JALT Teacher Development SIG

Explorations in Teacher Development

Teacher Journeys 2021: Special Issue
Volume 28, Number 2 • ISSN 2434-589X

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Volume 28, Number 2 • ISSN 2434-589X • Teacher Journeys 2021: Special Issue
http://td.jalt.org

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Editorial Introduction

Nick Kasparek

Eikei University of Hiroshima

The Teacher Journeys conference has continued to evolve as a vital forum for teachers to share their own narratives of growth and for others to find resonance and inspiration in these stories. The 2021 conference featured 19 recorded video presentations, all of which *ETD* readers can still view at https://sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2021/presentation-index-alphabetical-by-presenter.

Additionally, the force behind the conference, conference chair Michael Ellis, hosted an insightful panel discussion with four presenters, the video recording of which is available at https://sites.google.com/view/teacherjourneys2021/panel-discussion.

A follow-up special issue of *ETD* has become a venerable tradition, and this year's special issue builds on the success of last year's Volume 27, Issue 2 (https://td.jalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ETD-272.pdf).

In this issue, **Devon Arthurson**, **Michael Blodgett**, **Sarah Miyoshi Deutchman**, **Agnes Maria Francis**, **Caroline Hutchinson**, **Nicholas Marx**, **Diane Raluy Turner** and **Ramon Mislang**, **Jamie G. Sturges**, and **Akihiko Andrew Tohei** further develop their respective presentations in brief narrative-driven articles. Following the same unified format as last year, each of the nine articles opens with an illustrative vignette before presenting clear objectives, practical implications, and finally a reflective conclusion.

This issue is thanks to the work of the contributors themselves; Michael Ellis as conference organizer; Ryo Mizukura as co-editor; Ewen MacDonald, Sam Morris, Jon Thomas, and Matthew W. Turner as reviewers; Matthew W. Turner again as layout editor; and the rest of the *ETD* team.

With Teacher Journeys 2022 just around the corner, I hope these articles might serve as inspiration not only for readers' own journeys as teachers but also for participating in this year's conference, which you can learn more about at https://tj.td.jalt.org/.

Teacher Journeys 2021

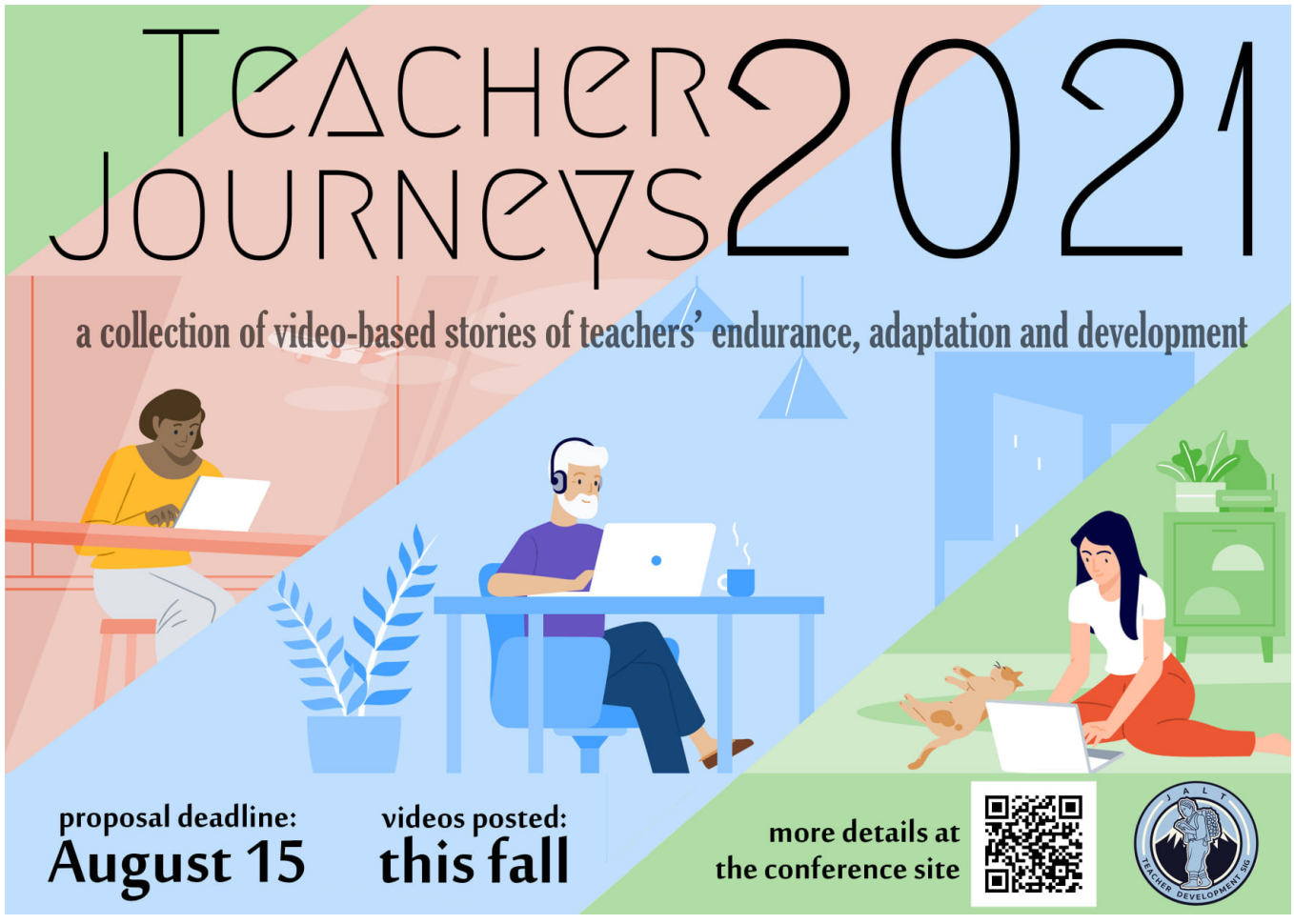
Michael Ellis

International Christian University High School

Teacher Journeys 2020 was *forced* online; it felt like an evacuation. From late 2019, we were developing plans for a face-to-face conference in west Tokyo. We didn't explicitly call it face-to-face, of course. That would have seemed redundant at the time. Those plans were disrupted by and ultimately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference team scrambled to host an online, asynchronous conference on TD SIG's YouTube channel. All of the video presentations focused on teachers' experiences with emergency remote teaching. Though it was a struggle, the presenters and conference team succeeded in sharing many important stories with practical implications for other educators teaching remotely.

Teacher Journeys 2021 was *composed* online; it felt like a homecoming. Using the conference structure established the year before, we were able to maintain an online format to share stories and experiences that weren't necessarily related to online teaching. In this way, Teacher Journeys 2021 reflected an acclimation to a new normal. There was no struggle. The presenters knew how to record video presentations and were used to speaking to cameras. We weren't overwhelmed anymore. Instead, we used the tools and skills gained through the experience of remote teaching to share journeys of professional teacher development—which might or might not relate directly to remote teaching itself.

