TAKING IT TO TASK

The newsletter of the JALT task-based language teaching SIG. Volume 5 Issue 2 – Summer 2022

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Taking it to Task! in 2022.

We have a bumper edition of the newsletter for our readers to enjoy. To open, Charu Gupta and Heather Woodward take us through a debate task, followed by Patrick Strefford explaining how task-based teaching principles can be applied in an EMI context. In another article, Christopher Phelps considers the use of TBLT in Japanese university self-access centres. There are also three detailed lesson plans on creating group essays (Graham Robson), a travel guide (Claire Ryan), and a stock market portfolio (Timmy Ang).

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, and if any of you have a TBLT related article, lesson plan, book review or opinion piece that you would like to submit for consideration in a future issue of Taking it to Task, please contact us at tbltinasia@gmail.com

Rick Derrah and Martin Spivey, Publications Chairs

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS – TBLT TUESDAYS

The TBLSIG is sponsoring a series of online talks in October, November, and December 2022 called “TBLT Tuesdays Twenty-Twenty-Two”. All talks are held on Zoom. Registration links are on the TBLSIG website. The line-up is as follows (all Japan standard time).

**Andrea Revesz – University College London, UK.** Tuesday, October 25th, 7pm

*Methodological issues in exploring task-based speech production processes*

**Masatoshi Sato – Universidad Andrés Bello, Chile.** Tuesday, November 15th, 8:30pm

*Learner engagement and TBLT: Marrying the wisdom of teachers and researchers*

**Jonathan Newton – Victoria University of Wellington, NZ.** Tuesday, December 6th, 7pm

*Do we really know what a task is? Insights and from textbook analysis*
A Debate Unit Based on Task-based Language Teaching Principles

Charu Gupta and Heather Woodward – Rikkyo University

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to help integrate a focus on form in the classroom through the use of a debate task, while adhering to task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles and approaches. We present a debate unit for secondary and post-secondary students with intermediate to advanced second language (L2) proficiency to enhance skills of teamwork, research, and critical thinking, using social media as the central topic. Utilizing Willis and Willis’ (2007) framework for TBLT and Nunan’s (2004) seven pedagogical principles, we combine theory with practice to help students learn about debate and social media. Form-focused instruction is of equal importance to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses, but at times, in our own practice, we have sidelined linguistic goals in favor of content-based goals related to tasks such as research skills and critical thinking skills. Therefore, this research is relevant to our practice, and we hope to offer suggestions based on TBLT theory to implement a language focus for other teachers interested in integrating debate into their EFL courses.

Keywords: task-based, debate, focus on form

Introduction

Debate can help students to master content, develop critical thinking, and enhance communication skills (Kennedy, 2007) as well as help students to improve research and team building skills (Rikkyo University Debate Committee, 2020). Developing these skills can assist students in real-world contexts. In a study by Keidanren (2018), according to business leaders, the most desirable traits for university students are taking initiative, executing plans, and setting and solving problems. Debate fosters these desired traits as students a) are in charge of their own team, b) plan and prepare for their debate, and c) treat the debate proposition as a problem to be solved, wherein by investigating both sides of the argument, they can arrive at a clearer understanding of the problem. However, debate teachers of EFL students should not only focus on the content benefits students obtain from learning how to debate, but even with students at the intermediate to
advanced proficiencies, they should also be incorporating form-focused instruction to help students further their language abilities.

According to Spada (1997), form-focused instruction is “any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners’ attention to language forms either implicitly or explicitly.” Many applied linguists agree that form-focused instruction helps students acquire features of their second language that they might not learn otherwise in communicative contexts (Spada & Lightbown, 2008). Form-focused instruction provides opportunities for noticing and practice, an essential combination that aids the process of moving information from short-term memory to long-term memory (Bataineh, Rasheed Al-Qeyam, Mahmoud Smadi, 2017). Long (2000) proposes a focus on form (FonF) approach to form-focused instruction. FonF-based lessons treat meaning as a priority within a communicative context while the secondary focus is to encourage students to notice linguistic items when these items emerge incidentally within the communicative context. Norris and Ortega’s (2000) meta-analysis shows that explicit FonF has a large effect size on students’ improvement of their target language, and the FonF approach qualifies as such when:

- Meaning-focused tasks are introduced before form-focused tasks
- Intervention of form-focused instruction is considered to be unobtrusive
- Attention to the naturalness or essentialness of forms are used for a given task
- Students' cognitive processes (e.g., noticing) are recognized and attended to

Additionally, studies with a FonF approach frequently include the following qualities:

- Lexicogrammatical forms are based on students’ needs
- Students’ interlanguage constraints are taken into consideration when selecting lexicogrammatical targets and analyzing instructional outcomes

As debate teachers, we admit that we have, at times, shelved FonF instruction in favor of the content-based and skill-based goals, so the purpose of this paper is to explore one way to integrate form-focused instruction within our debate course that are based on task-based theory and principles. We present a series of lessons, which can be adapted and have chosen social media for the topic as it is relevant and controversial. These tasks and activities can be modified to incorporate the topic of teachers or students’ choice.
Literature Review

Definition of a Task

In the field of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL), tasks are defined as classroom activities that mimic conditions of real-world communication (Ellis, 2003). In theory, mirroring the conditions of real-world communication helps TESOL students to transfer their English knowledge and skills outside of the classroom (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2003) states that for tasks to be considered as such they must have the following four conditions. Firstly, the senders and receivers are focused primarily on meaning of the message as opposed to the forms used. For example, receivers are not focused on whether senders are using the present perfect tense; however, they are decoding the message to comprehend it. Secondly, task outcome is clearly defined and non-linguistic in nature (e.g., winning the debate).

Thirdly, senders and receivers choose their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources to use during the task. In other words, they choose language from their pre-existing knowledge bank. If receivers do not understand the message, they can negotiate meaning by asking for clarification. Lastly, senders and receivers should have a gap such as a knowledge gap or information gap. That is to say, receivers should have clearly defined roles and do not know exactly the senders’ message content. These four conditions mirror the characteristics of real-world communication, and without these conditions, transfer from L2 language classrooms to real-world contexts might be challenging for students (Ellis, 2003). Different types of tasks include selecting, ranking, sequencing, listing, classifying, reasoning, ordering, contrasting/comparing, and evaluating (Willis, 1996).

Task-based Framework

Willis and Willis (2007) introduce a framework of different stages of task-based language teaching (TBLT). In Figure 1, there are three main stages: (1) pre-task, (2) task cycle, and (3) language focus. The following information describes this framework.
In (1) pre-task stage, students learn about the topic and the task. For this stage, teachers can introduce useful vocabulary and a video for students to watch of the task performance. In (2) task cycle, there are three sub-stages: (a) task or series of tasks, (b) planning, and (c) report. For (a) task or series of tasks, students complete tasks individually, in pairs, or in groups. Next, for (b) planning, they prepare to discuss the outcome of the task, their weaknesses, and strengths of the task performance. After, for (c) report, they either present their reports or exchange written copies that discuss task performance results. For Willis and Willis (2007) the full task cycle encompasses the task, debate, the planning of the reflection of task performance, then the report stage where they present their reflections to others.

In (3) language focus stage, there are two sub-stages. In the first sub-stage, teachers help students analyze specific language that students used during the task either by using a recording or transcripts (e.g., present perfect tense or adverbs of frequency). In the second sub-stage, students practice the new lexicogrammatical forms or phrases using a controlled practice activity that helps students focus on those that are in need of correction to improve proficiency (Willis & Willis, 2007). Language focus is at the end stage to encourage students to use their own linguistic resources to inform teachers of student needs.

**Pedagogical Principles of TBLT**

In this section, we summarize Nunan’s (2004) seven pedagogical principles of TBLT: scaffolding, task dependency, recycling, active learning, integration, reproduction, and reflection. The first principle, scaffolding, entails that teachers provide support before students begin the task. Willis and Willis (2007) refer to this stage as the pre-task stage. This support can translate to assisting students with task instruction, providing language support, and showing a model task so that students know task expectations. The second principle, task dependency, denotes that for a given series of tasks, each task depends on the successful
completion of the previous task. Per Willis and Willis’ (2007) framework, this task dependency occurs during the (2) task cycle.

For Nunan’s (2004) third principle, recycling, tasks in a series have the same theme or topic because students are more likely to be exposed to the same set of lexicogrammatical forms (e.g., target vocabulary or grammatical structures). For instance, social media has a set of vocabulary that students revisit throughout the task cycle such as ‘to go viral,’ ‘meme,’ and ‘internet trolling.’ Students can also focus on adverbs of frequency when reporting data from studies. For the fourth principle, active learning, tasks should require that the students learn by doing rather than by passively listening or reading because active learning helps increase students’ attention and engagement.

Per the fifth principle, integration, students should have the chance to connect linguistic form to the semantic meaning and communicative function (Nunan, 2004). Communicative functions refer to the purpose of the linguistic form (e.g., request, show, protest). For example, students should have the opportunity to connect the form of the phrase, “in other words” with communicative function of paraphrasing. In another example, students should have the chance to connect the linguistic form of “cyberbullying” to their corresponding semantic meaning (e.g., the act of bullying someone online). This integration of form-meaning mapping should occur throughout Willis and Willis’ (2007) framework.

The sixth principle, reproduction, Nunan (2004) holds that students first need to engage with input-based tasks and connect forms to meaning before engaging with output-based tasks that require language production. In terms of Willis and Willis’ (2007) framework, the pre-task activity can provide students with input before the task. Concerning the seventh principle, reflection, students should have the chance for reflection of their task performance and the language content, and during reflection, students should reflect on the extent to which they have learned new language encountered during or after the task (Nunan, 2004). Willis and Willis (2007) add a planning and report sub-stage of the debate cycle for reflection on language performance and task performance. For formative assessment purposes, we believe that teachers can use the reflection stage to give students an opportunity to reflect on the extent to which they believe that they have progressed in terms of the content and language-related goals.

