing a specific time you are going to be able to sit down and look at student work and gauge assessment, that will also help with time management from a teacher's perspective.

3. Sharing

Online learning can be frustrating, and also have a lot of genuinely funny moments. Our teachers like to screenshot and share funny moments that have happened, which helps lift everyone's spirits. We also still ensure we schedule time for regular departmental meetings so everyone feels a sense of social connection.

Reflective Conclusion

Despite the constant influx of new ideas and tools that can be used in remote teaching, these should be viewed with a skeptical eye and only adopted if the teacher really, genuinely feels they can enhance what is being taught compared with time taken by learners to adapt. In addition, the need for a clear organizational system for lesson planning and delivery is key to reduce stress and time spent. I hope that teachers can use my story to reflect on the benefits of asynchronous learning, despite how alien it can feel to us personally.

About the Author

Kendal Rolley is the Head of Secondary and High School for a K-12 Bilingual School in Hanoi, Vietnam and enjoys reading and writing about student-centered learning, teacher development, and in particular how motivation affects language acquisition. He has a Masters of Applied Linguistics from Monash University and has published in a variety of publications.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRPE8oWUFS4>



Workplace Transition During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Personal Reflection

Michael Kuziw

Fuzoku Compulsory School, University of Fukui

In early 2020, after working six years at elementary school level, I was ready to enrich my teaching experience in a new setting, so I decided to take up a teaching position as an ALT at the Fuzoku Compulsory Education School at the University of Fukui. I wanted to feel fulfillment in my work-life, but I was ill-prepared for the complications and adversity I would confront in my job transition during the COVID-19 pandemic. While I consider myself a proactive person, whether when taking on a new hobby such as gardening or undertaking a new project to outfit a school library with more English books, this self-image was soon challenged. Every time I had a moment of introspection, my job transition in April 2020 emerged as the catalyst. I decided to confront my struggles, hoping to uncover a deeper awareness of myself as a teacher, while in the process realizing what practical solutions teachers require in their own changes in career.

Teachers in all capacities are familiar with environmental changes in the workplace. The Japanese education system encourages teacher school assignment changes, which may occur as often as every one to three years, and assignments may be capped at ten years in some areas of Japan (Numano, 2017). ALTs are not immune to these transitions in the workplace. They find themselves coping with environmental changes, which typically include new staff members, new students and perhaps even a new school. Recognizing that change is typical in a teacher's career, teachers of all types should also understand that dealing with change is a necessary part of one's ability to find fulfillment in one's job. I believe teachers can live fuller, happier lives by knowing how to deal with change.

When I transitioned to my new workplace in April 2020, I found myself in a new environment, leaving behind the comforts of a ten-person-strong ALT office with whom I interacted on a daily basis. I realized that the emotional complexity of managing my new work environment without the assistance of my fellow non-Japanese peers was taking a toll on me. Even though being alone was not new for me, I

missed being able to rely on the comforts and emotional understanding of my peers. I suddenly felt like a stranger in my new environment. What had been opportunities for joy in the past quickly became burdensome. As the days went by, I struggled to cope in this unfamiliar environment.

Objectives

- To suggest positive responses to workplace transitions individually and in communities.
- To introduce the benefits of professional counseling services.

Practical Implications

Through my experience of workplace transition, I learned that there are certain things that I can control and certain things that I cannot, much of which I experienced for the first time. For instance, I couldn't control the policy implementations brought on by the pandemic, which led to the cancellation of many events. I also couldn't control the decision to keep students at home for three months, resulting in online lessons and the issues that came with remote learning. However, I knew I could depend on my ability to be proactive in times of uncertainty, which I harnessed, preparing assignments and online materials and familiarizing myself with online learning platforms and other ICT before meeting my students. I drew upon Parker et al.'s (2012) suggested problem-focused coping strategies which "seek to directly resolve challenges of threats" (p. 505), for example, making priority lists and accepting what can and cannot be changed in one's environment. These strategies provide the foundation for a positive response to change in teachers' work-life.