I sincerely hope that you enjoy the articles in this special issue of *ETD* from this conference. As the conference organizer, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all of the contributors, editors Nick Kasparek and Ryo Mizukura, and all of the *ETD* team for putting this together. As mentioned in the panel discussion at the end of Teacher Journeys 2021, to me this conference represents an exciting blend of synchronous and asynchronous professional development, and I am looking forward to seeing the journey continue under the expert guidance of Alexey Kukharuk and the rest of the new team. Please look forward to more Teacher Journeys in the future!



An Instructor's Experience with and Students' Opinions about Reflection Journals

Devon Arthurson

Rikkyo University

Vignette

The shift from face-to-face to online lessons due to COVID-19 created new challenges beginning in spring 2020 for EFL classes at my university. I felt disconnected from engagement and interaction with learners. At the same time, I was interested in finding new ways for students to self-evaluate, set goals, and process the lesson's contents, as I have long been interested in ways to foster learner autonomy. Program managers suggested reflection journals as an activity and area for research for the fall 2020 semester. As it was my initial experience using reflection journals, I thought that receiving student feedback would help deepen my understanding of the activity. I continued to seek learner feedback on the journaling activity each semester from fall 2020 to fall 2022.

Definition of Reflection Journaling

Reflection: more than just recalling a past event but also processing and expressing thoughts about the event.

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Journaling: guiding learner self-reflection as well as encouraging self-regulation, self-knowledge, and motivation in learning.

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Reflection Journal

Objectives

- For Instructors: To assess students' participation in class and their writing abilities; to provide an understanding and sense of achievement of lesson goals, such as through students' reflections about the lesson content.
- For Learners: To increase autonomy through goal-setting and self-assessment with more awareness of their performance; to provide assistance with life-long learning practices.

Practical Implications

Implementation

Journal prompts may focus on 1) a summary of the lesson's contents, 2) performance self-evaluation, 3) skills used in the lesson, 4) goals for the next lesson, and 5) general comments. Without prompts, it may be difficult for the learners to understand the purpose of the activity, which could result in their writing being more personal than academic. Below is an example of prompts used in a first-year debate class from fall 2020:

1. Summarize the main points learned in class.
2. What did your team do well in the debate? (Please give reasons and examples)
3. What did the other team do well in the debate? (Please give reasons and examples)
4. What can your team do to improve the debate?
5. What is important when making rebuttals?
6. What is important when judging a debate?
7. A goal for the next class.

Learners' Opinions

To gather learner feedback, the final journal for fall 2020 had prompts which sought to discover 1) their opinions about the reflection journals on the development of their skills, 2) their ideas about if journals help them to remember the class contents, 3) their opinions about whether writing their goals helped with the achievement of the goals, and 4) their advice about the activity or any additional comments. The most frequently appearing themes in the learner feedback were the following:

- the development of writing proficiency.
- the creation of a writing habit/a writing opportunity.
- an opportunity to review and reflect on the learning process.
- time to process what is learned.
- analysis of their performance.
- a challenge of their abilities.

- awareness of goals/clarity of goals.

Additionally, two other areas to consider that appeared in the data:

- the level of difficulty.
- the necessity for review after submission.

Alternative Suggestions

Instructors could journal simultaneously with learners. Prompts could be used to aid with instructor development. For example, if the instructor is uncertain about whether the lesson's goals were achieved, they could share these goals with the students at the beginning or in the journal; they could then ask for the students' comments about how much they remember the goals or how well they could complete the goal. The instructor could create their own journal prompts or use modified versions of the students' journal prompts to reflect the instructor's voice.

Based on their rapport with the class, the instructor may also want to share with their learners that they are also doing the activity, and perhaps in some classes, even share the contents of the journal with the students. This shared instructor's journal could provide a writing sample for the learners and help the instructor to develop a deeper connection with the learners through the shared activity.

Reflective Conclusion

Though I have continued to use reflection journals, this section will only focus on the implementations in the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters.

First Implementation Reflections

There were three main satisfactory outcomes: learners' writing skills developed, I understood better how they self-assess, and I saw their ability to set goals increase. However, there were also several areas for improvement. I was too rigid with prompts which may not have been useful, focused on the format more than content, and neglected the importance of the type of classes. There was also a gap between the time learners spent writing and I spent grading, as students took time writing, while I only quickly skimmed their submissions. Reading the students' comments after the first implementation gave me a better understanding of how to create a more meaningful activity and provided me with more confidence for future uses of the activity.

Second Implementation Reflections

Since I did the activity a second time in spring 2021, my confidence with it increased. However, since I had more experience using reflection journals, I forgot to solicit regular feedback about the activity. However, in the middle of the semester, one journal prompt asked the students to review their second journal and reflect on their completion of the task in comparison to their sixth journal. This helped some students to see the improvement in their writing skills. Looking forward, I will try to be more conscious of seeking learner feedback about the activity so that the necessary adjustments can be made.

Using reflection journals and seeking out learner feedback continuously since the fall of 2020 until the fall of 2022 has helped me to feel more confident in using the activity as I understood how to create journal prompts that will aid the students in reflection, assessment, and goal-setting. In addition, sharing about reflection journals on numerous occasions with peers in professional development settings also prompted me to re-examine learners' voices for the development of my teaching practice. When using new activities, getting feedback from the learners is beneficial to make language learning more meaningful for both the students and their teacher. Sharing about such activities with peers also helps the teacher develop their activities, and in turn, their teaching practice.

Author Bio

Devon Arthurson teaches English at Rikkyo University in Tokyo. Since moving to Japan from Canada in August 2008, she has been working in EFL education. She has a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Arts in Integrated Studies. Her research areas are in fostering learner autonomy and reflection. <devonarthurson@rikkyo.ac.jp>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Twf5L6k7ZE>

Near Death in the Mountains: My Path to Becoming a Better Teacher

Michael Blodgett

Nara Medical University

Vignette

In March 2014, I nearly died. I hiked up to the temple atop Mt. Omine, one of the most sacred mountains in Nara, to pray for the healthy birth of my second daughter. On my descent, I slipped and fell in the deep snow. Far from the trail, I became lost. I survived in the mountains for seven days. Miraculously, on the seventh day, I clawed my way back up to the snowy peak and found a way down to the village where my pregnant wife and 3-year-old daughter were waiting. This experience completely changed me and the trajectory of my life's path.

In my video presentation, I share the detailed story of what happened in the mountains and how that experience has transformed me into the teacher I am today. Furthermore, I describe how I incorporate the lessons that I have learned in the mountains into lessons in the classroom. I go on to illustrate how I build strong bonds with my students, and even better, motivate them by incorporating storytelling into both classroom activities and our interactions.

Objectives

- To share my story of survival and the life lessons that came from this near-death experience.
- To show how it is possible for teachers to motivate and bond with students by sharing personal narratives.
- To demonstrate how storytelling can be used both as a classroom activity and as a source of language practice.
- To inspire teachers (and others) who may sometimes feel fatigued as they navigate the peaks and valleys of academia.