Debate Definition

Mishima et al. (2021) define ‘debate’ as an academic timed and structured task whereby two opposing teams discuss a controversial topic. Debate preparation and performance can qualify as main tasks according to Ellis’ (2003) four main task characteristics because students (a) are primarily focused on meaning, (b) have a clearly defined and non-linguistic task outcome, (c) choose their own linguistic and non-linguistic resources, and lastly, (d) have knowledge gap between the debate teams. These tasks are suitable for addressing complex topics because the process helps students to consider both the drawbacks
and the benefits of complex topics. Yet, for the debate course to be considered TBLT, according to both Nunan (2004) and Willis and Willis (2007) teachers need to incorporate focus on language learning.

**Debate Preparation Tasks**

The debate preparation tasks are in Table 1 below. When preparing for their debate, students complete the following 12 tasks.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debate Preparation Tasks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stages for building the affirmative position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do research to find reasons that affirm the proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. List all the reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rank reasons according to their perceived persuasiveness or strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Select the most persuasive reasons and find additional evidence and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. For each reason answer Paul and Elder’s (2006) critical thinking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Revise reasons based on the answers to the critical thinking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stages for building the negative position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do research to find reasons against the proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. List all the reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rank reasons according to their perceived persuasiveness or strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Select the most persuasive reasons and find additional evidence and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. For each reason answer Paul and Elder’s (2006) critical thinking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Revise reasons based on the answers to the critical thinking questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tasks for building the affirmative position are the same as the tasks for building the negative position. These types of tasks reflect Willis and Willis’s (2007) task classification as they require students to list, rank, and select. Once students have made a list of reasons to support or oppose the proposition, they choose the reasons they determine to be most persuasive and collect further evidence and examples to strengthen their arguments. To help students choose, we use critical thinking questions from Paul and Elder (2006) below.
Table 2

Paul and Elder’s (2006) critical thinking questions adapted for debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Corresponding Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Is the argument important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Is the argument clear?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision</td>
<td>Does the argument have enough examples and evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Is the argument still true today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Does the reason support the position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Is the argument based on strong evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breadth</td>
<td>Does the argument consider other viewpoints?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Does the argument make unfair assumptions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth</td>
<td>Does the argument have any weaknesses?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students ask these types of critical thinking questions from Table 2 while preparing for their debate. They do this same process for every article for and against the proposition to strengthen the overall argument and determine weak points.

Debate Performance Tasks

Table 3 below shows the standard debate format from Mishima et al. (2021). The Affirmative Team (AFF) argues for the proposition (i.e., controversial statement), and the Negative Team (NEG) argues against the proposition. For example, if the proposition is, “University students should delete their social media accounts” AFF supports the proposition while NEG argues against it.
Table 3

*Debate Performance Tasks Adapted from Mishima et al. (2021)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Debate Tasks</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Stage</td>
<td>1. AFF defends the proposition</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. NEG creates cross-examination questions about the AFF speech.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. NEG asks AFF cross-examination questions to clarify or identify weaknesses</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. NEG give arguments against the proposition.</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. AFF creates cross examination questions about the NEG speech.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. AFF ask NEG cross-examination questions.</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Teams identify weaknesses of the opposing team, and prepare summaries.</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Stage</td>
<td>7. NEG states the weaknesses of AFF’s arguments</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. AFF states the weaknesses of NEG’s arguments</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. NEG gives a summary of their position.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. AFF gives a summary of their position.</td>
<td>2 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Stage</td>
<td>11. Judges determine the winning debate team</td>
<td>5 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first stage, teams clearly establish their position and present a series of well-prepared and researched arguments in support of their position. The debate begins with AFF delivering their speech, followed by preparation time for cross-examination questions. The cross-examination question stage helps NEG to clarify any information that they do not understand or request additional information from AFF about AFF’s evidence or supporting arguments. This process is repeated with NEG presenting their speech and cross-examination questions from AFF.

After, teams are given a 10-minute break to identify weaknesses in the other team’s arguments and develop their rebuttal. NEG initiates the second stage whereby teams state weaknesses of the other team’s argument and support their rebuttals with evidence. Lastly, they summarize their arguments and address weaknesses of the other team’s rebuttals. In the third stage, judges (the teacher and other students who are not participating in the debate) determine the winning team using a rubric.

**Discussion of the Lesson Plan**

The lesson plan designed below (see Appendix A) is a series of tasks relying on the task stages discussed by Willis and Willis (2007). The tasks in this lesson plan meet all four conditions that define a task according to Ellis (2003). The first two conditions of a primary focus on meaning and a clearly defined outcome are met through the aims of the tasks by engaging students in negotiation of meaning throughout
the discussions and debate instead of focusing on form or grammar, and by relying on the successful completion of successive tasks to participate in and win the debate. The last two conditions of using students’ own linguistic resources and providing a knowledge gap or information gap are realized by encouraging students to use their prior knowledge to formulate their debates, while also addressing gaps in their knowledge by learning more about the various parts of a debate and introducing a language focus at the end of the main task.

The lessons are designed to be employed as a series that helps students delve into the debate while engaging in teamwork, research, and critical thinking. As the three central aspects of debate, students are given opportunities to practice and develop these skills across all five lessons. Teamwork is at the forefront since all activities require students to work in pairs or groups. The environment of competition in a debate and the need to support their position on the proposition help to enhance the connections among teammates. Additionally, students are taught how to conduct research, while also being given the opportunity to find the most persuasive arguments for both the affirmative and negative positions. Finally, students think critically in all five lessons from rethinking their existing position on social media in Willis and Willis’s (2007) pre-task stage to examining the subject from multiple perspectives in the debate preparation stage to planning and reporting on their performance in the task stage to finally analyzing their scripts for language patterns and difficulties in the language analysis stage. The following discussion addresses Willis and Willis’ (2007) stages of pre-task, task cycle, and language focus.

Pre-task Stages

The pre-task stage relies on the principles of scaffolding, active learning, recycling, integration, reproduction, and task dependency. As stated by Willis and Willis, the first lesson introduces the central topic, social media, and an example of the main task, the debate. For the topic itself, students are provided support with peer collaboration, building towards more difficult activities using task dependency. Insofar as they discuss their prior knowledge, they are introduced to new perspectives at the stations, and share their perspectives about social media in a discussion. By increasing student-student interaction and giving students opportunities to discuss their ideas about the topic they can learn actively while recycling their new vocabulary. They acquire an understanding of social media, integrating and reproducing all that they have learned in each successive activity. Furthermore, by watching the video of the debate and analyzing the phrases, the debate model can scaffold student learning by providing input that they can use for their own debates if they wish to do so.
Pre-task and Task Cycle Stages

In the second and third lessons, students prepare for their debates. They begin by learning how to conduct research as a means of scaffolding their preparation to write their debate speeches. They write both affirmative and negative speeches, to view the proposition from various viewpoints and develop their critical thinking skills. Here, they are able to recycle, integrate, and reproduce their knowledge from the previous lesson. Learning actively by writing their own arguments, the activity is also scaffolded through peer collaboration. The students are also given opportunities to reflect on their speech by discussing their ideas with other teams and using Paul and Elder’s (2006) questions for critical thinking to further strengthen their arguments. Each aspect of the debate – speech, cross-examination, rebuttal, and summary – is separated into a series of tasks across the two lessons to avoid overwhelming the students and providing the chance to actively apply what they learn.

The final activity in the task series is the debate itself which is conducted in the fourth lesson. Debate stages require task dependency. From generating ideas to constructing and learning about each part of the debate, the students reach a non-linguistic outcome of participating in and conducting their own debate. However, this is not the end of the task cycle. As both Willis and Willis (2007), and Nunan (2004) state, reflection is an important part of TBLT. Thus, in the final lesson of the series, students reflect on their performance by focusing on the extent to which they successfully performed the core skills – teamwork, research, and critical thinking. They identify their strengths and weaknesses and share them with the rest of the class. The reporting stage is just as important as the planning because it helps students to hear about everyone’s experiences, foster a sense of community, and most importantly, allows the teacher to identify the common gaps in the students’ knowledge of their second language.

Language Focus Stages

As the aim of most foreign language courses is to learn the target language, it is important that lessons address any issues students have with it. Spada and Lightbown (2008) state that applied linguists increasingly recognize the importance of form-focused instruction to help students acquire target features that they might not otherwise. At university, students come with varying proficiencies. As such, some language lessons can be unnecessary because teachers cover pre-determined aspects of the language that students have already mastered. Long (2000) proposes FonF in part so that teachers focus on those aspects of the language that students have shown a need for by introducing the bulk of form-focused activities or tasks after meaning-focused tasks. The language focus can be based on the frequency of mistakes or errors, or on the lack of use of one or more grammatical constructions so long as it takes into consideration the natural order of acquisition when selecting language targets or assessing outcomes. For example, the language
focus could be adverbs of frequency if students are using them incorrectly or avoiding using them, and it could also address argumentative language or paraphrasing. By virtue of placing the form-focused instruction after the meaning-focused tasks, teachers can identify lexicogrammatical forms natural or essential to the given tasks.

The analysis stage of this section allows students to make connections directly with their own work. While reviewing their work, they locate and study areas to improve with the help of the teacher. The teacher can design multiple practice activities such as gap fill, impromptu speeches, dialogue comparison, or even mini debates. These types of noticing activities recognize and attend to the students’ cognitive processes (e.g., noticing) as a means by which students acquire the target language. By saving the form-focused instruction until the end of the unit, students can focus on meaning while participating in the main debate without interruption from the teacher regarding the accuracy of their form. The analysis stage of the TBLT framework also embodies Nunan’s (2004) principles by using the students’ preparation and debate for review and reflection. The work from their preparation and debate serve as scaffolding for the language focus, while engaging students in active learning, recycling, and integrating what they learned and produced.

Conclusion

In conclusion, having a debate in the classroom is a great way to engage students and help them to develop teamwork, research, and critical thinking skills that they can use outside of the classroom. Additionally, by using a topic like social media that is familiar to most students, it is easier to reach them and incorporate this in most curricula, while also making them aware of the benefits and dangers. Teachers can choose any activities or parts of the lesson that might be most appropriate for their students. Finally, by adhering to the TBLT framework, students are given multiple opportunities for peer interaction and collaboration, application of their new knowledge, and self-reflection and improvement, but also of equal importance, TBLT provides students with the opportunity to analyze and practice language that they need to improve their overall proficiency. Following these stages of task-based language teaching through the goal of conducting a debate helps foster more in-depth learning and relationships in the classroom, while also giving the teacher a more holistic view of their students’ needs to help them create the best possible course.