It is well understood that teachers, especially new ones, cannot depend on getting meaningful and adequate professional support if this support is limited to their workplace. Teachers' professional learning networks are expanding to the online realm, which complements but does not replace the physical one, adapting to teachers' process of

learning needs (Trust et al., 2016). Online communities, including JALT, have become a source of comfort in my own life—places where I can craft my voice while expressing my opinions and sharing my concerns. These communities, which embrace the aspects of teaching and research that I enjoy, have welcomed and accepted me. I recall joining my first webinar at the end of March 2020 and instantly feeling connected to my interests in teaching. This led me to becoming a regular member of the 語り合い会 (*katari-ai-kai*) hosted by the University of Fukui, an informal, voluntary monthly online meeting between ALTs, JTEs and HRTs. Such online professional learning networks thus offer vital support that enhances individual strategies for responding to change.

Beyond these online learning communities, I longed for more meaningful relationships, which I had not yet found in my daily work. A lack of accessibility, including language barriers, prevent most individuals from receiving on-site counseling, when this is even available at all, for teachers. I found myself in a similar situation and decided to seek guidance from a trained, unbiased third-party professional with whom I could discuss my grievances. Luckily, as an alumnus of the University of New Brunswick (Canada), I was able to seek help through their counseling services. Through this experience, I recognized the importance I place on work as a source of happiness in my life, which had been lacking. The experience was a short four weeks, so I was encouraged to continue counseling and was provided with the ability to self-reflect and self-monitor. My counseling experience also made me more aware of the plethora of online services available, in part thanks to the pandemic, in addition to long-standing services such as the Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL), Tokyo Counseling Services and Tokyo Mental Health. Teachers coping with especially challenging change might find powerful support from specialist services focused on mental health.

Reflective Conclusion

As my journey evolves, I continue to forge meaningful relationships with my colleagues and students and reflect on how my workplace transition has impacted my state of happiness. I also look back to the relationships that have brought me to where I am today and for which I am grateful. I have realized

that our interactions with people allow us to confront and therefore control our own situations. Looking back on this year, I realize now that I am much more self-aware of not only my needs as a teacher and coworker, but also as a person. I hope my work leads me to assist others in their own job assignment changes and I also aim to encourage better mental-health practices and initiatives in the workplace.

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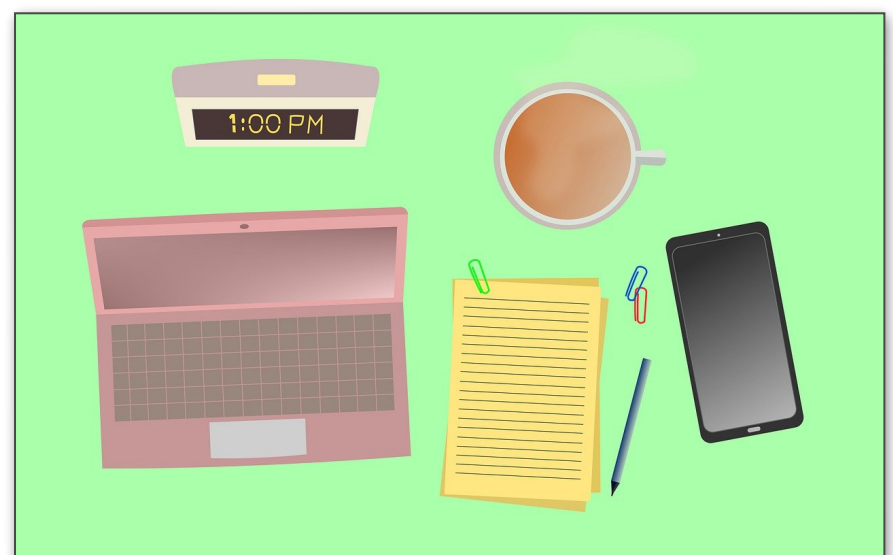
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Michael Kuziw, MEd, is an ALT at the Fuzoku Compulsory School at the University of Fukui, Japan. He is a contributing member of the Learner Development SIG at JALT and is interested in storytelling, self-regulated learning, motivation and most recently, well-being. In April 2021, he began working at Jin Ai University, Fukui.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLv9c_cjYn0



How the Coronavirus Helped Me Become More Involved at School

Jonathan Isaacson
Tohoku Fukushi University

It was early 2020, and it was becoming clearer that the coronavirus was likely to force us out of the classroom and into online classes. A senior faculty member asked if I wouldn't mind conducting some online training sessions to help familiarize our English teaching faculty with both Google Meet and Google Classroom. It made sense - in my efforts over several years to create a paperless classroom, I was already getting familiar with the Google Classroom learning management system and other educational technology. The cancellation of face-to-face classes was going to push everyone towards paperless classrooms one way or another. Which is how I found myself leading our teacher training for online classes.