Practical Implications

I am a firm believer that storytelling is a fundamental part of the human identity. Through storytelling, we form relationships and learn important life lessons. It also appears that hearing and seeing stories is a great source of entertainment. These concepts really hit home the first time I returned to the classroom following my mountain survival experience. At first, I was a little reluctant to share my story, but after doing so I started to notice some reactions that really encouraged me to think more deeply about my experience and how I might apply it to the classroom. Over time, I have polished my story with practice and multiple retellings in several different classes. Not to mention, I found that it works really well as a source of language practice. Thus, I have also incorporated my story into a classroom activity which has increased student motivation, created a special bond between me and my students, and has become a jumping-off point for students to practice and share their own stories. The activity that I would like to share is a variation of "two truths and a lie" which I use as a getting-to-know each other activity at the beginning of the semester. Although I now teach students at a medical university who are rather proficient in English, I have also successfully used this activity in both junior high and high school classes by adjusting the level to suit their language skills. This activity could be completed in one class or spread out over several classes.

Procedure

1. Create three stories to introduce yourself to your students. Rather than a simple straightforward self-introduction, I start the first class by sharing three stories about myself with my class. However, one of the stories I share is actually not true.
2. After the students listen to the three stories, put them in pairs or small groups to discuss the three stories you have shared.
3. In their groups, ask them to come up with follow-up questions about the stories to help them better guess which story is the false one.
4. Have the students ask their follow-up questions, and share your answers with the whole class.
5. Have the students vote on which story they believe to be false.

6. Reveal to the students which story is false. This can be done in several ways. I prefer to go through the stories one by one to increase excitement and anticipation. For example, I start by saying, "Story no.1 is…true." Then I proceed to story no. 2, and finally story no.3.
7. Have the students write down their own three stories.
8. Put them back in their groups and have them share their stories with their group members.
9. (Optional) Have some students present their stories in front of the class.

Reflective Conclusion

Upon having a near-death experience, I have learned several things. First of all, I appreciate how precious life is. It may seem like something that I should have already been aware of. On the contrary, it was only when I almost lost my life that I could fully comprehend the miracle of just being alive. It is not only the feeling of having my life back but also the outpouring of love and support that I have felt from all the people around the world who were pulling for my return. The word "gratitude" comes to my mind.

Second of all, I realize that challenges are a necessary part of life and that makes life special as we meet those challenges and persevere to overcome them. Although I would not choose to repeat such an experience, it has completely changed my life in many positive ways. I feel now that challenges in life are not something to fear, but rather something to embrace.

Finally, I hope that by sharing my story I can inspire other teachers to do likewise. I strongly believe that sharing your personal narrative with your students will allow them to see you as more than just a teacher, but rather a fellow human being. In my opinion, this can break down the barrier between teacher and pupil. From my experience, this has greatly enhanced my classes and has consequently encouraged students to also open up which has created a wonderful team-like atmosphere where students are more likely to be motivated to actively participate.

Author Bio

Michael Blodgett is a full-time lecturer at Nara Medical University. He earned an MSEd. in TESOL from Temple University. His research interests include motivation and authentic communication activities enhanced by technology. Currently, he is exploring the use of podcasts in language education and produces a podcast with his students. <mwblodgett@naramed-u.ac.jp>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SR5jNmcpJ8Q>

Implementation of Data-driven Learning (DDL) and the Effects of Machine Learning on the Classroom

Sarah Deutchman

Waseda University & Wayo Women's University

Vignette

With technology continually advancing it is important to make use of new tools in the classroom. For example, having access to corpora, large searchable collections of texts on particular subjects, is like being able to consult a native speaker at any time. Corpora can be used to search for grammatical patterns and other information about words. The process of looking for patterns is called data-driven learning (DDL). If students are taught how to do DDL they can gain more autonomy and become more aware of how language works.

However, there are some negative sides of AI and machine learning which affect us already. For example, DeepL has been rapidly improving at translating text, which can lead to the problem of students using auto translators to write their papers. This translated text can then be put through Grammarly to fix any grammatical errors. After this process is complete, the paper may seem as if it has been written by the student.

Another negative aspect of improved technology is data mining, such as Facebook quizzes that ask questions to get password information or answers to security questions. If people post these answers, they are giving hackers the ability to get into their accounts.

Objectives

The purpose of the paper is to inform fellow educators about tools that can be used in the classroom to do DDL. Additionally, this paper will explain ways to protect their data and students' data.

Practical Implications

Corpora are now easier to use as many are free and web-based. With corpora, students can see which genre a word belongs to, see how it is used in a sentence, create genre-specific vocabulary lists, and see how words connect. Three commonly used tools are Sketch Engine for Language Learning (SKELL), AntConc, and the Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA).

SKELL is a web-based corpus that is geared toward beginners. It does not require an account and searches can be done easily. For more frequent words it gives information on collocations (i.e., words that are paired together). This is important because of language influence; students may try to pair words incorrectly based on their L1. In Japanese, you *drink medicine* but in English you *take medicine*. If students use SKELL to search they can see for themselves which words are neighbors and see how the words are used in context. With SKELL, teachers can create different activities such as fill-in-the-blank activities, multiple-choice questions, cross-out words that do not pair with each other, etc. The only downside of SKELL is that for low-frequency vocabulary words, such as uxorious, only sentences are provided.

AntConc is free software that can be used to create corpora. Student essays can be imported into the software and searched for common errors. For four years I have taught academic writing classes where students had to write essays about studying abroad. One of the reasons students gave for studying abroad was to *touch culture*. With AntConc I could search for the word *culture* and see if many students were making this mistake. After identifying a common error, I could correct it by creating activities to show students that the word *experience* should be used with *culture*. Another good point of AntConc is that Laurence Anthony, the creator of the software, has a Youtube channel that shows how to use his free software (https://www.youtube.com/user/AntlabJPN).

COCA is a free corpus with many features. For example, it can be used to compare two similar words such as *utter* and *sheer*. *Utter* is used with negative words (e.g., failure, darkness, disregard) while *sheer* is used with more descriptions of scale (e.g., number, volume, magnitude). It is also possible to link COCA with different websites such as Youglish (a searchable YouTube corpus) and Linguee (a kanji dictionary website). Two of the downsides of COCA are that users must create an account to use the

website and the sentences provided are not always complete so students should be made aware of this.

In short, teachers can create activities from more controlled to less controlled. It is possible to use corpora for all levels. If students are beginners, students can be shown corpora in their L1 and L2 and look for patterns between the two.

At the same time, plagiarism and data mining exemplify the negative aspects of advancements in technology. Unfortunately, many plagiarism detectors are not able to flag papers as being translated from other languages, or copied from other papers. This is because Turnitin is based on corpora; the software looks for similar phrases. If a paper has not been imported into the system yet, a plagiarism checker will not flag any content from that paper or essay as plagiarized. Bitwarden and Lastpass are examples of password management software. Having a password manager allows users to have more complicated passwords that will be more difficult to crack and can store complex answers to security questions. It is better to use random strings of alphanumeric characters instead of actual answers, which makes it harder for hackers to access accounts.