Author Note

Charu Gupta is currently an English lecturer at Rikkyo University, Japan. She received her M.S.Ed. in TESOL from the University of Pennsylvania in 2018. Her research interests include reflective practices, educational technology and task-based language teaching.
Heather Woodward earned her M.S.Ed in TESOL from Temple University in 2018. Heather taught in China, Vietnam, and Japan before joining Rikkyo University, a private university in Tokyo, Japan in 2019. Her research interests include TBLT, CALL, and material development.

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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References


Appendix A

Debate Lesson Plan Based on TBLT

Theme: Social Media

Students: 12

Level: Intermediate to Advanced

Lesson Length: 100 minutes x 5 lessons
Unit Objectives

Students will be able to (SWBAT) discuss and challenge their views on social media.
SWBAT formulate and assess different points of view through discussion and debate.
SWBAT use adverbs of frequency when reporting findings from research studies.\(^1\)

Debate Unit with Activities, Principles, and Materials

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Task</td>
<td>Warm-up</td>
<td>Scaffold; Active learning</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students (Ss) discuss the following questions with their partner:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Which social media sites do you use?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Why do you use social media?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. How much time do you spend on it?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Would your life change without social media? What changes would occur?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Task</td>
<td>Station and Discussion</td>
<td>Task dependency; Recycling; Active learning; Reproduction</td>
<td>6-8 stations (See example in Appendix B)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Ss visit each station for two minutes to discuss in pairs. Information at each station gives pairs ideas for the next pre-task and includes pictures to help Ss connect meaning of new vocabulary words to forms</td>
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<td>- In groups of four, Ss discuss the following questions, then present their ideas to the class:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. What are four advantages and four disadvantages of using social media?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Who benefits the most from social media and who benefits the least? Why do you think so?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Overall, do you think social media is good for society? Why or why not?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Task</td>
<td>Video of Debate</td>
<td>Task dependency; Scaffold; Active learning;</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ss watch a model of debate and take notes on the stages of debate to know what to expect. After, they confirm stages of debate with classmates, then teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Task</td>
<td>Debate Phrases</td>
<td>Task dependency; Recycling; Active learning; Reproduction, Integration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ss read transcripts of the video (above) highlighting the different phrases used for different functions such as presenting reasons, viewpoints, and examples.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ss circle the phrases that they would like to use during their debate and teacher reviews any unknown words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) This linguistic target has been chosen based on students’ needs of their post-task analysis.
### Lesson 2

#### Pre-Task

**Warm-up: Reliable Sources**
- Teacher gives pairs a list of sources to discuss from the video that Ss watched last lesson.
- Ss decide which sources are most reliable & why. After, pairs share ideas with whole class
- Teacher adds to Ss’ ideas
- Teams find sources of information for their speech and fill the table of the handout from Appendix B

**Conducting Research**
- Teacher divides Ss into their debate teams and gives social media proposition of “Social media benefits society more than harms it” and Tables 1 and 2 (above) to follow the steps provided for conducting research

**Speech Writing Activity**
- Ss do research and choose the best reasons for and against the social media proposition, then write an AFF and NEG speeches (See Table 3 for debate stages)
- Share their arguments with another team

| Scaffolding; Active learning; Integration | Task dependency; Scaffolding; Active learning; peer collaboration; Integration; Reproduction | See Appendix C: How to Conduct Research | 15 |
| Scaffolding; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction | Task dependency; Scaffolding; Active learning; peer collaboration; Integration; Reproduction | See Appendix C: How to Conduct Research | 50 |
| Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Integration; Reproduction | Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Integration; Reproduction | See Appendix D: Creating Affirmative and Negative Speeches and Cross-examination Questions | 35 |

### Lesson 3

#### Pre-Task

**Conducting Research**
- Ss make necessary changes to strengthen their speeches from Lesson 2 using Table 1 with more examples or evidence, and find three ideas against own arguments

| Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | See Appendix C: How to Conduct Research | 20 |
| Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | See Appendix C: How to Conduct Research | 20 |
| Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | Task dependency; Active learning; Recycling; Reproduction; Reflection | See Appendix D: Creating Affirmative and Negative Speeches and Cross-examination Questions | 40 |

**Cross-Examination Preparation**
- Ss look at arguments from another team and create cross-examination questions based on the other team’s arguments for practice
- Ask questions using the list (See Appendix A).
- Keep list as reference for debate

| Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | See Appendix E: Rebuttal and Summary Practice | 20 |

**Rebuttal Preparation**
- T explains rebuttals (untrue / partially true / illogical / weak evidence) with example
- Ss use homework ideas to write a rebuttal against the other team’s argument
- T gives feedback to each group

| Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | See Appendix E: Rebuttal and Summary Practice | 20 |

**Summary Preparation**
- Ss create summaries, which they can later revise during the 10-minute break

| Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | Scaffolding; Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | See Appendix E: Rebuttal and Summary Practice | 20 |

### Lesson 4

**Task Cycle: Debate Task**
- 2 teams debate each other
- 2 teams as judges and observers (participate in cross-exam with one question for each team)
- Follow debate stages on Table 3

| Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | Task dependency; Active learning; Integration; Reproduction; Recycling | Table 3 (above): Debate Performance Tasks | 100 |

### Lesson 5

**Task Cycle: Planning**
- Planning

<p>| Scaffolding, Task dependency; | N/A | 20 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Ss consider the core debate skills of critical thinking, teamwork, and research to determine the extent to which they succeeded in these aspects. - They share their experiences with their teammates to decide their strengths and weaknesses.</th>
<th>Reflection, Active learning;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task Cycle: Report Stage</td>
<td><strong>Report</strong> - Ss share their reflections with the class of their strengths and weaknesses and the class creates a list of the most popular strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>Reflection, Active Learning N/A 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Focus: Analysis</td>
<td><strong>Language Focus Analysis</strong> - Ss analyze a portion of their transcript from their debate performance with teacher who helps Ss identify and analyze the most frequent language mistakes</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Focus: Practice</td>
<td><strong>Language Focus</strong> - Ss practice the language using controlled practice activities such as gap-fills, short impromptu speeches on social media or dialogue comparison to practice their weak points</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B**

**Example Station for Stations and Discussion Pre-Task**

Social media is a safe space. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Any examples from your experience?
Appendix C

How to Conduct Research

Sources (Adapted Mishima et al., 2021)

Do you think these sources are reliable? Why or why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Common knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Survey /Statistical Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online news articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wikipedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• TV shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating and Recording Source Information

Include the following information when recording your sources and use these questions to decide if your source is reliable, strong, and useful to your debate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Where did you get the information?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the name of source?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Who are the authors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are they experts on the topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are they sharing information for research or advertising?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>When was it published?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was it within the last 10 years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>If online, provide a link to the source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key ideas/numbers</td>
<td>Is the information supported by data? What is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What types of evidence do you see – opinion, facts, data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is it connected to your proposition and position? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does it discuss various viewpoints? What are they?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hello everyone. Today we are debating the proposition ____________________

We are strongly [for/against] this proposition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument 1</th>
<th>Argument 2</th>
<th>Argument 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idea:</td>
<td>Idea:</td>
<td>Idea:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons:</td>
<td>Reasons:</td>
<td>Reasons:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, based on the three arguments- __________, __________ and __________ that we presented, we agree/disagree with the proposition that ________________________________.

**Cross-Examination Questions** (ask at least 2 questions about the arguments above)

1. 
2. 
3. 
Appendix E

Rebuttal and Summary Practice

1. Rebuttal Organization

Write one idea against each argument from your affirmative and negative speeches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument 1 main point:</th>
<th>Argument 2 main point:</th>
<th>Argument 3 main point:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idea against argument:</td>
<td>Idea against argument:</td>
<td>Idea against argument:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason:</td>
<td>Reason:</td>
<td>Reason:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rebuttal (write a rebuttal against at least 2 arguments from the other team)

Rebuttal 1: The other team said _______________. However, this is (not true / only partially true / not logical / not supported with strong evidence) because ___________________________________________. Therefore, ________________________________.

Rebuttal 2: The other team also argued _______________. However, this is (not true / only partially true / not logical / not supported with strong evidence) because ___________________________________________. Therefore, ________________________________.

Rebuttal 3: The other team talked about _______________

In conclusion, we strongly believe that ________________________________.

2. Summary Organization

We would like to summarize the debate. We presented 3 arguments today.

First, we said…(main idea + 1 key evidence/example/reason)

Second, we argued…(main idea + 1 key evidence/example/reason)

Third, we also talked about…(main idea + 1 key evidence/example)
EMI in Practice: Model United Nations

Patrick Strefford – Kyoto Sangyo University

Introduction

In 2014, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announced its latest push for the continuing internationalization of universities in Japan. The Top Global University Project (TGUP) “aims to enhance the international competitiveness of higher education in Japan”. Along with the goals of fostering exchanges with foreign universities and supporting the reform of personnel and administrative systems within the universities, the project aims to “strengthen systems to cultivate the ability of students to deal with globalization”. One of the primary tools, in conjunction with fostering critical thinking, is the strong focus on the English language ability of students. Therefore, funding is provided to this end. However, in addition to basic language skills, there is deemed to be a need, in order to “cultivate the ability of students to deal with globalization”, to foster advanced-level language skills, and this is done through a pedagogical approach called, ‘English-Medium Instruction’ (EMI). EMI refers to teaching and learning an academic subject in English. Learners are therefore required to develop both their language skills and knowledge of the academic content concurrently. There are close links between EMI and Task-Based Learning Teaching (TBLT) in similar ways to how Content-Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and TBLT intersect (Garcia Mayo, 2015). In fact, we could say that TBLT facilitates the implementation of EMI. This paper will use the Model United Nations (MUN) as a case study of the intersection between TBLT and EMI and show how the MUN can support ongoing efforts by universities to “strengthen systems to cultivate the ability of students to deal with globalization.”

