

# An Evaluation of Text-Chat/Voice in the L2 Classroom

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## Reference Data:

Young, A. & Edwards, S. (2013). An evaluation of text-chat / voice in the L2 classroom. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

In this research project we investigated the benefits of Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) through negotiated learning tasks. For this purpose, 20 volunteer students completed a number of negotiated task-based learning activities using Skype text-chat and Skype voice. The benefits of these SCMC media were then explored by examining the frequency of language related episodes (LREs), "instances of collaborative dialogue" (Swain, 2001), as well as by looking at the students' own feedback. From this data it was concluded that Skype voice was advantageous in promoting listening and pronunciation skills as well as negotiation of meaning and production of modified output. Text-chat, on the other hand, was more conducive to the study of grammatical and lexical accuracy while also focusing on communication skills.

本研究は、交渉的な学習タスクによる「コンピューターを用いた同時コミュニケーション (Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication: SCMC)」の効果を検証したものである。この目的のために、20人の学生がチャットによる筆記とスカイプによる発話に基づく数々の交渉的な学習タスクに自主的に参加した。そして質問紙や討論による学習者自身の印象に加え、これらのSCMCメディアの直接/間接的な効果が、Swain (2001)が定義するところの「言語関連事象 (Language related episodes: LREs)」の「共同対話」の分析により認められた。この結果より、スカイプは、意味交渉や修正されたアウトプットの産出と同様、聴解と発音技能の向上に効果があることがわかった。一方チャットは、コミュニケーション能力に注視しながらも、文法的/語彙的な正確さに資することが確認された。

**A**DVANCEMENTS IN technology today provide learners with opportunities to interact in online environments similar to face-to-face communication. This has led to a growing interest in the ways computer networks can be utilized for second language acquisition purposes. In recent years, research into Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) technologies has explored in greater depth how different configurations of telecollaboration, from real-time text-chatting to videoconferencing, can impact and have impacted on students' language development. A smaller number of studies within this paradigm (Belz, 2006; Lee, 2006; Sotillo, 2005) have also focused on the value of having students actively reflect on language form for linguistic development. Data have shown these new media forums appear to complement new approaches to language teaching, in which students are seen as active agents, collaborating in their own learning process (Warschauer, 2000).



## Theoretical Framework

### Input to Output

In the theory of Comprehensible Input, Krashen (1982) argued that for input to be available for acquisition, it must be comprehensible to learners. According to this theory, learners improve and progress along a natural order when they receive second language input that is one step beyond their current stage of linguistic competence. In response to this, however, Swain (1985) proposed that while input was fundamental to the process of acquiring new language, it alone would not be sufficient for acquisition to take place. She claimed that in order for L2 acquisition to occur, the learner's own experimentation with the new language was also essential. This notion went on to be known as the Comprehensible Output theory. According to Swain (as cited in Farrokhi & Gholami, 2007) output serves three main functions: to prompt learners to test hypotheses, to allow them to notice gaps in language use, and to act as a springboard for metalinguistic awareness.

### LREs

These instances of "noticing" language went on to be defined by Swain (2001) as Metatalk or Language Related Episodes (LREs); terms she used interchangeably. LREs describe a type of communication that is centered on conscious reflection of language use. They are considered to be collaborative dialogues in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building together (Swain, 2000). Citing Swain, Ismail and Samad (2010) explained that through LREs "learners may (a) question the meaning of a linguistic item; (b) question the correctness of spelling / pronunciation of a word; (c) question the correctness of a grammatical form; or (d) implicitly or explicitly correct their own or others' usage of a word, form or structure" (p. 98). Although it cannot be guaranteed that acquisition will take

place in the presence of LREs, it can be argued that they are an all-important first step.

## Research Project

### Research Questions

Despite a number of studies having been done on the benefits of text-chat, very few studies have compared the unique qualities of text-chat to voice. Therefore, in response to new opportunities afforded by advancing online communication technologies, a comparative investigation was undertaken into the perceived and provable benefits of these media with respect to second language uptake. This comparative study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Which medium (voice or text-chat) is more effective for making students reflect on language form?
2. Which medium do students feel is more beneficial to their English language development?
3. What are the benefits of each medium?

### Participants

The participants of this study were 20 Japanese university students, aged between 19 and 22. They were highly motivated individuals, ranging from mid-beginner to lower-intermediate levels, who participated in a voluntary capacity.

### SCMC

The software used for this comparison study was Skype. Skype is a software application that allows users to chat over the web via text, voice, or live video. It was used in this research project for its versatility, as it allowed participants to use the same technology for both aspects of the comparison, as well as for its

ease of use and the participants' familiarity with it. For the purposes of this project, video was not used when doing the Skype voice activities as it was deemed to be too similar to face-to-face interaction.

### Procedure

The participants were allocated partners to work with for the duration of the study. Over a period of eight sessions of 1 hour each, they completed a series of negotiated task-based activities using both Skype voice and text-chat.

### Reasoning-Gap Tasks

Altogether six tasks were designed for the project, to meet the following criteria: to have students negotiate meaning, communicate about form and content, and produce a final product. Reasoning-gap tasks were selected for this purpose as they are effective in promoting negotiation, as well as providing intrinsic support to learning outcomes. Citing Prabhu, Ismail and Samad (2010) described reasoning-gap tasks as tasks which require learners to derive "some new information from given information using practical reasoning" (p. 90) to formulate their own meanings.

For this project the goal of the tasks was to have participants collaboratively write stories using their "best" English. For this purpose each participant was given a worksheet with a set of three pictures on it; partners had two pictures that were the same and one that was different. The first part of the task was to identify the disparate pictures. The second part of the task was then to describe the pictures and order them into a story sequence. The third part of the task involved writing the story. A requisite of the task was that participants had to write down exactly the same sentences (including the same spelling) on their

own worksheets. Over the duration of the project participants completed three tasks each for text-chat and voice. The use of dictionaries was permitted.

## Data Collection and Analysis

### Data Collection Method

The frequency of LREs was used as a criterion to determine which media (voice or text-chat) was the most effective for making students reflect on language.

For the text-chat component of the project, participants copied their communication transcripts to Word documents. For the voice component, the software *Audacity* was used to record the sessions, which were later transcribed. The number of LREs was then counted to get an overall comparison between the two media.

### Initial LRE Coding

LREs were identified and coded according to two generalized categories proposed by Swain (2001) to indicate general patterns: *Lexis-Based LREs* and *Form-Based LREs*.

### Lexis-Based LREs

Learners search for lexical items or choose from among competing lexical items.

Example:

Student 1: vacuum > vacuum cleaning?

Student 2: maybe... vacuum cleaner

Student 1: lol yes!

### Form-Based LREs

Learners focus on aspects of English morphology, syntax, or discourse.

#### Example:

Student 1: run? ran?

Student 1: which is the past tense?

Student 1: sorry i forgot...

Student 2: past tense is ran...?

### Comprehensive LRE Coding

The transcripts were later coded again based on Zeng and Takatsuka's (2009) more cogent LRE classifications, to more explicitly understand the characteristics of the LREs associated with each media. Table 1 is the list of classifications used, including examples from participants' transcripts.

Table 1. LRE Classifications With Examples

Classification	Example
Inviting /stating an opinion	Student 1: In my opinion, he want to go down to ground but he cannot do, so he hit the balloon.
Self/partner correction	Student 1: oh, so the man shot the balloons by hissself? Student 2: yeah, he shot the ballons by himself.
Seeking confirmation/Checking information	Student 1: A woman brought a vacuum-cleaner in a panic. Student 1: how do you think?

Classification	Example
Suggesting an improvement/alternative	Student 1: cleaning machine is. . . "a vacuum-cleaner" in English.
Requesting assistance/clarification/Giving an explanation	Student 1: Sorry, I don't know "get stuck" means. In this case that means the food stay in one place??
Code switching	Student 1: hahaha^^because that day was Osyogatu! Student 2: an old man ate moti because that day was a new year.

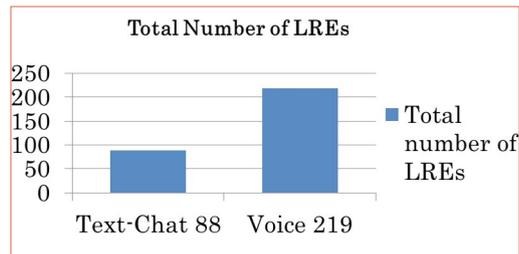


Figure 1. Total Number of LREs

The overall frequency of LREs experienced on Skype voice was over twice as often as on text-chat (see Figure 1). From these figures it can be initially inferred that voice afforded participants considerably more opportunities to reflect upon their language use. However, this was surprising as the numbers ran contrary to expectations based on the assertions in previous research. Smith (2004), Yamada (2009) and Zeng and Takatsuka (2009) advocated text-chat's slower rate of communication and

visual evidence of utterances as promoting grammatical awareness, which led to the assumption that it should have elicited more LREs than did voice.

### Form- and Lexis-Based Results

The percentage breakdown of LREs based on lexical and form issues was not vastly different for the two media (see Figures 2 & 3). However, we should consider the following two results: (a) Across both media, participants appeared more focused on form-based issues than lexical issues; and (b) there were more lexical issues for voice than text-chat. The reason for this disparity may be directly linked to the different speeds of communication that are afforded by each media. The slower rate of communication of text-chat was beneficial in allowing participants time to check lexical items by using their dictionaries, thus producing a situation where lexical issues could be resolved individually, without the need for negotiation. This was confirmed by the participants' own comments relating to the use of text-chat: "I felt I could communicate more as I had time to look things up in my dictionary." The tasks on voice, however, were done at a faster pace and so participants felt more pressure to respond quickly and to not take such long pauses to look things up themselves. It was more convenient to confer with their partner.

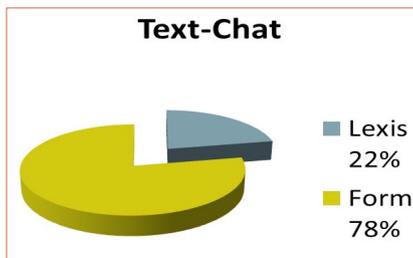


Figure 2. Text-Chat: Lexis vs. Form

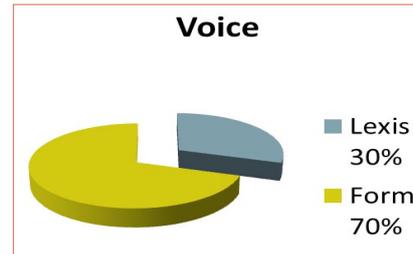


Figure 3. Skype Voice: Lexis vs. Form

The more in-depth breakdown of LREs revealed a greater range of differences between the media (see Figures 4 & 5). In the category *Inviting/Stating an opinion*, the percentage of text-chat LREs was almost double that of voice LREs, 11% and 6% respectively. This may have been indicative of the relative anonymity of text-chat, which, according to Kern (1995), encourages equal participation and reduces anxiety—sentiments which were echoed by the project participants: "I didn't feel so much pressure so it was fun to communicate this way."

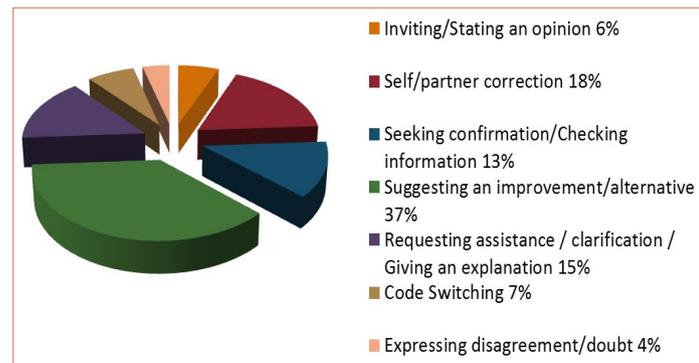


Figure 4. Detailed Voice LRE Breakdown

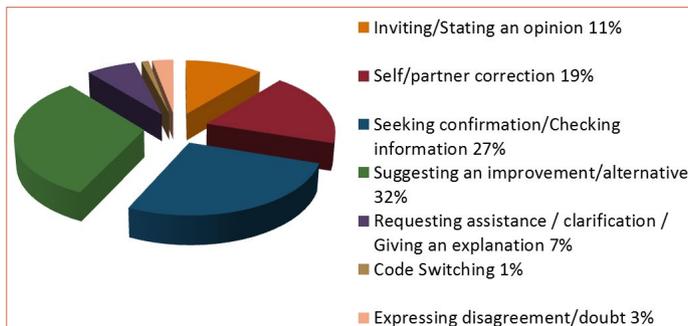


Figure 5. Detailed Text-Chat LRE Breakdown

In the category *Seeking confirmation/Checking information*, the percentage of text-chat LREs was more than double that of voice LREs, 27% against 13%. Participants appeared to be more aware of, and gave more thought to, the language they were producing, which precipitated the desire to confirm and check what was written. That participants were conscious of this higher awareness can be seen in one participant quote: “As I put my words into sentences I found I paid more attention to grammar.”

In the category *Requesting assistance/clarification/Giving an explanation*, the higher percentage of LREs fell to voice, accounting for 15% of its overall total as compared to only 7% of the text-chat total. From these results it was inferred that, of the two, voice appeared to be more complex. Having to process more information in a shorter amount of time, without the visual benefit of having a record of their typed utterances (as afforded in text-chat), both listening skills and memory were needed to complete the tasks. By this rationale it was concluded that in addition to the complexity of the project tasks, using voice is likely to have accounted for a greater need to request clarification and give explanation. Citing Skehan, Ismail and Samad (2010) asserted:

Human beings have a limited capacity to process information, and as a result, task content and language accuracy are in competition with each other for a learner’s attention. Thus more complex tasks will demand more attention on content, resulting in less attention given to language use. (p. 89)

The requests on the whole tended to be associated with pronunciation, lexical comprehension, and meaning, which explains the higher percentage of lexical-based LREs in voice and supports the notion that participants had less time to check dictionaries and so were more inclined to ask for assistance under the voice conditions.

In the *Code-switching* category, voice had a higher percentage of LREs with 7% of the total as compared to only 1% for text-chat. An explanation for this may lie in the ease and immediacy of changing from one language to another when speaking. The deliberate nature of text-chat meant participants took the time to search for meanings and adhering to English appeared more manageable. One participant comment regarding voice endorses this idea, “I found it easy to switch to Japanese to explain difficult things.”

## Answers to Research Questions

### Research Question 1

This question asked, “Which medium (voice or text-chat) is more effective for making students reflect on language form?” Although the number of LREs is greater for voice than for text-chat, it appears that different types of LREs were predominant in each medium. In voice exchanges, participants engaged in a higher frequency of *Lexis*, *Code-switching*, and *Requesting assistance/clarification/Giving an explanation* LREs, particularly in reference to meaning, with pronunciation playing an important

role. Participants were paying attention to language but with an emphasis on content and meaning as opposed to form. As one participant emphasized about voice, “I ended up not really thinking about grammar so much,” emphasizes this. Whereas in text-chat, participants appeared to focus more on language production and form, as suggested by the higher number of LREs for *Seeking confirmation/Checking information* and *Inviting/Stating an opinion*. These results echo those of Jepson (2005):

This study suggests that although text chat is the more widely available and most studied form of chat, voice chat offers an environment in which learners are more apt to negotiate for meaning. Voice chats in this study generated a number of repair moves, specifically negotiation of meaning . . . which was significantly higher than the number in text chat. (p. 92)

It was also noted that LREs in text-chat took much longer to resolve, which leads to the question: Does the amount of time spent on individual LREs actually result in higher uptake of the language point under discussion? This, however, goes beyond the scope of the current study, and may be an avenue for further research.

### Research Question 2

This question asked, “Which medium do students feel is more beneficial to their English language development?” Upon conclusion of the project, participants completed questionnaires (see Table 2) in an endeavor to answer this question. The questionnaire elicited participants’ perspectives (on a 5-point rating scale) on the perceived benefit to SLA of each medium, the perceived ease of task completion in each medium, and participant preferences for the use of each medium. Participants were also

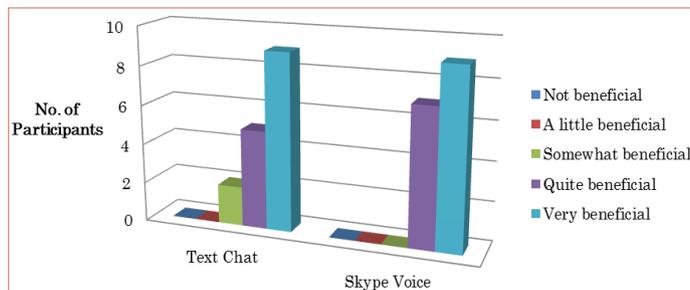
asked to comment from their own experience on the advantages and disadvantages of each medium. The questionnaires were initially written in Japanese to enable the participants to answer comprehensively and subsequently translated by the researchers for the purpose of this paper.

Table 2. Questionnaire

Questions	Rating scale
Rate how connected (close) you felt to your partner while using Text-Chat / Skype Voice.	1 Not close at all – 5 Very close
Rate how comfortable you were using Text-Chat / Skype Voice to communicate in English.	1 Uncomfortable – 5 Comfortable
Rate how much you noticed grammatical mistakes in your own or your partner’s sentences.	1 Not at all – 5 A lot
Rate how much you thought about English grammar while using Text-Chat / Skype Voice.	1 Not at all – 5 All the time
Rate how much time you had to think about what you wanted to say when using Text-Chat / Skype Voice.	1 No time – 5 Lots of time
Rate how much you felt using Text-Chat / Skype Voice was beneficial to do language learning activities.	1 Not beneficial – 5 Very beneficial

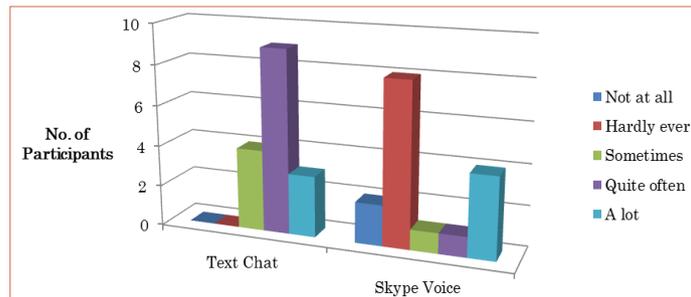
## Questionnaire Results

In response to the request, “Rate how much you felt using text-chat/voice was beneficial to language learning activities,” participants were very positive towards the use of both media (see Figure 6). However, voice was rated slightly higher than text-chat. This could be explained by the closeness of voice to face-to-face communication, with its emphasis on listening, speaking, and fluency skills, which the participants greatly valued. One participant comment, “It was good because I had to be careful of my pronunciation,” highlights the importance given to verbal exchanges.



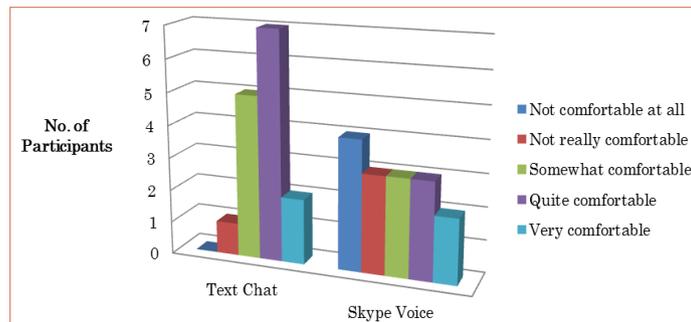
**Figure 6. Participant Ratings of Benefits of Using Text-Chat / Skype Voice**

To the request, “Rate how much you noticed grammatical mistakes in your own and your partner’s sentences,” participants reported noticing much more when using text-chat as compared to voice (see Figure 7). From a pragmatic point of view, the reduced speed of communication, which afforded more time for questioning and reflection, and the fact that utterances were recorded on the screen, made it likely that mistakes were easier to see in text-chat. This is relevant to being beneficial, because although participants may not have been consciously aware of the fact, the act of noticing gaps in language knowledge, as suggested by Schmidt (1990), may be a catalyst for SLA.



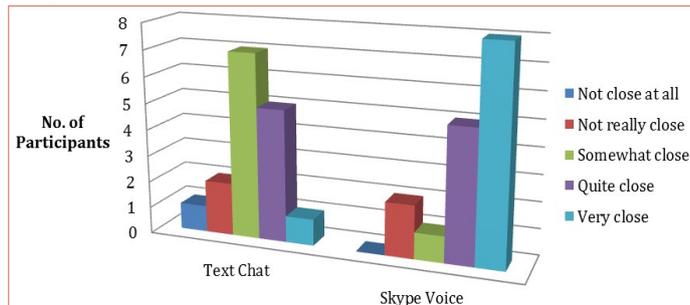
**Figure 7. Participant Ratings of Noticing Grammatical Mistakes in Text-Chat / Skype Voice**

When asked to rate how comfortable they were using text-chat or voice to communicate in English, participants on the whole felt more comfortable using text-chat, with many appreciating the slower pace of communication (as shown in Figure 8). The following participant quote illustrated this point: “I liked having more time to think about what I wanted to say before I responded.”



**Figure 8. Participant Ratings of Comfort When Using Text-Chat / Skype Voice**

In response to the request, “Rate how connected (close) you felt to your partner while using text-chat / Skype voice,” participants felt that voice was more conducive to connectedness (see Figure 9). Citing Lomicka and Lord, Yamada (2009) suggested that “social presence enhances the interaction between learners, which, in turn, affects learning performance” (p. 822) and so this must also be taken into consideration when examining the unique benefits of each medium.



**Figure 9. Participant Ratings of Connection Felt When Using Text-Chat / Skype Voice**

### Research Question 3

This question asked, “What are the benefits of each medium?” The benefits of the respective media were determined through a combination of observation of participants and final outcomes, as well as the detailed LRE breakdown and participant questionnaires. The main benefits of each medium can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. Summary of Benefits**

Text-Chat	Voice
The promotion of consciousness of grammatical and lexical accuracy	High dependence on listening skills, particularly as gestures and facial expressions cannot be used to convey meaning
The ability to study both form and communication skills within the same task	Accurate production and pronunciation of English is required
The ability to check utterances before sending them enhanced language confidence and created a low stress environment	A greater feeling of social presence
The sense of anonymity enhanced participants' abilities to correct partner mistakes, give opinions more willingly and foster an environment of equal participation	Clarification requests pushed students to produce modified output
Less use of native language, with more time afforded to check meanings and words	The rapid speed of communication was motivating
The collaborative nature of the activity led to learner output (in terms of quantity of written work) being sizeable	Similar to face-to-face communication (use of fillers)
Participants stayed on-task due to the positive pressure not to leave their partners waiting.	Participants stayed on-task due to positive pressure of a partner waiting for responses or input.

## Pedagogical Implications

There are several pedagogical implications to the study. The results show that use of SCMC within the class should be tailored to specific teaching objectives to maximize student learning opportunities. Specifically, voice was found to be advantageous in promoting listening and pronunciation skills as well as for negotiation of meaning and production of modified output. Text-chat, on the other hand, was more conducive to the study of grammatical and lexical accuracy while also focusing on communication skills.

Through the study of participant LREs, the gaps in students' language knowledge became apparent, particularly in those LREs which remained unresolved. Specific knowledge of these gaps could be used by teachers for future lesson plans. This knowledge would allow teachers to tailor classes very precisely to student language levels in keeping with Krashen's (1982) Comprehensible Input theory.

## Conclusions

Within the theoretical framework, this study set out to compare the benefits of voice and text-chat in relation to SLA. The results indicate that both text-chat and voice are beneficial to SLA, particularly in correspondence with negotiated learning tasks. Participants were receptive to language study using both types of SCMC and were able to identify positive benefits when using both media.

It should be acknowledged, however, that the research was conducted under some limitations. The purview of the research was small as only 20 students participated. Also, although participants used a number of LREs in both media, the scope of this research did not allow for testing the retention level of the knowledge gleaned from experiencing such LREs. Further study could be conducted to investigate the likelihood of retention of

the knowledge gained and what the optimum conditions for LRE knowledge retention are.

## Bio Data

**Anthony Young** has been teaching for 12 years in Japan and holds a MEd in Second Language Learning. He is currently an assistant professor in the Literature Department at Aichi University. His pedagogical interests include autonomous learning, blended learning environments, and negotiated task-based instruction.

**Sian Edwards** is an assistant professor in the Faculty of International Communication at Aichi University. She has been teaching in Japan for 9 years in a variety of contexts. She has been an active member of JALT since 2007, and her current research interests include student motivation, autonomous learning, and CALL.

## Acknowledgement

This paper is a revised version of a paper that first appeared in the Aichi University Journal 言語と文化, published in June 2012.