A few pieces of background information seem useful in understanding the story fully. When all of this began, I was just starting my second year of teaching at my current institution. So I was very much learning my way around the school, both in a figurative sense and a literal one. When I had applied for the job, one thing that I included on my CV and talked about in my interview was my effort to establish a paperless classroom, as well the knowledge of the technology needed to make that happen. As such, the more senior members of the full-time English teaching faculty were all aware of my interest and knowledge in the area. In fact, just a month or two before the full extent of the pandemic started to become clear, I had had a conversation with two of my colleagues about using Google Classroom in the coming school year, albeit for use in face-to-face classes. Since I have made the decision to move towards paperless classes, my students have always gotten more than just English lessons - they have gotten technology lessons in the process. For my classes, students need some computer literacy to complete assignments. I believe that this is something very useful for students. In the 21st century, technology plays such a central role in so many facets of life that being able to navigate an online, computerized environment is something that is beneficial to students. Even if they don't become experts in computing from my English classes, they

will at least be made more aware of what some of the possibilities are. Maybe they will take it further on their own, or maybe my class will simply provide them with the technological savvy required to navigate similar classes. However, I know that this technological knowledge is definitely something useful for them.

Thus, the use of technology in the classroom was already a topic of discussion among myself and my colleagues before the cancellation of face-to-face classes. The training sessions were, in many ways, an extension of my work with creating paperless classes. The pandemic was forcing all teachers to adopt such classrooms, and I was uniquely qualified to aid other teachers at my institution with this shift.

One other point worth noting is that I am not a gregarious, outgoing person. I do not enjoy talking to people very much unless I have a clear purpose for doing so. I have always felt envious of those teachers who have a very easy-going, easy-to-talk-to attitude with both students and other faculty members. I have never been that type of person. These two factors - my newness and my quiet nature - meant that I was not familiar with most of the part-time teaching staff. However, the pandemic forced our school into online classes and thrust me into the position of leading teacher training on how to use online tools, which helped me get to know my part-time colleagues much better. While I'm still unlikely to ever be an outgoing, talkative teacher, the experience with leading the training sessions helped me realize something about the usefulness of my skills.

Objectives

- To find one's strengths as a teacher and utilize them for the benefit of students and colleagues.
- To recognize that while no teacher will be exceptional at every aspect of teaching, every teacher has at least one area where they can take a lead role.

Practical Implications

For educators, it is important to acknowledge their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Teachers can certainly improve in their weaker areas, up to a point, but it is also important to accept that they might never meet the high standards they hold themselves to. Perhaps more important is for teachers to recognize and emphasize their strengths. Once they recognize their strengths, teachers should work to emphasize these and find the best ways to use them to improve their schools.

Reflective Conclusion

Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. That applies not only to our personal lives, but also to our professional lives. Do I wish I were more gregarious with both colleagues and students? Absolutely. Can I work to improve these aspects of my persona as a teacher? Of course. However, I know that I have other skills that are extremely useful to both students and colleagues. It is likely that all teachers have some sense of how they bring important unique strengths to their work, but this is often easy to overlook. For instance, while I know this about myself, the pandemic brought certain aspects of my persona as a teacher to the forefront and made me appreciate this fact.

It was through this entire experience that I realized that I can offer my colleagues support in their efforts to be more technologically savvy, just as I can also offer the same thing to my students. Through the feedback I have received, it is clear that the training that I led did, in fact, help teachers adapt to the new reality of the pandemic. My skills and knowledge of educational technology proved invaluable for my colleagues. Every educator has something similar. It might not seem obvious at first, but no matter who we are or what our strengths are, maximizing those strengths is important to be the best teacher possible, for both our colleagues and our students.