Internationalization policy

The TGUP selected a total of 13 universities across Japan as ‘Top Type’, and a further 24 as ‘Global Traction Type’. According to the TGUP website, ‘Top Type’ universities “are conducting world-leading education and research,” and ‘Global Traction Type’ are universities “that are leading the globalization of Japanese society” (Top Global University Japan). The total budget for the project was three billion yen (about US$217 million). This budget was to be used to achieve a number of goals within each of the three general aims of the project: internationalization, governance, and education reform. Within the overarching goal of internationalization, there are a total of 10 sub-goals that relate specifically to increasing the percentage of certain criteria used to judge internationalization. Two of these, “percentage of classes conducted in foreign languages”, and
“percentage of students enrolled in degree programs in foreign languages” are relevant to the subject of this paper. However, as noted by Aizawa and McKinley (2020), the goals are vague (an increase in percentages), and not explicitly defined. The key issue, therefore, is how these guidelines are interpreted at the university level. More importantly perhaps, is the implementation in the classroom and the receptiveness by the students. Regardless of any government policy on education, the process of learning depends to a large extent on the motivations of students.

The TGUP was just the latest policy push by the Japanese government in its ongoing efforts to internationalize university education in Japan. In 2009, the Global 30 Project began at 13 leading universities throughout Japan. At this time too, one of the goals was to support the establishment of English-based degree programs at the designated universities. The dual aims of this were to facilitate the increase in foreign students attending universities in Japan, while at the same time, improving the English-language abilities of students attending these universities.

Following the Global 30 Project, the Go Global Japan Project (GGJP), which was launched in 2012, provided funding for 42 universities across Japan. The TGUP is the natural extension and expansion of the GGJP, and the Global 30 Project. As pointed out by Rose and McKinley (2018), “the push for EMI in Japan (the latest manifestation of which is the TGUP)… … underpins the successful implementation of this project.”

**English Medium Instruction**

This brings us to the topic under discussion. The Global 30 Project, while not actually using the concept of English-medium instruction (EMI), does specify the increase in English-based degree programs, meaning that all courses are taught in English. This therefore means that academic topics are to be taught in English, and this means EMI. Hokkaido University, one of the 13 ‘Top Type’, for example, established an ‘Integrated Science Program’, in which “52 subjects were offered in English, including general education and specialized courses” (Hokkaido Universal Campus Initiative). At Chiba University, “over 700 subjects in English will be offered in the ‘new’ college of liberal arts”, which has been the focus of their internationalization efforts (Chiba University, Project for the Promotion of Global Human Resource Development). This is indicative of the thrust of the new initiatives undertaken with the public finances provided by the Global 30 Project, the GGJP, and the TGUP.

This top-down push is not just in Japan, as EMI has been adopted around the world as a process of internationalization (Kirkpatrick, 2011). This may be a sincere attempt to provide students with the language skills necessary to compete in a global employment market, or may be merely an attempt to increase student numbers. The Chinese government has recently implemented it’s “internationalization at home”, which increases the practice of EMI at Chinese universities (Galloway and Rose, 2015). In the case of Japan, EMI classes are seen as a necessary tool to attract more foreign students, as well as to improve the general
academic abilities of students, increasing their job opportunities, and by extension, being a benefit to the Japanese economy and Japanese society. While the number of Japanese universities with EMI programs has been increasing in recent years, often in line with MEXT initiatives, this constitutes a small minority when compared with smaller, CLIL-style programs at many other tertiary institutions throughout Japan. An important issue is that perceived lack of ability on the part of the learners can lead to a tendency towards a prevalence of monological, non-interactive teaching styles (Chen et al. 2022).

Needless to say, for English to be the real medium of instruction for academic subjects, a high level of English proficiency is required. Leong (2017) identified this as one of the key factors that limits the effectiveness of EMI classes in Japan. For EMI to be practical, students must either enter university with a high level of English proficiency, or a large number of English language classes must be provided in order to enable students to reach the required level of proficiency. In order to bridge the gap, as it were, between regular EFL classes and EMI classes, CLIL can be utilized. As has been established, there are close connections between CLIL and TBLT (Ortega, 2015) based on a central premise that language and meaning are inseparable. CLIL classes offer academic or specialized content, while also providing substantial language support for students. We could perhaps, generally say that the focus of such classes is 50% content and 50% language. Such classes are most effectively taught by trained language teachers who have some level of expertise in the academic or specialized content area. However, in contrast to this, EMI classes are expected to have no, or very limited, language support for students. In this way, they can be considered to be 100% content, and zero percent language. However, having said that, ‘pure-EMI’ classes are rare at Japanese universities. Of course, universities and MEXT encourage the creation of such classes and courses, but in reality, most EMI classes can be thought of as ‘EMI-light’, meaning that some level of language support is provided by the teacher (perhaps something like 80-90% content, and 10-20% language). In this way, most EMI classes at Japanese universities are, to varying extents, CLIL classes. In this way, there is a kind of gradation between ‘pure-EMI’ classes, with zero language support, ‘EMI-light’ classes, with some language support, CLIL classes with equal focus on language and content, and then ‘content-based’ language classes, where some relatively easy academic content is used to facilitate language learning. Finally, there are traditional EFL classes, where language is the only goal.

Most universities students in Japan do not attend the elite universities that are provided with public finance to internationalize. If true internationalization is to occur, it must be more widespread than merely at a small number of well-financed elite universities. To do this, pedagogical interventions that are pragmatic, both in terms of what learners are able to do, and in what is possible for teachers to arrange, are important. This paper reports on one such intervention, the Model United Nations, as a case study to investigate the practical manifestation of the push for internationalization of higher education in Japan.
Internationalization Practice: MUN

The Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulation of the real United Nations for educational purposes. Students participate as representative of a country and discuss issues and potential solutions from their country’s perspective. In this way, the simulation is a type of role play that enables students to understand the complexities of serious issues, as well as the challenges of creating viable solutions. Of utmost importance, from a learning perspective, is the difficulty of reaching international agreements that take into account all participating countries. It therefore meets all of Ellis and Shintani’s (2014) criteria for a ‘task’, in that the central focus is on meaning, that there is a gap in understanding between interlocutors, that learners have freedom in language choices, and that there is a non-linguistic outcome. In Japan, MUN has been adopted as a practical framework, a task, for enabling students to delve into a specialized topic using the English language. It can therefore be considered a manifestation of the drive towards further internationalization of universities, and this is the reason for its use in this paper as a case study of EMI in Japan.

Even though students have training sessions before the actual event, and even though they also have time to research, prepare and refine their presentations and position papers, the entire event is conducted in English. This means that, while students have considerable language support before the event, the actual ‘task’ of participating and contributing to the success of the MUN is done entirely in English. In this way, it is a practical activity following the pedagogy of EMI. Success or failure is judged purely on the non-linguistic outcome determined by the successful completion of the Committee Working Papers.

The Japan English Model United Nations (JEMUN) is a MUN in which the language of all interactions is English, as opposed to other MUN events in Japan, where the language is Japanese. It is held every year, and brings together hundreds of university and high school students from all over Japan, and a limited number of overseas students. In July 2022, the conference was held over three days at Kinki University in Higashi-Osaka City in Kansai. About 200 students from twelve universities attended in-person, as did about 50 students from seven high schools. The theme for the 2022 JEMUN was ‘Addressing the Environmental and Social Issues Related to Fast Fashion’, and such a topic distinguishes it as a case study of EMI, in that the primary goal is not language acquisition. The JEMUN conference attempts to follow the protocols and procedures of MUN to a greater extent, and this means that the participating students need to follow certain set procedures and formal processes over the three-day conference. The students are assigned countries beforehand, and act as representatives for that country throughout the conference. Students are assigned to meeting rooms, and at the JEMUN 2022, there were a total of five meeting rooms, four for the university students and one for the high school students. Each meeting room has two physical spaces, one room for formal voting and one for discussions and debates. Students are also assigned to committees within each meeting room, and all initial presentations, discussions and debates take place within the committee setting. Each meeting room had four committees: Committee A – Garment Workers and Human Rights,
Committee B – Fast Fashion and Water Pollution, Committee C – Fashion Waste, and Committee D – The Role of Consumers for Sustainable Fashion. These can be regarded as the four issues of the theme of ‘Addressing the Environmental and Social Issues Related to Fast Fashion.’ Each meeting room was further divided into the five regional blocs of ‘Africa’, ‘Asia and the Pacific’, ‘Latin America and the Caribbean’, ‘Eastern European States’, and ‘Western European and Other States’.

On Day 1, after an informal ‘Meet and Greet’ session, students began by making prepared speeches of four minutes each. These speeches outlined their country’s position on the issue. These speeches are based on the prepared and previously submitted ‘position papers’, and take a considerable amount of preparation for the students. It is necessary for the students to undertake extensive background research on the issue itself, on the relevance and impact of that particular issue to their assigned country, and on solutions to the issue that they expect would be beneficial to their country and its citizens/workers. The committees vary in size, but some can include up to twelve country representatives. All other committee members are expected to take notes on the presentations of all other students. Needless to say, the students seemed to be predominantly taking notes on their computer. While it was evident in observation of this stage of the proceedings that most students were indeed taking notes, and while this is evidence that the students were effectively communicating their ideas to other participants, it was the first inkling of what became clear was an over-reliance on technology. Regardless of this, the notes taken at this time provided the basis for later discussions and debates. Each committee is tasked with creating a Working Paper (draft resolution) of proposed solutions to the issue at hand.

In the afternoon of Day 1, students spend a considerable amount of time (almost 4 hours) on discussions related to the creation of their Working Paper. During this period, it was evident that, even though discussions were taking place, many students were preparing their assigned section of the working paper by themselves. This was a sign perhaps of the limited proficiency of some of the students, who did not feel able to freely discuss with their partners and were instead inclined to try to compose their section of the working paper alone. It seems fair to speculate that had the students been put into smaller groups of perhaps 2-3 students, more discussions would have taken place, and therefore more meaningful interactions. This is a clear indication of one of the main problems of such tasks, in that, if students do not have the fluency level to enable meaningful discussions, the completion of the task is done with limited interactions. It also highlights, as previously outlined studies have also found, that the effectiveness of EMI can be severely limited if students do not have the language ability to fully participate.