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# Authentic English Through Modern Family

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## Reference Data:

Forster, D. (2013). Authentic English through *Modern Family*. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

The benefits of using television shows and films in the EFL classroom have been thoroughly researched and documented, and they have proven to be an effective learning tool. Particularly in the Japanese EFL context, using a situation comedy motivates students because they enjoy seeing, hearing, and using the language they learn. This paper shows how the popular American sitcom *Modern Family* can enhance EFL instruction through its up-to-date cultural themes and stereotypes and through its lively use of language, especially slang and idiomatic expressions. The course summary, syllabus, lessons, and testing and evaluation information are provided.

教室外での英語接触量が限られる日本人EFL学習者に、いかに「自然な会話」を教えるかは難しい問題である。そこで、授業に自然な会話を取り入れる容易な方法として、テレビ番組の活用が挙げられる。テレビ番組の会話は、多くのEFL教科書にあるような「作られた」会話よりも優れた教材と言える。従来の研究においても、EFL授業におけるビデオ使用の効果が調査され、その有効性が実証されてきた。特に、日本のEFL環境においては、見る、聞く、さらに学んだ表現を使うといった楽しみが得られるシチュエーション・コメディの活用は、学習者の意欲を高めることにつながる。本研究では、アメリカの人気シチュエーション・コメディである*Modern Family*を取り上げ、最新の文化的題材や語彙を扱いながら、いかにしてより良いEFL教育が行えるかを論じる。コースの概要、シラバス、授業内容、試験、評価方法を提示する。

**F**OR THE past 5 years, I have been teaching a North American Studies seminar class at Japan Women's University in Tokyo. The goal of the course is to increase students' knowledge and awareness of American culture and increase their vocabulary, particularly slang and idiomatic expressions. In the past, I have chosen Hollywood movies due to their popular appeal and their ability to reflect American culture and modern spoken English. Two years ago, I decided to use American situation comedies, such as *Seinfeld*, because they offer an interesting, and funny, array of characters, social situations, and slang and idioms. They are also shorter than full-length films (about 20 minutes without commercials) and thus easier to use in class. Last year, I decided to use *Modern Family* because it offers an interesting, and humorous take on the American family. This paper explains why and how *Modern Family* can be used to enhance EFL instruction.



## What is Modern Family?

ABC's *Modern Family* is a popular American situation comedy that premiered on September 23, 2009, whereupon it received critical acclaim and attracted over 12 million viewers. The show revolves around the family of Jay Pritchett (Ed O'Neill), his second wife Gloria (Sofia Vergara), his stepson Manny (Rico Rodriguez), and Pritchett's daughter Claire Dunphy (Julie Bowen), her husband Phil (Ty Burrell), and their three children, daughters Haley (Sarah Hyland) and Alex (Ariel Winter), and only son Luke (Nolan Gould); rounding out the cast is Pritchett's gay son Mitchell (Jesse Tyler Ferguson), his partner Cameron (Eric Stonestreet), and their adopted Vietnamese daughter Lily (Aubrey Anderson-Emmons).

The show is presented in a “mockumentary” style—the characters often speak directly to the camera in an interview format, in which they comment on themselves and their relationships with their family members and relatives. As such, the show is a humorous depiction of 21st century American families and their changing attitudes towards social issues such as gay rights. For example, being gay no longer holds the same stigma it once did, and many Americans now accept, or are at least willing to consider the legitimacy of, same-sex marriages. This idea is reflected in *Modern Family* in the relationship between Mitchell and Cameron—and Mitchell's father Jay's continuing struggle to acknowledge and accept that his son is gay. In contrast, Claire and Phil's family are portrayed as a “normal” family of five, with a rebellious eldest daughter, Haley, the “smart” middle daughter, Alex, and their somewhat dysfunctional son, Luke.

## Review of Research on Using Video in the EFL Classroom

The benefits of using films and television shows in the EFL classroom have been widely researched and documented, and

many researchers have shown them to be effective learning tools (e.g., James, 2011; Huang, 2005; Vélez, 2004; Washburn, 2001). Naturally occurring conversation in movies and television may be more beneficial for communicative learning than concocted texts that appear in many textbooks (Quaglio, 2008). Carter and McCarthy (1995), for example, claimed that effectively fostering speaking skills requires instruction to focus on spoken, not written, English, and there is “a lack of fit” (p. 142) between real conversations and textbook dialogs. Moreover, learners in Japan are not usually exposed to spoken English outside of the classroom; therefore, a reliance on textbook English may not adequately prepare learners for understanding or participating in real conversations. However, instructors can easily bring television dialogs into the classroom as a viable alternative, and situation comedies are a rich source of authentic dialog and thus particularly valuable for pragmatic teaching and learning (Washburn, 2001).

One reason television situation comedies provide a more effective language resource for EFL learners is that, as Katchen pointed out, they are “made to sound natural to native speakers” (2003, para. 17), so in this respect, they represent authentic language. Of course, the dialog found in situation comedies is scripted, so one could argue that it is not truly authentic. Widowson (1990), for example, claimed: “authenticity of language in the classroom is . . . to some extent, an illusion” (pp. 44-45). However, compared to the static written dialogs found in textbooks, television sitcoms offer a plausible depiction of real conversations between real people.

Perhaps more importantly, particularly in the Japanese context where low motivation is a common problem in English language classrooms, using a situation comedy such as *Modern Family* may motivate students because it is entertaining to watch. Students can identify with the characters, which may in turn motivate them to use the language they hear the characters

using. A considerable amount of research has shown that “positive attitude and motivation are closely related to success in learning a second language” (Bai, 2008, p. 12). From my experience teaching university Japanese students, I know they want to learn English slang, idioms, and colloquial expressions. Indeed, I believe this is an important part of language teaching because “knowledge of slang and idioms is fundamental to nonnative speakers’ understanding of the language that native speakers actually use” (Burke, 1998).

In addition to their lively depiction of contemporary slang and idiomatic and colloquial expressions, sitcoms can provide Japanese learners with a window into American society. *Modern Family* pokes fun at American social stereotypes while it is still couched in fairly accurate—at least by Hollywood standards—American cultural and social situations. For example, Gloria is presented as a typical hot-blooded—as well as hot-tempered—Latina woman who is not afraid to both show and act on her emotions. Her husband Jay is depicted as a conservative WASP with a trophy wife. And both Mitchell and Cameron are presented as “sensitive” gay men, though Cameron exhibits machismo when the situation warrants. Such situations and the language used in them give students a way into understanding stereotypes and other prevailing attitudes in American society.

American television situation comedies and dramas, like Hollywood movies, serve an important cultural function in the US because they “affirm and maintain the culture of which they are a part” (Maltby & Craven 1995, p. 8) and they “present a portrait of national life” (Burgoyne, 1996, p. 121). In addition, they “reveal directly or indirectly, something about [Americans’] national experience, identity, culture, temperament, ideologies, and aesthetic principles” (Belton, 1994, p. 123).

Of course, it could be argued that English is an international language and not tied to any particular culture. Furthermore, movies reveal something about American life to Americans,

but this cultural understanding may not be apparent to non-Americans who are not familiar with the language or the culture. However, because of its domestic setting, which Japanese students can easily compare and relate to their own family experience, *Modern Family* offers a more accessible resource for introducing American culture than many other sitcoms or full-length Hollywood films.

### Course Summary

The course described in this paper was designed to increase students’ awareness of American culture and humor, increase their knowledge of American slang, idioms, and colloquial expressions, and improve their listening comprehension skills. Each week, students watched two 20-25 minute episodes from Season 1 of *Modern Family*. Prior to each class, students were required to download, print, and study the scripts that had been emailed by the instructor.

Printing out the scripts themselves is helpful if the class is large, and it may encourage students to be more invested in the class. In addition, reading and studying both scripts before coming to class helps students understand the dialog and content better in class, as well as improve their listening comprehension skills. Having already gone through the script and dealt with any words they did not know, students can then watch the show in class without English or Japanese subtitles. In fact, I have found that, because the students know they will not be able to rely on subtitles in class, they are more careful about studying the scripts before coming to class.

Students are required to study and learn the slang, idioms, and colloquial expressions that are underlined and explained in footnotes in each script (see Figure 1), as these will be part of both the midterm and final exams.

**Modern Family Episode 2: "The Bicycle Thief"**

©ABC Television (September 30, 2009)

Written by Bill Wruble; Directed by Jason Winer

**SCENE 1: Jay & Gloria**

Jay: What's the key to being a really great dad? Ah, that's a tough one.\*

\*that's a tough one: an idiomatic expression, which means that a question is hard to answer, a problem is hard to solve, or a situation is difficult to figure out and/or resolve

**SCENE 2: Mitchell & Cameron**

Cameron: Giving them the freedom to be whatever they want to be.

Mitchell: Right. Exactly.

Cameron: Whether that's a painter, a poet, a pilot, a president...

Mitchell: And for us, we're gonna...\*\*

Cameron: ...of a company, or of a country.

Mitchell: Patience.

\*\*gonna: A commonly-used shortened form of *going to*.

**SCENE 3: Claire & Phil**

Phil: Well, be their \*buddy.

Claire: That's your answer?

\*buddy: one of several variations of *friend*

Figure 1. Sample Script

In class, students watch the first episode scene-by-scene, with the instructor stopping after each scene to explain cultural points using PowerPoint slides (See Figure 2). Students are required to take notes on these points since they will also be

included on the midterm and final exams. Students are not required to take notes for the second episode watched in class, but they are responsible for studying and knowing the underlined vocabulary words and phrases in the script.

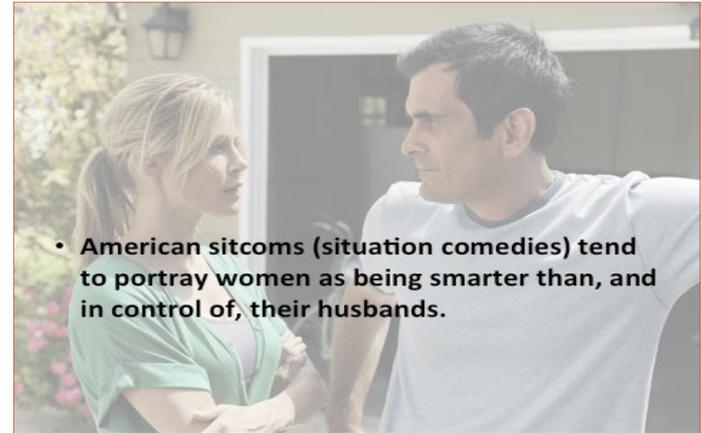


Figure 2. Sample PowerPoint Slide

*Modern Family* offers students a plethora of American cultural situations and characters, both idiosyncratic and stereotypical, which can be explained by the instructor as well as discussed by the students. It also contains a multitude of common slang and idiomatic expressions. Because they will be tested on these points, students are motivated to attend every class and take careful notes. More importantly, they are motivated because they enjoy watching the episodes and learning about American culture while experiencing American humor.

## Course Syllabus

The following course is designed for a 15-week semester, but can be shortened and adapted to any semester time frame:

- Week 1: Course introduction/syllabus; Episode 1: *Pilot*
- Week 2: Episodes 2 & 3: *The Bicycle Thief & Come Fly with Me*
- Week 3: Episodes 4 & 5: *The Incident & Coal Digger*
- Week 4: Episodes 6 & 7: *Run for Your Wife & En Garde*
- Week 5: Episodes 8 & 9: *Great Expectations & Fizbo*
- Week 6: Episodes 10 & 11: *Undeck the Halls & Up All Night*
- Week 7: Episodes 12 & 13: *Not in My House & Fifteen Percent*
- Week 8: Midterm Exam (Episodes 2-13)
- Week 9: Episodes 14 & 15: *Moon Landing & My Funky Valentine*
- Week 10: Episodes 16 & 17: *Fears & Truth Be Told*
- Week 11: Episodes 18 & 19: *Starry Night & Game Changer*
- Week 12: Episodes 20 & 21: *Benched & Travels with Scout*
- Week 13: Episodes 22 & 23: *Airport 2010 & Hawaii*
- Week 14: Episode 24: *Family Portrait*
- Week 15: Final Exam (Episodes 14-24)

## Testing and Evaluation

The midterm exam (see Figure 3) is based on the cultural notes the students took for even-numbered episodes (2 through 12), and the underlined vocabulary in the odd-numbered episodes (3 through 13).

**I. American Culture (Episodes 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, & 12): For each statement, circle T for TRUE or F for FALSE (60 points).**

1. *Pho* is a somewhat trendy soup in the U.S. T/F
2. *Time outs* are commonly used to teach American children how to use a clock to tell time. T/F
3. A common tradition in the U.S. is giving pajamas as a gift on Christmas. T/F
4. Although golf is very popular, most Americans do not belong to a country club. T/F
5. American boys use *slumber party* while girls use *sleepover* to describe a party in which friends spend the night together. T/F

**II. Vocabulary (Episodes 3, 5, 7, 9, & 11): For each statement, circle T for TRUE or F for FALSE (40 points).**

61. *Butterflies* refers to feeling lightheaded or dizzy. T/F
62. *Don't push it* is used when you think someone is asking or expecting too much of you. T/F
63. *Had a blast* is often used to describe a very difficult or frightening experience. T/F
64. *Here's the deal* is used by realtors when negotiating the price of a house with a potential buyer. T/F
65. *Hit the road* is another way of saying, *leave or go away*. T/F

Figure 3. Sample Midterm Exam

Similarly, the final exam is based on culture points from the even-numbered episodes (14 through 24), and the vocabulary in the odd-numbered episodes (15 through 23).

Aside from creating the scripts and PowerPoint slides for each class, grading the midterm and final exams is one of the most

time-consuming chores for the instructor, especially if the class has attracted a large number of students. Therefore, it may be advisable to employ a teaching assistant or graduate student to take care of emailing the scripts to the students, keeping attendance, and scoring the exams. Despite the work involved, however, I found this class to be extremely rewarding for both the students and myself. Because this was a large seminar class focused on American culture, I did not include any speaking activities. However, the lessons could easily be adapted to include speaking activities, such as discussion and comprehension questions related to themes in the show. Moreover, with a smaller class, students could be asked to give oral presentations instead of the midterm and final exam.

## Conclusion

Research supports the use of video-based instruction in the EFL classroom, particularly as it increases student motivation and provides a more authentic language resource when compared with textbook instruction. A contemporary American situation comedy such as *Modern Family* provides an excellent vehicle for teaching American culture because it provides culturally relevant, vocabulary-enriching, and, perhaps most importantly (from the students' point of view), enjoyable content. Indeed, I have received extremely positive feedback on a course questionnaire completed by my students at the end of the semester. Comments have included: "I look forward to coming to class every week because each episode is so funny and I learn a lot about America and many interesting slang expressions"; "This class is so exciting and fun"; and "I really think my listening has improved because I am getting better at understanding each episode without any subtitles."

*Note.* Transcripts and PowerPoint slides are available to anyone who would like to use them to teach *Modern Family*.

## Bio Data

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# Authentic Sound Bites: Using Talk Radio Clips for Language Acquisition

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## Reference Data:

Rebuck, M. (2013). Authentic sound bites: Using talk radio clips for language acquisition. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Using 2 examples of recordings from talk radio, this paper outlines how authentic audio can be made accessible for learners and used in a way that promotes language acquisition rather than just tests listening comprehension. The characteristics of the described recordings are encapsulated in the acronym *SAMPLE* (Short, Authentic, Meaningful, Productive, Listening, Extract). Key components of this acronym are explained with the aim of providing some guiding principles for incorporating this audio resource into EFL lessons.

この論文では、ラジオのトーク番組から録音したふたつのサンプルを用いて、オーセンティックなラジオの音声、いかにして学習者の手の届くものになり、そして単なるリスニングの理解テストとしてではなく、言語習得の助けとなるような方法で用いられうるかについて論じる。録音されたものはSAMPLEという頭字語でその性質を描写することができる(S: 短く、A: 生の英語で、M: 意味のある、P: 生産的で、L: 聞きとりで、E: 抜き出されたもの)。この頭字語の文字のいくつかについて解説し、オーディオクリップをEFLの授業に取り入れる際に留意すべき点について説明する。

**W**HILE DISPOSING of my few remaining cassette tapes some months ago, memories returned of listening-comprehension time in a Tokyo *eikaiwa* (conversation) school at the start of (what turned out to be) my career. I was aware even then (in the early 1990s) that listening skills were important, of equal importance with speaking skills, as had been pointed out to me by Anderson and Lynch (1988, p. 3). I was thus loath to omit the listening exercises in each unit of the textbook the school management had chosen for the class. Yet, although a lesson without listening was somehow incomplete, the feeling that lingered following the textbook listening exercises was itself one of incompleteness. This feeling, I later realized, arose because learners were just being tested, by means of several comprehension questions, on how much they had understood of a recording; learning *from* the listening appeared to be of secondary importance. (That the transcripts of the recordings in this particular textbook were only in the teacher's manual was perhaps a manifestation of the book's pedagogic stance.) As a result, those cassette tapes—in addition to recalling the contrived language voiced by yesteryear's "professional ELT actors" (Thorn, 2012, p. 66)—brought to mind the confused and sometimes reproachful faces of students past and a sense of professional failure at my inability to offer listening as something with real pedagogical value.

JALT2012 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

It was the Internet, together with a newfound freedom not to have to use a textbook, that changed the teaching of listening for me. I realized that radio programmes I downloaded for my own pleasure could also yield listening material. In the decade or so of using authentic audio (first with MP3 files burnt onto a CD and then, as classrooms became equipped for computer-aided instruction, played directly from a computer), I have become convinced that it can augment university language classes, regardless of the students' English ability.

In this paper, illustrating with actual examples of audio texts, I offer suggestions for using authentic audio in a way that will not overwhelm Japanese students whose prior experience of listening has mostly been limited to the "reduced language" characteristic of many EFL textbooks (Arndt, Harvey, & Nuttall, 2000, p. 13). In particular, I will describe how listening can be developed into something more than a comprehension test and become a springboard for language acquisition activities.

### Cutting Samples of Sound

As a boy, I would watch my father in his shop cut small pieces of fabric from bulky rolls for customers who requested samples. Now, as an English teacher, I find myself cutting samples of sound for my students (using editing software, not scissors). The word *SAMPLE* actually serves as a useful acronym with which to describe the characteristics of the audio resources I use and the principles guiding their implementation in the classroom: Short, Authentic, Meaningful, Productive, Listening, Extract. These characteristics are explained below.

### Short

I have found that when using authentic audio, short bursts are often most appropriate; most of the clips I use are well under 1 minute. There are several reasons for preferring shorter audio

texts: short clips can be easily incorporated into existing lessons, and they can be played several times without students losing concentration. There are, as Rost (2011) pointed out, "known limitations to short-term memory that occur after sixty to ninety seconds of listening—for listeners of all ages and backgrounds" (p. 198). Repeated listening allows learners to adjust, or "normalize" (Field, 2002, p. 243) to the speed and characteristics of the voice(s). Finally, and most importantly for this paper, using short clips leaves time for activities that seek to promote language acquisition. When recordings are overly long, there is a danger that insufficient time will be left to develop the listening beyond a comprehension exercise (as was my experience at that Tokyo language school).

### Authentic

One of the key reasons for using authentic audio—that is, audio containing "language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers" (Harmer, 2007, p. 272)—is that it exposes students to English as it is spoken outside of the classroom, to features of natural conversation that just cannot be mimicked in dialogues created at a computer and read in a studio. Authentic material is also often richer in terms of its cultural and linguistic content than concocted texts. In addition, a recording's authentic provenance, if "sold" to the students, can in itself be motivational (Rebeck, 2008).

However, the value of authentic material is by no means accepted by all; indeed, Rost (2011) stated that authenticity is "one of the most controversial issues in the teaching of listening" (p. 165). A cogent criticism of ELT's preoccupation with "real English" was offered by Widdowson (2003) who argued that because "what naturally occurs seldom serves our pedagogic purpose, we need to contrive something that does" (p. 116). While it is certainly true that made-up texts offer a convenient way to model or introduce language features in a systematic way, there

is also no doubt that the Internet can supply plenty of naturally occurring speech that can be made to meet our pedagogic aims. A teacher may have to listen for several hours before a suitable “sound nugget” is found, but for lovers of radio these nuggets come as a by-product of listening they would normally do anyway. Finally, as I illustrate later, authentic and contrived do not have to be mutually exclusive because teacher-created dialogues (extension dialogues) can complement the authentic texts.

### Meaningful

Students are motivated by content that is relevant and engaging. Judicious selection by the teacher of authentic audio can provide listening material on issues that will resonate with the learners. In particular, authentic audio can serve to bring to the classroom thought provoking topics that are rarely, if ever, covered in textbooks (see Rebeck, 2012, for an example of a lesson incorporating audio clips from a BBC programme on Down’s syndrome).

### Productive

Listening should be used to promote language acquisition (Richards, 2008). This acquisition, as Richards explained, can be achieved by means of *noticing* and *restructuring* activities (p. 16). Noticing activities involve using the listening text for raising awareness of the language, while restructuring activities are those that have learners make productive use of all or part of the text.

Regarding noticing, research into second language acquisition suggests that an important step for a learner to acquire language is becoming aware of the differences between his or her present interlanguage and the system of the target language (Schmidt, 1990). However, as McCarthy (1998) stressed, “it is what the target for ‘noticing’ is that matters most, and if the input is impoverished, there will not be much worth noticing” (p. 68).

McCarthy’s comment points back to an advantage of authentic material mentioned above: It is often richer than its concocted counterpart.

### Listening

The clips are initially presented as audio input, although as will be described later, they lead to various production activities.

### Extract

The recordings are usually extracted from a longer piece of spoken text.

### SAMPLEs in the Classroom

I use authentic audio clips in most of the lessons of the communicative English course that I teach. Some of these clips have served as the kernels around which I have created completely new lessons, while others, including the two introduced in this paper, have been integrated into existing lessons. The programmes from which the two clips in this paper were taken are, at the time of writing, still available on the BBC Radio 4 website. Readers are encouraged to listen to the recordings; doing so will literally give a voice to the transcribed words (for convenience, the URLs of the programmes and temporal location of each extract are given below the transcripts).

### SAMPLE 1: My Last Summer

Listening one evening to a BBC Radio 4 programme, *Woman’s Hour*, I heard a moving interview with a woman diagnosed with terminal cancer. I realized that it could serve as a thought-provoking supplement to a *find someone who* activity, a fixture of the first lesson of the autumn semester, that involves students find-

ing out how their classmates spent their summer (see Appendix A). Following this mingle activity I added two prelistening tasks. The first of these, shown in Figure 1, sensitizes students in a general way to the contents of the audio clip and also reviews the use of the unreal conditional.

We've talked about what you did during your summer holidays. Now, imagine that next year's summer holiday will, for some reason, be your last one. Write down three things that you would do during your very last summer. Think of a reason for each of your choices.

Have conversations with your classmates. For example:

- A. What would you do during your last summer holiday?  
 B. That's a really difficult question, but I think I'd go to the Amazon rainforest.  
 A: Why?  
 B: Well, it's a place that I've always wanted to see, and if I'm going to die anyway, I wouldn't have to worry about catching any diseases.

Figure 1. Handout Extract 1a, Prelistening Task

The second prelistening task is a dictation that provides necessary background information for the listening. As a listening task itself, the dictation also serves as a warm-up for the authentic audio that follows. After dictating the text (see Figure 2), I display the transcript onto the screen and go through it with the students

Wendy Butler was a high-flying executive in the city, but in February 2011, Wendy, who is 56, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She was told by the doctor that her cancer was terminal and that she had between 6 to 12 months to live. In this interview, Wendy is speaking about what she wants to do with each of her three daughters in the time she has left.

Figure 2. Dictation, Prelistening Task

For this audio clip, students are set a while-listening task (see Figure 3), the main aim of which is not so much to test students' comprehension, but rather to direct their attention to the speaker's key points.

Wendy has three daughters, Natalie, Becky, and Melissa. What has Wendy done, or wants to do, with each of her daughters?

*Draw a line between the name and the activity*

- |                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Natalie</b> | go to her wedding                     |
| <b>Melissa</b> | go up in a hot air balloon            |
| <b>Becky</b>   | go to Wimbledon (to watch the tennis) |

Figure 3. Handout Extract 1b, While-Listening Task

After the matching task, students listen to the recording again and attempt the cloze exercise (see Figure 4). The boxed words were those gapped on the actual class cloze handouts and were not chosen randomly. Rather, these words were expected to be in the students' active vocabulary (that is, words that learners understand and use in production), but which, because of changes in pronunciation within and across word boundaries,

are likely to present problems when uttered in a stream of speech. The realization that it is often impossible to catch such simple words when spoken at natural speed is an effective way of making students receptive to follow-up practice on connected speech.

**Interviewer:** How did you want to spend the time that you have left?

**Wendy:** It didn't take long to decide because my friends said, "Oh, surely you'll travel as much as you can." I've no intention of travelling anywhere. I didn't want to. I **just wanted to** spend time with my family and my friends. And, you know, the major things that we wanted to do: Natalie wanted to go to Wimbledon; we went on Tuesday, so she's now been to Wimbledon with me. Um, Becky just wants **to go up** in a hot air balloon with me, so we're going to do **that soon** as well. And Melissa, who's getting married **next year**, really wants me to be at the wedding. Now, that's a tough one because it's a year, you know, it's in 2012, um, but she's determined I'm going to be there, so I've got something to work towards as well.