Reflective Conclusion

Technology is advancing quickly and already has an influence on our lives as teachers, so it is important to stay informed about innovations that have taken place. Quillbot and Wordtune are two new websites of note that have been trained on machine learning models. These sites may cause concern among those who teach academic writing because they can help to summarize, paraphrase, and automatically edit texts. Thus, educators may have to decide what constitutes plagiarism and whether these tools should be allowed in class. Additionally, I found it very encouraging that one of the people who watched my presentation could create their own activities and successfully implement them in class.

Author Bio

Sarah Miyoshi Deutchman teaches at Waseda University and Wayo Women's University as a part-time lecturer. She has taught English for over 14 years in three different countries. She has been teaching at the university level for 4 years. Her areas of research include data-driven learning, corpus linguistics, and vocabulary.

<sarah.deutchman@gmail.com>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j26c7f3v3s4

First Year Teaching in the Pandemic Era: I Survived!

Agnes Maria Francis

Soka University

Vignette

"Experience is not the best teacher. Evaluated experience is." This quote by John C. Maxwell resonates with my first year teaching at the university level, although teaching was not completely new for me. I started teaching English to kindergarten and primary school students while I was finishing my undergraduate degree in English Education. Upon graduating, I worked in a language school for adults who were around 15 to 65 years old. When I was doing a master's in TESOL, I worked as a student staff at our self-access center and became a teaching assistant too. I also had a teaching practicum for 15 weeks during my final semester. With these experiences, I was confident and ready to start my professional journey. I had also set certain expectations regarding my classes and what kind of teacher I wanted to be.

However, the beginning of my career was not as smooth as I thought it would be. In 2020, we transitioned from face-to-face to online teaching, a situation many of us had never experienced. Hence, the confidence, readiness, and expectations I had were not enough to get me through my first year. I often found myself exhausted and not able to enjoy teaching the way I used to, hence, I kept asking myself, "am I doing this right?" One day, I just sat down, reflected on my graduate school days, and remembered a discussion we had in one of our classes: "Teaching is not about what's right or wrong. It's about finding what works for us and our students." From this point, I regained some motivation and learned the importance of reflective practice for my professional development.

Objectives

- To share my experience with other first-year teachers so they know that they are not struggling alone.
- To encourage teachers to do reflective practice regularly for their professional development and motivation.

Practical Implications

Reflective practice can be described as a reflection over teachers' daily practices in the classroom, including challenges and successes, in order to make conscious decisions for the improvement of future practices (Farrell, 2015; Rushton & Suter, 2012). In other words, reflective practice is a personal tool for teachers to assess themselves and to be aware of the reasons behind their decisions. Farrell (2018) proposes some activities to facilitate reflective practice which can be done individually, with peers, or in groups: Teaching journals, critical friends, teacher development groups, class observations, and action research.

To do any of the suggested activities, I faced two main issues. First, I did not have enough time to prepare for my classes, grade, give feedback on students' work, or research. Second, I felt anxious about my teaching practice. For many new teachers, it is uncomfortable to see that some activities may not work in our classes or to admit that we do not perform as well as our own expectations. These two problems led me to choose individual reflection among the proposed activities. By doing individual reflection, I did not have to set a specific time and I could personalize the questions for my reflection. Instead of asking myself what was right or wrong, these were three questions I formulated for my reflection:

1. Who am I as a teacher?
   I think this is a crucial question as the answers influence our decision making in the class. I aspire to be a teacher who listens to what students say. I want my students to know that learning is their responsibility, this is their class, and learning English is a process.
2. What will my students feel about certain activities?
   The second question is related to my answers for the first question. As teachers we often forget how students feel as we focus on ourselves as a teacher. Taking students'

feelings into account does not mean indulging them, but it means balancing between giving them challenges and avoiding unnecessary stress because I want students to enjoy the learning process.

3. What can I do better next?
   To answer this question, I consider what works in my class and what does not work. Although it is important to be critical with our teaching practices when we do reflection, we should be aware not to overly criticize ourselves. Remember that the point of doing reflection is to improve ourselves positively.

Reflective Conclusion

By reflecting back on my experience and trying to answer those three questions, I decided to implement some changes when I entered my second year. For example, during my first year, I tried to give personal feedback on all of the students' assignments. I used to like reading my teachers' feedback which was why I demanded myself to do the same. Yet, giving personal feedback took up so much time. Now, I prioritize which assignments need personal feedback and use my time effectively. Another change that I made was how I used technology in the class. At the beginning of online teaching, I tried to use different applications, such as *Kahoot*, *Google Classroom*, *Flipgrid*, and *Quizlet*. I realized students were overwhelmed with using technology, so I decided to use just *Zoom*, *Kahoot*, and *Google Classroom*. I focus more on making sure students feel familiar with the applications and they are comfortable with online classes.

My reflection also changed how I perceived the use of English in the class. I used to be strict with an English-only policy in the class. I am now more flexible and allow students to check their understanding using Japanese with their friends. I sometimes try saying one or two things in Japanese that make students laugh and that helps develop our relationship. Finally, my reflection also makes me more comfortable to practice learner autonomy. I am more willing to engage students in making decisions, giving them options, and encouraging them to be active. These changes made my second year a much better academic year. This experience also motivates me to keep reflecting on my teaching practice. By sharing this experience, I hope teachers, especially novice teachers, feel inspired to reflect on their own experiences.

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Author Bio

Agnes Maria Francis is an assistant lecturer at the World Language Center, Soka University. Her research interests are self-access, autonomy, and professional development.
<agnesmfrancis@gmail.com>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YN6n3mkzvDU>

Overcoming Professional Self-Doubt

Caroline Hutchinson

Nihon University College of Economics

Vignette

In February 2020, the biggest worry on my horizon was planning for my new graduation seminar course (known in Japan as a '*Zemi*'). Zemi are often considered to be a uniquely Japanese practice, involving professors mentoring students over a longer period (in my case, three years) to pursue research into their academic specialization, culminating in a graduation thesis. They typically also have a strong social or pastoral element, with some offering group trips and even introductions to graduate recruiters.

Although I had designed and taught content-based courses before, this time I was finding it challenging to get down to details. Like many non-Japanese faculty, I had no personal experience with the Zemi system, and I could not visualize what went on in the classroom. I was aiming to help students produce an academic thesis informed by research, in their second language, but I also wanted them to identify with topics, enjoy discussion and build productive relationships. I wasn't sure how to strike a balance between freedom and oversight; how to be both teacher and mentor in the Japanese cultural context.