On Day 2, students continued developing their Working Papers in the morning, as final resolution drafts had to be submitted before lunchtime. These final submissions were then edited for language only, by faculty advisers during the lunch break. In the afternoon, student representatives presented their working papers to their regional group members. So, for example, the representatives for Pakistan, Malaysia,
the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka were all in Committee D, and so their Working Paper’s topic was on the Role of Consumers for Sustainable Fashion. These representatives had to present and explain their Working Paper to representatives of other Asia and the Pacific countries, which included Indonesia, Bangladesh and Iraq (in Committee A), India, China and Vietnam (in Committee B), and Thailand, Japan and The Philippines (in Committee C). Members of the other committees had to likewise present and explain their Working Paper on their respective issue. At this stage, within these regional blocs, representatives were allowed to recommend amendments to the Working Papers written by other committees. Each regional bloc was assigned a ‘scribe’ who was responsible for filling out the amendment forms. With the addition of the scribes, it was necessary for students to participate in discussions, and this removed the tendency towards students interacting merely with their own computer.

On day 3 of the conference, the amendments that were requested by countries in the regional bloc session of the previous day were presented and debated within the committees. After this, ‘informal debates’ introduced the amendments to all committees (A, B, C, and D) within the meeting room. This meant that all committees were able to hear the proposed amendments from all the regional blocs. This was followed by a period of formal debate, in which each committee was able to discuss the amendments and decide if the proposed amendments were ‘friendly’ or ‘unfriendly’. The final session before the vote took place was undertaken with all four committees. The chair of the meeting room called out all of the amendments, and asked each committee to declare if that amendment was ‘friendly’ or ‘unfriendly’. Finally, delegates/representatives voted on the draft resolutions, which included the amendments.

**Implications for TBLT and EMI**

Running the JEMUN is an enormous logistical effort, and beyond the capacity of many teachers and faculties. It requires considerable effort from the organizers and needs a large number of student volunteers to manage the meeting rooms. Having said that, it is clearly of huge benefit to the students who participate. It would be very practical to hold a scaled-down version of the event within a faculty. It would equally be possible for teachers to hold such an event as a final assessment for a single course, instead of a final exam. In this way, it would be a task that the students could prepare for throughout a semester. This preparation time enables students to more fully participate. Therefore, it is considered that MUN has a high potential for practitioners of TBLT. Having said that, it may be advisable to reduce the use of MUN protocols and formal procedures, as these can infringe on the time available for meaningful discussions between students.

In this discussion, I have used the MUN as a case study of the practical implementation of EMI. The entire JEMUN conference was held in English, and most group discussions, and all formal interactions were conducted entirely in English. Obviously, preparation is essential, and it is likely that students expended considerable time and effort before the event, and this gave them the capability and confidence to participate
in the conference. Clearly, some were able to participate more fully than others, and one reason for this may have been English ability (although personality and disposition of the individual student cannot be discounted as a factor).

The JEMUN was clearly a resounding success. However, having said that, reaching international agreements is merely the first challenge in taking any action to resolve international issues, such as the negative impacts of fast fashion. While the students are able to acquire some limited understanding and appreciation of the complexities and difficulties of reaching agreement on complex international issues, it would be beneficial to outline the next steps that would be necessary to take any meaningful action. This would include the challenge of ratifying the agreement at the domestic level, and then creating government policies to actually implement the agreement. This could perhaps be carried out in a feedback session that followed the MUN conference.

**Conclusion**

This investigation has looked into the use of MUN as a TBLT approach to the implementation of EMI. The MUN is a highly symbolic event for the internationalization of higher education. As it is based on the real United Nations, it has the aura of authenticity. The use of procedures and protocols which are used in the real United Nations reinforce this. Experience of MUN is clearly of high value to many students, as is reflected in the effort necessary to prepare and participate in the event. Universities also place, to varying degrees, a high value on holding such events, and in supporting their students to participate in such events. It seems plausible to postulate that many companies would also value the experience in applicants, as it is an indication of the ability to prepare and organize, and to cooperate and negotiate. MUN is clearly an example of “systems to cultivate the ability of students to deal with globalization,” a stated goal of MEXT policy.

**References**


Introduction

Task-based Language Teaching (hereafter TBLT) is often seen as an antidote by governments when English language teaching curriculums are deemed to have failed to promote communicative goals or motivate learners (Ho & Wong, 2004, as cited in Thomas, 2015). Such issues regarding the teaching of English communication skills have been identified in Japan. Although solutions may exist outside the education system, university self-access centres (hereafter SACs) may conceivably be one of the only places, and perhaps even the first place within the education system, where Japanese students can specifically focus on improving their English communication skills.

TBLT may have great potential in self-access language learning (hereafter SALL) as the two approaches complement each other in several ways. While a large body of research has dealt with implementing task-based approaches in environments such as university classrooms and secondary schools, little research appears to have been focused on the application of task-based approaches in SACs. In this article, I outline how TBLT and SALL may work in tandem to achieve mutual goals in university SACs by encouraging learner autonomy and offering opportunities for meaning-focused interaction, so SAC users can learn skills relevant to their futures.

I begin the article by defining learner autonomy, SALL and SACs before discussing the possible benefits of utilising TBLT in university SACs in Japan. Following this, I attempt to explain why common criticisms of TBLT may not apply to university SACs. Later, in an attempt to offer some practical suggestions, I look at how TBLT might be implemented in university SACs through storytelling workshops before finally considering some of the challenges of employing TBLT at university SACs in Japan.
Learner Autonomy

One of the most referenced definitions of autonomy comes from Holec, who has described autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (1981, p. 3, as cited in Philpott, 2015). Benson (2011) clarifies this definition by adding that it is individual learners controlling, managing, and organising their learning, cognitive processes and content at various stages of the learning process. Nevertheless, this is not to say autonomy is “a single, easily describable behaviour” (Little, 1990, p. 7, as cited in Benson, 2011), but rather many diverse psychological states and ways of thinking (Little, 1991) that may fluctuate over time and between skills (Gardner & Miller, 1999). Consequently, autonomy is not a solitary state that learners either have or do not have. Little (1991) asserts that some behaviours which may demonstrate learner autonomy are “a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (p. 4). However, he clarifies that it is not individual learners studying independently or self-instruction independent of a teacher, a popular misconception (Little, 1991). Despite this assertion, Little (1991) admits that to achieve autonomy, learners must take responsibility for their learning from their teachers.

Several approaches have been suggested that may help to promote learner autonomy. According to Gardner and Miller (1999), all of these emphasise learners setting their own language learning goals. Benson introduces a number of these approaches, including the ‘resource-based’ approach, which sees “independent interaction with language learning resources as the focal point for the development of autonomy” (2011, p. 126). One particular ‘resource-based’ approach, SALL, is explored in the next section.

The importance placed on learner autonomy may be related to a move towards focusing on the individual learner (Reinders, 2010). Alternatively, Benson (2011) suggests there are theoretical reasons that indicate autonomous learners are better language learners. Another reason frequently referenced recently to explain learner autonomy’s importance is that constant changes to the global economy now require individuals to become autonomous life-long learners able to learn new skills throughout their lives (Benson, 2000, as cited in Dafei, 2007; Errey & Schollaert, 2003). This claim has been repeated by Mynard (2019a), who states that the Japanese workplace has also changed. These changes have made temporary work increasingly common and require workers to develop their skills to secure new contracts; making the ability to be an autonomous learner able to learn new skills throughout one's working life vital. Thus, there are certainly practical reasons for fostering learner autonomy.

Institutions specialising in encouraging and maintaining learner autonomy in various ways have existed around the world since the 1970s (Tassinari & Martos Ramos, 2021). However, these institutions, known as SACs, or self-access learning centres (SALCs), are more recent innovations in Japan (Mynard,
SACs and SALL are examples of ‘resourced-based’ approaches to fostering autonomy, and are discussed in the next section.

**Self-access language learning and self-access centres**

As previously mentioned, SALL is a ‘resource-based’ approach that “has as its ultimate goal the moving of learners from teacher dependence towards autonomy” (Gardner & Miller, 1999, p. 34). Reinders (2010) has stated SALL is frequently characterised as the most prevalent approach to developing learner autonomy. Cotterall and Reinders (2001) have maintained it is an approach that occurs specifically in SACs. Essentially, SALL might be described as an approach usually adopted by SACs to encourage its users to become more autonomous in their studies.

Mynard defines SACs as “person-centred social learning environments” dedicated to promoting “language learner autonomy both within and outside the space” (2016b, as cited in Mynard, 2019a, p. 186). Although SALL is a 'resource-based' approach, SACs often go beyond simply being spaces where resources are stored by providing services to aid and supplement their users' studies. While the services offered may vary from space to space, some services that may be available are advising and language support sessions. Physical spaces for group work may also be provided. Finally, online resources like websites, physical resources such as DVDs, computers and books or other printed materials may also be accessible (Benson, 2011). The SAC where I am currently employed offers all of these services, and provides several quiet study areas and social spaces, both on and offline.

Differences in services and spaces available may arise based on the institution SACs are based in, the funding and resources available to SACs, or their particular goals. For instance, financial constraints on a SAC may mean they cannot hire enough teachers to provide language support sessions. Conversely, well-funded SACs may be able to take on other goals, such as promoting international exchange. Whereas some specialised goals may differ, Benson (2011) adds that one of the basic tenets of SALL is that resources should be free to access. Cotterall and Reinders (2001) add that SACs are “designed to accommodate learners of different levels, styles, goals and interests” (p. 2). It may also be worth noting that the services offered at SACs are usually not assessed (Reinders & Lázaro, 2007).

Increasingly, a social element has also been noted in SACs, with the users who occupy the SAC being recognised as complex communities who share goals and assist each other through their knowledge and experience (Murray & Fujishima, 2013, as cited in Murray, 2018). The following section addresses how the communities that use SACs could benefit from TBLT and how common critiques of TBLT may not be relevant to university SACs.
TBLT in SACS
A vast amount of research broadly deals with the strengths of TBLT. Though many of these qualities may be particularly beneficial to Japanese university SAC users, the following section explicitly examines the relationship tasks have with autonomy and TBLT’s strong focus on meaningful interaction. Following this, common criticisms of TBLT, such as it not being suitable in East Asian contexts and the questions directed toward TBLT regarding its capability to effectively teach grammar, are discussed as I argue that assessments such as these may not apply to university SACs.