About the Author

Jonathan Isaacson has been teaching at various levels in Japan for over 15 years. He is interested in technology in the classroom, as well as the use of teacher created podcasts as an extensive listening resource.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN0-GhcYWeA>



The Trials and Tribulations of a Pandemic: From My Camera to Yours

Lara Promnitz-Hayashi
Keiai University, Chiba, Japan

2020 will go down in history as the year that was. With the emergence of COVID-19 and its rapid spread, one could not help but wonder if movies such as *Outbreak*, *Contagion*, or *12 Monkeys* were prophecies, or if *The Walking Dead* was going to become a reality show. COVID-19's spread saw education thrown into turmoil around the world, and Japan was no different. I was starting a new job in April, and I was extremely excited about a new position and meeting new freshmen who were enthusiastic about starting their tertiary journey. However, this excitement quickly changed to apprehension as I had to suddenly find new ways to adapt my lessons to conduct them synchronously online.

While many of my colleagues were panicking and scrambling to rewrite their entire syllabi, I stayed calm and decided to fall back on my own technology knowledge and not "reinvent the wheel", so to speak. I decided to use Zoom as it had all the features I needed for my interactive classes and Moodle, a Learning Management System (LMS), as it is simple to use for teachers and students alike. I made my own manuals with simple screenshots so students could understand easily and quickly. I also uploaded clear information about how classes would be conducted, and held practice Zoom meetings prior to the official semester commencement so students could familiarize themselves with everything before the first class. Organizing myself early on and being accustomed to the technology made it much less stressful.

Having said that, my experience was not all roses. I discovered in the beginning that I had to wear many hats, in that I was not just a teacher, but I was also tech support, online chat support and a shoulder to cry on. Although this was challenging, I also found it to be rewarding. I hope that my experience shows that it is important to stay calm, persevere, be flexible, and keep to what you know initially in order to minimize stress and workload. It is important to keep in mind that this situation is temporary and will pass eventually.

Objectives

- To show that there is a silver lining and a sense of accomplishment even with the stress of online teaching.
- To demonstrate that we have learnt and developed new skills during the pandemic making us more empathetic and better teachers.

Practical Implications

Many teachers were considerably stressed throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, worrying about their quality of teaching, and in turn, the quality of education that their students were receiving. We need to remind ourselves that we were in unprecedented times and we were thrown into Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) which is not the same as online learning. ERT is only meant to be a temporary change in what we think of as a 'normal' mode of instructional delivery due to a crisis or emergency (Hodges et al., 2020; University of the People, 2020). It is important to remember that the goal of ERT is to set up instruction and support quickly; it is short-term and may lack resources at times, but we need to do our best to adapt our classes to engage our learners (Milman, 2020).

My classes were all synchronous and it was important to not change my curriculum too much. I only made minor tweaks in most of my classes so activities would run smoothly and easily on Zoom and to keep my sanity. I found that I just needed to be a little more resourceful than normal and keep tasks simple and easy to understand. The most popular and successful activities were group presentations and storytelling. I prepared a presentation document outlining the presentation topic and subtopics to be researched, lists of group members, and links to the Google Slides that I had made for each group. I gave preparation time in breakout rooms so students could work collaboratively both in and out of class. When I checked on groups in the breakout rooms, one group member was always showing the Google Slides through sharing their screen, and all members

were researching and discussing the content and format of the slides in real time. For storytelling, I gave groups picture prompts (ranging from a haunted mansion, a flying carpet, a group of animals in an African safari park, to a UFO) and made a Google Doc where each group selected one picture and collaborated on writing a story about it in breakout rooms, presenting it to the class in the main room in the last half of the class. Students were quite creative with many showing pictures, using fun voices and even adding background music. These activities were successful because the students said they enjoyed having more autonomy and creativity, and found it easier to collaborate online as they were already using their computers. They said they preferred using Google Slides and Docs because if they were in the classroom, they would not have had their computers, and using these meant all of their content and ideas were in one single place rather than every member having numerous pieces of note paper.

Reflective Conclusion

During ERT I found that it was imperative to lower expectations of students as many were not familiar with technology and others may have been struggling due to the pandemic, either mentally, financially, or both. It was also important to familiarize myself with the technology, websites and apps that I expected my students to use so that I was prepared for any questions and could troubleshoot any potential problems before they arose, as they were inevitably going to. In addition, it helped to put myself in the students' shoes and think about the challenges they were facing and be more empathetic in these challenging times, especially as freshmen were not experiencing the exciting start to their tertiary life that they were looking forward to. While we had many challenges and hiccups on this ERT journey, there were positive points too. I found attendance to be significantly better than face-to-face classes, and I had better communication with students both inside and outside the 'classroom' as students could easily send a private chat message, email or Line message at any time.