What's more, as a language teacher seeking to mentor students in the content area I had not studied since undergraduate level almost twenty years earlier, I felt underqualified in the field I had chosen to teach. I tried to remedy my perceived deficiencies by reading everything I could get my hands on, filling my hard drive with articles and lesson materials, but I was failing to put the pieces in place. When I asked questions, I kept hearing the same phrase: "it's up to you". What worked in one context, for one teacher, might not be the right answer for me.

In March 2020, everything changed. In response to the spread of COVID-19, my university moved all courses online, where they remained for two years. I no longer had the luxury of spinning my wheels, so I got on with teaching, combining task-based learning, group work and reading discussions with individual research and mentoring. The pandemic forced me to stop worrying about what I couldn't do and start doing what I could.

Objectives

- To explore the balance of constraint and freedom in guiding professional decision-making.
- To consider the importance of professional self-image.
- To reflect on your strengths as an educator.

Practical Implications

Consider the following questions, either individually or in discussion with other teaching professionals:

1. Do you prefer to work within clear guidelines, or for most decisions to be "up to you"? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
2. Have you ever experienced professional self-doubt, or a daunting challenge? What happened? What was the outcome?
3. Consider the following questions suggested by Tarr (2021):
   a. Who are five role models that you admire?
   b. What do you have in common with them?
   c. Why do they inspire you? (In particular, what actions do they take that you admire?)
   d. What similar actions have you taken in your own teaching practice?
4. Based on the actions you have listed in question 3.d., make a list of what you feel to be your strengths as a teaching professional. Consider how you can apply these strengths to a professional challenge you are facing.

Reflective Conclusion

Two years on, I am preparing to guide my first Zemi cohort through their graduation theses, and to welcome my third intake. While some course elements need fine-tuning, and content will change

along with topical issues, I feel happy with the framework I have created, and satisfied with student engagement. I am looking forward to returning to classroom-based teaching and beginning to develop the social aspects of the zemi.

I suspect that the materials and course I developed online will transfer quite smoothly to the classroom. With the move to emergency remote teaching, I had to focus explicitly on what I wanted to achieve in the course, and how to teach in a way I was comfortable and confident with. Thinking that the situation would be temporary – a few months, I thought! – I approached new tools and platforms as ways to replicate the kind of teaching and interaction that I would plan for the classroom.

Frustrating as it sometimes felt at the time, I realized that the response "it's up to you" was well-intentioned, and empowering. I had been asked to teach the course – to choose topics, pedagogy, activities, assignments and to recruit students – because my institution and colleagues believed that I could. If they had wanted someone else, they would have hired someone else! The same is true of students: since zemi courses are electives, and teachers select applicants, they offer the chance to work with a small group who are highly motivated to learn with you. I have come to appreciate the freedom granted to me, and the chance to develop the course flexibly in conjunction with my students.

The pandemic and shift to online learning led many experienced teachers to question their established practices, and even their competence as educators. Even without the pandemic disruption, self-doubt can strike at any stage of a teacher's career, particularly when taking on new responsibilities or positions. Tarr (2021) suggests that to combat self-doubt, "Reaffirming what we believe in and reminding ourselves of evidence of past success can be a reliable way to dissolve the fear" (para. 8). The sudden change to remote learning forced me to identify the essence of what I wanted to achieve, and what had worked in the past. Next time I encounter self-doubt in my teaching career, I hope to be better armed to tackle it with intention.

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Author Bio

Caroline Hutchinson is an Associate Professor at Nihon University College of Economics. Her research interests include motivation and learner autonomy, Japanese history, and content-language integrated learning (CLIL). She has developed and taught CLIL courses in Japanese history, tourism and intercultural communication.

Link to Presentation on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvNwQS6EEaA>

Technology and Our Choices

Nicholas Marx

Ritsumeikan University

Vignette

While in the 2020/2021 school year, many of us were unexpectedly and unpreparedly thrown into the deep end of online teaching. Just like many other educators in Japan, this was my first experience with the online education environment. After a year of attempting to handle this new situation, I found myself wanting to know how others felt about this. Due to this unique situation, I decided to reach out and ask fellow educators in Japan what technology they used and their rationale or reason for choosing these. Therefore, I sent out a questionnaire in February of 2021 asking other educators what websites and programs they use in class and why. Fortunately, twenty-two educators from different educational levels shared their experiences and thoughts regarding such technology.

Being involved in Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) for many years, I understand the importance of a needs analysis. It is even considered the first step of creating a TBLT curriculum. A needs analysis is a crucial tool to building a syllabus that is often overlooked (Long, 1985). In this way, the questionnaire takes on a form of a needs analysis looking at one factor of a classroom, the educator. The rationales for technology use showed a familiar sight taking the form of the three essential sections of a needs analysis: the institution, the educator, and the student (West, 1994). By looking at these educators' rationales, we can shed some light on what we should consider before adopting some of the technologies and services into our classrooms.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of our own technology-mediated course designs
- To understand ways of thinking about educators', institutions', and learners' needs in implementing online and in-class learning technologies

Practical Implications

The Institution

The most common responses were the learning management systems (LMS), where educators can communicate with students, set assignments, and share information and materials. Most of the LMS systems were required by the institution. Many responses were not related to the educator's preference for such systems, but one response included some negative wording, "forced to by admin". On the other hand, some educators liked the LMS they were given. Some even say that they "got used to it", "I'm good at utilizing it," or even there is an "ease of use".

The Educator

Language instructors tend to base their use of technology on two main factors. These responses could be related to the LMS or other programs or websites with pedagogical value in the course. The first factor is the ease of use of the application. Often the reason for the adoption of these technologies is due to the ease of use for the instructor, and other times it is the ease of use and access for the learner. The second factor is more personal for the educator. Educators often use the technologies that they are most familiar with, that are easy to organize, or that help to ease the workload, such as "self-grading" online quizzes.

The Learner

The final rationale is related to the perceived needs of the learners. Many of these examples were pedagogically based applications that promoted learning environments and resources for the learners. These come in the form of applications to "practice output" and "allo[w] for collaboration," and they are maybe "fun for students." These applications or websites are often related to speaking, collaboration, listening, and even reading.

When making choices in technology use in language classes, we must look further than our preferences. While our choices concerning our ease of access are appropriate, educators should not stop their rationale there. We must choose the

the technology that can lead learners to proficiency outside of the language classrooms. Learners see merit in technology in their education, but very few language-specific websites, programs, and technology may be useful outside their language learning environment. Therefore, educators and institutions should prioritize technology popular outside of an educational context and adapt these to work in language learning, and to promote language learning technologies that have use-cases outside of the institution.

By taking the ideas of the needs analysis triangle taken from earlier writings on ESP course needs (West, 1994), educators and institutions should focus more on all three aspects of the language classroom and meet in the middle as much as possible. Doing so for language task choices and technology-related choices could lead to more learner benefit. However, looking at the examples prior, we must not look at the three points of the needs analysis triangle as separate but holistically connected.