TBLT & learner autonomy
Perhaps the most potent argument for using TBLT in SACs comes from the relationship between TBLT and learner autonomy. As has already been discussed, the principal aim of SALL is fostering learner autonomy. Accordingly, any approaches that might support this goal may be of particular value to SACs. Willis and Willis (2007) suggest involving learners in task selection in TBLT to help motivate them. Moreover, allowing learners to make choices about the tasks they do and the language they use in these tasks, which is not restricted in TBLT classrooms, complements Holec’s definition of autonomy as learners are taking control of their learning (1981, as cited in Philpott, 2015). Errey and Schollaert (2003) maintain that these choices are essential to fostering learner autonomy and position TBLT as particularly suited to developing it. Learner choices may also influence motivation as “learners are more likely to be motivated by ownership over a task that has not been fully imposed upon them” (Errey & Schollaert, 2003, p. 57). This claim is particularly relevant as Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002, as cited in Philpott, 2015) have asserted that motivation is needed to develop autonomy.

If motivation is required for learners to become autonomous, the nature of tasks themselves may also help to encourage learner autonomy, as Willis and Willis (2007) reason that good tasks are intrinsically motivating. According to Ellis (1997), tasks may be intrinsically motivating if they are interesting, arouse and maintain curiosity, and make learners feel personally connected to the activity. Ideally, interesting topics and specific learner needs are identified during a needs analysis. Addressing these topics and needs might mean interesting content is covered, creating connections with the learner; maintaining their curiosity which may promote learner autonomy by selecting tasks that motivate learners. Van den Branden (2016) supports this claim and states that teachers have found that learners enjoy tasks, and their motivation to learn languages may be positively influenced by them.
The desire to successfully achieve an outcome may also produce motivation (Willis, 1996a). Further, this motivation may be enhanced if the reasons why learners are doing specific tasks are made evident to them, enabling them to link what they are learning with actual language used outside the classroom (Willis & Willis, 2007). Such links may also be made by using authentic materials in TBLT (Oura, 2001). Consequently, TBLT’s ability to build motivation at several stages creates a compelling argument for TBLT’s inclusion in SACs to foster learner autonomy by motivating learners.

Nonetheless, it is not only by building motivation that TBLT makes learners more autonomous. TBLT may also aid students in realising that they are absorbing language despite not being directly taught by a teacher. There are two aspects of TBLT that may assist students in gaining awareness of their learning. Firstly, the facilitator role teachers adopt in TBLT tasks requires learners to participate in the class actively. Secondly, Willis and Willis (1996) suggest using consciousness-raising activities, which encourage learners to discover and make their own conclusions about how language functions. TBLT may promote learner autonomy since learners may come to see their learning is based on their participation rather than on any information presented by a teacher, essentially allowing students to become responsible for their own learning, a condition Little (1991) claims is necessary for learners to become autonomous. Additionally, if students become aware they are learning independently of the teacher, TBLT may be able to influence students beyond the classroom throughout their lives.

One example of how TBLT might influence learners’ lives might be by creating lifelong learners. As previously referenced, Mynard (2019a) claims that fostering learner autonomy relates to the needs of many Japanese students due to changes in the Japanese workplace requiring workers to develop new skills autonomously. Thus, tasks, which have been suggested to be intrinsically motivating, may be an excellent conduit to assist SACs in promoting learner autonomy, which may prepare learners for a future where they will need to learn new skills to progress in their careers. Outside of Japan, Errey and Schollaert's (2003) work on the TABASCO project suggests that European students share similar needs to their Japanese counterparts, meaning developing learner autonomy via TBLT may also benefit learners in university SACs beyond Japan.

**Focus on meaning**

Beyond promoting learner autonomy, TBLT may also assist Japanese university SAC users in improving their spoken communication. Numerous authors have highlighted issues with teaching spoken English in Japan. For instance, in a survey of 112 high school graduates, Kikuchi and Browne (2009) found that few English classes focused on oral skills. Meanwhile Ryan (2009) has supported their claim by suggesting that Japan’s pre-
tertiary English education system appears to focus heavily on grammar rather than communication. Such arguments are compounded by Mynard (2019a) who lists multiple authors (Tanaka, 2009; Otani, 2013) who have argued that communicative approaches are frequently rejected by Japanese school teachers. Consequently, there may be a real need for learning environments where Japanese students can develop their oral skills.

Such an environment may exist in SACs, as Thornton (2021) identified the promotion of language practice as a driving factor in establishing several SACs around the world during interviews with veteran SALL practitioners. Furthermore, Benson (2011) states that language practice is one of the many services SACs generally provide. In Japanese university SACs, it makes sense to adopt meaning-focused approaches, which Willis and Willis (2007) define as those which motivate learners to communicate using their language, whereby success is judged by their ability to communicate. Significantly, this language is not controlled by the teacher (Willis & Willis, 2007). The issues surrounding English communicative skills in Japan and the focus on communication in SACs may make TBLT, a meaning-based approach, a logical choice when designing sessions or workshops.

A prominent strength of TBLT is its emphasis on meaning, as it immerses learners in authentic communication (Beglar & Hunt, 2002). Crucially, Swan (2005) states that TBLT may be ideal for learners who have more language than they can use. This criterion may correspond with many university students in Japan, who have probably already been through several years of English education. Much of this education may have been primarily grammar-focused, and therefore these students may still have language that needs to be practised before it can be used automatically. In Japanese universities, TBLT and SACs can act in unison. SACs can provide spaces for language production, while TBLT is utilised to ensure that practice is meaning-focused. Ultimately, the interaction offered by TBLT may benefit users whilst aligning with their existing use of a SAC’s services to practice language.

Common criticisms of TBLT

Though I previously stated that a focus on meaning is a strength of TBLT, one of the biggest criticisms it has faced from commentators such as Swan (2005) is that it may focus too heavily on meaning, resulting in an insufficient focus on grammatical accuracy. The problem a lop-sided focus on meaning creates is that TBLT may only train learners to complete tasks more efficiently and to speak strategically using lexis (Skehan, 1996). Thus, focusing on meaning too heavily may result in unsophisticated, or inaccurate speech. Additionally, if learners’ grammatical knowledge is incomplete, there may be issues regarding what and how to assess learners.
Indeed, grammatical knowledge is routinely assessed to ascertain what has been learnt in second language learning. Conceivably, examinations may be problematic if no pre-specified language is taught in TBLT. These issues could make TBLT incompatible with some contexts, such as certain Asian institutions. Lai (2015) states that Asian schools are often exam-oriented, and exam scores are frequently linked to a school's reputation, with these exams being heavily form-focused and knowledge-centred. Furthermore, Lai (2015) highlights several studies (Thien Hiep, 2009; McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007; Xu, Liu & Jiang, 2008; Iwashita & Li, 2012) suggesting Asian teachers prefer traditional, grammar-focused methods. Such preferences may be related to perceptions involving TBLT’s inability to teach grammar sufficiently, a concern Sato (2010) has highlighted.

These issues have been addressed by Willis (1996a, 1996b), who added a language focus stage to her TBLT framework, Ellis (2009), who maintains a grammatical element to TBLT does exist through his focused tasks, and Long (2016), who argues that even unfocused tasks have a grammatical element as learners are exposed to authentic language and feedback on their own language use is received. Nevertheless, I would contend that grammar teaching may not even be strictly necessary in Japanese university SACs. Japanese university students should have already completed several years of grammar-focused English education. Moreover, acknowledging that SACs primarily exist to encourage autonomy recognises that studying done in the SAC should ideally only be one part of a user’s studies. Additional studying may occur in formal classes at the university, independently at home, or with peers in the SAC. However, students may have learned language during their studies but not have had ample opportunities to practice speaking. Therefore, I would argue that university SACs should look to assist users in the best way possible by providing opportunities to practice using language and adopting meaning-focused approaches rather than grammar teaching. Furthermore, a focus on communication over grammar is substantiated by Reinders and Lázaro’s (2007) observation that services at SACs are generally unassessed, meaning there may be little need for an explicit focus on grammar. Consequently, regardless of whether TBLT is conducive to grammar learning, it may escape any grammar-related criticism when utilised in university SACs.

Another claim frequently levelled at TBLT is that its approach is inappropriate in East Asia owing to cultural differences. For instance, researchers have argued that it is particularly unsuited to countries strongly influenced by Confucian principles (Ellis et al., 2020). Hu (2005, as cited in Lai, 2015) reasons that the learning culture of these countries is one of accumulation, pitting it against TBLT’s view of acquisition. Additionally, Ellis et al., (2020) point to a number of commentators (Littlewood, 2007, 2014; Butler, 2011) who state learner-centeredness in TBLT is said to conflict with local teaching approaches, which generally place teachers and textbooks as the primary sources of knowledge in the classroom. This clash in ideologies
may also mean that the learner-centeredness underpinning SALL may face issues in Asian countries influenced by Confucianism.

Nevertheless, Lai (2015) has claimed that TBLT is not necessarily unsuited to Asian contexts, and several researchers and teachers (Harris, 2016; Huang, 2016; Safitri, Rafli & Dewanti, 2020) have reported successfully implementing TBLT in Asia, including Prabhu's (1987) seminal work. Furthermore, Mynard (2019b) states that a self-access boom is currently happening in Japan, perhaps suggesting that learner-centred approaches can succeed in Asian countries. Significantly, Littlewood (2001) found that cultural stereotypes about learners are only sometimes correct, and there is often a more significant difference between individuals than nationalities. Accordingly, it seems more pertinent to primarily consider individual needs, which TBLT attempts through a needs analysis.

**Suggestions**

Practically speaking, TBLT could be implemented in SACs to address a number of needs. However, in terms of classes or workshops, TBLT-based conversation classes would assist SACs in providing opportunities for production. One such class could be an oral storytelling workshop. Willis and Willis (2007) argue that storytelling is an integral part of communication. Therefore, classes based on storytelling may reflect real-life communication, presumably providing the motivation that Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002, as cited in Philpott, 2015) contend is a prerequisite to learner autonomy. Provided these links are explained to learners, motivation may be further enhanced as learners are able to link what they are learning with language used outside the classroom (Willis & Willis, 2007). This workshop could be incorporated into university SACs and based on Willis’s three-part framework consisting of a pre-task, a task and a post-task activity (1996a, 1996b).