If you're continuing to use ERT methods or find yourself taking it on in the future, we now know what to expect and we should not take anything for granted. While many teachers may struggle with teaching online for numerous reasons, many of us

are fortunate that we are in a profession whereby we are able to conduct our classes online and keep our jobs, regardless of the obstacles we may face. Teachers and students alike have dramatically improved their technology proficiency and this has been something that COVID-19 and ERT has led us to deal with. I am in no way a tech expert but as teachers, we can view this experience as a form of professional development. We have had the opportunity to delve into and learn new web platforms and become more creative by finding alternative ways for student assessment. From my experience in the past academic year, I found that teachers are resilient and these unprecedented times have seen teachers and students come together and form stronger bonds, helping and encouraging each other with compassion in times of need.

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About the Author

Lara Promnitz-Hayashi is an Associate Professor with an MA in Applied Linguistics and M.Ed. in TESOL, at Keiai University in Chiba, Japan, teaching English skills and Japanese culture content electives. Her teaching approach is interactive and communicative, encouraging autonomous learning and critical thinking. Her research interests are CALL, Australian English, code-switching, and manga in language classrooms.

Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2BKUjhH1Sk>

Researching English Language Part-Time University Lecturer Voices During ERT

Colin Skeates
Keio University

Bill Snyder
Soka University

Chiyuki Yanase
Chuo University

Wendy Gough
Bunkyo Gakuin University

As the coronavirus pandemic unfolded, Colin saw that many of his part-time university teaching friends were having experiences he was not. This prompted a Facebook post by Colin in late March with a call for collaboration about researching part-time teachers' reactions to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) (Hodges et al., 2020). Three other researchers responded to the initial post. Chiyuki, a part-time lecturer, was interested because she wanted to investigate what other part-time teachers felt and share insights from ERT. As the full-time teacher with experience using educational technology at her university, Wendy was tasked with supporting the teachers in her department. As a result, she wanted to find out about part-time teacher experiences and reflect on ways she could better support the teachers at her university. As a teacher educator and researcher, Bill had been interested in teachers' emotional experience of their work and saw ERT as a unique experience that needed to be documented.

We created an initial survey with the aim to better understand the working situation of part-time university English teachers at the beginning of ERT and to gauge participating teachers' emotional well-being. This was followed up with weekly surveys throughout the 2020 academic year. From this initial survey which is discussed in this paper, we learned the beginning of ERT created drastic changes for part-time teachers' working conditions. We also learned about the relationships these teachers had with their universities, with other teachers, and with themselves.

Objectives

- To reveal themes found in the data regarding part-time university instructors' experiences during ERT.

- To give a voice to part-time instructors and shed a light on their working conditions.

Practical Implications

Relationships Teachers had with their Universities

For this theme, we discovered four interconnected subthemes, one of which (issues relating to compensation and job security) is discussed here. Teachers signalled that they felt they would be the ones to bear the brunt if students complained, and also that they were ignored when compensation was handed out.

I think for part-time teachers, too, we worry that we'll get fired if we don't perform well. We have little job security. (Teacher 39)

One of my schools... offered all students 50,000 [yen] to make sure they could cope with the tech challenges they face. All of us part-timers are left scratching our heads that they would ignore us so completely. (Teacher 28)

One implication we drew from these and other statements is that universities often focused on students' needs while disregarding those of part-time teachers. These actions led part-time teachers to feel neglected and not inspired by their employers to face the challenges of ERT.

Relationships Teachers had with Other Teachers

We found that many teachers were not only worried about the lack of stability and support offered by their institutions, but that they were also worried about learning to use the technology needed to provide acceptable classes during the ERT situation. Because many universities were not technologically prepared for the situation, they were also not prepared to provide the training necessary to help teachers prepare for their online classes. Therefore, some teachers took it upon themselves to help their colleagues.