Reflective Conclusion

Many of the comments made by participant educators in the survey focused on one or two of these points of the needs analysis triangle. Often educators are not given the best tools by their institutions to provide answers to their own or their learners' needs; however, we must find ways to connect these needs. These connections may take the form of using the LMS for integrating other tools that learners and educators find more useful, or maybe it could be to separate these and use the LMS for feedback only. However, what educators must avoid is to use tools that only make our jobs easier without considering the usefulness of these tools for the learner.

It is worth avoiding applications that the students will likely not use again outside of the language courses. Instead, educators and institutions should consider ones that have a high chance of continued use for both language-related and non-language-related tasks. I implore you all to take up your own needs analysis to see what the learners think will be helpful to their language learning and beyond.

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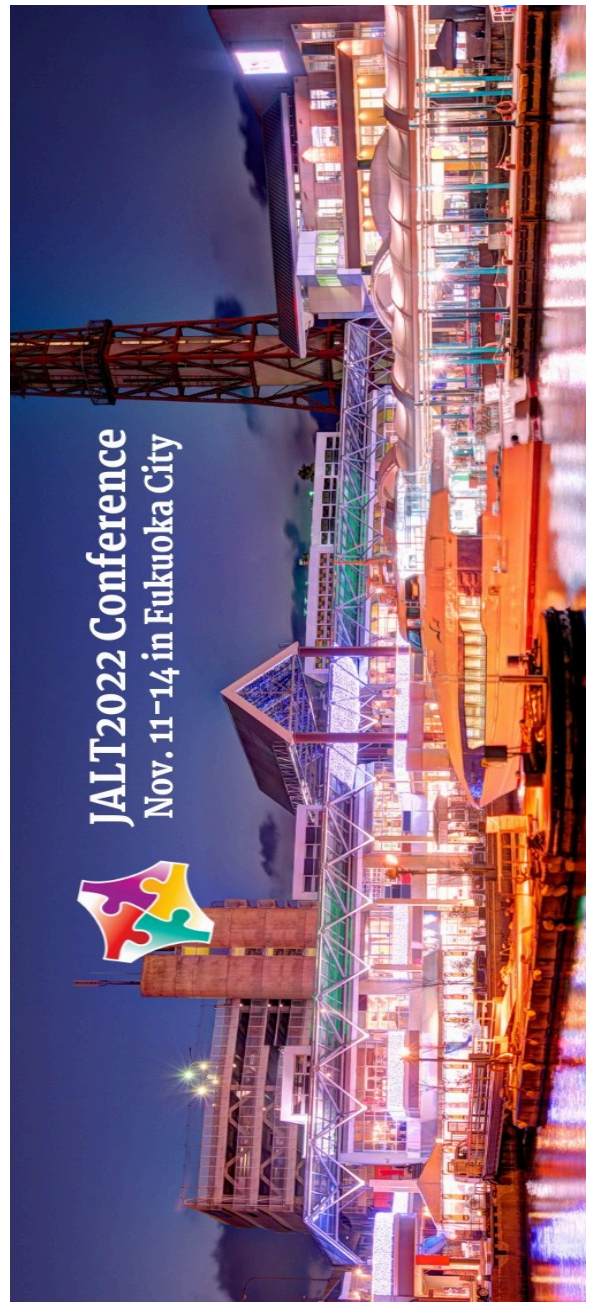
Author bio

Nicholas Marx is currently an English instructor at Ritsumeikan University and is currently enrolled in the PhD in Applied Linguistics program at the University of Leicester. He also acts as the public relations chair for the TBLT SIG of JALT. His main research interests involve emotions in the language classroom. <nicholas.d.marx@gmail.com>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3VZGO3mezs



A Year after ERT: How Online and Hybrid Classes have Reshaped F2F 2.0 Classes

Diane Raluy Turner and Ramon Mislang

Hitotsubashi University

Vignette

Our Teaching Journey highlights our online and hybrid university teaching experiences during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically as informed by workshop-based preparation sessions for faculty and students, and how these experiences impacted face-to-face (F2F) classes in 2021. As teachers with limited backgrounds in online instruction and blended learning approaches, we had many questions to consider, such as how to adapt the curriculum and how to create policies to ensure the best outcomes for students in synchronous and asynchronous online environments. Fortunately, our faculty team of ten teachers was divided into small learning groups and given five weeks to prepare (Table 1). Coinciding with two aspects (substitution and augmentation) of Puentedura's (2012) SAMR framework for technology integration in education, learning groups each week were given specific tasks in the morning, such as researching challenges of online pedagogy, experimenting with online tools that support curriculum delivery, and drafting policies for class conduct. In the afternoons, learning groups were given time to share their findings with the faculty team. At the end of each day, learning groups reflected on their daily tasks and the implications of the team sharings.

Starting from week three, students interacted with each other through the Edmodo learning management system (LMS). Students were given biweekly prompts that encouraged them to collaborate on troubleshooting issues in online learning environments. The prompts also collected needs assessment data on students' digital literacy and home learning situations. By week four, students had co-created a code of conduct to help establish behavioral norms for Zoom video conferencing and were encouraged to access Zoom to reduce potential anxiety during week five's orientation and subsequent classes.

Table 1. Pre-Semester Preparation (April 6 - May7)

Timeline	Protocol
Wk 1 (Teacher)	Adapt curriculum & assessment, Learn Edmodo and Teams
Wk 2 (Teacher)	Adapt curriculum & assessment, learn web 2.0 tools
Wk 3 (Student)	Introduce themselves, interact with classmates, collaborate for troubleshooting
Wk 4 (Student)	Complete tech survey, co-create Zoom code of conduct
Wk 5 Orientation	Review class policies and practice Zoom breakout rooms

During the second semester, our department was mandated to switch from online lessons to a hybrid format. Speaking and listening lessons were conducted online because the faculty agreed that these skills would be safer and more practical to perform at home. We reasoned that wearing masks in F2F instruction would disrupt verbal and nonverbal cues in communication and that it would create a tendency to break social distancing protocols, as speaking activities often necessitate closer physical proximity. Writing and reading lessons were conducted in person. Students brought their laptops to class and were assigned collaborative tasks on Google Docs. There were some students who opted to continue learning remotely. Laptops and Google docs allowed F2F students to collaborate on tasks with remote students Zooming into lessons.

As our experience illustrates, the urgency to develop digital literacy during the pandemic has helped learners and teachers become more familiar with educational technology. Teaching experiences in the past year were a form of professional development, resulting in increased proficiency in using technology for language education (Promnitz-Hayashi, 2021). Returning to face-to-face classrooms in 2021, it became apparent that technology had

become an integral part of our teaching and students' learning and could be beneficial in the physical classroom. In the following sections, we explore how online and hybrid experiences have reshaped our F2F 2.0 classes.

Objectives

- Describe how online and hybrid experiences have reshaped learning and pedagogy.
- Illustrate ways in which F2F 2.0 classes could impact post-pandemic language education.