#### Figure 4. Audio Transcript 1, Cloze Exercise

Note. Highlighted words are gapped on the actual class handout.  
*Woman's Hour*. (2011, July 1). BBC Radio 4.  
 Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0124qt7>  
 Location of extract: 7 min 5 sec into programme. Length of clip: 50 seconds.

Once the cloze exercise has been checked, students listen to the recording while reading the transcript. Because reading-while-listening does not reflect how people generally listen in the real world, some advocates of communicative language teaching, as Renandya (2012) pointed out, do not consider it sufficiently genuine enough for classroom use. I have, however,

found it to be an important step in consolidating students' understanding of what they have heard.

Having matched the sounds to the printed words, students are then taken through the text. I direct students' attention to key features of Wendy's response, including her use of verb tenses and pronoun reference (e.g., What does *one* in *that's a tough one* refer to?). The utterance "I've no intention of travelling . . ." serves as an opportunity for a brief discussion of several noun and preposition combinations followed by a gerund. The audio is played again after the key language features of the audio have been foregrounded and any linguistic difficulties that have arisen have been addressed.

In my classes, postlistening always includes at least two activities to promote language acquisition. Different texts may be more or less suited to a certain activity. For example, because Wendy's speech is rich in contractions, one of the postlistening exercises in this lesson is the *Returning the Contractions* activity described later.

#### SAMPLE 2: *The Thing That Put Me off*

The audio clip transcript in Audio Text 2 was integrated into a lesson that had students use the construction *used to* to talk about changes in their lives. Although the clip is from a programme broadcast in 2005, the subject matter is not dated. Preparing authentic material may take some time, but if the material is chosen wisely it can potentially become a permanent item in a teacher's resource bank.

To stimulate interest in the upcoming audio, students ask each other about a food that they *used to* like but do not now (see Figure 5). At this stage, students are also familiarized with the phrasal verb *put off*, which appears in the recording.

- a. Is there a food that you **used to like** but don't like now?
- b. What put you off eating this food?

Have conversations like this with your partner.

- A: Is there a food that you used to like but don't like now?
- B: Yes, I used to like *yuuke*, which is a Korean dish of seasoned raw beef topped with an egg yolk, but now I don't eat it.
- A: What put you off eating it?
- B: Well, recently [in 2011] some people died of food poisoning after eating it.

Figure 5. Handout Extract 2a, Prelistening Task

Students are told prior to the first listening that they will listen to a man who used to like eating kidney but was put off eating it. Before playing the recording, I ask students to guess what put the man off this particular meat and write their ideas on the board. Prediction tasks such as this are “vitaly important if we want students to engage fully with the text” (Harmer, 2007, p. 271).

Field (2002) argued that a long prelistening session can be “counterproductive” (p. 243) because it can result in too much of the content of the listening passage being anticipated. This is one of the reasons I often limit my preteaching of vocabulary to a few items; another is that listening “cold” heightens task authenticity by ensuring that students’ first exposure to a recording mimics most real-life situations (when I turn on NHK radio in the morning, I am not provided with a list of difficult vocabulary to support my comprehension).

Students listen while checking the board to see whether any of their predictions were correct. For the second listening,

students fill in the blanks shown in Audio Text 2 (see Figure 6). As with the first text, the words blanked out are basic ones that students know well but which they may find difficult to distinguish in connected speech.

I think in common with a **lot of** other people, I haven't always disliked even the idea of offal, really. I remember when I was young, when I was at primary school, **you know**, I **used to** like things like liver and kidneys. I think there is just something about being told what these things actually did, that put me off them a bit. There's always that lingering notion at the back of your mind **that when** you're eating a kidney that the main thing about a kidney - the main thing that it does - is it makes urine. That's **going to** put you off, isn't it? Certainly does me.

Figure 6. Audio Transcript 2, Cloze Exercise

*Note.* Highlighted words are gapped on the actual class handout. *The Food Programme.* (2005, October 2). *BBC Radio 4.* Retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/foodprogramme\\_20051002.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/foodprogramme_20051002.shtml) Location of clip: 36 seconds into programme. Length of clip: 29 seconds.

### Mining the Text

Authentic recordings are not only a challenge to the students; they also present a never-ending test of the teacher's language awareness. A teacher with poor explicit understanding of the target language may find little to “mine” or extract from the texts, whereas one with more extensive linguistic knowledge should notice whole seams of language to exploit.

In Audio Transcript 2, there is much that can be highlighted for the students, as the following examples show:

- The use of connected speech (e.g., the reduction of *and* to the letter *n* in *liver 'n kidneys*). It is worth stressing here the need for teachers to have a basic knowledge of phonetics, particu-

larly features of connected speech such as elision, intrusion, and assimilation. This will augment a teacher's intuition when deciding which words to use for the cloze activity. It is often the case, as has been pointed out (Kelly, 2000, p. 113), that simply making students aware of the existence of connected speech features can contribute greatly to improving their understanding of natural speech.

- The intonation on the tag question *That's going to put you off, isn't it?*
- The use of ellipsis and substitution in *Certainly does me* (this utterance shows ellipsis of the dummy subject *it* and substitution of the phrasal verb in the preceding sentence with the auxiliary verb *do*). To deepen their understanding of the text, students can be asked to recover the full meaning of such constructions.
- The fact that, while phrasal verbs are idiomatic, their meaning is rooted to some extent in the core meaning of the component parts. The core meaning of *put* is to "move or place something in a particular position," while that of *off* is "away from the place in question." Thus, in the context of this audio, the speaker's learning that kidneys make urine caused his previous liking for kidney to be "put away from him."

### Postlistening: Exploiting the Audio Text for Acquisition

Mining the text for language serves to raise students' awareness of key linguistic features. Such noticing activities are an important part of acquiring language from listening. However, Swain's (1985) output hypothesis would suggest that if retention of the language to which students have listened is to be achieved, it is also important that they actually produce the language. A number of activities that engage students in productive use of the audio text are described next.

### Reading the Audio Script in Pairs

This can be done with a monologue, as in Audio Transcript 2, but often works best with conversations such as that between the presenter and a caller on a phone-in programme.

### Extension Dialogues

Teachers can write dialogues that incorporate elements of the authentic text. Such dialogues give students a chance to use in a more controlled way some of the vocabulary and structures in the audio text. Appendix B contains the extension dialogue that complements Audio Transcript 1, as well as accompanying language-focus questions. In more advanced classes, students could create their own dialogues based, perhaps quite loosely, on the audio transcript.

### Retelling

With short monologues in particular, students can be asked to note down a certain number of key words from the text and then try to retell what the speaker said. Nation and Newton (2009) pointed out that this kind of retelling is "one of the most effective ways of bringing receptive language knowledge into productive use" (p. 118).

Another kind of retelling is *Mountain Word-Climbing*. Students choose around 10 words from the audio text and write them on the slope of a mountain outline drawn on a piece of paper or on the board. Students then use these key words as lexical footholds to retell the text to their partner or to the class. Swain (1985) proposed that output is more likely to lead to acquisition when learners are pushed towards delivering a message in an accurate and coherent manner. The teacher providing error feedback after an initial word-climb and asking students to repeat

the activity is one way to nudge learners to raise the accuracy of their output.

### Returning the Contractions

A transcript with all the contracted forms written in full is displayed on the screen. A student can then be called to the computer to change the full forms back to the contractions used by the speaker.

### Shadowing

All or part of the audio text is used for shadowing practice.

### Moth-Eaten Sentences

The idea for this activity came from the *mushikui eibun* method on “*Nyuzu de Eikaiwa* [English Conversation Through the News]” on NHK Television. The class first reads an extract from the audio transcript placed on a PowerPoint slide (Slide 1 in Figure 7). On the second slide some words have been deleted. Students then recall the missing words as they read the sentence aloud. This continues until reconstruction of most of the text becomes the students’ job (Slide 5 in Figure 7).

Slide 1: I used to like things like liver and kidney, but finding out what these organs actually do, put me off eating them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Slide 5: I [ ] like things [ ] and [ ], [ ] finding [ ] what these [ ] do, [ ] me [ ] eating [ ].

Figure 7. Sample PowerPoint Slides for Moth-Eaten Sentences Activity

### Chunk Shadowing

A feature of unplanned spoken language is that it is often formed from small chunks rather than from the kind of sentences produced by writers of textbook dialogues. These chunks, as Shigenori, Yoshiaki, and Hajime (2006, p. 191) explained, tend to be demarcated by a pause as the speaker takes a breath. To raise awareness of chunking, students can first be asked to insert a slash [/] on the transcript each time they hear the speaker pause. Next, each pause-unit chunk is presented on a separate PowerPoint slide. Students read each slide as soon as it appears on the screen. This is repeated several times with the speed of progression through the slides increasing each time.

### Conclusion

With a little creativity on the part of the teacher, clips of authentic audio can be slotted into existing lessons or provide the inspiration and nucleus for new ones. The rapid rate and sound changes that characterize much natural spoken English can certainly be challenging for learners; however, when the audio is presented in a form that is manageable—that is, in short clips—and when it is used as a springboard for language exploration and acquisition, authentic audio can represent a valuable resource, even in lower level classes.

A few points, however, should be borne in mind when considering the activities introduced in this paper. Firstly, intensive analysis of the transcript may leave students with the impression that complete understanding of a text is necessary to catch what is being said. They may need to be reminded that full comprehension of every word is rarely required in real-world listening situations. Secondly, although students gain a thorough understanding of a particular lesson’s audio script, it is uncertain to what extent mastering one recording will make it easier for learners to cope with the next. Perhaps an explicit focus

on listening strategies could help develop more transferrable listening skills. Siegel's (2012) Process-Based Listening Instruction, which involves teachers narrating the thought processes they engage in as they listen, so as to provide frameworks that students can emulate, could provide some valuable pointers for augmenting the teaching of SAMPLES.

## Bio Data

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## Appendix A

### The “Find Someone Who . . .” Activity Preceding SAMPLE 1

During the summer vacation, did you . . .	A follow up question I asked
1. study English either by yourself or at a language school?	
2. miss anything about university life?	
3. see a great movie?	
4. travel to somewhere either in Japan or abroad?	
5. experience something that made you rethink your values or change how you live, even in a small way?	
6. change your appearance in some way?	
7. feel some strong emotion in reaction to a story in the news?	
8. do something that you regret?	
9. do something that you are proud of?	
10. eat something really delicious?	

## Appendix B

### Extract from Class Handout: Extension Dialogue for SAMPLE 2 with Focus-on-Language Questions.

Read the **extension dialogue** below and answer the questions that follow. At the beginning of next week’s lesson you will practice the dialogue in pairs.

*John and Peter are in a London restaurant. They are looking at the menu and deciding what to order.*

**John:** It’s been ages since I’ve been to a restaurant serving traditional English food. I think I’ll have the set lunch, the steak and kidney pie. Do you want the same?

**Peter:** No, thanks. I’m **not too keen on offal**, especially kidney<sup>1</sup>.

**John:** Really. Have you always disliked it?

**Peter:** No, when I was at primary school, I **would**<sup>2</sup> always ask for seconds when steak and kidney pie was served for school lunch, but I stopped eating it when I was around 12.

**John:** Did something in particular **put you off it**<sup>3</sup>?

**Peter:** Yes, I went off eating it after a biology lesson when we were taught about what the kidneys do.

**John:** So, you’re saying that learning that the kidneys make urine put you off steak and kidney pie.

**Peter:** That’s right. I did try to eat it a few times after that lesson, but I couldn’t help associating the lumps of kidney on my plate with what the kidneys do in the body. The **lingering**<sup>4</sup> notion that kidneys make urine just made me lose my appetite.

**John:** Seeing that you find *offal* so *awful*, perhaps you should go for the fish and chips. I’m just going to catch the waiter’s eye<sup>5</sup>.

Answer the following language-focus questions

1. Is there a difference between the expressions *I'm not too keen on offal* and *I don't like offal*? If so, what?
2. Is there any difference between the expressions *I always used to ask for seconds* and *I would always ask for seconds*? If so, what?
3. Many phrasal verbs have a single verb equivalent; for example, "the teacher *handed out* the copies" could be re-written as "the teacher *distributed* the copies." Write a single verb equivalent for *put off* as it is used in the dialogue.
4. The verb *to linger* is often used with smell. What kind of smells linger? Write two below. Do a Google search to check your ideas (you could use the following sentence for your search: "the smell of\* lingered").
5. What is the meaning of the idiom *to catch somebody's eye*?
6. Apart from *to put off*, there are two other phrasal verbs in the dialogue. Write them below and give the meaning of each one in English and / or Japanese. Remember that some phrasal verbs have multiple meanings, so be sure that the meaning you write is the one that fits the context of the dialogue.

# Here and There: An Authentic Online Orientation Program

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## Reference Data:

Laurence, D. (2013). Here and there: An authentic online orientation program. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Students preparing for study abroad often find themselves facing unknowns, not only about study but also about the basics of life in a foreign country. The ubiquity of Internet-mediated communication tools provides a useful forum for relieving this anxiety through communication with faculty at the destination school prior to departure. Faculty and graduate students at Chubu University and its sister school in the United States, Ohio University, collaborated to create a pilot orientation program to prepare Japanese students for study abroad, connecting them directly with faculty at Ohio University. The course used a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online communication and a variety of pedagogical tools, focused around a Moodle website and the use of Skype. Students had firsthand, real-time access to information about all aspects of their upcoming experience. In this paper I describe the planning, implementation, and outcomes of the course, with an eye towards future improvement.

留学準備中の学生は、勉学のことのみならず、外国生活の基本についてもわからないことが多数ある。インターネット媒体のコミュニケーション・ツールの遍在は、出発前に留学先の学校の職員とのコミュニケーションを通して不安の軽減ができるという、学生にとって有益な場所を提供している。日本人学生の留学のためのオリエンテーション・プログラムの作成と実施を行い、留学先大学の職員と直接つながりを持てるようにした。そのコースは、ムードルを中心にスカイプも使用し、オンライン・コミュニケーションの同期性と非同期性の組み合わせ、さまざまな教育上のツールを用いた。授業から寮生活、そして大学のあらゆる市の情報まで、学生は経験するすべての側面について、リアルタイムで直接、情報にアクセスすることができた。この報告は、そのコースの計画、実施、結果について、管理上また指導上の問題に焦点をあて、このコースの改善を見据えて記したものである。

**S**TUDENTS TAKING part in study-abroad programs face a host of challenges both inside and outside the classroom: a new academic environment, unfamiliar living conditions in a foreign country, and culture and language issues. In addition, they often have only a short period of time in which to come to terms with and overcome these issues. To help ease these transitions, many study abroad programs offer predeparture orientation programs, and their value in preparing students to meet the challenges they will face is well understood (Martin, 1989).

However, predeparture orientations are, necessarily, held in the students' home country, for students who have mostly never been abroad. This can make discussion of potential cross-cultural problems a fairly abstract question, as the students have no real-world experience to draw upon. Many excellent training materials have been developed to help bridge this gap



between theory and reality. Two of the more well known, and used as part of Chubu University's predeparture orientation until quite recently, are (a) BaFa BaFa, a cultural simulation activity in which participants role-play different cultural values and see how they interact, and (b) Barnga, in which participants learn a game and are placed, unknowingly, in groups whose participants have all learned slightly different rules.

The effectiveness of this sort of training material is generally accepted (Petersen, Glover, Romero, & Romero, 1978) but the activities tend to be somewhat abstract. As a result, drawing connections between student experiences with these activities and potential real situations they may face during their study abroad can be difficult—especially if the training is being conducted in the students' second language (Carroll, 1997). The challenge of real understanding and analysis of activities such as these in the EFL context is one of the factors that led Chubu University to investigate other options for predeparture orientation. The new reality of an increasingly interconnected world and, above all, the ubiquity of free, easy-to-use Internet communication tools opens exciting new possibilities in orientation which are, as yet, only beginning to be explored.

In this paper I will describe the design and adoption of a pilot online predeparture orientation program for 1st-year students at Chubu University in Japan preparing for a 4-month study abroad course at Ohio University in the United States. I will present and discuss the challenges in the design and implementation of the course, and how those challenges will be met in a second pilot and eventual full implementation of the program.

## The Online Orientation Program

### *Foundations and Design*

Chubu University and Ohio University have a long-standing relationship, with reciprocal study exchange programs between them

for more than 20 years. Chubu University sends a large cohort of exchange students to Ohio University every year for a 4-month period. Students participating in the study abroad program receive active support from graduates of Ohio University working at Chubu University, both Japanese and foreign. In all, it is a mature program with a robust support and orientation system.

Ohio University's Department of Linguistics and Intensive English Program are, traditionally, only directly involved once the students reach the United States, but in recent years the Linguistics department has developed a strong CALL focus. The creation of this online orientation program was suggested as a way to supplement the Japanese students' orientation experience with authentic communication with interlocutors at Ohio University, while providing important real-world course design and teaching experience to graduate students in Ohio University's MA program. Instruction and website design and creation were all carried out by these MA students, under supervision from Ohio University and Chubu University faculty.

The online orientation program was designed to introduce four main categories of the foreign exchange experience at Ohio University: life in a small town in the United States, dormitory life, making friends in the United States, and academic life. Information was presented in each category to help prepare the students for the transition to life in an American university, while providing supplementary English language activities to help develop students' communicative skills and activate relevant vocabulary. The information was presented through video, audio, and text in order to improve both listening and reading comprehension.

During the course of the program, the participating students were given opportunities to interact with their instructors both synchronously, via video conferencing, and asynchronously, through a discussion forum. Throughout the program, the instructors provided guidance for the students and made them-

selves available to help introduce and clarify the topics, as well as answer any questions that the students had. In addition to helping the students navigate the program and learn about Ohio University and Athens, Ohio (the town it is situated in), the instructors served as English language tutors for the students.

### **Aspects of the Online Course**

The course was hosted on a standard Moodle website. It was focused around two basic types of material: authentic web resources and instructor-created content, both supported with quizzes hosted on the Moodle website, surveys, and structured forum discussion activities. As noted above, they were organized around four primary themes: an introduction to the academic program in which the students would be enrolled, Ohio University's town, the dormitory system, and social life at an American university.

### **Authentic Web Resources**

Instructors created extensive link aggregates to authentic informational webpages about each topic; for example, Ohio University's dining hall services, local mobile phone service providers, and a virtual tour of the library. Quizzes and similar activities were created for each set of webpages, giving students the impetus to explore and learn, and the basic language skills they needed to access and make sense of each site. Further, Skype lessons with the instructors used the results of quizzes and activities to learn where student interests and questions lay and to target language instruction.

### **Instructor-Created Content**

The course instructors and their colleagues in the CALL teaching and research course created some content expressly for the

course. This content was centered strongly around instructor made and produced videos about the various themes. Typical examples were video tours of Ohio University dormitory rooms and dining halls, the Ohio University campus, and the city of Athens, Ohio. These videos were created with common questions and concerns of study-abroad students in mind, for example introducing how many roommates the students might have, the sorts of food available in the dining hall, or the presence of public transportation and other services in town. The videos were hosted on YouTube, and again quizzes and other activities were created to support the students.

### **Instructors**

The instructors for the course were nine MA candidates in Ohio University's Department of Linguistics, supported by two more MA candidates who did not interact directly with students but helped with materials design, as part of a CALL practice and research course that was part of their studies. They were overseen by their faculty advisor and by the director of the semi-intensive English program at Chubu University, who acted as a liaison between the students and instructors.

### **Students**

Students were recruited for the orientation program during the extant study-abroad orientation presented by the university's Center for International Programs, which is required of all students studying abroad. For this pilot study, participation was purely voluntary. Seven students, out of a study abroad cohort of 72 students, elected to participate in the program. The low participation was most likely due to a combination of the voluntary nature of the program and student worries about computer literacy; this will be further discussed in the Reflections section. The participating students reflected the composition of the

study abroad cohort as a whole, with two students from the Department of English Language and Culture, three from the Department of International Relations, one from the Department of Comparative Cultures, and one from the Department of Applied Chemistry. In accordance with Chubu University's study abroad program, all were 1st-year students at the time and were to go to Ohio University at the beginning of their 2nd year.

### **Implementation**

At the beginning of the program, the participating students met together for a Skype session with the Chubu University liaison and all the participating Ohio University instructors. At this stage, students and instructors introduced themselves, and the general outline for the course was laid out. The Chubu University liaison walked the students through registration and basic use of the course website, and students set up appointments to meet with the Ohio University instructors individually over Skype, using the Moodle website's discussion forum tool.

In the following stages, the students did the activities on the website and scheduled and took part in Skype sessions with their instructors in the United States on their own. They met with their instructors individually and in pairs about once a week via Skype, for an average of about four times total, to discuss the assigned material and have a general language lesson to support their study.

### **Outcomes and Issues**

#### **Recruitment**

Only a very small number of the students in the study abroad cohort chose to take part in the program. As this was a pilot program, low student interest and participation was not necessarily a pure negative—in fact, low student numbers made it some-

what easier to identify and deal with technological issues in the early stages of the program—but moving forward, the program will need to reach as many students as possible. Considering the size of the MA-candidate cohort of instructors at Ohio University and the time they have available for teaching, it seems likely that as many as 20 Chubu University students could reasonably be serviced, more if they meet their instructors in pairs or in groups of three.

#### **Instructor Responses**

Instructor feedback was collected via written reports and a Skype discussion session with the Chubu University liaison. Much of the instructor feedback about the course centered on the language level of the students and the difficulty they had doing the activities and speaking with native speakers using Skype. Many instructors noted that students had a strong preference for text chat over voice chat, with lessons often proceeding much more effectively when supplemented by, if not conducted entirely by, text chat. Most of the instructors additionally had little or no practical experience teaching EFL students and found that they had to spend some time getting used to and learning how to accommodate the students' English abilities. Most instructors agreed that more extensive scaffolding activities would make both the authentic language materials and the video chat sessions much more productive.

Instructor feedback about the course content fell into two main categories. First, some instructors noted that the Moodle site presented a massive amount of information, which could be bewildering to students, especially lower level students who might lack the confidence to explore authentic materials with only post hoc support. Second, the instructors themselves sometimes found that, as graduate students, they simply were not equipped to deal with student questions about dormitory life, the undergraduate curriculum at the university, and similar concerns.

## Student Responses

Student feedback was collected via one-on-one interviews. Student feedback about the course tended to echo the issues noted by instructors. Some students felt that the Moodle site presented too much information, and one student found that the lack of guidance in its use led her to nearly avoid using it altogether. On the other hand, some students accessed nearly everything the Moodle site had to offer. Students agreed with instructor assessments that video chat was intimidating and difficult, and noted that they were generally much more comfortable with text chat, especially for language questions.

## Participation

Student participation, both in terms of taking part in video chat sessions and usage of the Moodle site, tended to fall off as the program progressed. After the initial group Skype meetings, the students were left on their own to schedule appointments with their instructors, to do the material on the website, and to actually meet the appointments they made. Most of the students had no problems doing so, but one student only met with her instructor once and two more failed to complete the course.

Declining participation was, like the low initial enrollment in the course, likely due to a number of factors. Most important was the voluntary and ungraded nature of the course, which meant that students could stop participating with no repercussions. As the course took place in the very busy month preceding the students' departure for the study abroad program, it is not surprising that some chose to prioritize other preparations over course participation. This was probably made easier by the lack of direct supervision of the students by Chubu University faculty; students had essentially no accountability and no requirements to check in and follow up on or verify participation in the program once it began.

## Moving Forward: Reflections

As a pilot program, this first implementation of the online orientation course was far from perfect, but most of the issues faced by the administrators, instructors, and students are solvable. In the remainder of this paper I will outline changes that will be implemented in the next version of the course.

## Recruitment

Clearly, the number of instructors available is more than capable of supporting a much larger cohort of students in a program such as this one. For a number of reasons, mostly administrative, student recruitment began only a few weeks before the course began, and there was very little coordination between the Chubu University liaison and either the study abroad program at Chubu University or the departments sending large numbers of students to study abroad. As the course moves forward, this communication must be increased, not only to increase student awareness of the course, but also to target students who are likely to be interested or who are likely to get the most out of a course such as this.

## Course Design

The materials created for the course were generally effective, according to both instructors and students, but their implementation and the design of the Moodle site need improvement. As noted previously, some students found the Moodle site's layout overwhelming and confusing, and attention must be paid to streamlining the student interface and making it more user friendly to low-level students and those who are less computer literate.

As for content, the only major addition that both students and instructors agreed would be useful is access to undergraduate

students at Ohio University to discuss campus life and similar issues. One option is to find students in Ohio University's Japanese program who might be interested in a cultural exchange. Possibilities are currently being investigated and discussed with the instructor supervisor at Ohio University.