The workshop could begin with a pre-task stage where discussions on how to structure good stories and examples of good stories being told by expert speakers may be shown to prime speakers and introduce the topic and task (Willis, 1996b). Demonstrating well-structured stories would give learners a framework for storytelling to be used in the class and provide a structure to build future stories around. After looking at storytelling structures, learners could be given time to prepare their stories. Willis and Willis (2007) state that five to ten minutes of preparation tends to positively impact the length, fluency, and complexity of speech. They also maintain that preparation time has been found to give confidence to shyer speakers in Japan.

Central to the course would be the 4/3/2 technique (Nation, 2001, as cited in Willis & Willis, 2007; Nation, 2001) which involves students repeating a story three times to different speakers. Each time they repeat the story, they have less time to give the same information; first four minutes, then three and finally two
(Nation, 1989). Nation (2001) states that the 4/3/2 technique helps improve fluency, and Willis and Willis (2007) describe it as challenging and fun. They also assert that even in our first languages, stories tend to contain many fixed expressions, and despite appearing to be spontaneous narratives, good stories are generally the result of repetition, meaning that repeating stories still reflect actual language use.

After telling their stories using the 4/3/2 technique, learners would report on their classmates’ stories. A report stage may address the claims that TBLT trains learners to speak lexically by prompting learners to focus on accurate speech, which Willis and Willis (2007) assert should be produced due to the pressure of speaking in front of the class. Finally, in the post-task stage, learners could focus on new language or grammar featured earlier in the task. As explained earlier, explicitly focusing on grammar is not a key concern in university SACs; however, this inclusion may reassure students expecting a more conventional teaching style.

The benefits of such a workshop are numerous. As well as helping learners remember new stories in English that they can repeat in later conversations, they may also benefit from learning a structure for good storytelling as it will give them a framework for future stories. In essence, the 4/3/2 technique could help learners move beyond single-sentence answers by developing fluency when speaking in long turns. Adding preparation time may lead to more confident interactions, and the report stage could elicit noticing or aid acquisition. Crucially, the workshop is flexible and could easily be adjusted to focus on discussions, TED Talks or news reports instead of storytelling. The 4/3/2 technique could be used to provide practice in opinion-giving or summarising TED talks, on topics that learners reveal to be interesting in a needs analysis, or in advising sessions.

Regarding the benefits for university SACs, several opportunities to develop learner autonomy also exist:

1. Motivation may be generated through the desire to complete the task and through the use of authentic materials such as YouTube videos. Likewise, selecting topics for stories relevant to learners’ lives may make the task interesting and also help to motivate learners.

2. Learners’ choices over the language they use in the workshop may have a similar effect. As a result, provided learner motivation is increased, learner autonomy may be fostered.

3. The post-task phase, where learners can focus on language in the task, may present opportunities for students to realise that they are learning independently of the teacher.
Challenges & considerations

For TBLT to be implemented successfully in Japanese university SACs, diverse issues may need to be considered and factored into the design of sessions, workshops or courses. The first of these challenges relates to the optional status of sessions in SACs, and the second regards inclusivity in SACs.

The nature of SALL means that sessions in SACs tend to be non-compulsory, usually with no exams, and they are free to access. The implications of this are that the number of learners using a SACs services may be inconsistent. Further, continued use may also be unpredictable, or it may be challenging to ensure use is continued over a long period. Indeed, measures such as sign-up forms can count how many learners sign-up for sessions, but as attendance is optional, learners may drop out despite signing up for a course for numerous reasons. Moreover, depending on the SACs popularity, sign-up numbers may be high or low. In SACs that struggle to attract large numbers, learners dropping out of sessions, particularly if these sessions are heavily focused on group work, might mean that sessions must be adjusted to work with small classes or even individuals. Low or varying numbers of learners may also become an issue during courses as there are fewer reasons for learners to continue courses over a prolonged period compared to classes in other institutions. In accredited university courses or classes in private language schools, fees or grades may motivate learners to continue studying. Conversely, SAC use depends heavily on the existence and maintenance of a user's personal goals or motivation. A needs analysis may help reveal topics that motivate learners and may help maintain their motivation, but sessions should be designed to adjust to the ebb and flow of student numbers. Furthermore, discrepancies between the levels of students who attend may only reveal themselves during the workshop or course. These differences may also have to be considered, and lessons may need to be adjusted to accommodate all learners.

Issues regarding varying levels of English amongst learners relate to another factor to consider: inclusivity in SACs. University SACs attract a variety of users who may have unique learning goals, diverse levels of English and distinct ideas as to what learning is. Advocating a learner-centred approach means that these personal differences should be taken into account and catered to by providing a range of services that accommodate different types of learners. For instance, learners with lower levels of English may not be able to participate in the workshop I have suggested as they may need more scaffolding. Although the storytelling workshop could be simplified by using written scripts of stories rather than videos, some learners may need approaches other than TBLT before engaging in meaning-focused classes. Thus, while I believe TBLT has a vital role in Japanese university SACs, I cannot suggest that all SAC services should implement TBLT.
Conclusion

In this article I have examined incorporating TBLT into Japanese university SACs through storytelling workshops. TBLT’s potential to promote learner autonomy and tasks’ possible motivational nature are of enormous benefit to SACs seeking to foster learner autonomy amongst their users. Users may profit from becoming autonomous learners in the future. Moreover, TBLT’s heavy focus on meaning could aid Japanese SAC users looking for opportunities to practice language, as opportunities to practice speaking in primary and secondary education may have been limited. Criticisms, such as those surrounding grammar teaching, may not apply to university SACs as users have either already learnt grammar many years or are being encouraged to study grammar outside of the SAC. Similarly, exams being uncommon in university SACs may mean grammar teaching is unnecessary. Accordingly, I would recommend using TBLT at university SACs in Japan in various courses, workshops and sessions, including the suggested storytelling workshop. However, syllabi other than TBLT should also be used in SAC sessions to accommodate individual preferences, promote inclusivity and fully match the needs of SAC users. Finally, whilst outside of the remit of this article, future research could look at SAC users’ views of whether TBLT assists them in their autonomous learning to gauge a more complete understanding of how positive a role TBLT could play in SACs.

References


LESSON PLAN:

Creating Group Essays and Discussions on a Topic of Your Choice

Graham Robson, Toyo University

This is a multi-lesson task-based project to be carried out in groups, designed for intermediate levels, with a tourism theme in mind, but it can be modified for both major and proficiency levels. The two main overarching purposes are to create a group/pair essay (400 words), and to discuss the content of that essay with others, but continual self-review is important.

GOALS

- Collecting information about topics of interest
- Familiarizing students with parts of an essay
- Having students produce a 400-word essay in groups/pairs
- Reflecting on the writing process
- Summarizing an essay into short information piece
- Creating discussion questions from the topic of an essay
- Promoting a 10-minute discussion of the topic in groups
- Reflecting on the discussion process

MATERIALS

- Whiteboard / projector
- Student intranet to allow posting of work
- Worksheets related to essay production, and discussion (See Appendices)
PRE-TASK (LESSON 1)

In the introductory lesson, students begin by attending to pre-writing, which means thinking about topics that they are interested in. At this point students can share lists, and an overarching list can be put on the whiteboard. The whole of the lesson one can be seen in Appendix One.

MAIN TASK (LESSON 1)

The main tasks involve negotiation of meaning and the main task centres around two articles. Students should read by themselves and match the vocabulary at the foot of the page with that underlined in the passage. This is followed up by an information–sharing task in which students share their notes on the summaries with others who have a different reading. An example of a 450-word reading can be seen in Appendix Two. The author created the readings for this class, but similar readings may be taken from textbooks. It should be stressed that learners need to check their partner’s understanding of their explanation.

POST TASK (LESSON 1)

After thinking about topics, and sharing articles, students need to collect information on a topic of interest for homework individually. In the homework should be a summary of information, the source, why the article was chosen, and one opinion related to the article.

PRE-TASK (LESSON 2)

The students should have brought in information about their topic of interest. To start the lesson, students should share this information with others, including opinions. The teacher should state the one of the overall goals of this first activity is to help each student think more deeply about other topics, which they had not considered but could be of personal interest. The class worksheet for Lesson Two can be seen in Appendix Three.
MAIN TASK (LESSON 2)

The main task and objective for Lesson Two is related to identifying parts of and types of essays. Students should know and be able to annunciate both types and parts of an essay. The three essay types chosen were classification, problem and solution and persuasive essays. An example of a classification essay created by the teacher can be seen in Appendix Four. During this part of the lesson, each group is assigned one essay type and with help from students and teachers try to identify areas such as references or body paragraphs. Once each group is confident, information is shared with groups / pairs who have another essay type. Teachers will also need to allow students to form groups / pairs around topics of similar interest. The teacher may also want to add information about referencing in essays as preparation for the first draft.

POST TASK (LESSON 2)

Now that groups / pairs have been established, the students should work towards creating a first draft of their essay on a Google document. To aid this, teachers may want to add examples of the essay (with notations showing the various parts) onto a school intranet for inspection, if available. It is ultimately up to each group on how they proceed with the homework task, i.e., dividing up different sections of the essay to write individually. It should be stressed that plagiarism is unacceptable and that students should have a copy each of the first draft to bring to the following class (paper or digital data), which they have familiarized themselves with.

PRE-TASK (LESSON 3)

Students may have questions after the first draft, so in Lesson Three, the teacher should encourage students to ask questions at any time. To start with, pairs / groups can meet and reflect on several points with help from the teacher. Examples of questions in pairs to address include:
In the main task, students share the answers to the questions above as well as show their first drafts to those in other groups. This activity serves to both raise awareness of students’ own work and motivate them to proceed with the second draft. Depending on the abilities and preferences of the teacher / students, it may be worth explicitly teaching ideas such as cohesive devices (https://ieltsfocus.com/2017/07/20/cohesive-devices-in-ielts/) to aid students in the writing process.

Finally, students work with an essay checklist to make a plan before the end of the class in preparation for the second draft (https://www.99worksheets.com/33918/writing-checklist-for-informational-writing.pdf). Make sure students highlight any new work in colour and upload their work to a shared space on the school intranet, where both teachers can comment, and students can see others’ work.