Practical Implications

Hybrid instruction and socially distanced classrooms during the second year of the pandemic played a role in establishing norms for using educational technology. Safety concerns resulted in a shift towards less movement in the classroom, stricter rules for pairwork engagement, and reduced usage of class handouts. We overcame these challenges with our students by using online tools such as Edmodo and Google Docs to access assignments, collaborate on tasks, and post homework. The more educational technology was used during instruction, the more it became a core component of language education.

Educational technology and online tools have played an increasingly prominent role in supporting learners in F2F instruction. In pre-pandemic classrooms, students with visual, auditory, or learning disabilities may not have been identified, resulting in some students underperforming or having anxiety in completing assignments. Increased usage of laptops in post-online classrooms has made it easier for students to access assignments, organize resources, and collaborate on tasks. By providing more flexibility, technology has enabled students to access their work from anywhere, making it easier to work with peers inside and outside of class. It has also allowed students to share completed homework with the whole class, leading to increased peer feedback and interaction with course content.

The bigger role of technology in language education has not only impacted how learning is envisioned, but has also impacted how teaching is conceptualized. When preparing for the second year of the pandemic, the nuances of online and F2F lessons became less distinguishable as planning stages remained unchanged. Integrating technology into lesson plans did not become incidental or unnecessary, but instead became a norm in teaching practices. We knew technology was here to stay when we noticed even the most reluctant of our colleagues during the first year of the pandemic had shifted their teaching approaches and found more creative ways to integrate technology into their pedagogy and assessment practices.

Online tools have made learning more transparent as teachers can digitally share documents with students and view their progress towards assignment completion. Being able to observe how students are completing assignments enables teachers to identify students who need support and provide timely feedback on the learning process. Shifting more attention to the process of learning can help teachers maximize learning experiences. The pandemic has compelled educators to rethink teaching practices and technology integration into curricula, which will enhance learning and teaching experiences in post-pandemic language education.

Reflective Conclusion

Online instruction during the pandemic has broadened our own and our colleagues' perspectives on LMS and web 2.0 tools in language education, which has increased opportunities for collaboration in class, during homework tasks, and in higher-stakes assessments. Educational technology has also reshaped how we and other teachers track student progress and provide feedback. Access to more robust assessment tools will help teachers identify struggling students who need support and make more informed decisions on adjusting lessons accordingly. We have come to appreciate especially the flexibility online tools provide, as they enable support for an array of situations students may encounter. We think these constructive additions will continue to positively impact the classroom. We believe our observations of our successful collaborative efforts, in-service training, pre-academic course preparation, and ongoing needs assessments will provide insights for establishing best practices in both pandemic and post-pandemic classrooms.

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Author Bios

Diane Raluy Turner and **Ramon Mislang** have been working as EFL educators for over ten years in various countries. Now, they teach at Hitotsubashi University, a national university located in Tokyo which specializes in social sciences. Their research interests include encouraging oral communication in the classroom, autonomous learning, and self-access learning. <diane.turner@live.fr>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVH4EGeNfl4

Neurodivergent and Teaching in the Time of Covid-19

Jamie G. Sturges

Rikkyo University

Vignette

In Fall 2019, I was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and later autism spectrum disorder (ASD). I was 38 and these diagnoses shook the foundation of my entire life. I was immediately forced to confront how I had struggled and how much I had adapted over the course of my life and teaching career.

For example, in faculty meetings, I could take copious notes on everything discussed but then read them with only confusion as to their sense and possible application. If multiple tasks were being discussed for a project, I would zero in on a single task at the cost of failing to look at the bigger picture.

The same went for lifelong problems with interpersonal communication, which I was able to magically hide while in "teacher mode." This was a result of decades of masking, a technique neurodivergent people use to appear as "normal" and be able to fit in to an environment while pushing down impulses, stimming, or other coping mechanisms (Green et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021; Pearson & Rose, 2021). Even under normal circumstances, masking consumes a lot of mental and emotional energy, which can result in communication breakdowns or emotional meltdowns in other aspects of life. Then, just as I was beginning to understand how to readjust to my life and my own world post-diagnosis, the rest of the world changed.

In Spring 2020, universities scrambled to adjust to COVID-19 restrictions. For my university, this meant moving everything and everyone online. Despite having no experience teaching online, I was tasked with creating a demo lesson for carrying out English Discussion classes online as well as with helping fellow instructors best meet the needs of students in an online learning environment. At the same time, I also had to meet my own needs. During the spring semester of 2020, I continued going to campus and teaching my classes online from my office in order to maintain a semblance of a routine. This helped me control at least one aspect of an otherwise uncontrollable situation.

However, in the fall of 2020, I chose to teach online from home and experienced the challenges of shifting focus from work to leisure and back again. I began understanding the importance of boundaries and setting limits on work. Keeping work exclusively on my laptop and leisure exclusively on a tablet device separated the two worlds. I also learned time management techniques to help me shift into "teaching mode" effectively. This included setting 10-minute-warning alarms before lessons so that I could transition into work mode and begin lessons on time.

Spring 2021, and, most recently, Fall 2021, began face-to-face and then shifted to online and back again respectively. This further challenged my ability to adjust from one environment to another, keep faculty informed of changes, and reacclimate myself to the physical classroom. Additionally, I had to discover how best to build rapport with students with so many restrictions in place.

What helped me most in all the shifting teaching environments were three personal and professional reminders: clearly identifying my organizational and planning styles, setting clear boundaries between work time and personal time, and self-advocating.

Objectives

- To highlight areas of understanding, adjustment, and self-advocacy for neurodivergent faculty.
- To inform university instructors staff reading this article of ways to understand and support neurodivergent instructors in professional situations.

Practical Implications

Clearly identify organizational and planning styles.

From the experience described above, I found that the best way for me to plan a course was to make a table that contains all the lessons, topics, materials I will need, materials students will need, and homework to be assigned. For individual

lessons, since going online and now back to face to face, I used the lesson's PowerPoint as my lesson plan. While teaching, I kept a notebook and took manual notes of attendance and reflection-in-action moments. For administrative tasks, I kept ongoing lists using Google Tasks. These styles worked for me, and I understood them thoroughly. Yours may be very different. The key is being aware of them and how they best serve you.

Set clear boundaries between working time and personal time.

Task switching and time management have always been a challenge for me and others with ADHD and ASD (Adamou et al., 2013), and since my diagnoses I have tried different strategies. One quick way to do this was to adjust smartphone notification settings so that I had more control over when and how I received them. On committees, I clearly tried to communicate the times I was available and unavailable outside of my teaching schedule, and I valued my personal time away from work. This was easier said than done, but it sometimes helped minimize meltdowns later.

Self-advocate.

Just as it was important for me to be clear about my work approach and work time, it was also important for me to be clear about how my work could better accommodate me (Ohl et al., 2017). Emphasizing personal difficulty with completing tasks without an exact deadline, or a clear breakdown of duties, brought attention to colleagues and demonstrated I did not want to negatively affect the task or project. It also informed colleagues to improve their explanations of tasks or assignments. However, although I have become comfortable sharing my disorders with others as necessary, at no point is anyone necessarily required to disclose their disorder(s). That is a personal choice.