I have been involved with educational technology for many years, taught blended learning, and I have been using Moodle for more than 15 years, I am confident in my ability to teach classes online. I have been spending a lot of time helping others to get the basics down. (Teacher 61)

I was terrified, confused and dumbfounded. Some assistance by a couple of other teachers and online instructions got me to the point where I felt I could deal with the situation to an acceptable degree. (Teacher 66)

Despite not feeling fully confident, the assistance provided by colleagues seemed to help some teachers overcome their initial stress about the prospect of ERT. These types of informal networks strengthen bonds between co-workers, and show the innovative ways instructors find to cope with difficult or unexpected situations by supporting each other and working together. Institutions need to recognize the efforts part-time teachers have made during ERT to provide effective instruction. They also need to pay more attention to the conditions of part-time teachers and more explicitly support those who often make up the bulk of the foreign language teaching staff.

Relationships Teachers had with Themselves

During ERT, part-time teachers in this study showed their vulnerability as they faced many uncertainties, anxieties, and mental as well as physical concerns. They also faced professional issues, yet at the same time, they showed resilience and steadfast professionalism towards their teaching.

I feel quite nervous, but I am doing my best and it is working out so far. I feel that if I do end up having problems, the proper support will not really be there for me. (Teacher 3)

This is a huge learning curve, I will come out of it with a new set of skills but I'm experiencing a lot of anxiety. However, I do feel like it's sink or swim, and I mustn't sink. (Teacher 40)

Under excessively stressful working conditions, educators tended to seek the positive aspects of the situation, such as learning new technological skill sets, and went forward from the insights gained in doing this. As Kelchtermans and Strittmatter (1999) assert, vulnerability can be the birthplace of resilience. Such resilience can be enhanced through collaborating with empathetic and supportive

colleagues, being proactive in problem-solving and self-care, and by embracing positive yet realistic perspectives.

Reflective Conclusion

From conducting the survey and then reading pertinent literature to understand some of the data collected, we unexpectedly saw snapshots of the lives of part-time university instructors in Japan. We learned about their working conditions, concerns related to integrating technology into teaching, and a need for greater support from institutions. We also learned about issues related to physical and mental well-being during the initial shift to ERT. In spite of the importance of their presence as a moving force of tertiary education in Japan, it is also apparent that part-time teachers' needs are a neglected topic, which made us aware of the need for faculty development specifically to support them. This could entail teacher training, discussion forums, and regular distribution of information in concise language (either Japanese or English) that is understood by all. For those looking to do masters or doctoral research, this is an area in need of further exploration.

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_Dgml0AGq8



An English Classroom in 2020

Stephanie Lim

Miyazaki International College

// Every single teacher is about to have their first year teaching again" (Genta, 2020).

Like many institutions all over the world, my university decided to migrate classes online in April 2020 as COVID-19 was quickly spreading in my corner of Kyushu, Japan. As a relatively new teacher in the level of higher education, I personally found this move quite intimidating for a number of reasons.

First of all, I am an introvert who dislikes calling in any form, so the prospect of teaching through video calls was unappealing to say the least. More importantly, however, I had no previous online teaching experience nor had I even heard of Zoom, so my fears and anxieties were multifaceted: How do I keep the class dynamic? How do I keep the students engaged? How do I monitor students' progress? And what of the technical and physical difficulties that would inevitably arise given the nature of online classes?

In addition to the pandemic, 2020 brought to the forefront many important and extremely complex social issues. Most notable in my case was the Black Lives Matter protests and the riots that broke out in the United States and other countries. I was unsure about how to broach the topic in my classes, and I certainly felt ill-equipped to do so properly. However, I felt strongly that these issues be addressed because as one of my teachers in my Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program taught me, to teach language is to teach culture and we were, at that time, essentially witnessing a real-time cultural shift.

Objectives

- To suggest some interactive online activities to practice speaking and pronunciation.
- To incorporate socially relevant themes in writing practice.
- To underscore the value of empathy in the classroom.

Practical Implications

Regarding the overall dynamic of online classes, one activity that worked in my 1st year Oral Communication class was a pronunciation activity. I prepared a number of documents with various minimal pair sets that allowed students to practice different sounds. I screenshared the documents on Zoom and students had to annotate or stamp the words they thought I was targeting. The students responded positively to this activity. I think they found it enjoyable because the ability to interact with each other instantly allowed them to have a sense of control and agency. Also, I felt that the competitive nature of the activity simulated the dynamics of an actual face-to-face class. There were times when the class would be divided in their answers, so it was thrilling for everyone to find out what the correct choice was.