### **Instructor Training and Oversight**

Many of the difficulties the instructors reported with the program centered around the students' language abilities: difficulties with not only instruction but with basic communication while using video chat, student difficulties with quizzes and activities on the Moodle site, and so on. It is the view of the instructors' supervisor and the Chubu University liaison that most of these issues are not really problems as such, but rather basic realities of teaching Japanese students with limited English proficiency. As the instructors are MA candidates, many of whom have no classroom teaching experience, difficulties in these areas are to be expected.

However, it is clear that the instructors would benefit from some degree of training to prepare them for the realities of teaching in this situation. A short precourse training session for instructors will be implemented to ensure that they understand the levels of the incoming students and teaching issues that may arise with them. An instructor with experience teaching in Japan and with using video chat and similar technologies will be involved.

In addition to the precourse training session, meetings will be held between the instructors, their supervisor, and the Chubu University liaison as the course progresses. In these meetings, issues—both with teaching and technology—that may arise will be dealt with in a timely fashion.

### **Student Training and Oversight**

It is possible that at least some of the student difficulty with the video chat sessions came from lack of familiarity with Skype—student comments in at least one instance bear this out. In addition, some students expressed trepidation about the use of the Moodle site and lack of understanding about what exactly they were to do on the site and how. In future implementations of the course, the Chubu University liaison will meet with students for a simple training session in the use of Skype, and a detailed overview of the contents and use of the Moodle site.

In addition, just as with the instructors, the Chubu University liaison will meet face-to-face with the students as the course progresses, to identify issues in a timely fashion and pass them along to the instructors for discussion of possible solutions. Although the course will remain voluntary for the time being, more stringent accountability measures will be put into place to help ensure that students continue with the course, including weekly email check-ins with the Chubu University supervisor and biweekly group meetings to assess technology and teaching issues.

### **Summary**

Most of the lessons learned during the 1st year of the program center around administrative and planning issues—designing and coordinating a course such as this, with active support and participation in two universities literally halfway around the world from each other, has proven to be every bit as much of a challenge as one might expect. We have learned a great deal about what works and—more importantly perhaps—what does not, and we hope that our plans for the next implementation of the course will take these lessons into account to produce an experience which is much more useful for both the Japanese students and the MA candidates at Ohio University.

Future implementations of the online program, with closer oversight of course design and implementation, along with larger bodies of students participating, will hopefully be able to focus more closely on the measurement of outcomes for the students. With a larger student body and (hopefully) a more robust program, we will be able to collect meaningful data about student satisfaction with the course. We also hope to investigate how much easier students' integration into life at Ohio University becomes, and the degree to which participation in the course eases student anxiety about the study abroad experience.

### Bio Data

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# Implementing Blended Learning in Foreign Language Education: Reasons and Considerations

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## Reference Data:

Mondejar, M. (2013). Implementing blended learning in foreign language education: Reasons and considerations. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

As information technology becomes more and more advanced, an increasing number of foreign language instructors are utilizing blended learning in their teaching contexts. Blended learning (BL) is the out-of-class use of online and mobile learning tools to supplement traditional classroom environments. In this paper, reasons for incorporating BL in foreign language contexts will be explored, and principles for utilizing BL from literature will be examined. The paper concludes with a description of a BL EFL course that I designed and taught based on these principles. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to readers' understanding of how to incorporate BL elements into their teaching contexts in a pedagogically sound way.

情報技術がますます高度になるにつれ、外国語教育においてBlended learningを活用する教師の数も増加している。Blended learning (BL) とは、伝統的な教室環境を補完するためにオンラインやモバイル学習ツールを授業外で使用するものである。本稿では、外国語環境でBLを導入する理由を検討した後、BLを用いる際の原則を先行文献から明らかにする。最後にこの原則に基づいて筆者がコースデザインし、実践したBL EFLのコースについて述べる。本稿はBL要素を教育場で効果的に取り入れるための確固とした基盤を提供する。

**I**N THE current digital age, the ways in which people convey and acquire information, ideas, and opinions are rapidly changing. In response to these changes, education too must evolve away from teacher-centered, one-way transmission of information. Rooney (2003) and Young (2002) have noted that one of the major educational trends to result from this transformation in communication styles is the rise of blended learning.

*Blended learning* (BL) can be defined as “a combination of face-to-face (FtF) and computer-assisted learning (CAL) in a single teaching and learning environment” (Neumeier, 2005, p. 164). Graham (2006) noted that FtF and CAL have been historically separated from one another, particularly in terms of the dimensions of *space, time, fidelity, and humanness*. Put another way, while FtF classes feature live, synchronous interactions between humans, CAL courses provide virtual, asynchronous interactions between humans and course materials. BL is essentially a hybrid of these two extreme learning models, in which learners utilize online tools and materials out of class to complement the FtF interactions that they encounter in a traditional classroom environment.

The purpose of this paper is to provide readers with a basic guide for utilizing BL in foreign language classrooms. In order to accomplish this, recent literature on BL will be examined, and

reasons and principles for incorporating it in foreign language instruction will be explored. An example of a BL EFL language course from my own teaching experience will also be presented, with the intention of better elucidating the integration of BL systems in foreign language contexts in Japan.

## Incorporating Blended Learning in Foreign Language Teaching Contexts: Reasons

On account of continual rapid advancements in information technology and growing familiarity with that technology among younger generations, several scholars on BL have rationalized complementing traditional classrooms with online tools and materials. Graham, Allen and Ure (2003, 2005) put forth three reasons for utilizing BL:

1. Through BL teachers can improve their pedagogy by creating a more interactive, student-centered learning environment for students.
2. Using BL provides learners with the increased access and flexibility of online materials and tools without sacrificing the human interaction of FtF contexts.
3. BL is much more cost effective than traditional classrooms.

According to Graham (2006), “blended learning systems provide an opportunity for reaching a large, globally dispersed audience in a short period of time with consistent, semipersonal content delivery” (p. 10).

Studies on BL (Rovai & Jordan, 2004; Tayebinik & Puteh, 2012) also seemed to indicate that BL courses create a stronger sense of community among learners in a particular context than both completely online learning environments and traditional classrooms. BL can provide learners with the FtF human interactions that online courses lack; at the same time, through BL instructors can create a virtual learning space for more introverted

students to express themselves, a space which they may not get in FtF classrooms dominated by more extroverted peers.

In terms of foreign language education, Marsh (2012, pp. 4-5) has argued that blended learning can provide the following benefits to learners over traditional classrooms:

1. BL “provides a more individualized learning experience” by enabling learners to find and study materials of their own choice online.
2. BL “provides more personalized learning support” to learners by allowing instructors and peers to provide more immediate feedback on student work.
3. BL “supports and encourages independent and collaborative learning” through the use of interactive online tools.
4. BL “increases student engagement in learning.”
5. BL “accommodates a variety of learning styles” by providing access to a virtually unlimited amount of multimodal materials online.
6. BL “provides a place to practice the target language beyond the classroom,” thereby increasing contact hours.
7. BL provides a potentially “less stressful practice environment for the target language,” since learners are not always in the physical presence of peers.
8. BL “provides flexible study, anytime or anywhere, to meet learners’ needs.”
9. BL “helps students develop valuable and necessary twenty-first century learning skills” such as word processing, web searching, and online communication.

In addition to these benefits, there seems to be little pedagogical detriment to utilizing blended learning in foreign language classrooms. In a case study of an ESL class, Grgurovic (2011) reported that all language skills can be successfully integrated in the face-to-face and online aspects of a BL course when these

aspects are combined. In other words, it seems that BL systems can provide all of the benefits of both FtF and CAL classrooms without adversely affecting the acquisition of any foreign language skills.

Because of these advantages, application of BL systems in education is on the rise. However, there seems to be a lack of theoretical conceptualization, research agenda, and qualitative research of BL (Kerres, 2001; Neumeier, 2005; Reinmann-Rothmeier, 2003). Neumeier stated that “the most important aim of a Blended Learning design is to find the most effective and efficient combination of the two modes of learning for individual learning subjects, contexts, and objectives” (p. 164), and this requires a careful analysis of learner needs and abilities in the potential BL as well as a principled approach.

### Incorporating Blended Learning in Foreign Language Teaching Contexts: Principles

In her seminal work on BL design, Neumeier (2005) provided the following parameters for instructors to consider when determining whether to incorporate blended learning in their teaching contexts: (a) mode, (b) model of integration, (c) distribution of learning content and objectives and assignment of purpose, (d) language teaching methods, (e) involvement of learning subjects, and (f) location (p. 167). *Mode* refers to the determination of mode (either FtF or CAL) choice and distribution, as well as the tasks within each mode, based on learner, course, and institutional requirements and restrictions. *Model of integration* refers to the sequencing of modes and tasks within the course as well as their level of integration (i.e., whether they are obligatory or optional). In terms of the distribution parameter, instructors must determine if the target language skills will be practiced in both modes in parallel or isolated in one or the other mode. When considering the parameter of *language teaching*

*methods*, instructors must keep in mind that learning methods in each of the employed modes may vary due to differing nature of interactions in FtF vs. CAL environments. The parameter *involvement of learning subjects* refers to the varying interactional patterns, learner and teacher roles, and level autonomy of each mode. Finally, *location* means the instructor must seek to create learning spaces both inside and outside of the classroom (e.g., in computer labs or at home) to accommodate the selected modes.

In addition to Neumeier’s (2005) parameters, Stracke (2009, pp. 6-7) recommended that instructors contemplate these practical considerations when implementing BL:

1. Complementarity: Selected modes and tasks within each mode must complement each other; mismatches can lead to learner confusion, frustration, and demotivation.
2. Variety of media: The instructor must present a variety of media for students, which they can select from to match their learning needs.
3. Class community: The instructor must provide FtF contexts which emphasize human interaction.
4. Flexibility as regards to time and space: Flexibility must be provided as much as possible to fit individual learner lifestyles.
5. Choice: Providing choices allows learners to take responsibility of their own learning, that is, develop autonomy.
6. Change of roles: Learners and instructors will need to be able to negotiate roles changing over different modes.
7. Technology-enhanced materials: Multimodal materials that are methodologically sound and interactive must be made available to learners.
8. Technical support: Technical support is necessary for instructors to encourage learners to continue using new and potentially unfamiliar technology.

9. Time to develop: “Teachers and students need time to adapt to and develop in a new teaching and learning environment” (Stracke, p. 7).

The importance of this last point cannot be overemphasized, in that the time required to acclimate to BL environments may limit effectiveness of BL at the beginning of a course or in shorter, more intensive classes.

Taken together, Neumeier’s (2005) pedagogical parameters and Stracke’s (2009) practical considerations provide a useful framework for teachers to consider when incorporating BL in foreign language contexts. In order to better illustrate these principles, an example of a simple BL course in the Japanese EFL context will be examined in the next section.

### Example of an EFL Blended Learning Course in Japan

I designed and taught the following BL course in the winter of 2012. The course was a pre-intermediate level class of 13 Japanese working adults that met FtF for 10 weeks, once a week for 4 hours at a time. Some of the lesson content was drawn from a predetermined, general English textbook mandated by the language institution.

At the beginning of the course, I issued an open-ended, short answer survey to determine the learning goals of participants, their accessibility to BL materials online, and their potential time commitments to language practice outside of class. From this survey, it was determined that a BL learning model that focused on developing all four language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) as well as specialized vocabulary and utilized asynchronous online communication to complement learners’ FtF classroom interactions would best suit their learning needs and desires.

The primary tool for facilitating out-of-class, online communication in this course was the course website. Google Sites, a

free wiki platform sponsored by Google, was selected to host the course website because of its easy accessibility by all of the participants. Participants were asked to post their course work on the website regularly, which their peers and instructor could freely access in order to view, comment on, and provide immediate feedback. Outlines of FtF sessions were also posted on the course website, so that participants could easily preview upcoming sessions and review ones from which they were absent.

One of the main tasks for participants of this course was to upload media summaries to the course website on a weekly basis. Participants searched for and viewed an online periodical, podcast, or video (related to news or a topic of interest) of their choice and composed a short summary of the article for their peers on the website. This activity provided participants with the opportunity to frequently practice locating information online and summarizing it, two of the most-used skills among new Japanese office workers (Lambert, 2010). In addition, because participants selected media of their own choice, this activity afforded learners with a fair degree of personalization in terms of content and learning style preferences.

After posting their summaries and links to the source media, participants were also asked to read and provide feedback on the work of their peers, as well as review and comment on feedback given to their own summaries. This served two purposes: First of all, it facilitated asynchronous communication between participants and therefore increased their contact with the target language; secondly, it prepared participants for linked FtF oral activities where they would lead discussions on their articles, often continuing conversations begun on the course website in class. Thus, participants were able to communicate and use the target language purposefully, both asynchronously online and synchronously in class. Finally, because the discussions were based on the interests and materials of the participants themselves, their engagement with the discussion content was high.

Another BL task utilized in this course was the self-generation and study of vocabulary cards, one of the most effective activities for building vocabulary (Nation, 2009). Participants were asked to record unknown words in the target language that they encountered, research those words online, create a vocabulary card for each word, and upload their words onto vocabulary lists on the course website. In class, students would engage in peer-teaching and peer-quizzing activities using their own cards, both of which are activities that facilitate learning (Dale, 1969; Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). In addition, vocabulary tests were generated from the online lists, and the participants could use the lists to study for tests.

Finally, on top of FtF exercises participants used the website *English Central* <[www.englishcentral.com](http://www.englishcentral.com)> to practice their listening, pronunciation, and spoken fluency skills outside of class. *English Central* is a gamified online platform where participants select videos of their own choice to view. After viewing the selected video, they also have the opportunity to orally recite the lines of that video and receive points for their recitation depending on the similarity of their pronunciation with that of the source material. *English Central* also features a built-in monitoring system for instructors, which allows them to determine weekly goals for participants (in terms of points to complete) and observe the progress of the class at will.

At the completion of the course, a feedback survey was issued to students in order to gauge their impressions of the BL portions of the class. Using a 5-point Likert scale, students were asked to rate how they felt about each of the following BL aspects: the course website (which received an average rating of 4.5), media summary task (4.14), vocabulary task (4.125), English Central (4.75), and an overall rating for the course (4.5). Based on these results, the participants as a whole seemed very positive about all BL portions of the course, as well as the course as a whole. These results echoed those of studies by Stracke (2007a, 2007b)

who found that participants were overall favorable towards BL learning, particularly because of its independent learning features and their ability to develop self-awareness of learning goals and preferences through this type of educational model.

## Conclusion

BL, the systematic combination of FtF and computer assisted educational models, is a swiftly growing trend in this age of rapid advancements in information technology. Language teachers can utilize BL systems to provide personalized learning experiences and support to learners, furnish them with increased access and flexibility of materials, foster learner autonomy but also collaboration and a sense of community among students, accommodate a variety of student learning styles and personalities, and assist learners with developing valuable technical skills concurrently with language development. BL can also benefit the instructors themselves by improving their pedagogical practices and raising the cost effectiveness of their classes. However, utilizing BL effectively requires careful needs analysis of the learners, as well as a principled approach to course design. Neumeier's (2005) parameters of *mode, model of integration, distribution of learning content and objectives and assignment of purpose, language teaching methods, involvement of learning subjects, and location* (p. 167) and Stracke's (2009) considerations of *complementarity, variety of media, class community, flexibility as regards to time and space, choice, change of roles, technology-enhanced materials, technical support, and time to develop* (pp. 6-7) can inform such an approach to BL, as discussed in this paper. Previous studies (Stracke, 2007b, 2009), as well as the participant feedback of the sample course presented earlier, seemed to indicate that BL systems are effective and learner friendly education models for improving foreign language education.

Much research remains to be done on BL. All of the studies cited in this article seemed to have focused on university-aged

learners and older. An interesting avenue of further research would concern the effectiveness of BL in young foreign language learners, in particular the so-called “digital native” generation. Another potential vein of inquiry could compare the interactional patterns of synchronous online interactions (e.g., chat rooms) with those of asynchronous interactions (e.g., blogging), and their respective potential effects on linked FtF communication.

## Bio Data

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# Improving Collaborative Dialogues with POV Video

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Kindt, D. (2013). Improving collaborative dialogues with POV video. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Until recently, educators have relied on either stationary or handheld camcorders to collect classroom data. With the development of point-of-view (POV) camcorders, however, naturalistic classroom events can be captured from a truly participant perspective. Over the past 2 years, I have conducted trials with POV camcorders to examine interaction in oral communication classes. One promising result of these trials is the use of POV video clips to create materials focused on increasing students' classroom interactional competence (CIC) in collaborative dialogues (CDs). This exploratory paper provides a short description of POV trials and a selection of materials based on these recordings. It concludes with a discussion of further applications and potential research directions.

最近まで、教育者たちは教室内の情報を集める手段として、固定式または携帯式のビデオレコーダーに依存してきた。しかし、point-of-view (POV) ビデオレコーダーが開発され、教室内で自然に起きている出来事を、学習者の視点から忠実に記録することが可能となった。過去2年間にわたり、筆者はPOVビデオレコーダーを使って、オーラルコミュニケーションの授業における学生のインタラクションについて調査してきた。その結果、POVビデオレコーダーで作成したビデオクリップを資料として使用することが、学生が教室内で共同の対話を通してインタラクション能力を向上させることを明らかにするのに有効であるということが分かった。当論文は、POVのテストおよびその記録をもとに作成した資料について説明する。結論として、POVの将来的な応用および研究の方向性について述べる。

**T**HE FIRST time I recall comparing video from three distinct perspectives—stationary, handheld, and point-of-view (POV)—was in a BMX promotional video sponsored by GoPro® (2010), a company producing a popular line of wearable camcorders and accessories (name and trademark used with permission). That the audience can experience the action vicariously through the eyes of the person wearing the camcorder was a unique characteristic of the POV position. With this characteristic in mind, I began considering possible classroom applications and potential advantages this device might provide over traditional camcorders. Assuming that other teachers and researchers had already done the same, I was surprised to find that, at that time, there were very few published references to the use of POV camcorders in education, the social sciences, or applied linguistics. Even Hindmarsh, Heath, and Luff's (2010) relatively recent update of video in research did not consider POV camcorders, the only position that has the potential to provide a truly participatory point-of-view (Figure 1, all images and data used with permission).





Figure 1. Capturing a Participant POV

Though not yet an established instrument for classroom data collection—a situation that is likely to change as recorders become lighter and cheaper—POV camcorders seemed to have a clear advantage for capturing the view of a participant, neither encumbered like a handheld nor constrained like a stationary camcorder. I assumed that the POV camcorder would provide a much closer approximation of what participants actually see, hear, and say during the classroom experience. With an interest in student engagement dynamics (Kindt, 2010), I considered potential pedagogical applications and research avenues worth exploring with this innovative tool, particularly in developing ways to assist students in benefitting from practice conversations in oral communication (OC) classes. It seemed reasonable that when POV camcorders are used to capture exemplary

interactions or pinpoint areas requiring improvement, resulting clips and materials could help develop students' *classroom interactional competence* (CIC), "the interactional competence that will result in more engaged, dynamic classrooms where learners are actively involved in the learning process" (Walsh, 2011, p. 1). Furthermore, since students in OC classes participate regularly in practice conversations, I thought that increasing students' CIC would be particularly beneficial in *collaborative dialogues* (CDs; Swain & Lapkin, 1995), defined by Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman (2011) as "engag[ing] with others as a joint endeavor in meaning making" (p. 34).

After briefly describing POV trials, I provide a selection of classroom materials based on these recordings. These were designed and implemented to explore a tentative research question: Can POV camcorders and subsequent data be employed to increase students' CIC in CDs? Though an empirical examination of this question is beyond the scope of this paper, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using POV camcorders to explore CIC in CDs are presented, followed by a discussion of potential for both classroom applications and future research directions. I argue that data from POV camcorders can provide a previously unavailable and valuable pedagogical resource and can promote further studies using these innovative camcorders, particularly in the area of classroom interaction.

### Introducing the POV Camcorder to Students

After considering a number of POV camcorders (see Kindt 2012b for detailed descriptions and technical specifications), I ordered the first generation of the popular GoPro Hero® late in the summer of 2010, providing me enough time to become familiar with the equipment before introducing it to students in four OC courses at the beginning of the second semester in mid-September. (It is worth noting here that the most recent version of the GoPro camcorder is the Hero 3®, available since December 2012.)

To introduce students to the POV camcorder, I used the same BMX promotional video clips that I saw on the GoPro website. Preparing for conversations about summer activities, I suggested BMX riding as one such activity and showed the students video clips of the same rider from two perspectives, stationary and POV. After discussing some of the differences the perspectives provide and brainstorming some interesting activities to do with a POV camcorder, students suggested *climbing a mountain, cooking something, riding a roller coaster*, and the like. Then we considered the camcorder's potential for English study, and our OC classes in particular. After some time to contemplate the idea and offer some suggestions, including *record our conversations, teach how to do something, and practice giving presentations*, I showed students the camcorder and explained that I thought it would be fascinating to see the class through their eyes, something that teachers rarely—if ever—see. After gauging student interest, which seemed relatively high, I asked for general permission to trial the camcorder and possibly use subsequent data, including images, video clips, and transcriptions, in future classes and for research purposes. I also gave students the chance to contact me after the class or via email should they be uncomfortable with wearing the camcorder, being a wearer's partner, or viewing short clips from the recordings. In all four classes, agreement to make POV recordings and the first volunteer came quickly and no students noted they were uncomfortable with the trials. Some students did, however, request that their video clips not be shown in subsequent classes.

### Developing Materials to Improve Collaborative Dialogues

With the aim of increasing student CIC in self-directing learning opportunities in CDs, I first employed POV camcorders to better understand the nature of student interaction in CDs in my 1st- and 2nd-year OC classes. After viewing the resulting video, I

considered interventions for improving students' IC, particularly for those students who have not yet developed effective interactive skills. To trial interventions, I used the head-held camcorders to capture footage to potentially develop students' grammatical, strategic, and nonverbal competence to help them engage more effectively in CDs. In these competency areas, it is apparent that one advantage that POV camcorders have over standard devices is the wearer's head controls what is captured. This results in a dynamic, participant recording of audio and visual data that can include the teacher, other students, materials, and so on. It would require a number of stationary and handheld camcorders with operators to attempt to capture this dynamic variety.

Besides being head-controlled by a participant, POV camcorders have less apparent advantages. They are a novelty and have an inherent playfulness that differs from stationary camcorders' often research-like impression. This may be due to students' awareness of their use in outdoor sports and by comedians in Japan. Compared with head-held cameras, both handheld and stationary devices effect a distance, both physical and participatory. Thus, POV recordings result in transcriptions that can be exploited for effective examination of grammatical competence because it is likely to be closer to what students actually do and say during classroom events. Similarly, an investigation of strategic and nonverbal competence can be more encompassing because interactions with teachers and other students are also captured, which is not the case with a stationary camcorder unless they move close to the scene. Handheld camcorders may capture such interactions, but they tend to provide roving perspectives, and without such roving a student or pair might become overly self-conscious, particularly with an assistant or another student recording them over extended periods.

In the following sections, I briefly introduce the types of materials used to increase grammatical, strategic, and nonverbal competence in CDs.

## Developing Grammatical Competence

The first instance of bringing student interaction captured by the POV camcorder to a class as a video clip with accompanying materials was a section from approximately the last minute of my introduction to a task (Figure 2) through the first 2 minutes of student conversation completing that task. This resulted in a transcription comprising several lines of my explanation, continuing with student-student dialogue to the end of an A4 page (see Appendix A). It provided a number of potential learning points for helping students to possibly increase formal accuracy and interact more effectively during classroom conversations related to the topic, in this case concerning diet and health.



Figure 2. Video Capture of the Teacher's Instruction From a POV Camcorder

To illustrate, the first learning points in this handout were related to teacher talk. By including an excerpt of my instruction, students were able to get more exposure to some common classroom expressions. In this case, the expressions included,

*anyway, ideas that you can maybe talk about today, I'll give you about 10 minutes, and talk a little bit more freely.* Interestingly, the wearer shadowed "more freely." In the section of student dialogue, a number of grammatical points were presented including "soybeans **are**," "good **to lose our** for losing weight," "is not **good for me** my taste," and "a lot of **new** kinds of soybean milk **was released** **are being sold**." Besides potentially useful classroom expressions and grammatical points, I also drew students' attention to interactional skills related to the appropriate use of electronic dictionaries, nonverbal communication, translation, and effective follow-up questions.