Reflective Conclusion

For fellow neurodivergent colleagues, I hope my experiences and approaches to organization, work style, and communication show that it is more important than ever to identify ways you can maintain your comfort in teaching and professional environments. I hope this can also help foster faculty support.

It is very difficult to go back to the way I taught and interacted pre-diagnoses, and in more ways than one this "new normal" continues to bring about unexpected challenges. For the benefit of all teachers, especially diagnosed or undiagnosed neurodivergent educators, we first need to validate the difficulty and discomfort of these upheavals. The upheavals have also created a chance to continue understanding our approach to work, boundaries, and communication with others.

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Author Bio

Jamie G. Sturges is a specially appointed associate professor in the Center for Foreign Language Education and Research (FLER) at Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan. She has an MA in Applied Linguistics/TESOL from Old Dominion University. She has taught ESL and EFL in the United States and Japan since 2006. <jamie@rikkyo.ac.jp>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=309_ql7zZVY

Building Relationships through the Online Classroom

Akihiko Andrew Tohei

Sakura no Seibo Junior College

Vignette

"So how is everyone today?"

After getting no answers in my introductory Zoom session with first-year students in April 2020, I checked to see if my microphone was working. I asked the question again and received the same blank stares. Maybe students were smiling, but it was difficult to tell since they wore masks. A few had their cameras turned off and only the foreheads of others were visible. Subsequent icebreaking activities had limited success, as some participants remained silent or experienced various kinds of technical trouble.

This is not going to work, I thought. There has to be a better way.

At the end of the session, the students filled out a short questionnaire on Google Forms about their new online learning environment and if they had any trouble. I was expecting technical questions regarding hardware or software, but most of the students' responses were of a totally different kind.

"I'm worried if I can become friends with people at my new school."

"I don't know anyone here, so I feel lonely."

"I think my classmates are nice, but since we wear masks and have to keep social distance, it's hard to communicate with them."

The students' openness about their concerns allowed me to reflect on their situation and work on a solution that might allay their fears.

According to the results of the initial Google Forms questionnaire, over 70% of the incoming students had concerns about making friends. They were not able to have an entrance ceremony due to the spread of COVID-19 and there was no proper freshman orientation where they could get to know each other. Masks proved to be a barrier to communication. From the students' perspective, they were being thrown together into a new online environment and basically forced to have interactions in a foreign language with strangers.

Other responses to the questionnaire indicated that most students were not confident in their ability to use English and more than half of them shared a computer at home with other family members. I needed to come up with an easy way for them to get to know each other gradually in their classes, even while being physically apart. The method also had to be accessible outside of a fixed class time.

After considering the needs of the students, I chose to incorporate the free applications Flipgrid (for speaking activities) and Padlet (for writing activities) into my English classes. Communicative tasks were easily separated into individual class pages within each application and the similar computer and smartphone interfaces allowed the students to navigate the apps easily. In addition, since many students were not able to work part-time jobs due to COVID-19 and were already concerned about using up their smartphone data plans by connecting to Zoom for multiple classes, it was vital to have applications that were free to use.

Objectives

- To provide successful examples of applications that give students a chance to communicate with each other in English without masks.
- To illustrate how structuring online classmate interaction allows students to get to know each other through easy communicative activities.

Practical Implications

The structure of the class interaction was the same for both speaking and writing activities, as listed below. Through the applications, the lengths of the submissions can be controlled by the teacher, but I stressed to the students that the most important thing was to have friendly interactions with one another. If the student's partner could understand their English, then the goal of successful communication was achieved.

1. Decide on a topic of discussion for that week's class (ideally related to the textbook, if one is used).
2. Provide model responses for the students that are either spoken (Flipgrid) or written

(Padlet).
3. Ask the students to add their individual responses to the classroom Flipgrid or Padlet page before the next week's lesson.
4. After checking the students' submissions, assign each of them a partner for that week.
5. Explain to the students the purpose of replying to their partner each week in order to get to know each other more. (The teacher can also give an example response by replying to a student's submission and addressing them by name, complimenting their work, asking a follow-up question, etc.)
6. Ask the students to comment on their partner's spoken or written submission and instruct them to give their partner a question to answer.
7. Assign a different topic of discussion for the next week's class. Students reply to their partner's question the following week. As the pattern continues through subsequent class sessions, students are engaged in simultaneously giving their opinions on that week's topic, commenting on a classmate's submission from the previous week, and replying to a different classmate's question from two weeks before. Through this cycle, each student can interact with most or all of their classmates before the end of the course.

Reflective Conclusion

Post-course survey results of the nearly 100 students who participated in these English classes showed that their relationships with classmates had improved through the online interaction. Since students were able to take their time formulating responses to their peers in the asynchronous tasks, their confidence in English also improved dramatically. Finally, an overwhelming number of students indicated that they preferred asynchronous over synchronous remote learning and appreciated that they could access the course tasks and content at any time and as many times as they wished.

As long as a communicative classroom community is properly structured and nurtured online, students can have the same opportunities for interaction as in a face-to-face classroom. Through written and spoken exchanges on applications such as Padlet and Flipgrid, first-year students who have yet to physically meet each other can get to know their peers on a deeper level. Additionally, especially for low-confidence learners who require more time to formulate English output, this online environment may even be a more productive one in which they can grow.

Author Bio

Akihiko Andrew Tohei is an associate professor in the Department of Liberal Arts for Career Development at Sakura no Seibo Junior College in Fukushima. His main research interests include educational technology, curriculum making, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and flipped learning. <tohei@ssjc.ac.jp>

Link to Presentation on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvCsOuX-QqE

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.)

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

Benefits:

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

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Meet theTD SIG Publications Team

Ryo Mizukura,
Co-managing Editor

Ryo Mizukura is an English instructor in the College of Liberal Arts at International Christian University in Japan. He is also a PhD candidate in Lleida university in Spain. His research interest is in the translingual identity of language teachers and students, language ideology, and English as a Lingua Franca in higher education.

Nick Kasparek,
Co-managing Editor

Nick Kasparek is an English lecturer at Eikei University of Hiroshima and a PhD student in curriculum studies and teacher education at Texas Tech University with interests in theory, narrative inquiry, and post-qualitative research. He has recently begun serving as one of the managing editors of Explorations in Teacher Development.

Junyuan Chen,
Assistant Editor

Junyuan Chen serves as an assistant editor in the JALT Teacher Development SIG. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Arizona, with focuses on Japanese linguistics and Second Language Acquisition & Teaching. Her current research interests include Japanese sociolinguistics and foreign language teaching, especially language teacher identities.

Matthew W. Turner,
Layout editor

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 a cofounder and co-presenter of The TEFLology Podcast and the CLIL Voices podcast.

Andrew Hoffman,
Proofreader

Andrew Hoffman has been teaching in Japan for nine years and has taught at every level from kindergarten to senior high school. His research interests include the practical applications of corpus linguistics, task-based teaching, teaching young learners, teacher development, and team-teaching.