My students and I used many videos and news articles for various discussion activities often in smaller breakout rooms. We also used the Zoom whiteboard feature for students to process their ideas further and/or review new vocabulary. For example, one student wrote 'Go-to Campaign', a contentious Japanese tourism program launched by the national government in an effort to help revive the country's tourism industry by giving residents travel-related discounts. This then served as a springboard for others to share their opinions about this program. Activities such as these helped me to keep the classes more active and engaging. Moreover, joining students in their breakout rooms allowed me to connect with them better as I could interact with them individually.

As for addressing socially and culturally relevant topics in the language classroom, I tried an activity in my Academic Writing class in which students chose one local or international news story every week. They then had to create a Google Document that included their own summary and opinions on the stories with proper citations. By the end of the semester, we had a shared Google folder with a collection of stories from different countries. This was useful because in addition to the students being able

to practice their writing and general computer skills, it also diffused my power as the teacher to direct their attention to particular social issues. By allowing them to bring up what news stories resonated with them, there was more diversity all around. Furthermore, I believe the students found it informative as they were able to learn about global events they may otherwise have missed. Finally, I felt like I gained some insight about my students through the stories they chose to highlight. This was important for me as conducting classes online can be dislocating.

Reflective Conclusion

2020 certainly taught us many lessons. My students and I have had to quickly adapt to the online learning format and find ways to stay connected with each other despite the physical and social separation necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through interactive activities and discussions around relevant social issues, we were able to keep the class dynamic and engaging.

For me, it belabored the point that indeed nothing is certain. As we have all witnessed, the world as we knew it changed in an instant, fundamentally altering how we do our work and how we live our lives in general. Also, I realized that teaching is such an emotional profession. It is utterly frustrating and draining when things do not go well, but can also be highly rewarding when they do. Given all these, my biggest takeaway is that it is important for us teachers to regularly remind ourselves that we need not have all the answers, or for our classes, online or otherwise, to run flawlessly every single time. This is not to say that we do not strive to fulfill our roles as educators to the best of our abilities. We are going through unprecedented times, so flexibility, patience and empathy towards our students and ourselves are ever more imperative. I think these will, to some degree, alleviate our fears and apprehensions about our classes, and help us more effectively cope with whatever else may come our way beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

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About the Author

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYJ-O9eEOxw>



Teachnology 2020: My Journey from Tech-Savvy to Tech-Skilled

Rezwana Islam

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

"Build the plane while you're flying it"

The quote from Walker (2016) perfectly sums up my feeling from when I transitioned to online teaching in the middle of an ongoing semester and the beginning of a pandemic. The lesson plans seemed inadequate, technological tools were imposed, and the reality of Covid-19 infecting colleagues and undergraduate learners in Bangladesh pointed towards an uncertain future. Suddenly, a tech-savvy community of teachers and learners frequenting social media by making videos and sharing live events started transforming into a tech-skilled community where using learning management systems (LMS) and video conferencing tools became regular practice. Teachers like me, who occasionally used LMS and mostly adapted online materials, began training and watching software tutorials to develop their emerging e-teacher self. However, without spontaneous learner feedback in online classes, my journey started as a one-sided pursuit of teaching expertise. Days and nights were spent preparing student-centered lessons with audio-visual rich materials. Still, I missed crucial steps in the preparation stages. For example, while turning quizzes into online games, I overlooked either the contextual value of the content or the user-friendliness of technological tools. Naturally, lesson hurdles like forced responses became more frequent than spontaneous interaction. It became demotivating to the extent where I started to reevaluate my teaching approaches. Then, one day, a learner shared his frustrations of being quarantined during the pandemic and acknowledged my classes as a distraction as it comes with the challenge of learning new tools. The isolated recognition of tools made me think, "Have I focused more on the tools rather than the pedagogy?"

An attempt to assimilate technology took me to the seven domains of the TPACK framework (Herring et al., 2016), which include content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological content knowledge (TCK),

technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). This framework was devised to prioritize the content and teaching method in order to ensure the proper use of technology online. My pedagogical skills became structured by exploring these domains. While TCK helped to identify suitable websites and videos for content, PCK allowed me to contextualize, customize and reflect on the content. TK was applied by simplifying application usage, checking device compatibility, and identifying learner preferences. Gradually, a pursuit for excellence in online teaching turned into a quest for skillful online facilitating.