## Developing Strategic Competence

Besides helping students to focus on particular linguistic items, in creating the first set of materials it became clear that the POV clips could also be exploited, as I had hoped, for instruction of conversation strategies, an important element for competent participation in EFL classrooms (Schwab, 2011). Thus, in designing the next set of materials, I used a 2-minute clip from a student conversation in which I was able to pinpoint 10 strategies (Appendix B). In this case, the strategies had all been introduced in previous class meetings. When using the materials in class, we first watched the video and afterward I attempted to elicit some of the strategies being used. Students then watched a second time, trying to fill in the handout on their own. They watched a third time before collaborating with a partner, sharing their choices and discussing any differences. In this class, three strategies in particular seemed to interest the students: (a) interjections, (b) intonation questions, and (c) self-correction. Noting this, I wrote these strategies on the board and students assisted in brainstorming example gambits. Then students were encouraged to try to use at least one gambit from each of the three strategies in a subsequent practice conversation. After the conversations, I asked students to raise their hands if they used

the strategies. The majority of students did so, indicating that it is likely that they were making efforts to integrate these interactive techniques into their conversations.

### **Developing Nonverbal Competence**

Because POV recordings obviously include visual data, I was able to examine not only what is being said, but also what participants are actually doing nonverbally during conversations. Thus, in developing the third set of materials, I decided to introduce this novel use of POV clips by focusing on gesture and facial expression. I extracted a 3-minute excerpt of my explanation of a vocabulary item in the OC textbook, creating a handout similar to that for presenting communication strategies (Appendix B), but with suggested items and blanks for selected gestures rather than strategies. I again gave students a number of opportunities to view the clip; they seemed actively engaged in trying to match the gestures and expressions listed at the top of the handout with their occurrence in the transcription. This engagement seemed especially keen when students collaborated with a partner (Figure 3). Based on the students' general reaction, it appears that their interest is enhanced by video recordings from their own classes, which, being of their own actual production, are likely to be set more closely to their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP; Vygotsky, 1978/1930s), making them easier to access and engage in. The handout provided a number of interactive expressions and matching gestures that became practice points in subsequent conversations, providing students with the potential to gain a greater awareness of the nonverbal aspect of interactions in English conversations.



**Figure 3. Video Capture of POV-Derived Handout as Seen Through a POV**

### **Thoughts on Advantages and Disadvantages**

Although the POV-derived materials listed above are a small sample, after 2 years trialing the POV camcorders in a variety of ways to help increase students' CIC in CDs, it is possible to describe some general advantages and disadvantages. One powerful advantage, as I mentioned earlier, is the camcorder's ability to capture a participant's view of events, whether teacher or student interactions (compare Figure 4 and Figure 5 below, taken at precisely the same time). Without POV camcorders, I would not be able to see and hear a much closer approximation of what students see and hear. I realize that students can hold their heads still and look elsewhere, or speak in a whisper, but the resulting video provides an extraordinary record of one participant's experience in classroom events, a record that is qualitatively different from stationary and handheld video.



Figure 4. Photo From the Teacher's View



Figure 5. Video Capture of Student's View

One disadvantage is that the recording captured by the POV camcorder is still only a single view, and in my OC courses only one of between 12 and 17 participant perspectives. By seeing and hearing what a student and his or her partner are doing during tasks, however, a teacher may be able to make better-informed pedagogical decisions. This assumption can be problematic based solely on single incidents, but when individual samples—enhanced by viewing a number of students over several class meetings—are taken into account, the result can be productive.

In these trials, the process of reviewing POV videos over time has initiated a clearer understanding of the nature of interaction for both individual students and the classes in general. Though I am not yet able to offer empirical evidence for improvement, in the areas of grammatical, strategic, and nonverbal competence the head-held camcorders could capture a record of what students were saying and doing, and provide an innovative approach to potentially targeting and promoting improvement in these areas in subsequent lessons. As multiple recordings are processed and analyzed, I plan to use POV recordings to develop a database of learner interaction to map students' CIC at various skill levels and support progress at each of these levels.

### Logistical Issues

When using POV equipment, there are a number of logistical issues that require extra attention from the teacher or an assistant. It is particularly important for students to be aware how the camcorder will be used, what it will be used for, and how wearers will be selected. The majority of courses under study had immediate volunteers in each class meeting, but three times I had to encourage someone, usually the next person on the class list, to wear the camcorder. Again, permission to use the camcorder and that wearing the camera would be voluntary had been established the first day. All wearers to this point have

volunteered. In one case, however, the wearer felt the camera was uncomfortable, apparently due to hair accessories. The student removed the camera and his partner agreed to wear it. Also, in one group the same student volunteered twice.

I understand that although there was generally great enthusiasm and excitement generated by introducing the POV camcorders to the four courses under study (Figure 6), some students may not want to participate. Should that situation arise, I plan to ask another student to volunteer, request someone volunteer for a second time, wear the camera myself, or refrain from videoing that class session.



Figure 6. Effects of the Camcorder

Finally, there are a number of steps required to successfully record and organize video files. The camcorder must be set properly—with charged batteries and an empty memory card—and turned on. Turning on the equipment is simple, but

in one instance several minutes had passed before I noticed the camcorder was not recording. The video files, which require approximately 4GBs of memory space per hour of capture, need to be copied to a hard disk and organized by course and class meeting. None of these tasks are odious, but they do take time and the development of an efficient organizational system. Transcription for materials development is time consuming, but this has been made easier by improved audio quality due to the GoPro's recent addition of an external 3.5mm microphone plug.

### Further Directions for POV Video

There are many possible directions for classroom studies, including investigations of student interaction, using POV camcorders. With the wealth of interactive information already captured, I am considering the use of NVivo 10 (Richards, 2013), a type of Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), to aid in the organization and analysis of this relatively large amount of data, which include not only the video files and transcriptions, but accompanying materials, photographs, journals, and student feedback. This data will come together in a multimedia database of classroom interaction, tentatively called the *Database of English Learner Interaction (DELI)*, which is expected to contribute to an increased understanding of the nature and development of students' CIC, particularly during CDs. Interested readers can follow the progress of the DELI project online (Kindt, 2012a).

Some other possible areas for further study of learner interaction using POV camcorders include: (a) exploring ways to address the challenging task of aligning teacher and student expectations; (b) involving students more in analyzing clips, perhaps meeting with volunteers outside of class time; (c) designing in-depth questionnaires and conducting interviews to clarify student experience; (e) exploring the effect of the camcorder as,

for example, another teacher presence; and (f) documenting the effectiveness of various communicative tasks.

## Final Thoughts

Although there are a number of issues related to its implementation—including cost, logistic concerns, student comfort, place in the larger curriculum, and integration with other technologies (Figure 7)—there is great potential for new insights into classroom interaction from this innovative camcorder, particularly with the participant perspective it provides. As with all innovations, there will be a period of experimentation and development leading to more efficient and effective methods. After 2 years of trials, however, my impression is that the POV head-held camcorders can open up new possibilities in collaborative learning, materials development, student motivation, teacher education, and other areas of classroom research. I expect it—and future, more-lightweight versions with improved audio capture—to become a staple among educators' observational and developmental tools.



Figure 7. POV and Other Technologies

## Bio Data

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## Appendix A

### Sophomore Oral Communication Class: Excerpt From a Lesson About Health

Write the corrections or improvements on the lines next to where they are used:

1. PK: ...very small portions of meat and convenience foods. Really? How often do you guys eat convenience store food, I wonder. But it says here, "...very rare that people eat a lot of meat or convenience store food." Maybe that's changing. Anyway, some ideas that you can maybe talk about today with this new partner that you are sitting with. I'll give you about 10 minutes. Let's try again to talk a little bit more freely about diet. Go ahead you guys.
2. A: More freely... Do, do, do you think, what food is healthy?
3. B: Ah. Mm. I think, soybean is soybeans are very healthy, because, um... <checks dictionary> ...it have not, uh, uh, sorry, "carbohydrate," so it's, it is good for our health. Have not, uh, high, uh... It's low calorie.
4. A: Mm-hm.
5. B: It's good to lose our, our weight. good for losing weight
6. A: Ah.
7. B: So, I like it.
8. A: <nods>
9. B: How about you? What do you think about healthy food?
10. A: I think, mm, mm, so, something, uh, used soybeans, made of soybeans so for example tofu, or natto, or tonyu. soymilk
11. B: Mm. I see.
12. A: It's, I think it's healthy food.
13. B: Do you like it?
14. A: Yeah. Uh, uh, do you... Uh, can you, can you drink tonyu?
15. B: Yeah, but, uh, natural, natural tonyu...
16. A: Ah!
17. B: ...is not good for me. is not my taste But, oh. Is it sweet? Ah, sweet. Ah, it's a lot of variation of taste...
18. A: <nods>
19. B: For example, strawberry...
20. A: Ah!
21. B: ...and tea, green tea. I like them.
22. A: Ah, yeah, yeah. Recently, a lot of new kinds of to, tonyu, soybean milk is, was released. are being sold So, I think... I... People who don't like to, soybean milk, makes it easier, easier to drink...

## Appendix B

### Freshman Oral Communication Class: Excerpt From a Lesson About Food

Write the strategy on the line next to where they are used:

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. confirmation    | 6. intonation question |
| 2. giving examples | 7. self correction     |
| 3. having fun      | 8. shadowing           |
| 4. interjection    | 9. suggesting a word   |
| 5. interrupting    | 10. using synonyms     |
- 
1. A: Uh, this year...
  2. B: Yeah.
  3. A: ...*nashi*...
  4. B: *Un*.
  5. A: ...is very expensive.
  6. B: Expensive, \_\_\_\_\_ *shadowing* \_\_\_\_\_ uh-uh. I think so, t... Yeah.
  7. A: So it, I ate little. [?]
  8. B: Mm-mm. You don't like *kaki*? \_\_\_\_\_ *intonation question*
  9. A: Yes. [How do you answer a negative question in English?]
  10. B: Japanese fruits.
  11. A: Yes. You like...
  12. B: *Kaki*. \_\_\_\_\_ *suggesting a word* \_\_\_\_\_ <laugh>
  13. A: <laugh> \_\_\_\_\_ *having fun*
  14. B: Yeah, I like x.
  15. A: Yeah, so you often eat *kaki*?
  16. B: Yeah, yesterday, yesterday, I ate *kaki*...at supa, supper. \_

### self correction

17. A: Do you like only fresh *kaki*?
18. B: Mm, yeah, only fresh, raw, raw... \_\_\_\_\_ *using synonyms*
19. A: Mm.
20. B: *Kaki*, yes. <laugh>
21. A: <laugh> Ah. Mm, in this spring vacation...
22. B: *Un*, spring vacation.
23. A: I know you \_\_\_\_\_ *will* \_\_\_\_\_ go to New Zealand...
24. B: Uh, New Zealand, yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ *confirmation*
25. A: What do you think \_\_\_\_\_ *about* \_\_\_\_\_, uh, food, food...
26. B: Food.
27. A: ...in New Zealand? Uh, very...
28. B: I worry about food. \_\_\_\_\_ *interrupting*
29. A: Ah.
30. B: So... I can't eat mayonnaise...
31. A: Ah!
32. B: ...but, I think people...
33. A: Oh.
34. B: ...in New Zealand seems \_\_\_\_\_ *seem to* \_\_\_\_\_ like mayonnaise.
35. A: Really? \_\_\_\_\_ *interjection*
36. B: Mayonnaise, sandwich, or...
37. A: Ah.
38. B: ...hamburger, like, potates potatoes and... \_\_\_\_\_ *giving examples*

# Incidental Increase in Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge Through the Viewing of Subtitled, Authentic Videos

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## Reference Data:

Raine, P. (2013). Incidental increase in depth of vocabulary knowledge through the viewing of subtitled, authentic videos. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

This study investigated the effectiveness of subtitled, authentic videos as tools for incidentally increasing depth of vocabulary knowledge. Low-intermediate level Japanese learners of English were shown authentic videos, subtitled in four different modes (intralingual, interlingual, dual, and no subtitles). A Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) test was administered to the participants to determine whether their depth of knowledge of six items of target vocabulary appearing in the video had been incidentally increased. Incidental increase in depth of vocabulary knowledge was observed for only two of the participants. These findings are discussed and implications for teaching practices are suggested.

本研究では、付随的に語彙知識を深めるツールとして、字幕付きのオーセンティックなビデオの有効性を調査する。日本人の初中級英語学習者に、4つの異なるモード（言語内、言語間、二重言語、字幕なし）の字幕が付いたオーセンティックなビデオを見せた。参加者にはVocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) テストを行い、ビデオに出現する対象となる語彙の6単語の知識が付随的に深まったかどうかを判断した。語彙の知識が付随的に深まったことが観察されたのは、参加者のうち2人のみだった。本論文では、これらの結論について検討し、教育実践のための関連性を提案する。

**M**OST UNIVERSITY English teachers in Japan are fortunate enough to have access to multimedia technology at home and school. However, we should be mindful not to use technology for technology's sake, but only when it provides pedagogical value. The aim of the current research was to assess the extent to which viewing a subtitled, authentic English language video could bring about incidental increases to the depth of vocabulary knowledge of Japanese university learners of English, and thereby “put students in the position where they [were] capable of deriving and producing meanings from lexical items both for themselves and out of the classroom” (Carter, 1998, p. 186).

The main question addressed in this paper is whether “just watching” subtitled, authentic English language videos, that is, neither taking notes nor paying any special attention to new



vocabulary, is sufficient to result in increases to depth of vocabulary knowledge of specific items of target vocabulary appearing in the video. If depth of vocabulary knowledge can be increased in this way, teachers will be able to advise their students to watch subtitled, authentic English language videos in order to increase their vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, if such incidental increase to vocabulary knowledge is improbable or impossible, the futility of just watching such videos in the hope of increasing depth of vocabulary knowledge can be conveyed to learners.

## Literature Review

### What It Means to “Know” a Word

Although there are many factors involved in truly “knowing” a word (Richards, 1976), this research focuses mainly on respondents’ knowledge of the syntactic behavior of words (i.e., “the types of grammatical relations words may enter into,” Richards, 1976, p. 80), and respondents’ knowledge of the meanings of words (i.e., “the most frequent ways in which a word realizes a particular concept,” Richards, 1976, p. 83).

The ways used in the study to assess word knowledge were through respondents’ knowledge of the L1 equivalents of L2 words and their ability to use L2 words in grammatically correct sentences. In order to assess these abilities, a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) test (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) was administered to the participants both immediately prior to and immediately after viewing the treatment video. The VKS is further discussed in the methodology section.

### Incidental Learning

Incidental learning is the process by which something—in this case, foreign language vocabulary—is learnt without the indi-

vidual concerned directing attention specifically toward the act of learning it. Incidental learning is synonymous with implicit learning, and the antithesis of explicit or intentional learning.

Brown (2007) suggested that the real question is not which of these processes is better than the other but “under what conditions, and for which learners, and for what linguistic elements is one approach, as opposed to the other, advantageous for [second language acquisition]?” (p. 292). In the current research, the linguistic element under investigation is vocabulary, and the condition is viewing a subtitled, authentic English language video.

Some existing research (e.g., d’Ydewalle & Van de Poel, 1999; Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999; Neuman & Koskinen, 1992) supports the proposition that increases the depth of vocabulary knowledge can occur incidentally through viewing subtitled L2 videos. In Neuman and Koskinen’s study, for example, it was found that middle school children were able to incidentally increase depth of vocabulary knowledge by watching L2 (intralingual) subtitled English language videos. Similarly, in d’Ydewalle and Van de Poel’s study, primary school learners of French and Danish were able to increase their depth of vocabulary knowledge by watching subtitled videos, even when no attention was explicitly drawn to vocabulary by the teacher either before or during the video viewing. In a study conducted by Koolstra and Beentjes, primary school children who were told to “just watch” L2 subtitled authentic videos were also able to increase their depth of vocabulary knowledge.

Studies that have examined the effect of subtitled videos on vocabulary learning have generally been assessed by self-report (e.g., Katchen, 1997; Tsai, 2009) or by requiring participants to select or produce an L1 equivalent for target words (e.g., Koolstra & Beentjes, 1999; Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009), and both of these established methods were used in the current research.

## **Authentic Videos**

Authentic videos include “feature films, documentaries, commercials, game shows” (Sherman, 2003) and many other kinds of videos that have not been made specifically for learners of English. Authentic videos are those that have been made for the enjoyment or education of native speakers of the language in which the videos were produced. As such, they tend to feature dense and ungraded language (Stempleski, 1992). Authentic videos are said to present “real” language, not in the sense that it is unscripted, but in the sense that it is “intended for native speakers—people who are already familiar with the language” (Stempleski, 1992, p. 9). Allan (1985) suggested that authentic videos provide “slices of living language” (p. 48) in the sense that the amount of realism encoded in video media is greater than that to be found in either written or audio media.

## **Interlingual Subtitles**

Interlingual subtitles are a form of subtitling in which the audio track is in the original language of the video (e.g., English) and the subtitles constitute a translation of the audio track into another language (e.g., Japanese).

## **Intralingual Subtitles**

Intralingual subtitles are a transcription of the audio track of a video into subtitles of the same language (e.g., English audio and English subtitles).

## **Dual Subtitles**

Dual subtitles are the combination of both interlingual and intralingual subtitles displayed on the screen simultaneously. Chang (2003) purported to have coined the term in her study

relating to the interaction between subtitles and schemata (i.e., prior knowledge).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

A total of four all-female Japanese university classes with 9-11 students in each class ( $N = 39$ ) participated in this study. The classes were made up of 1st- and 2nd-year university students with a pre-intermediate level of English, according to the results of a TOEIC Bridge test, which measured the students’ English listening and reading comprehension ability. The students were enrolled in a variety of non-English majors and were taking English lessons in the four main skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Each of the four classes was shown the treatment video subtitled in one of four modes: no subtitles (No-Subs), intralingual subtitles (Intra-Subs), interlingual subtitles (Inter-Subs), and dual subtitles (Dual-Subs). An ANOVA of the four classes’ scores from the previously administered TOEIC Bridge test suggested that the students’ listening and reading abilities differed significantly between classes ( $p < .05$ ). Such statistically significant differences between the four classes’ listening and reading abilities make it difficult to draw direct comparisons between the groups in terms of gains to depth of vocabulary knowledge. However, the aim of this investigation was not to determine which mode of subtitling was most effective, but rather to determine if any of them were. As such, direct comparisons between the four groups are not essential.

### **Materials**

The following materials were used for this study:

- a DVD of Jessi Arrington's *Wearing Nothing New* TED talk (Arrington, 2011), subtitled in the four different modes; and
- a modified version of the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996).

### **Jessi Arrington's Wearing Nothing New TED Talk**

TED Talks are freely available English-language video presentations, many of which have been subtitled in a variety of languages, including Japanese and English. The TED talk chosen for this research was given by Jessi Arrington, an American fashion designer and blogger, whose 6-minute presentation *Wearing Nothing New* (Arrington, 2011) extolled the virtues of buying secondhand clothes.

The video was chosen for its predicted appeal to the fashion-conscious teenage girls who comprised the participants of the research, and its "moderately slow" (Pimsleur, Hancock, & Furey, 1977) rate of speech of 140 words per minute. The English language transcript of the presentation is provided in Appendix A and the Japanese translation in Appendix B.

### **The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale**

Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) was developed to assess the depth of an individual's foreign language vocabulary knowledge. It has since become a commonly used scale in research relating to foreign language vocabulary learning (Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009) and is particularly suited to "track[ing] the early development of knowledge of specific words in an instructional or experimental situation" (p. 33).

The VKS combines assessment of both perceived knowledge and demonstrated knowledge. The version of the VKS utilized in this research required participants to self-report their level

of familiarity with a particular word on a scale of five levels. Additionally, three levels (III, IV, V) required the participants to provide evidence of the reported knowledge by writing either the L1 translation of the word (III, IV, V), or an L2 sentence using the word in context (V).

The five levels of self-reported vocabulary knowledge used in this study were:

- I have never seen this word before.
- I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

Following Yuksel and Tanriverdi (2009), participants' responses for the VKS test were given a score based on the level of the VKS selected for each word. For example, Level I responses (I have never seen this word before) were given one point, Level II responses (I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means) were given two points, and so on. When participants selected a Level III, IV or V response, but their translation or example sentence was deemed to be incorrect (as judged by the researcher), their response was downgraded by one level, for example a participant who selected Level III (I have seen this word before and I think I know what it means) but provided an incorrect translation of the word was assigned a Level II response for that word.

The version of the VKS used in this paper was translated into Japanese, in an attempt to ensure that a potential lack of comprehension of the description of the five vocabulary knowledge levels would not interfere with the ability of the participants to respond to each question. The English language version of the

VKS used in this research is provided in Appendix C and the Japanese translation in Appendix D.

### Target Vocabulary

The items of target vocabulary appearing in the treatment video were selected by virtue of the fact that a direct L1 translation could be located in the Japanese version of the transcript and the meanings of the English words were likely to be unknown to the participants. Table 1 shows each word, its Japanese equivalent as provided in the Japanese transcript, and the word in context in the English transcript.

Table 1. Target Vocabulary for VKS Pre- and Posttests

Word	Japanese translation	Word in context
confession	告白 (kokuhaku)	I'm going to make a very public <i>confession</i> .
phenomenal	素敵な (sutekina)	You can almost always look <i>phenomenal</i> for under \$50.
donate	寄付する (kifusuru)	I'm going to <i>donate</i> everything back.
obsessed	~に夢中です (~nimutyuu)	I'm outfit <i>obsessed</i> .
overrated	過大視されすぎています (kadaisisaresugiteimasu)	Fitting in is way <i>over-rated</i> .
sequins	スパンコール (supankooru)	Gold <i>sequins</i> go with everything.

### Data Collection Procedure

Prior to showing the video, the members of each group were asked to complete the vocabulary pretest (Appendices C/D). They were then shown a DVD of the *Wearing Nothing New* TED talk, subtitled according to the group the participants were in. The video is approximately 6 minutes long and was played twice in succession. The students were not permitted to take notes and were not informed of the specific purpose of the video viewing. The vocabulary posttest was then administered.

### Results

Table 2 shows the scores that the students obtained on the VKS as both a pretest and a posttest as well as any gain between the two tests. A mean score and gain for each group is also provided. As we can see from Table 2, there was a similar, minimal gain in each of the four classes. The mean gain was 1.2 for the Intra-Subs group, 1.4 for the Inter-Subs group, 1.7 for the Dual-Subs group, and 1.0 for the No-Subs group. Student 5 in the No-Subs group made the highest individual gain of 4 points. There were at least two students in each group who made no measurable gains at all. In addition, some students received a lower score on the posttest than on the pretest, and thus their "gains" are in negative figures. This phenomenon is discussed further below.

**Table 2. Vocabulary Gains by VKS Score in Each of the Four Subtitling Groups**

Group	Student #	Pretest score	Posttest score	Gain
Intra-sub	1	9	12	3
	2	12	11	-1
	3	12	12	0
	4	11	12	1
	5	6	9	3
	6	12	12	0
	7	7	8	1
	8	7	8	1
	9	7	9	2
	10	10	12	2
	11	12	11	-1
Group mean	11.7	12.9	1.2	
Inter-sub	1	10	12	2
	2	9	8	-1
	3	9	12	3
	4	9	12	3
	5	12	12	0
	6	10	12	2
	7	10	9	-1
	8	9	12	3
	9	10	12	2
	Group mean	9.8	11.2	1.4

Group	Student #	Pretest score	Posttest score	Gain
Dual-sub	1	6	6	0
	2	8	10	2
	3	12	12	0
	4	11	12	1
	5	8	9	1
	6	10	11	1
	7	12	14	2
	8	9	12	3
	9	10	13	3
	10	10	12	2
Group mean	10.7	12.3	1.7	
No-sub	1	9	12	3
	2	10	11	1
	3	10	11	1
	4	13	12	-1
	5	12	16	4
	6	11	11	0
	7	12	12	0
	8	11	11	0
	9	11	12	1
Group mean	11.0	12.0	1.0	

## Discussion

### **General Failure to Incidentally Increase Depth of Knowledge of Target Vocabulary**

The results of the VKS test seemed to indicate that viewing the treatment video, regardless of the kind of subtitling, caused no significant gains in depth of knowledge of the target vocabulary. It is possible that, even with the addition of subtitles, the video was not at a level where it constituted comprehensible

input (Krashen, 1991) for the students. Furthermore, the limited exposure to the target vocabulary in the video (and pre- and posttests) may not have been sufficient to cause incidental increases to depth of vocabulary knowledge. It seems that a greater number of exposures to new words is necessary to cause such increases, although just how many exposures is a question for additional research.

Lack of increase to depth of vocabulary knowledge could also have been due to the incidental nature of the learning activity. Had the students been instructed to pay special attention to particular words, or permitted to make notes during the video viewing, we may have observed more significant increases to depth of vocabulary knowledge. It is possible, however, that students picked up words from the video other than the target vocabulary. Additional research is required to determine whether or not this is the case.

It is also possible that the language level of the participants was not high enough to allow them to benefit from the effects of incidental learning through video viewing. Neuman and Koskinen (1992) noted a “rich get richer” tendency in the results of their research, whereby “students who were most proficient in English at the outset of the study made more gains than others from the same experience” (p. 103).

Finally, it is possible that longer-term exposure to subtitled, authentic English language videos is necessary to yield any significant vocabulary gains. The participants in Neuman and Koskinen’s (1992) study, for example, viewed numerous subtitled, authentic videos over a 12-week period.