Objectives

Teachers can use this story to:

- Maintain a balance between technological and pedagogical practices;
- Help e-teacher selves to flourish;
- Make online learning and teaching experience more comfortable.

Practical Implications

By reflecting on classroom experiences through TPACK (Herring et al., 2016), I have provided some guidelines below. These guidelines can be used as a rubric by teachers.

1. Online classes may limit non-verbal cues and gestures from teachers to some extent. Therefore, content presentation can help to redirect learners' attention. Topic related podcasts, videos, and websites may increase their responsiveness. For example, Window-Swap (<https://window-swap.com/>) can be useful to teach descriptive composition as it allows viewing any part of the world from someone's window.
2. Besides content, interactive tools for giving tasks and instruction may increase learner motivation. For example, Kahoot and Quizizz can turn a regular test into a game where participants can compete in real time.
3. A crucial requirement for apps is getting to know their learner-friendliness. Teachers can request for a trial student account in their institution's LMS

which will help them see through learners' eyes. For example, when I discovered that the recording feature in Google Meet was unavailable for students, I suggested an external recorder like Apowersoft or AZ Screen Recorder.

4. Despite a learner-centered approach, virtual classrooms have unforeseen issues. For example, videos lagging and buffering can hinder tasks during live classes. Sometimes, the playback speed of the YouTube video can be reduced, or parts of the video skipped by pressing number keys. By anticipating possible obstacles, alternative steps can be planned by following websites like Practical Ed Tech (<https://practicaledtech.com/>), which are dedicated to sharing online teaching essentials.
5. Modern teaching approaches involve both instructions about content and related technology. Giving a task comes with additional responsibility of giving a small tutorial about the online submission process. The available tutorials are less effective for non-native learners sometimes, with generic contents for an international audience and English language instruction. Bite-size video tutorials prepared by the teacher may support specific and localized contexts. Since 2020, I have made tutorials about using Google Classroom and shared them with students through a YouTube channel.
6. Personalized instruction may be futile if it does not match the learners' context. We need to connect learners' current technological knowledge with the pedagogical technological knowledge. For example, Learners can use their skill of tagging someone on Facebook to tag a classmate in Google Classroom (https://youtu.be/VkSYS94TD_k) as the process is quite similar.
7. Along with context, learners' initial adjustment with apps is also required. Non-graded parts in the beginning of online forms, the use of familiar apps, and similar patterns of questions can reduce learners' fear of tools.
8. Learner discomfort may stem from device discrimination. Some learners use the latest laptop or iPhone models, whilst others opt for Android phones. Surveys about their access to devices and internet applications in the beginning of a course could be helpful.

Reflective Conclusion

Sustainability in online teaching comes from the teachers, not the tools. Therefore, I developed the e-teacher self through the support of the TPACK framework (Herring et al., 2016). Both experienced and novice teachers, who review and explore their teaching skills, may benefit from following this quest. For me, the next phase of this journey will be a collaborative one, whereby learners make video tutorials and conduct group discussions about their experiences too. Moreover, I will work on improving online pedagogy through sharing training sessions with colleagues and peers. Establishing a comfort-rich environment in the online classroom before employing a tech-rich environment should be the ultimate goal of my *teachnology*.

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Link to presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKH7t0BOlhM>



Explorations in Teacher Development

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 the 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.

The 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. The 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



JALT TD SIG

About the 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.)

Become a TD SIG Member

Joining:

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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Meet the Incoming TD SIG Publications Team



**Matthew W. Turner, SIG
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Matthew W. Turner is an English language lecturer at Toyo University, Tokyo. His research interests include reflective practice, professional development, podcasting, accessible tourism, and support for language learners with disabilities. He is the current coordinator of the JALT TD SIG and is pleased to have helped guest edit this special edition.



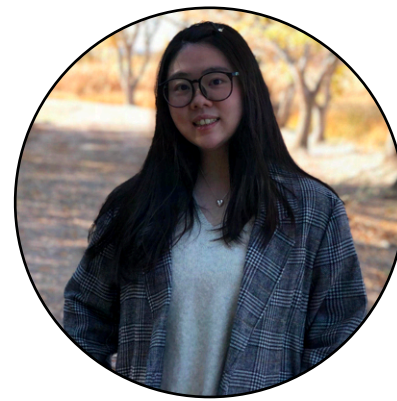
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