### **Increases to Depth of Knowledge of Target Vocabulary Observed in Two Students**

Student 5 in the No-Subs group and student 9 in the Dual-Subs group were the only two students to choose a Level II response

in the pretest and a Level III response for the same word in the posttest, in which the posttest response was accompanied by a correct Japanese translation of the word in question—*confession* by student 5 and *obsessed* by student 9.

These two exceptional cases suggest that incidentally increasing depth of vocabulary knowledge from watching the treatment video was not impossible, although these students represent the exception rather than the norm.

### **Decreases to Depth of Knowledge of Target Vocabulary Observed in Two Students**

Student 2 in the Intra-Subs group and student 4 in the No-Subs group both selected a Level IV response for one word in the pretest, and a Level III response for the same word in the posttest. This resulted in the loss of a point in relation to that word, and thus an overall negative gain. It is unclear what caused the students to moderate their responses in this way. In both cases the translation of the word in question (*overrated* by student 2 and *donate* by student 4) offered by the students was the same incorrect translation in both the pre- and posttests.

### **Students May Fail to Notice Target Words**

Students 5, 7, 8, and 9 in the Intra-Subs group, students 1, 5, and 6 in the Dual-Subs group, and students 2, 3, 6, and 8 in the No-Subs group all failed to notice at least one of the six target words in the pretest or when watching the video. That is, all of these students selected the Level I response for at least one word on the posttest. This phenomenon might be explained in part by the gap between *input* and *intake*. As Brown (2007) explains, “[intake] is the subset of all input that actually gets assigned to our long-term memory store” (p. 297). In the current study, it is clear that some of the participants did not remember having

seen or heard the target vocabulary in either the pretest or the treatment video.

### **Students May Forget They Have Seen Words**

In the case of students 5, 7, and 11 in the Intra-Subs group, students 2 and 7 in the Inter-Subs group, and student 1 in the Dual-Subs group, the negative overall gains are due to selecting a Level I response on the posttest while a Level II response was selected for the same words on the pretest. It is possible, of course, that some students forgot what they had said on the pretest—that they had seen the target words before—and were therefore inconsistent in their answers on the posttest.

### **Ability of Students to Guess the Meanings of Unknown Words**

After the VKS was administered, a colleague (in personal correspondence) pointed out that the VKS did not account for a case where students might be able to guess the meaning of a word despite not having seen it before. This might be possible if an unfamiliar word was nevertheless made up of familiar morphemes. For example, in the case of the word *overrated*, the respondents may have been familiar with the words *over* and *rate* and thus been able to guess what the meaning of *overrated* might be.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to determine whether the participants' depth of vocabulary knowledge of six target vocabulary items could be incidentally increased from viewing a subtitled, authentic video. Such increases were not observed for the majority of participants. However, a couple of exceptional students showed that such increases were possible to a limited extent.

It is clear that, for the majority of the participants in this study, just watching a subtitled, authentic English language video was not sufficient to cause increases to their depth of knowledge of the target vocabulary. However, the small, nonrepresentative sample dealt with in this research makes it difficult to generalize these results to other English learners.

Students may need to be given more exposure to target words before we can realistically expect depth of vocabulary knowledge to be incidentally increased. Alternatively, fewer exposures coupled with intentional learning may result in the meanings of a greater number of target words being noticed and remembered. For low-intermediate students, a video with a lower level of English than the one selected for this study may be necessary in order to be only “slightly above” the students' current language level (Krashen, 1991). Alternatively, it may be necessary to use nonauthentic videos with graded language for low-intermediate level students.

### **Bio Data**

**Paul Raine** is a Japan-based teacher and writer on TEFL. He is currently the main contributor to “TEFL Journey” <jobs.ac.uk>, a blog for English teaching professionals that provides information on TEFL issues and advice about effective teaching methods and techniques. He obtained his MA in TEFL from the University of Birmingham in 2012. He is particularly interested in integrating technology with English language pedagogy. He teaches at J. F. Oberlin University and several other universities in the Tokyo area.

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## Appendix A

### “Wearing Nothing New” TED Talk Transcript (English)

I'm Jessi, and this is my suitcase. But before I show you what I've got inside, I'm going to make a very public confession, and that is, I'm outfit obsessed. I love finding, wearing, and more recently, photographing and blogging a different colorful, crazy outfit for every single occasion. But I don't buy anything new. I get all my clothes secondhand from flea markets and thrift stores. Aww, thank you. Secondhand shopping allows me to reduce the impact my wardrobe has on the environment and on my wallet. I get to meet all kinds of great people; my dollars usually go to a good cause; I look pretty unique; and it makes shopping like my own personal treasure hunt. I mean, what am I going to find today? Is it going to be my size? Will I like the color? Will it be under \$20? If all the answers are yes, I feel as though I've won.

I want to get back to my suitcase and tell you what I packed for this exciting week here at TED. I mean, what does somebody with all these outfits bring with her? So I'm going to show you exactly what I brought. I brought seven pairs of underpants and that's it. Exactly one week's worth of undies is all I put in my suitcase. I was betting that I'd be able to find everything else I could possibly want to wear once I got here to Palm Springs. And since you don't know me as the woman walking around TED in her underwear (laughter) that means I found a few things. And I'd really love to show you my week's worth of outfits right now. Does that sound good? (Applause) So as I do this, I'm also going to tell you a few of the life lessons that, believe it or not, I have picked up in these adventures wearing nothing new.

So let's start with Sunday. I call this shiny tiger. You do not have to spend a lot of money to look great. You can almost always look phenomenal for under \$50. This whole outfit, including the jacket, cost me 55, and it was the most expensive thing that I wore the entire week.

Monday: Color is powerful. It is almost physiologically impossible to be in a bad mood when you're wearing bright red pants. (Laughter) If you are happy, you are going to attract other happy people to you.

Tuesday: Fitting in is way overrated. I've spent a whole lot of my life trying to be myself and at the same time fit in. Just be who you are. If you are surrounding yourself with the right people, they will not only get it, they will appreciate it.

Wednesday: Embrace your inner child. Sometimes people tell me that I look like I'm playing dress-up, or that I remind them of their seven-year-old. I like to smile and say, "Thank you."

Thursday: Confidence is key. If you think you look good in something, you almost certainly do. And if you don't think you look good in something, you're also probably right. I grew up with a mom who taught me this day-in and day-out. But it

wasn't until I turned 30 that I really got what this meant. And I'm going to break it down for you for just a second. If you believe you're a beautiful person inside and out, there is no look that you can't pull off. So there is no excuse for any of us here in this audience. We should be able to rock anything we want to rock. Thank you. (Applause)

Friday: A universal truth—five words for you: Gold sequins go with everything.

And finally, Saturday: Developing your own unique personal style is a really great way to tell the world something about you without having to say a word. It's been proven to me time and time again as people have walked up to me this week simply because of what I'm wearing. And we've had great conversations.

So obviously this is not all going to fit back in my tiny suitcase. So before I go home to Brooklyn, I'm going to donate everything back. Because the lesson I'm trying to learn myself this week is that it's okay to let go. I don't need to get emotionally attached to these things, because around the corner, there is always going to be another crazy, colorful, shiny outfit just waiting for me, if I put a little love in my heart and look. Thank you very much. (Applause) Thank you.

## Appendix B

### “Wearing Nothing New” TED Talk Transcript (Japanese)

私はジェシー。これは私のスーツケースです。中に入っている物をお見せする前に皆さんの前である告白をします。私は洋服に夢中です。洋服を探すのも着るのも大好き。最近では写真を撮ってブログを書いていて、様々なシーンで使えるカラフルでクレイジーな装いを紹介しています。でも新品の服は買いません。私の服はどれもプリマや古着屋で買ったものです。ありがとうございます！古着の服を買うことで、環境にもお財布にもやさしい洋服選びができます。素敵な人たちとの出会いもあるし、私のお金も立派な目的に使われる事にな

ります。見た目もユニーク。買い物が宝探しのようにも感じられます。今日の戦利品は何?サイズは合う?色は気に入る?20ドル以下で収まる?どの答えもイエスなら、勝ったような気分です。

スーツケースに話題を戻し、TEDで着る為に持参したものを紹介します。こんな服装をしている人間が持ってくるものに興味はありませんか?何を持ってきたのかお見せすると、7枚の下着、これだけです。1週間分の下着をスーツケースに入れてきました。パームスプリングスに着いたら、自分が着たいと思うものはすべて見つかるだろうと思ったからです。TED会場を下着だけで歩き回っているわけではないので(会場:笑い声)、買い物ができたとおわかりでしょう。1週間分の装いを紹介したいのですがどうかしら?(拍手)洋服の紹介をしながら、人生の教訓も述べたいと思います。古着を着る冒険をしながら、教訓を身につけていきました。

日曜日から始めましょう。名付けて輝くトラ。着飾るためにたくさんのお金をかける必要はなく、50ドル以下でも素敵なきがができます。ジャケットを入れても全部で55ドルでした。これが今週のスタイルで最も高かったものです。

月曜日:カラーはパワフル。赤いパンツを履けば不機嫌になるのも生理的にはほぼ不可能(会場:笑い声)。自分が幸せそうにしていれば、幸せな人たちが寄ってきます。

火曜日:協調性は過大視されすぎています。私は自分でであろうとしながら、協調性を求めようとずいぶんな時間を費やしました。ただ自分らしくありましょう。身边を適切な人で固めれば、個性を認めてくれるだけではなく、高く評価してくれます。

水曜日:子どもっぽさを忘れずに。時々ドレスアップをして遊んでいるようだと言われたり、7歳の自分を思い出すと言われます。にっこり笑ってお礼を言います。

木曜日:自信が秘訣。ある服が似合うと思ったら、だいたい場合は似合っていて、ある服が似合わないと思ったら、おそらく似合っていないのです。常にごう教えてくれた母の下で育ちました。でも30歳になるまでこの意味がわかりませんでした。噛み砕いて説明してみます。内面も外面も自分が美しい人間だと思ふなら、着こなせないスタイルなどありません。これは皆さんに言うことです。カッコよく見せたい服装はカッコよく見せられるはず。ありがとうございます。(拍手)

金曜日:万物の真実—あなたへのメッセージ:金のスパンコールは何にもピタリ。最後に土曜日:独自のスタイルの構築は、言葉を使わずに自らを表現するすばらしい方法。こうしたわけで、私の装いが理由で、今週はいろんな方に話しかけられ、充実した会話ができました。

あの小さなスーツケースに全部入れられないので、ブルックリンに帰る前に服はすべて寄付するつもりです。なぜなら、今週学ぼうとしている教訓は、手放しても構わないということだからです。愛着をもつ必要はありません。いつだって身のまわりにはクレイジーでカラフルなキラリと輝く服が私を待ってるんですもの。ハートとスタイルにいつも愛をどうもありがとう。(拍手)ありがとう。(拍手)

## Appendix C

### Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Pretest/Posttest) (English)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### obsessed

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

\_\_\_\_\_

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

\_\_\_\_\_

**donate**

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

---

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

---

**overrated**

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

---

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

---

**sequins**

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

---

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

---

**confession**

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

---

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

---

**phenomenal**

1. I have never seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I don't know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think I know what it means.
4. I have seen this word before, and I know what it means.
5. I have seen this word before, I know what it means, and I can use it in a sentence.

If you checked 3, 4, or 5, please write the Japanese translation of the word below:

---

If you checked 5, please write an English sentence using the word below:

---

**Appendix D****Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (pre-test/post-test) (Japanese)**

名前 (ローマ字): \_\_\_\_\_

**obsessed**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

---

**donate**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

**overrated**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

---

**sequins**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

---

**confession**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

---

**phenomenal**

1. この単語を見たことはありません。
  2. この単語を見たことはあるが、意味は分かりません。
  3. この単語を見たことがあり、意味もおそらく分かります。
  4. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かります。
  5. この単語を見たことがあり、意味も分かり、文の中で使うことができます。
- 3、4、5のいずれかにチェックをした方は、この単語の日本語の意味を書いてください。

---

5にチェックをした方は、その単語を使用した例文を書いてください。

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# Motivating Students With Humorous One-Point Videos

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## Reference Data:

Thollar, S. (2013). Motivating students with humorous one-point videos. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Much of the literature and published research on L2 motivation has moved its focus from promoting motivation to avoiding demotivation. Some evidence appears quite convincing that teachers are responsible for demotivating learners, but learner-centered intrinsic motivation also needs to be considered. Keller's ARCS model was applied as a way to provide a systematic motivational design process to the construction and application of a humorous series of short, one-point English learning videos and online exercises. To evaluate the effectiveness of the series, a pilot survey containing eight questions was given to 14 students acting as testers. The results of the study show that 93% of the students enjoyed the activity and 86% reported experiencing positive learning outcomes from using the video series.

最新の第二言語学習者のモチベーションに関する先行研究の多くは、その焦点を学生のモチベーションを高めることから、モチベーションの低下を回避することに移行している。教員は学習者のモチベーションを下げる原因となりえるが、それのみではなく、学習者を主体とした、学習者本来のモチベーションを考慮する必要があるという研究結果は重要である。一連の短くシンプルでユーモラスな英語学習動画およびオンライン練習問題からなる本学習教材の構築および応用のために、体系的モチベーション向上のためのデザイン・プロセスを提供する方法としては、ケラーのARCSモデルを応用した。本教材の効果を測定するために、14人のテスター学生を対象に、本教材からの8つの問題を用いてパイロット調査をおこなったところ、93%の学生がその活動を楽しむと同時に、86%の学生が本教材から積極的な学習効果を経験したと解答した。

**D**EMOTIVATION NEGATIVELY affects learner behavior, hinders autonomous thought, and leads to continuing low performance (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Demotivated learners are “turned off” and often appear detached, disengaged, or ambivalent about learning. In an attempt to improve the low performance of such demotivated learners, a series of net-based humorous one-point videos and associated online exercises was developed to help activate EFL learning and improve basic English skills. The video series was constructed using a systematic motivational design process, John Keller's (1987) ARCS model, and its validity was tested in a pilot program, using a small number of learners who were asked to evaluate the program. Their feedback was analyzed and evaluated. The object of creating the series was to test the credibility and effectiveness of such a tool as an L2 motivator and ascertain whether such a methodology could genuinely motivate unenthusiastic or low performing students and promote positive learning outcomes.

## Motivation and the Teacher

Recently, much of the literature and published research on L2 motivation has moved its focus from promoting motivation to avoiding demotivation (Falout & Maruyama, 2004, Falout & Falout, 2005, Dörnyei, 2001). This is summarized best by Christophel and Gorham (1995) who observed that motivation is most strongly affected not by what teachers do, but what they don't do, arguing that an absence of demotivators is much more effective in producing positive learning outcomes than the presence of motivators.

In SLA studies on motivation, as Falout and Falout (2005) indicated, findings are corroborative, identifying the teacher as the major source and often the primary cause of demotivation. Dörnyei (2001) identified nine demotivating factors, claiming that teacher competence, commitment, personality, and teaching method are not only the most common causes of demotivation but are also responsible for 40% of the demotivation that students experience (p. 151). While Dörnyei's research has been largely conducted in Europe, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) reiterated this finding in a Japanese context, indicating two consistently top-ranking attributes were "teachers' classes being boring or monotonous" (p. 60). Potee (2002) also reported similar findings in Japan, just as Millette and Gorham (2002) and Kearney, Plax, and Allen (2002) identified the same tendency within a North American context, noting that displeasing or unpleasant teacher behaviors or personalities were among the highest causes of demotivation. Other demotivating behaviors that emanate from the teacher have been identified in various studies, such as overly pedantic behavior and ridicule (Arai, 2004), anger at questions and blaming students for lack of understanding (Falout & Maruyama, 2004), preferential treatment (Dörnyei, 2001) and a lack of competence, preparation, or enthusiasm (Falout & Falout, 2005). This was further reiterated in survey findings presented by Falout, Murphey, Elwood, and Hood (2008), who noted that students identified the teacher as the major thing

they did not like or found unhelpful in both high school and junior high school grammar translation classes.

## Motivation and the Learner

The evidence seems fairly overwhelming that teachers are responsible for demotivating learners, albeit unintentionally. However, both Dörnyei (1998) and Falout and Falout (2005) identified reduced self-confidence in learners as a major significant factor in demotivation. Falout and Falout also suggested that the earlier learners are subjected to demotivators, the less likely the learners will be able to control their affective states, leading to what Sosa and Casanave (2007) described as learners who are "out of reach, disengaged, or uninvolved" (p. 240). As Falout, Stillwell, and Murphey (2012) indicated, this in turn can demotivate teachers in their professional practices, leading to a potentially vicious circle in which they become demotivated by unenthusiastic learners who lack "motivation, interest, (or) purpose" (Sosa & Casanave, 2007, p. 240), thereby perpetuating the same negative behavior from all participants.

## Increasing Motivation

As Hasegawa (2004) reported, language learning failure is considered to be highly related to demotivation, but the source is not always the teacher. There are other causes. Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009) divided demotivating factors into three categories, classified as external (of the learning environment), internal (of the learner), or reactive behaviors (to the demotivation process). They added that less proficient learners have more difficulty in controlling their affective states to cope with demotivating experiences. However, such demotivation could easily come from sources other than the teacher, such as lesson material and format, learning experience design, or difficulty level, in addition to other external or internal factors.

An activated, dynamic, motivated teacher does not guarantee a motivated and motivating learning experience. Consider the case of the learner who just doesn't "get it." The learner may become demotivated or feel incompetent from being unable to complete a task or grasp a concept, despite the teacher's best motivating efforts. Also, decreasing demotivators to improve learning outcomes, as recommended by Christophel and Gorham (1995) may not be an easy task. Increasing motivators may be more realistic.

Studies such as those by Yair (2000) indicated that learners are more likely to be engaged in the learning process when they are actively involved and given some investment (choice and control) in the learning process. Furthermore, Ushioda (1998) found that demotivated learners were able to maintain their learning by circumventing perceived demotivators and adopting motivational strategies to encourage their own motivation. Reversing demotivation should thus not only focus on reducing teacher-centered demotivators but also on increasing motivators.

For this reason, Keller's (1987) ARCS model was adopted as a way to provide a systematic motivational design process. The ARCS model, an acronym from the first letters of the words *attention*, *relevance*, *confidence* and *satisfaction*, offers a problem-solving approach to designing motivational aspects of learning environments, with each stage suggesting how to stimulate and maintain students' motivation to learn. In other words, if the subject material or teaching method is perceived to be interesting or valuable, the learner will be more likely to pay *attention* to what is being taught. Similarly, if the content is perceived as *relevant*, the learner will be more motivated to learn and continue learning. This in turn leads to *confidence* as the learner comes to realize that success in both learning and understanding the new content is possible, ultimately resulting in *satisfaction*. The learner prevails by being able to successfully achieve the originally desired goal, and the process, being both cyclic

and self-reinforcing, engenders further motivation to learn and succeed, with much of the responsibility for engendering motivation and decreasing demotivation being moved from the teacher to the learner.

### The ARCS Model: A Model to Motivate Learners

Recognizing the value of the systematic reinforcement process in Keller's model, it was decided to test the viability of using video-based language learning within the ARCS framework. The elements of humor, brevity, simplicity, and a visual aspect all appeared to fit well within what could be accomplished using the model, allowing the design and creation of a platform to teach basic English through humorous one-point videos (see Figure 1).

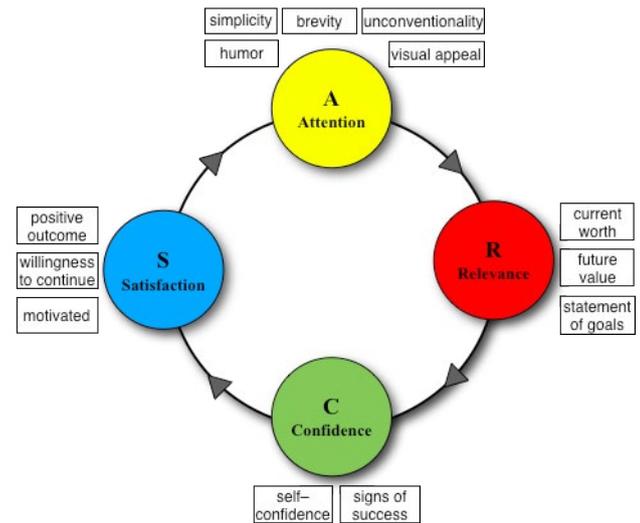


Figure 1. Motivational Aspects of Keller's ARCS Model When Applied to Short Movies

The first and most important component of the ARCS model is gaining and maintaining the learner's attention. In our model, attention is gained by using five features: humor, visual appeal, brevity, simplicity, and unconventionality. There are reasons for these choices. Foremost, humor is not only appealing and attention grabbing but has been shown to facilitate learning in subjects perceived by students as difficult (Kher, Moslstad, & Donahue, 1999), in addition to encouraging the retention of new information (Torok, McMorris, & Lin, 2004), and increasing learning speed (Gorham & Christophel, 1990). Visual appeal promotes attention by its very nature; watching movies is generally more fun than listening to a teacher. One of Keller's (2008) strategies for gaining attention included sensory stimuli; he claimed that incorporating visual media into the learning experience makes the learner more attentive (pp. 176-177). This, along with a recent British survey that found university students have an average attention span of only 10 minutes (Richardson, 2010), explains why the videos in our series are limited to 3 minutes or less in length. They are also simple, teaching only one basic point. Avoiding complexity reduces the likelihood of frustration for the learner, which helps ensure satisfaction. Finally, just as Keller (2008) stressed the importance of variability in achieving satisfaction, an attempt is made to capture attention by being unorthodox. The format of the videos is unconventional. There are no actors—just paper, pens, and hastily drawn images filmed using an overhead camera. The story of each video follows the adventures of a character drawn on paper.

If learners perceive the second component, relevance, in what they are studying, motivation will increase. As Shepherd (2009) observed, linking learning experiences with desirable outcomes, especially in terms of current worth and future value, is important for demonstrating relevance. A university student might, for example, associate better English ability with a greater chance of gaining employment. A list of goal-oriented state-

ments and objectives will also help the learner to see progress. Our series uses simple titles for each movie and exercise, clearly showing the learner the target language focus, or the goal for that lesson. The associated follow-up exercises allow further practice of the lesson point, both demonstrating the relevance of the exercise itself and reinforcing the learning experience.

Likewise, confidence is gained as learners sense some ability to understand the content of the short movies and increases as learners are able to succeed at extension exercises. Every video begins with a very simple one-point English lesson that is both short and easy to understand. The extension exercises are initially very simple and enable the learner to build confidence by attaining the correct answer. The problems gradually become more difficult, extending the student and reinforcing new understanding.

Finally, satisfaction results when learners find they are able to complete a given task (Keller, 2008, p.177). If an activity is satisfying, the learner is more willing to repeat it. The aim is to pique attention with a short, entertaining, unconventional movie in which a comic figure explains a simple English language point. The learner may realize that English is not as difficult as he or she had thought, and that English proficiency might be attainable. In this way, if the learner can successfully understand the movie content and complete the online exercises, it is hoped that confidence will increase, which will satisfy the learner and likely inspire him or her to continue studying in that area.

### Short Movies as Motivators

The video series was developed in an attempt to help low proficiency, non-English major university students who demonstrated difficulty or poor motivation in learning English. As noted by Falout, Elwood, and Hood (2009), less proficient learners have more difficulty in controlling their affective states to cope with

demotivating experiences, leading to many learners developing and harboring a negative attitude toward English language study.

If, as the literature maintains, the teacher is a major source of the demotivation, and if there is minimal change in teacher behavior, continued study in a conventional manner using traditional methodology and orthodox materials seems likely to perpetuate the same demotivating effects and poor results. Accepting Gee's (2003) assertion that learning won't occur without motivation and Prensky's (2001) resolute belief that the challenge of the educator is to engage "digital native" students via their technology, the use of short, relevant, one-point videos and associated online exercises to help in teaching basic English skills seemed like a valid and appropriate way to successfully motivate and engage learners. Such an approach offers a viable alternative by employing different techniques and strategies to motivate the student.

### The Zombie Guy Series

The name of the short video series is *Zombie Guy* and it was chosen due to the prevalence of zombies in popular culture. Movies using a cat or dog could just as easily have been made, but it seemed they would not have the same impact as zombies. The unusual characteristics of zombies affords the opportunity to include some unexpected levity in presenting language structures; for example, *Zombie Guy* looks at a hacked-off leg to illustrate the sentence *I love meat* (see Figure 2). Visual and verbal humor, along with an unorthodox delivery method, help make the character and the key sentences memorable in a fun, informal way. The goal is to give turned-off students a back door to English, to compensate for negative experiences or poor performances in the past, and to provide learners with a second chance to understand and succeed in what may have been a disliked, written-off subject.

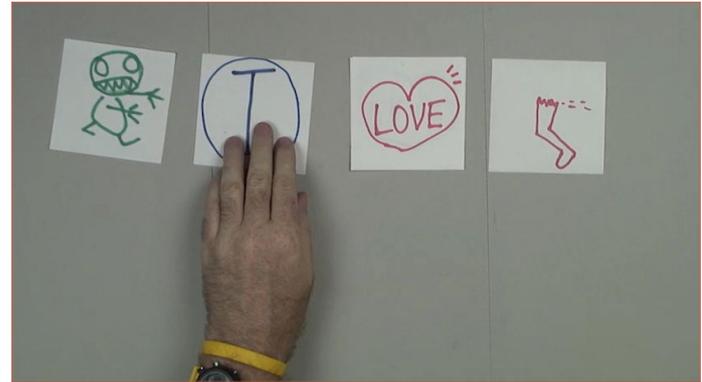


Figure 2. Infographic Representation of I Love Meat. (The main character, *Zombie Guy*, is on the left.)

### Features of *Zombie Guy*

The *Zombie Guy* series is designed to be appealing due to its humorous, unconventional themes, its compactness, and its delivery method. Using Keller's ARCS model, it is devised to produce positive learning experiences and motivate learners to continue learning.

The website ([ochimusha.com](http://ochimusha.com)) where both the movies and exercises are located is called the *Zombie Guy Diary*. The learner proceeds to the page and logs in; a unique record is kept for each user. Then the learner can click on the "day" of the diary that he or she wishes to study. Each day presents a theme or learning objective, usually with a suitably zombie-like title. For example, if learners click on *Day Three—They fight monsters*, they are taken to the video and related exercises (in this case presenting the third person plural). After watching the video, the learner can choose to either complete the extension questions online or download and print out a PDF version.

The online exercises test three different skills. The first exercise checks the learner's understanding of the word order, the second checks the learner's ability to translate a simple Japanese sentence into English, and the third is a multiple-choice problem. (See Appendix A for the PDF exercise from *Day One*.)

The online version is more effective as a motivator as it is self-correcting, calculates scores, and also contains an algorithm to display a *smile factor*—the degree of pleasure indicated on the face of a green monster, located at the end of each exercise. This smile factor is based on the respondent's answers, serving as an additional motivational feature. Faces range from a wide smile to expressions of various degrees of distress (see Appendix B). The PDF version does not contain this motivational feature. (See Table 1 for a comparison of features.)

**Table 1. Comparison of Student Exercise Formats and Functions of *Zombie Guy***

Functions	Online Exercises	PDF Exercises
Self-correcting	Yes	No
Automatic grading	Yes	No
Smile factor	Yes	No
All exercises	Yes	Yes
Printable	No	Yes
Downloadable	No	Yes

### Student Feedback

To evaluate the effectiveness of the series, a pilot survey containing eight questions was given to 14 students who were testers.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to confirm that both the process and material were not just amusing, but also motivating and educational. The questions were designed to test these objectives (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Survey Questions and Items Being Tested for**

No.	Question	Testing for
1	I have learnt something new.	Awareness of positive learning outcome
2	I would like to continue learning this way.	Acceptance of <i>relevance</i>
3	The length of the movies is appropriate.	Ability to understand content of short movie
4	The online exercises are easy to understand.	Willingness to undertake online exercises
5	I feel more confident constructing English sentences.	<i>Confidence</i> gained through understanding
6	I enjoyed this activity.	<i>Satisfaction</i> from perceived ability to succeed
7	Zombie Guy is cool!	Gaining and maintaining <i>attention</i>
8	I prefer regular classroom teaching.	Willingness to try unorthodox learning

In particular, questions 7, 2, 5 and 6 focus on the necessary requirements for motivation to occur, as specified in Keller's ARCS model. That is, they are testing for the learner's *attention*

being piqued, an acceptance of the *relevance* of the material, a showing of *confidence* brought by understanding, and a statement of *satisfaction* from the perception of likely success.

The survey itself was presented with a 4-point Likert scale, with respondents given the choice to *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. As Clason and Dormody (1994) advised, neutral choice was specifically and intentionally excluded from the scale. A neutral response is often interpreted as a *don't know* response, which is quite different to a *neither agree nor disagree*. It has also been noted that such factors as fatigue, reticence, uncertainty or ambivalence can lead to an over abundance of neutral responses (Schuman & Presser, 1996). The results can be seen below in Table 3.

**Table 3. Student Responses to Survey (N = 14)**

No.	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I have learnt something new.	6	6	2	0
2	I would like to continue learning this way.	4	9	1	0
3	The length of the movies is appropriate.	8	6	0	0
4	The online exercises are easy to understand.	4	8	1	1
5	I feel more confident constructing English sentences.	5	7	2	0
6	I enjoyed this activity.	5	8	1	0
7	Zombie Guy is cool!	7	6	1	0
8	I prefer regular classroom teaching.*	0	1	8	4

Note. \* One student did not answer this question.

As can be seen, the bulk of the responses seem to agree or strongly agree with the propositions, with the exception of question 8, which was a transposed question. In this case, the majority disagrees with the proposition.

From the survey, it can be seen that most students acting as pilot testers (86%) felt they had learnt something (Q1). Most (93%) also noted a desire to continue learning this way (Q2). All students thought the movie length was appropriate, validating our belief that short activities capitalize on short attention spans (Q3). Fourteen percent of students did not like the online exercise format, and found it difficult to understand (Q4). That may be due to a lack of confidence with spelling or keyboard typing. Most students (86%) felt they had obtained a grasp of basic sentence construction and felt comfortable making sentences (Q5). All but one student (93%) enjoyed the activity (Q6), and the same number also liked Zombie Guy (Q7). Besides being descriptor testers for the ARCS model, the purpose of questions 6 and 7 was also to differentiate student feeling concerning the learning as opposed to the character, Zombie Guy. No student strongly preferred regular classroom teaching (Q8), and 86% strongly disagreed with the proposition that classroom teaching is preferable. The responses indicate that the format and content are an appropriate learning vehicle and are effective as motivators.

## Discussion

Not only avoiding demotivation but also increasing motivation improves the learning process. As indicated by Schmidt (1990) and Sharwood-Smith (1994), learning is only that part of the *input* that the learner *intakes*. If the learner has no intake, learning will likely not occur. Despite the demotivating effects that the teacher may have on the learner, if the learner can successfully be motivated to intake at least some of the input, learning will occur. In other words, applying well thought out teaching

material and learning content to a systematic motivational design process results in a higher intake and a positive result for the learner. Capturing the attention of the student with an interesting approach, showing the relevancy of the material, and promoting confidence through appropriate design and reinforcement activities all lead to satisfaction, which motivates the student and increases learning.

## Conclusion

As the use of technology in English education continues to increase, so will the demand for innovative and creative implementations using the new technologies. As shown by the survey results, the humorous one-point video series presented here successfully demonstrates a systematic way to motivate low performance EFL learners. Plans are to continue the Zombie Guy project until a large bank of short videos targeting basic English skills has been created. A more detailed questionnaire with a larger sample will be undertaken upon completion.

## Bio Data

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## Appendix A

### Sample Zombie Guy PDF Exercise

Example of the 3 sets of exercises from lesson 1 of Zombie Guy. The example is taken from the pdf download.

**The ZombieGuy Diary** Day ONE

**A** Please help ZombieGuy! What is his message?

e.g. have, two heads, I → I have two heads.

- 1 dead people, see, I
- 2 eat, I, red meat
- 3 fight, monsters, I
- 4 like, I, sleeping
- 5 at night, walk, I
- 6 drink, I, blood
- 7 humans, love, I
- 8 I, horror movies, watch
- 9 I, and Japanese, English, speak
- 10 have, zombie friends, many, I

**B** Can you translate ZombieGuy's comments into English?

e.g. 俺はテレビを見る。 → I watch TV.

- 1 俺はハロウィンが好きだ。
- 2 俺はナイフを持っている。
- 3 俺はチョコレートを食べる。
- 4 俺は野球をやります。
- 5 俺は黒が大好きです。
- 6 俺はトマトジュースを飲む。
- 7 俺は英語を勉強する。
- 8 俺は古い服を着る。
- 9 俺は歯磨き粉を買う。
- 10 俺は太陽が大嫌い。

**C** Tough question! A day in ZombieGuy's life. Choose the best word

I eat (drink, meat, street) everyday. I (friend, eat, sleep) beef in the morning and (pork, night, I) drink coke for lunch. I (zombie, walk, fight) monsters in the afternoon. At night, I watch (have, head, TV) and (I, see, make) hunt people at midnight. I (eat, go, play) to bed in the morning.

*ZombieGuy Productions ZGP*

*watch  
like  
have  
wear  
buy  
play  
love  
hate  
eat  
drink  
study*

## Appendix B

### Sample Zombie Guy Online Exercise

Screenshot of online exercise showing problems and monster's face indicating degrees of happiness or distress according to the answer.

**I. DAY ONE. I FIGHT MONSTERS.**

Share More info

**A. Please help ZombieGuy! What is his message?**

e.g. have, two heads, I => I have two heads.

- (1) dead people, see, I =>
- (2) eat, I, red meat =>
- (3) fight, monsters, I =>
- (4) like, I, sleeping =>
- (5) at night, walk, I =>

(C)ZGP

# Self-Directed Internet- Based Extensive Listening Portfolios

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## Reference Data:

Ducker, N. (2013). Self-directed Internet-based extensive listening portfolios. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

To successfully learn a language, lots of language input is necessary. However, Japanese university students have limited class hours, in which teachers need to balance many activities, such as communication practice, grammar explanations, and feedback. This paper reports on one teacher's efforts to give students enough input through extensive listening portfolios that were used as homework for 2 semesters. The portfolio utilizes materials widely available on the Internet to primarily focus on extensive listening while giving opportunities for form-focused practice, output, and negotiated interaction. I describe student reactions to the portfolios, teacher observations about the success of the portfolios, subsequent adjustments to the portfolios, and recommendations for further improvements to the portfolios.

学習者のアクションは、言語学習の成功の中心となるが、テストとは、教師やカリキュラム設計者が、学生にやる気を起こさせる為に使用する学習過程で重要なもので、学生が自分の進捗状況を知り、テスト前後の学習を高めるのに役立つものである。それ故、より効果的に実施されたテストでは、学生の学習活動にプラスのウォッシュバック効果をもたらすはずである。テストの過程から最大限の利益を得る為に、課題を実施し採点した後、よりよいフィードバックをする事で、学生はさらに良い学習習慣を生み出し、注意を必要とする分野に努力を集中させる事ができる。この論文は、1学期において8つのスピーキング課題を実施し、質の良い練習課題を数多くこなす事によって、テスト前後の学習者の発達を促しスピーキングプログラムの効果を向上させる為に、教師/研究者がデータを収集した日本のある私立大学のスピーキングプログラムの評価をレポートしたものである。

**L**EARNING A language takes considerable time and effort. For example, Lyddon (2011) described how the average Japanese university student on matriculation would require 1000 hours of instruction to achieve a level of proficiency that would allow the student to use English to study abroad or for work. This high level of exposure to English is not even possible in a Japanese university course of study (Lyddon, 2012). Teachers must therefore in some way motivate students to carry out additional English studying outside of class.

Ellis (2005) outlined 10 principles of instructed learning that can help guide a selection of study activities. These principles are:

1. Students must learn formulaic chunks of language as well as learning grammatical rules.
2. Students should focus on pragmatic meaning.
3. Students, while primarily focusing on pragmatic meaning, should also attend to accurate forms.



4. Students need to develop implicit knowledge.
5. Learning needs to take into account the natural order of acquisition.
6. Massive amounts of target language input are required.
7. Students need opportunities to output.
8. Students need opportunities to interact.
9. Teachers should attend to students' individual differences, especially in motivation and aptitudes.
10. In order to examine proficiency, free production should be examined.

Item number 6, massive amounts of input, is the key point in learning a language. One of the earliest and most influential proponents of the need for L2 input was Krashen, who put forward the input hypothesis (1982, 1985), in which he proposed that the only prerequisite for successfully learning an L2 was comprehensible input. Despite numerous criticisms of the input hypothesis (see Brown, 2000, for a review), the idea that understandable input is an important part of language learning and L2 acquisition remains highly influential. Ellis (2005) confirmed this when he wrote, "If learners do not receive exposure to the target language they cannot acquire it. In general, the more exposure they receive, the more and the faster they will learn" (p. 15). Ellis went on: "If the only input students receive is in the context of a limited number of weekly lessons based on some course book, they are unlikely to achieve high levels of L2 proficiency" (p. 15).

Given the time constraints that Lyddon (2011) pointed out, it is necessary for teachers to find some way to supply students with large amounts of input outside of the classroom. In the EFL context, where real English interaction is hard to come by, this leaves students with options of reading (e.g., books and Internet articles), watching (e.g., movies or YouTube clips), listening (e.g., CDs and audiobooks) or a combination thereof (e.g., a

newspaper article with associated video from the Internet). How much reading, watching, and listening is enough cannot be answered easily, but it is clear that the amount is massive—for example, for a language learner to be able to read a newspaper, magazine, or novel without the aid of a dictionary they would need to know up to 9000 word families (Waring, 2009). To learn these 9000 words sufficiently well through reading, that student would need to read 30,000,000 words of text (Waring, 2012).

Arguably, students should be spending even more time on listening than on reading input. In terms of language learning, Brown (1987) argued that listening is the foundation skill upon which all other communication skills are developed. Furthermore, the skill of speaking is almost entirely dependent on interlocutors having had enough listening proficiency to interpret each other's oral messages (Yin Mee, 1990). Furthermore, according to Purdy (1997), listening is the most important among the communication skills needed for a successful career. The need for strong listening abilities in education is further underlined by Davis (2000), who found that Australian college students spent 64.7% of their time in oral and aural communication situations while only spending 12.3% of their time reading and 9.8% of their time writing. Additionally, Janusik and Wolvin (cited by Janusik, n.d.) found that the average American university student spent 2.22 hours per day on listening compared to 1.24 hours per day on writing and 0.78 hours per day on the Internet. For my students, who will eventually take content lectures in the English language, and for any students intending to study abroad, the need for listening practice is a particularly relevant problem.

In addition, the nature of spoken language and listening pose multiple challenges for the student that reading does not. Some of the problems when listening are:

1. The speed of input often cannot be controlled (Brown, 2011).

2. Input cannot easily be revisited (Brown, 2011).
3. Input is altered by reductions, blending, elisions, and so on, that are affected by preceding and subsequent sounds—written spelling does not change (Rost, 2002).
4. Input uses less standard grammar and more colloquial language (Brown, 2011).
5. Input is often accompanied by body language / gestures (Brown, 2011).
6. Input can be modified by sounds such as stress and intonation (Rost, 2002).
7. Input can be interfered with by volume, clarity, and background noise (Anderson & Lynch, 1988).
8. Input is subjected to different accents (Ur, 1984).
9. Input will be interfered with by affective factors including interlocutor relationships, environment, and associated stress.
10. Listening is often part of a dynamic whereby the listener is required to give a response (Ur, 1984), thus listeners' focus on input is often complicated by the need to prepare corresponding responses.

Indeed, this difficulty may be reflected in EFL reality. Waring (2010) advised that to carry out extensive listening, Japanese students should use texts two levels lower than their reading ability.

While there is a strong argument for students to focus a significant amount of time on gaining L2 input through listening activities, listening as a skill is undertaught and underresearched (Brown, 2011; Vandergrift & Goh, 2011). Furthermore, listening for gaining L2 input, or extensive listening (EL), is not only underresearched, but also underemployed by language teachers and programs (Waring, 2010). A review of the recent 2011 *First Extensive Reading World Congress* (Extensive Reading

Foundation, 2011) held in Kyoto revealed that only six of the 153 presentations at the conference dealt with EL in any way. At the 2012 *5th Annual Extensive Reading Seminar "Extensive Reading: Research and Practice"* (JALT Extensive Reading SIG, 2012) which also covers EL, no presentations were made on EL.

## The Study

Taking into account the four factors—class time is limited, students need lots of language input, listening input is potentially more challenging than reading input, listening as a skill is undertaught and underdeveloped—I decided to create an EL portfolio for my students for homework. The aims of the portfolio were as follows:

1. to promote students exposure to English input, primarily aural, but also through written texts;
2. to develop as many opportunities as possible to take part in activities that align with Ellis's (2010) 10 principles of instructed learning;
3. to have students complete as many activities as possible outside of the classroom and not have the portfolio interfere overly much with class time; and
4. to encourage students to continue to practice listening activities in addition to set homework once courses have ended.

The portfolio was initially used at an international, dual language, private university in Japan with 46 pre-intermediate level (TOEFL scores 400-439) students in two compulsory English classes. Each class met four times a week, and the portfolio was required homework for each class. The following semester, based on my observations and student feedback, the portfolio was used with changes in an elementary-level class that met twice a week.

In order to find suitable materials for the portfolios, I compared multiple websites, and chose <www.elllo.org> (a website with over 2,000 natural conversations) for a number of reasons.

1. *Genre:* I believe that the listening genre that holds the most interest for students wishing to communicate with people from other cultures is conversations, as per Yashima (2002, 2009). Fewer people tend to listen to stories than read them, and newspaper reports are delivered in a different manner than television news reports. Thus, I believed that listening to CDs of graded readers or listening to news websites would be of little interest to the majority of students, outside of those who specifically enjoy those activities. Additionally, in terms of acquiring communicative skills, I believed that conversations hold greater value than other genres. For example, the tone of voice for news reading does not vary as much as voices in a conversation, and the repair, negotiating, and back channeling features of a conversation are not employed in a reading of a graded reader.
2. *Practicality:* The website has a wide range of conversational topics, and all of them are available for free. Additionally, the texts are organized into varying difficulty levels and there is a wide range of lengths of texts, with shorter ones that are more suitable for weaker learners and longer texts for stronger learners. Without a sign-up page, the website is easy to use, and the audio files are accessible from the homepage.
3. *Authenticity:* One problem of many listening texts is that many paralinguistic features are interfered with due to scripting and careful (slow) reading of texts. This is not the case on this website—all texts are recorded from unscripted conversations, with no rehearsal. Thus they provide students with access to naturally produced language. Furthermore, there is a wide range of accents from all around the world.

4. *Usefulness:* While the primary purpose of the portfolio was to engage students in EL input; scripts and quizzes are available for all texts, thus enabling students to carry out further intensive work, including grammar and comprehension practice.

## Portfolio 1

Portfolio 1 was used daily with the students four times a week. At the beginning of the semester, they were introduced to the portfolio. They were advised that the aims of the portfolio were to help them get access to enough English to improve all areas of their English knowledge (develop their implicit knowledge). In class, students were directed through the following steps:

1. navigate to the website;
2. choose a topic that they were interested in;
3. predict the potential contents of the listening by writing down questions using prompts—who, how many, what, where, why, how, does he/she, is he/she;
4. listen to the audio file;
5. listen to the audio file a second time and summarize the topic of the text and three key points;
6. copy and print the script, then listen to the text again and read the script at the same time;
7. use the script to find sections of vocabulary or grammar that they did not understand and check the meaning;
8. shadow a portion of the text (one interlocutor's lines from the script) while reading to improve individual word recognition and individual word pronunciation;
9. listen to a selected portion of the audio file and mark word stresses on the printed script; then read, listen, and shadow again to practice word stress;

10. without the script, listen and shadow to improve spoken output speed (fluency), blended sounds, elisions, and reduced sounds;
11. without the script, listen and shadow to improve intonation and sentence-level stress;
12. form small groups and report what they heard back to the group;
13. continue a discussion based on their topics—an example, written on the board, was if they had chosen a topic about shopping, they could ask questions such as “How often do you go shopping?” or “Where do you like to go shopping?”; and
14. for review and to help make recommendations to others, keep a record of their listening activities and follow-up discussions in a paper portfolio.

### Further Instructions

- Steps 1 to 6 were activities that students were expected to complete every night in preparation for the next day’s class.
- Students were advised that they should select one of steps 7-11, or any combination thereof, for further study. Whichever they chose to do they were advised that it was important to maintain consistency—improvement would only be achieved in one area if they repeatedly practiced it.
- For any shadowing activity, students were advised to complete a minimum of three repetitions.
- In class, students would complete steps 12 and 13 whilst I checked the printouts of the scripts for key points (steps 3 and 5) and further study.

This preparation lesson lasted for the whole 95-minute session. For each subsequent lesson until the end of the semester, students were expected to complete one listening activity from the website. As the class was one of over a dozen at the same

level, I was not permitted to adjust the grading scheme for the class, so no grades were assigned for the completion of the activities. The portfolio was designed with the intention of having students fulfill as many of Ellis’s (2005) requirements for instructed learning as possible, as Table 1 details. In addition, in order to promote autonomy and agency, students were directed to choose whichever text file they liked to listen to.

Table 1. Justification for Portfolio Activities

Step of portfolio	Primary intended outcome
4. Basic listening	Input
5. Listening for key points	Input and pragmatic meaning
6. Reading and listening	
7. Vocabulary and grammar checking	Pragmatic and semantic meaning, focus on form, focus on rules
8. Shadow for word recognition and pronunciation	Automized output, focus on form
9. Shadow for word level stress	
10. Shadow for fluency, and connected speech	
11. Shadow for intonation and sentence stress	
12. Report to classmates	Communicative output, negotiation, free production
13. Further discussion	

### Data Collection

Student reactions to the portfolio were gathered through a voluntary, anonymous, online, bilingual English-Japanese survey using the website <[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)>, as well

as through my observations. In the following discussion about communications with students, the portfolio will be referred to as *elllo activities*.

### Results for Portfolio 1

Out of 46 students in the two classes, 27 responded to the survey (see Tables in Appendix). The results were mixed in that the majority of students (56%) reported frequently completing the activities (Table A1). Furthermore, the majority of students (55%) would be prepared to continue with the activities if required by a teacher the following semester (Table A5). Additionally, 91 % felt the activities did benefit them (Table A4). Also, optional comments from students revealed that they were able to understand the multifocus benefits of the portfolio. They wrote, for example:

*I think Elllo Listening is a good way to study English, because I can get some ability, for example, listening, reading, speaking and vocabulary. I think that is learning benefit.*

*I think we can get listening for word stress, telling about your topic clearly, speaking English more fluently by shadowing, etc.*

However students' comments indicated that their actual practice tended to focus on the value to them of improving their listening skills (listening for topics and key points); other activities were less popular (Table A6). Other negative results were that only 30% of students enjoyed the portfolio (Table A2) and that only 8% of students would complete further listening after the course was completed (Table A3).

Further results were obtained through teacher observations. I checked the students' ongoing completion of the listening activities at the beginning of each class while students were reporting

back the findings of their listening and carrying out a follow-up discussion. This could take up to 15 minutes of class time if students had follow-up questions. Additionally, students would frequently use this time to chat in Japanese rather than study properly. Furthermore, students would use this time to fake completion of activities such as finding word stress that should have been done for homework. It appeared as if many students were only carrying out the activities to show me, without really being engaged in learning. On reflection, a much more structured approach to this stage of the portfolio work, such as having students all complete a review sheet, and a peer question and answer form might have helped ensure that students completed the discussion stage properly.

### Portfolio 2

In reaction to the results of Portfolio 1, I concluded that students could recognize the benefits of doing these activities and that students would carry them out if so required. However, contrary to the original intentions, the portfolio took up large amounts of time in the class, students were not fully engaged, and they would not continue with the portfolio after the course ended. Correspondingly, the portfolio was revised and used with 24 students in a 1st-year elementary-level (TOEFL scores below 399) English class, twice a week. The following changes were made to the portfolio:

1. Students were to choose a topic from the lowest level on the homepage.
2. Students were then to practice listening by listening to the audio file, and then practice listening a second time by listening to the audio file again and summarizing the topic of the text, noting three key points.
3. Students were then to email a copy of the script, their discussion questions, and their summary to the teacher.

4. Students were then to carry out further practice of speaking only by shadowing a portion of the text (one interlocutor's lines from the script) while reading the script online. After two more practices, they were to record their voice using the online recording website <vocaroo.com> and then send a copy of the recording to me by email.
5. In class discussion and follow-up was conducted as with Portfolio 1.

### Results for Portfolio 2

The same data collection steps were followed a second time. However, as the homework checking process was carried out by email this time, question number 6 concerning the activities the student completed was omitted. Nineteen out of 24 students completed the survey (see Tables in Appendix). Again the results were mixed in that less than half (42%) of the students completed the activities regularly (Table A1) and only 12% said they would continue with the work after the course has finished (Table A3). Furthermore, less than half of the students (47%, Table A4) felt they benefitted from doing the activities. Conversely, the majority of students liked the activities (58%, Table A2) and 70% (Table A5) would be happy to continue with the activities the next semester.

### Analysis

Students were exposed to a lot of English throughout the course through the listening portfolios, however they did not engage fully with the follow-up activities such as shadowing, checking vocabulary, or discussions. The second portfolio did not take up as much class time as the original one, as I could check the students' completion of emailed work before or after class. However, this further reduced students' engagement with the materials and, according to students' reports, they were unlikely to continue with the activities after the course finished.

### Limitations of the Study

This is a piece of action research with the intention of informing me of the efficacy of this teaching and homework portfolio activity. As such, the only major limitation was that only volunteers answered the surveys. It is possible that the more conscientious and motivated students were the ones who responded to the survey (either to help me or to potentially continue improving their English), while less motivated students were more likely to ignore my request (just as they neglected to do homework). However, given the triangulation of teacher observations and the survey results this should not invalidate the conclusions of this paper.

### Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Portfolios

It is necessary to encourage students to expose themselves to large amounts of English, and in this case the first and second portfolios achieved this end for roughly 50% of the respondents. However, the portfolio described had more specific primary goals—to have students conduct extensive listening activities *in preparation for class* and leave students with motivation to continue extensive listening activities *after the course had finished*. However, the portfolio left students responsible for maintaining their motivation to complete the activities at home while I tried to maintain a distance between the activities and other classroom practices. On reflection, this was an error. Firstly, how can we ask students to complete homework if it is not tied to their classroom activities? Secondly, as both Ellis (2005) and Dörnyei (2001) pointed out, it is the teacher's responsibility to motivate and maintain motivation within the classroom. Furthermore, the portfolio was designed primarily with cognitive concepts of SLA in mind (such as input, output, focus-on-form, and pragmatic meaning), rather than also taking into account affective

needs of students, including motivation and teacher involvement in the students' learning process. With this in mind, I will continue to use the portfolio, but will make some changes.

- All students will listen to the same (teacher chosen) text and answer comprehension questions for homework.
- Students will check their answers in class with a partner.
- Students will read the script and listen to the text in class and then check for unknown vocabulary and grammar. Students will check these with their partners.
- Students will continue a discussion on the topic with teacher directed questions.

## Bio Data

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## Appendix

### Results of Surveys Administered After the Two Portfolio Trials

**Table A1. Frequency of Completing Ello Activities**

How often did you complete *ello activities* for homework?

週にどの程度、elloアクティビティを使用しましたか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Choices	Portfolio 2 (n = 19)
4 times a week 週に4回	56%	2 times a week 週に2回	42%
2-3 times a week 週に2~3回	41%	once a week 週に1回	12%
once a week or less 週に1回以下	3%	less than once a week 週に1回未満	47%

**Table A2. Enjoyment of Ello Activities**

Did you enjoy the *ello activities*?

elloアクティビティはどうでしたか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2 (n = 19)
Yes, I liked them. 好きでした	30%	58%
Neither liked, nor disliked 好きでも嫌いでもありませんでした	63%	18%
No, I disliked them. 嫌いでした	7%	24%

**Table A3. Plans to Continue Ello Activities**

Will you continue with *ello activities* in the future, such as during winter vacation?

今後、冬休み中などelloアクティビティを継続して使いますか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2 (n = 19)
Definitely yes 使いたいです	8%	12%
Not sure 分からないです	54%	70%
Definitely no 使いたくないです	38%	18%

**Table A4. Usefulness of Ello Activities**

Do you think ello activities are useful for improving your English ability?

elloアクティビティは、英語力向上に役に立つと思いますか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2 (n = 19)
Yes, they are useful. はい、役に立ちます。	55%	47%
They are somewhat useful. 役に立つこともあると思います	41%	29%
They are not useful. 役に立たないと思います	4%	24%

**Table A5. Feelings About Continuing Ello Activities**

Would you feel positive about doing ello activities again next semester?

次の Semester でも ello アクティビティを使用したいと思いますか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2 (n = 19)
Yes, this is a good activity. はい、良いアクティビティだと思います。	55%	70%
Neither positive nor negative どちらとも言えません。	30%	18%
No, I want to do something else. いいえ、他のアクティビティを使用したいです。	15%	12%

**Table A6. Properly Done Ello Activities**

Which of these activities do you do properly?\*

下記アクティビティの中でどれを適切に行っていますか？

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2
Previewing 予習	26%	N/A
Listening for topic and key points トピックやキーポイントについてのリスニング	70%	
Checking unknown vocabulary and grammar 分からない語彙や文法の確認	22%	
Practicing word stress by reading, listening and shadowing リーディング、リスニング、シャドーイングでの単語のアクセント練習	55%	
Shadowing with script for word pronunciation 単語の発音の為に、スクリプトを使用してシャドーイング	33%	
Shadowing without script for fluency, blended sounds 流暢に話せる様、スクリプトを使わずにシャドーイング	11%	
Shadowing without script for sentence stress and intonation 文中の強弱やイントネーションの為に、スクリプトを使わずにシャドーイング	11%	

Choices	Portfolio 1 (n = 27)	Portfolio 2
Reporting back to your classmates クラスメートへトピックやキーポイントなどについて話す	41%	N/A
Continuing a discussion on the topic トピックについてのディスカッションを継続	7%	

Note. \*"Properly" was translated as適切.

# Strategies to “Moodle” Your Academic Institution

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## Reference Data:

Crooks, A. P. (2013). Strategies to “Moodle” your academic institution. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2012 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Learning Management Systems (LMSs) have risen in prominence in educational institutions over the last 20 years. Whilst there are many commercial packages available for purchase or lease by institutions, their costs can lead to hesitancy of those in control of educational budgeting. In contrast to the often costly commercial packages, Moodle, an open-source LMS, has become the ideal system for academic institutions that wish to have such a system in place, but may have restricted finances or are reluctant to make a monetary commitment to an LMS. However, a major stumbling block for those who wish to implement Moodle can be its acceptance and adoption by those with whom the Moodle advocate must cooperate: the administration, technical support staff, coworkers, and students. This paper addresses a number of practical strategies and approaches that can be (and have been) employed in putting Moodle to use in an academic institution.

ここ20年教育機関において学習管理システムは広く利用されてきたが、コストが高いため導入に躊躇する機関もあった。しかし、ムードルはオープンソースであり、コスト上の問題のため導入できなかった教育機関にとっては理想的な学習管理システムであろう。ただし、ムードルの使用に際しては、実際に使用する人のみならず、教職員なども登録しなければならず、管理機能が煩雑である。本論文は教育機関でムードルを使用するためにはどのような方法で使用したらよいか、実際にどのように使用したかなどについて述べる。

**W**HEN AN educational institution develops an interest in offering an online platform for the delivery of its courses, a number of crucial factors come into play. What is often believed to be a straightforward, easy to implement system in fact requires far more expertise, effort, and collaboration than many institutions initially expect.

## The Lure of Learning Management Systems

While there are commercial learning packages that offer preprogrammed material, they often involve little room for innovation. For example, there is a range of programs with material to assist students with test preparation or vocabulary building exercises. Such packages, however, rarely allow for the institution that has purchased them to customize material for their students. With such systems, the staff and students must work with what is available to them, and these limitations may become quickly apparent after the courses have been purchased by the institution.



## **The Dawn of Computer Assisted Language Learning**

What has been of interest to the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) community since the availability of inexpensive free-standing personal computers in the mid-1980s are programs that permit instructors to design and author exercises to teach, practice, and test the abilities of the specific students with whom they are working. This flexibility allows customization to fit the needs of the teachers, the students, and the courses and material with which they are engaged (Underwood, 1984).

Vast changes since the 1980s have opened up the potential of CALL. For instance, computers have become more sophisticated and powerful and the availability of local area networks (LANs) within institutions has increased. In particular, ease of access to the Internet in the 1990s has broadened the computer-based learning possibilities dramatically, offering far greater potential to teachers and students alike than were available in the early days of CALL (Chapelle, 2001; Dudeney, 2000; Teeler, D. 2000; Warschauer & Kern, 2000; Warschauer, Shetzer, & Meloni, 2000; Windeatt, Hardisty, & Eastment, 2000).

## **The Rise of Learning Management Systems**

Learning Management Systems (LMSs) saw a dramatic increase in the 1990s, and its potential and presence in English language teaching (ELT) in the 2000s provided institutions with enormous possibilities for those willing to invest in such products (e.g., WebCT, Blackboard). These packages offered cohesiveness that was lacking in previous teacher-authored CALL programs. These new platforms could centralize students' engagement in a course, integrating multiple activities into a unified system and allowing teachers to log the progress of students. These programs remain in constant development to expand their potential and flexibility. Although intended initially to be LAN-based,

they became accessible beyond the campus when the Internet became a primary tool of communication for the wider public.

Such commercial LMSs were also accompanied by robust support systems. These packages have technical and human resource networks that ensure smooth implementation and maintenance of the product, and technical complications are taken care of by the companies that provided the LMSs. However, the staff at different institutions are still able to create user-specific content to run on the systems, with the assurance that support can be sought if and when issues arise.

Members of open source communities started to develop their own versions of these platforms, designed for shared distribution without a financial cost. This resulted in the emergence of Content Management Systems (CMSs) such as Mambo, Joomla!, and Drupal, along with the LMSs, most specifically, Moodle (Moodle, n.d.). These programs offered institutions the opportunity to run LMSs of quality, equaling their commercial counterparts without the substantial licensing costs such for-profit platforms incur. These open source platforms, due to their sophistication plus the absence of substantial financial demands, have seen a dramatic rise in their use across many spectrums. This can be seen especially in educational institutions and very frequently in the field of language teaching and learning. Most particularly, Moodle is one of the favored LMSs for this area of education (Stanford, 2009; Hillar, 2010).

## **Moodle: An Attractive Choice of LMS**

The qualities of Moodle have been recognized by a rising number of educational institutions since its introduction in the early 2000s. Along with this interest, Moodle has developed over the years, and its educational applications have widened. For example, recent versions have incorporated blogging and forum components into the core package, as well as free-of-charge

modules, such as the Scheduler, which allows students to arrange appointments with their teachers. Whilst it is undeniably a program that offers teachers and students great possibilities for teaching and learning, one that is in constant development, the platform has remained available without licensing costs (Standard Moodle Packages, n.d.) and that has made it such a popular LMS. However, the absence of a dedicated professional support network and technical infrastructure is still a concern for those institution administrators who wish to adopt it.

Although there are fee-based support services available for Moodle (an extensive list of such companies can be found at <http://moodle.com/partners/>), there also exists a vibrant professional user base in the support forums at the main Moodle site, users who can be consulted on a range of issues for no charge. In fact, I have used this user base extensively in the process of implementing and maintaining Moodle over the years. I have consulted the community rather than referring to Moodle-related texts, as the answers and information provided by people currently employing and developing the LMS itself are usually more up-to-date and relevant than those found in the texts. Therefore, referring an administrator who is considering the introduction of Moodle to this user base would assist in allaying concerns about the adoption of the platform.

### **Moodle Stumbling Blocks and How to Address Them**

As noted above, even though Moodle has been adopted by a wide range of institutions, a major stumbling block in its adoption can be its acceptance of and adoption by the individuals with whom the Moodle advocate must cooperate within the institution. These individuals can range from those within an institution's administration, to the technical support staff, to coworkers, to students. Their resistance can come in a variety of

areas, some of which include set-up and operational costs, complexity of installation and management, and teacher instruction in the software, as well as student uptake of Moodle itself as an educational tool.

Whilst teachers can bypass these individuals and employ Moodle as their own project, changes need to be made on a wider scale to see it adopted across an institution. There are ways and means to co-opt a range of these individuals to assist them in seeing the value of putting Moodle into place for all concerned. Thus, I will address a number of strategies and approaches that can be (and have been successfully) employed in introducing Moodle to an institution.

### ***Those Who May Attempt to Block the Adoption of Moodle and How to Counter Them***

Within any academic institution, there are a variety of individuals or groups who may need to be convinced of the value of Moodle in their teaching and learning environment.

### ***The Institution's Administration***

The first potential location for resistance may occur at the macro level: with an institution's administration. The first question that may be asked at such a level is simply the need for such a platform within the institution. This can be countered by introducing the administration to the potential of the LMS for an academic institution by exhibiting other successful implementations around the world, data about which are kept updated by those at Moodle. At the moodle.org website (Moodle, n.d.), examples of institutions putting Moodle to effective use can be displayed to those concerned. Those hesitant about its implementation can be provided with examples of Moodle in operation, with which they can interact online. Evidence of Moodle's

successful implementation in a variety of locations, along with its ease of use, can be potentially persuasive for reluctant adopters.

Although it can be relatively easy to persuade such individuals based on cost factors (given that the source code for Moodle can be obtained without payment), the administration may need further persuasion regarding the allocation of the existing server space within the institution that is needed to run Moodle onsite (i.e., within the campus). Arguments can be made with an institution's administration that the server space needed by Moodle is minimal, and Moodle can be run on an older, small-scale server if necessary. Another point to make is that the platform can be used on a relatively small scale. This can be done within the language teaching faculty, and evidence can be later produced using Moodle usage statistics relative to the potential drain on the institution's IT system. Such evidence could provide information to shift Moodle's use to the wider community of the institution rather than just the language learning sector. This may also serve to illustrate to the administration that Moodle has applications that go beyond those of a language education platform.

Another administrative hesitancy may be the need to delegate a technical officer to Moodle installation, implementation, maintenance, and platform updates. Moodle is a programming system based on PHP (hypertext preprocessor), a server-based language familiar to and easily understandable by the vast majority of those in the Information Technology (IT) field. Because of this, its introduction can be seen as a simple process, and the maintenance (e.g., backup of data) can be automated, both factors requiring a relatively small amount of an IT staff member's time. The IT staff can also be taught how to subscribe to emailed news updates regarding developments and changes in the programs, and how to interact with the Moodle open source community online, who are available to answer any potential

questions. Textbooks on Moodle administration are available (Buchner, 2011), but the most up-to-date reference exists either within the program itself, or online (moodle.org). Finally, the individual pushing for the introduction of the platform—the Moodle advocate—is also a potential source of support, given that such advocates keep up-to-date with innovations and changes with the LMS.

One other potential concern that may be voiced by an institution's administration could concern privacy matters. Moodle, like most other software, is open to online attacks. However, by subscribing to the moodle.org email alert service, a subscribed user will be kept informed regarding Moodle security issues, and the subscriber will have access to Moodle patches that will avert attacks. The vibrant Moodle community plays an invaluable contribution in this respect, raising security concerns and dealing with them immediately after such concerns become apparent.

A final appeal for the use of Moodle can be to the institution's standing in the academic world. As the presence and use of LMSs at institutions across the world are currently the rule rather than the exception, a hesitant administration could be persuaded that Moodle can play an important role in raising the technological level of the institution. The introduction of Moodle could be presented as a way for the institution to enhance its reputation, possible benefits being increases in enrollment due to this embracing of technology by the institution.

### *The Institution's Technical Support Staff*

Those within the IT section of an academic institution may also express concerns of their own. As discussed earlier, the potential introduction of Moodle places a heavier workload not only on certain staff but also on the computer servers. Notwithstanding this resistance, when the ease of implementation is explained to these individuals, there is a strong likelihood that their accept-

ance of Moodle can be achieved. It could also be argued that the implementation of Moodle would be that of a world-standard platform about which they could learn and become familiarized, expanding their knowledge and skill base. Yet again, the Moodle advocate could play a role in assisting the IT staff in its implementation and introducing them to the online Moodle community. For those IT staff members concerned about their proficiency in English, it can be stressed that the Moodle community operates in a number of languages other than English, with Japanese-language Moodle adopters being a substantial sector of the overall community. Multilingual documentation appears at the moodle.org website, and there have been a range of books published in Japanese on the platform (e.g., Rice, 2011a). In short, the IT staff, who may be a substantial point of resistance, could be persuaded that the addition of Moodle to their IT expertise would be of benefit to them.

### *Coworkers at the Institution*

Whilst the administration and IT staff are extremely important players in the adoption of Moodle, if coworkers are convinced of its value and put it into regular use, major battles in introducing Moodle to an institution will be overcome.

There is little use in approaching the groups listed in previous sections to implement Moodle in an institution unless teaching colleagues adopt it. If, after institutional adoption and installation, the Moodle advocate is the sole person employing the platform, the low use of Moodle will undoubtedly become apparent to the IT staff. This low use of the platform may be seen as a liability in the eyes of the IT staff or administration. As is the case with many educational innovations, if the staff do not employ a system that has required effort by others to establish, it is highly likely to fall by the wayside and may simply be abandoned due to its lack of use. So how does the Moodle advocate encourage colleagues in the use of Moodle?

Firstly, the teaching and learning potential of Moodle must be outlined to colleagues in a clear and coherent way. Demonstrated success of its uptake in other educational institutions, especially of the success dealing with language-learning matters, must be offered to the staff. They must be able to see its value as a learning tool, one that will assist the students in their development of a range of language skills. Sample sites can be accessed to demonstrate Moodle in use, and papers on Moodle's use can be provided to illustrate success stories.

The successful use of Moodle outside one's institution can be used to demonstrate its potential uses, but Moodle's range of features also need to be outlined in detail for colleagues. This may include an informative outline of Moodle's various functions and the benefits these tools will bring to both students and teachers. Once again, examples of common exercises in which language teachers engage their students (e.g., a forum discussion thread in the target language amongst students or a blogging project engaged in by students) can be offered as evidence of its value. Another option would be to expose colleagues to the plugin called Poodle (MAF-Learning Technologies, 2012; Thibault, 2010), which provides teachers with the flexibility of hosting Moodle from their own desktop computer. In short, showing teachers practical examples that have worked well with students can establish an understanding among staff that Moodle can be a useful tool for their learners' educational advancement.

In my own experience, it has often proved successful to also ask colleagues what they would like Moodle to do, and then respond to their query by showing colleagues ways of achieving the tasks they want their students to complete. Such questions also often reveal potential uses for Moodle that the advocate may not have even envisioned.

Another viable strategy is to show colleagues the back end of Moodle through Administrative privileges. Letting colleagues know how they can monitor their students' use of Moodle and,

more specifically, how students have progressed in their learning can convince fellow staff of the validity of the use of Moodle. For example, student engagement with Moodle and learning progress can be seen by examining the number of students' visits to the site or their attempts at set exercises and quizzes. When colleagues are shown that their students' interaction with the system can be seen by examining Moodle's participant logs or the results of students' attempts at exercises and quizzes, it can play a role in colleagues' uptake of the platform.

Understanding the Administrative features of Moodle also allows for an introduction to staff of their own abilities to create activities and tests. The website is an authoring tool; teachers who wish to create exercises need to have suitable knowledge. For this, they will require an understanding of the methods to access and build such activities. With such knowledge, the staff will be able to utilize Moodle for the best learning outcomes for their students. As opposed to the set, prewritten activities in systems that have dominated CALL for many years, staff would be well served if they have a successful grasp of how to use Moodle to customize activities for their learners.

However, the teacher as instructional designer is only one of the roles that can be played in Moodle. Moodle does not necessarily have to be an environment where creation is required of colleagues, but it can play a role as a support tool for teachers. In addition, it can be used as a location for the sharing of materials in its question bank. Products that can work alongside Moodle include Equella (Pearson Education, 2012) as well as similar DAMS (digital asset management systems). These can be utilized as resource banks for those who lack the time or skill to develop and design their own material or who wish to simply draw inspiration from the creations of others for the development of their own activities.

Training in the use of Moodle and other modules and utilities can be achieved through detailed handouts for the staff to en-

able them to engage with the platform in the initial stages. Materials featuring screenshots of step-by-step processes to achieve their goals can be provided to assist the staff. I have found that such documents are crucial for the adoption of a LMS platform such as Moodle.

Along with documentation, workshops for colleagues on Moodle are also highly recommended. Many of the graphic interface elements (e.g., menus and toolbars) in Moodle are the same as those of other Windows programs, but there are also areas of significant difference that will need to be explored with colleagues; workshops provide the ideal venue in which to examine these differences. These sessions can also be used to explain some of the perils and pitfalls of the platform and also provide an opportunity to alert colleagues about how to overcome such issues. In addition, these workshops can reveal methods and approaches that may not have been conducted before, with those new to Moodle potentially offering new insights in learning opportunities within the platform.

It is also suggested that, with the Administrative privileges Moodle offers, teachers' use of Moodle can be checked. Teachers not employing Moodle can be approached and given further suggestions and encouragement about how to get the most out of the platform. These interactions can also prove fruitful in discovering why a colleague has not taken up Moodle as an educational tool, and becoming aware of the reasons behind their resistance may provide insight into ways in which greater adoption of Moodle can be achieved. In addition, holding regular meetings on Moodle in which staff can share their opinions and views, ask questions, or introduce new approaches that they have developed for a language teacher database can assist in building an ongoing community of practice at your institution.

For those hesitant about using Moodle, gentle encouragement to engage in simple tasks can ease in new users to the platform.

One approach can involve the teacher using Moodle to record details of what went on in their class and provide instructions and due dates for upcoming classes and homework for their students. New users can approach Moodle initially as a notice-board or a place for links to sites that may be of interest to learners. Nonetheless, colleagues also should be encouraged to go beyond these initial approaches so that the potential of Moodle can be explored by the staff. This is more likely to occur if they are given a solid grounding in both its technical aspects and its pedagogical applications.

The Moodle advocate can also enable colleagues' use of the platform by being an important resource for those new to the platform. This requires that the advocate be well informed as to the current development status of Moodle. With this information, the advocate can be confident when approached by colleagues with their questions about the platform, and can offer the most appropriate answers and guidance. Hopefully, by serving such a role, the Moodle advocate will learn more about the platform through interactions with others. Just like the online Moodle community (which will also be of value to colleagues), a local, institution-based community needs to be built.

When Moodle has become familiar to the language teaching community, similar information and training can be extended to a wider audience within the specific institution. An increased adoption across the institution will solidify the role of Moodle in the institution that, in turn, will be of value to the administration who will then be able to see a whole-campus (and not just language sector) utilization of the platform.

### *The Institution's Students*

The end users of Moodle, the institution's students, will also need substantial training with the system. The degree of training will depend on their degree of experience with LMSs or

other online tools. Moodle does come with a range of language options so students can choose to have core Moodle tools and information (e.g., menus and help files) appear in their first language. Configuring Moodle to allow students to determine the language in which they interact with the platform will enhance their experience with Moodle's basic interface. Still, if it is the teacher's goal for students to work within an English-only environment, that option can be set within Moodle. Just as with teaching colleagues, it is highly advisable that students be given step-by-step instructions (printed handouts with screenshots of specific Moodle screens) to enable them to either register or (if preregistered by the teacher or the institution) login to Moodle.

For a first session with Moodle, the use of a computer room is ideal to step students through the process. This can be especially successful if the computer room has a system by which all students' screens can be directed to display the teacher's screen, or if the teacher's screen can be projected onto an overhead screen.

Some teachers choose to preregister the students with their given names or names they have chosen to be used in the class, their institutional email addresses, and their student ID as their password. This process saves confusion on first login, but students can then choose to change their password to ensure privacy. In my experience, it is *always* a good idea, however, to direct students to the link on how to reset their password. If they forget their password, using this link will allow them to reset their password.

Once the students have logged in, they can be shown the various elements of Moodle. They can also be shown how to locate information and links to different sections of the platform and any links you have added to core class pages for access to certain files or data (e.g., Word documents, PDF files, or links to websites). Once the core elements of their class screen have been identified, the students should have little trouble accessing the Moodle site and obtaining whatever information or materials they need.

For activities that are new to them, it is suggested that either students be given detailed instructions on the Moodle site regarding what to do or that they be instructed in class. By doing this, they can be informed about how to access the activity or exercise and how to complete the Moodle-based tasks successfully. As has been emphasized earlier, in utilizing Moodle with students, all processes should be detailed or stepped through to ensure maximum success.

### Leading by Example

Most of the guidance listed here is based on my personal practice. This was done in the fashion noted earlier, by using Moodle as a private project in an earlier academic workplace. By obtaining private server space and setting up and running Moodle from that location, firsthand knowledge was gained of the practices involved. As a novice in the field, I gained experience through trial and error, by consulting the online Moodle community, and by referring to either online material or that which had been purchased commercially (Buchner, 2011; Rice, 2007, 2011b). This experience allowed me to understand the core nature of the platform and also raised flags about potential problems and difficulties associated with running the platform with students. Installing and then implementing my own Moodle site with a variety of students has enabled me to gain a deeper knowledge of the platform's workings. These skills and knowledge have proved invaluable when it comes to being a Moodle advocate at an institution and understanding the complexities of convincing others of its power and value as an educational tool.

### Conclusion

The process of introducing an LMS such as Moodle into an academic institution is not particularly straightforward or easy,

regardless of the illusions that seem to be found chiefly in the upper levels of academic institutions. However, by using the appropriate tactics with the correct people, the goal of introducing Moodle can be accomplished. As has been the case in my own experience, becoming something of an advocate for Moodle in an institution involves not simply promoting its merits to others, but actually leading by example in its use and demonstrating it to others, especially teaching colleagues. Doing this allows such colleagues to see its ease of use and the educational benefits that can be brought to their students. Such practical, localized evidence, backed up with research from the field, can assist the installation and adoption of Moodle within one's academic workplace.

### Bio Data

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