At the beginning of the class, students reflect further on their writing experiences and share those experiences with others. The table below can be used to elicit opinions:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What are your topics and main ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>What essay style did you choose and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How did you find out that information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How did you divide work among members, was it easy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What problems have you had?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How could you get over those problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was able to work on my own on the writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I had problems finding sources to match the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My grammar was OK, I think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I was able to link sentences together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I planned before I wrote my part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I reviewed a few times after I wrote (and revised it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I have a basic understanding of parts of an essay (from last week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I enjoyed the writing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I deepened my interest in my topic through writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAIN TASK & POST TASK (LESSON 4)**

There are two main mini goals left to realize before the last lesson. The first is creating a summary of their second drafts to act as a comprehension aid for others. The second is the creation of 3-4 discussion questions that students will use with people from other groups. It is important that each individual member has access to the summary and discussion questions. If there is time, students can start to practice discussion in their groups, and continue after class. An example of discussion questions can be seen in appendix five, with grammatical chunks underlined. Give students the choice for the final lesson of paper (around 6 copies) or to put the information on a laptop or I-Pad. There should be a format to this information that includes:

- the basic topic
- why the topic was chosen
- sources used
- an essay summary and discussion questions
FINAL TASK (LESSON 5)

Once the essays, essay summaries and discussion questions have been prepared, students are now ready in the final lesson. Provide time at the start for groups / pairs to do a final practice. Next, set a time limit for students in new groups to present and discuss their ideas (e.g., in 3s, 10-15 minutes, depending on proficiency levels / confidence, etc.). For help with discussion, the teacher should again offer suggestions such as:

1. Bring people into the conversation “Rena, you haven’t spoken yet, what do you think?”
2. Ask for more ideas from people “is there anything else we can discuss / talk that?”
3. Ask deeper questions “you said “difficult”, can you tell me more about that?”
4. Use the 5WH1H system for asking follow-up questions.

The teacher may prefer a student self-assessment for the discussion on the final day. An example of possible scoring can be seen in appendix six. Lastly, have students carry out a final self / pair reflection of this entire unit.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Support language for students to carry out the task is offered through class worksheets, but it is not necessary to adhere completely to these.
- To maximize this unit students’ reflection is very helpful, especially if students have not written essays before
- This unit is pitched at intermediate level, but can be adapted for both lower and higher levels depending on the vocabulary / grammar, length of readings, essays and amount of discussion required
- Instead of self-assessment for the final discussion, students could alternatively record their conversation on Zoom etc, for the teacher to assess.
- Although providing a degree of control, it takes time to create some of the materials, particularly the readings and sample essays. However, once the first set of materials has been produced, these can be easily edited in subsequent class iterations, saving time in the long run. However, teachers may prefer to use sample essays from the Internet
APPENDIX ONE – LESSON ONE CLASS WORKSHEET

Over the next five weeks, students will work to achieve the following

- A group essay about a tourism-based / cultural-based topic
- A summary of that essay, with discussion questions (for group discussion)

To help you to start writing your essay, it is important to have a clear idea / topic that you can write about. For Unit 1, will call this Pre-writing.

**Pre-Writing**

- Reading topics of interest to you
- Narrowing own topic of interest to you
- Collecting information about that topic to help you write

*Reading topics of interest*:

You will be given a reading about a topic of interest. Check the meaning with a partner and be ready to share that information with someone who has not read the information.

Use the box below to add your notes / take notes about “other” topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Solo travel</th>
<th>2 Gender issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*How to summarize your reading to share with others*

Begin by reading your text

Mark as you go – underline what you think are the main points?

What are the details that support the main ideas?

What information is not so important?
Use key words or ideas and try and find the main points from the reading
As a guide try to bring your notes down to about 15-20% of the article (just notes and underlining is OK)

Now share your ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think?</th>
<th>Is this part important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think this part is not so important</td>
<td>How about this part..?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

!! Keep in notes form (not long sentences)

Now it’s time to explain

1. Be positive and lead the situation
2. Watch for signs of understanding / confusion
3. Check that they have understood what you say
4. Listen to their basic explanation back again

Ok are you ready? Can I continue? Are you sure?

Ok now I’ve finished, try, and explain your notes back to me

Well done! You missed the part about... Don’t forget to add.....

Finally, think about your topics

- Do they interest me? Is there anything else I want to know? What do I think about the topics?

Now let’s think about other topics you might be interested in.

- Any classes you have had at university
- Anything you have seen on the news or read on social media
- How about any of the following topics (if not OK):
Travel and global warming / climate change

barrier free

Catering to specific groups – e.g., Muslims / LGBT

Corporate social responsibility

Specific segments of tourism industry: Bridal industry / event industry / contents tourism

Revitalization of local areas

parts of Japanese culture

Try and add two of your own ideas

_____________________________   _____________________________

Try to make a top three of topics that you could find out about / write about

!! make sure they are topics you have an interest in, you can find out something about (i.e., realistic topics) and that suits your level of English ability

1

2

3

Now share with the class…..

Working towards HW

Use the following space for your notes. Think about what sources are good (journals / national organizations), not so good (private companies, blogs). Your original article can be in Japanese or English (but in Japanese you will need to change information into English – DO NOT use TRANSLATION SOFTWARE). The purpose of this HW is to collect information so try and find information with interesting data, examples that you can use in your writing.

Ideas....
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name ________________________________</th>
<th>number __________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article title ________________________</th>
<th>Article source _________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why I chose this article? ______________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic notes about the article __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 opinion about the content ______________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URL ________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

56
A report has found that 20% of young Americans want to take a trip alone overseas in the next year or so. Why then would people want to travel abroad by themselves? It could be lonely, boring, or even scary for them. There are reasons why some people prefer to travel alone. Firstly, solo travel allows you to know yourself better. You might have to make difficult decisions and face your fears. Secondly, being on your own it is easier to mix with local people and make some new friends. Locals might be more likely to help you if people travel alone. Thirdly, when you travel on your own it could be less expensive because you decide where and what to eat and do. That also means that it is much easier to save up money for other interesting activities.

Traveling by oneself could be thought of as western value. In Japan, a collectivist society (集産主義社会), where groups are more important than the individual, Japanese tend to travel in groups overseas on package tours to places like Hawaii. Travelers all get the same service and not much choice. These days, overseas package tours are still popular but so is people travelling abroad by themselves.

Several factors have changed young Japanese travel habits. For one thing, low-cost carriers (LCCs) provide cheaper travel abroad. Also, there are many online travel agents that provide Do-it-yourself travellers with sites like Expedia to make reservations with. Social media is also a factor, and the way young people make decisions has also changed. When a young person decides to travel overseas, he or she might use a hashtag to search for photos uploaded to Instagram as well as search online for reviews. Others young people use SNS to meet others through match-up. Lastly, and importantly, recently some young people prefer to travel alone, both domestically and abroad, because they want to avoid any trouble from having to listen to their travel partners’ wishes or because they just want to not have possible disagreements while traveling.

To meet the demand for solo travel the supply side needs to be ready. This can start with the accommodation that solo travellers use. To begin with, accommodation like hotels need to find out more about their Japanese guests. Do guests hope to be by themselves or to have an adventure and meet new people? This information can be found out through guest questionnaires. Also, hotels should give guests local event information, and recommend neighbourhood cafes, parks, farmers’ markets, and meeting spots where solo travellers can meet similar-minded travellers. Lastly, hotels that offer communal spaces are popular. Here, again, travellers can make new friends.
Match the words on the left with meaning on the right

face your fears - problems
value - tours with everything for one price
do-it-yourself - the customer does not use a company and does by themselves
disagreements - area / place that people can use in a guest house, for example
communal spaces - think about what is negative for you
face your fears - important thinking in society

APPENDIX THREE – LESSON TWO

After collecting information, let’s start to think about writing in today’s class. First, let’s share our information with others. Presenters and listeners try to ask questions of each other.

(Try to use RRLS) Read Remember Look and Speak as you present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenters</th>
<th>Listeners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you ready..  My topic is..........</td>
<td>Go ahead..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I chose this because................</td>
<td>That’s interesting, why do you say that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the main points are...</td>
<td>What else did you find out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I continue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here is my opinion about that..................</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Try to listen to three people and decide.

Which topic interested me the most and why

______________________________________________

Now let’s look at three types / genres / styles of essays that we could write.

**Classification essay**

**Problem solution**

**Persuasive essay**

Before you look at example of each, try and work out from the essay type, what kind of information / structure or expressions the essay will have
Parts of an essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>thesis statement</th>
<th>topic sentence</th>
<th>support ideas</th>
<th>reference</th>
<th>introduction</th>
<th>background recommendation</th>
<th>conclusion (summary of main points)</th>
<th>body paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Try to work out where you might find these parts in the essay (S) start, (M) middle or (E) end.

You will be assigned one of the following essays, try find the above parts, and share with group members

- Classification – Special Interest Tourism (SIT)
- Problem solution – Problems and solutions of obesity
- Persuasive – English education in Japan

After reviewing the essay types, think about the following – get some ideas from others

1. What topics are you interested in now?
2. What style of essay do you think is the best to fit that?
3. Are there others in the class that think in a similar way to you?

Time to find your group members

Fill in the ideas below and find group members (two groups of a similar topic is fine)

Basic topic ________________________ preferred essay type__________________________

Technical parts of the essay – adding sources and references

Let’s look at one source from an essay

According to The British Medical Association (2018), even 30 minutes walking can cut heart problems by 25%. That means a walk in your local area can help you live longer and healthier.

Source + basic information (but try to not use the same words) + extra meaning / opinion sentence

At the end of the essay comes the reference (tell your teacher what you see in this reference)

Your turn – look at the information below, think about which part you could use and then add some extra information


Title Disaster information app "Safety tips" now supports 14 languages

The Japan Tourism Agency has started "Safety tips", an application that gives disaster information to foreign visitors to Japan. It includes information about tsunami warnings and bad weather. The Japan Tourism Agency has made this available in 14 languages: English, Chinese (Simplified / Traditional), Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Tagalog, Nepali, Khmer, Burmese, and Mongolian. It comes as free download on Android and I-phones.

According to ____________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________Ideas

for extra meaning / opinion

This means that ____________________________________________________________

This can be good because____________________________________________________

APPENDIX FOUR – LESSON TWO SAMPLE ESSAY (CLASSIFICATION ESSAY)

Special Interest Tourism in Japan

In Japan, many people visit Kyoto to see autumn leaves change colour. Also, many Japanese people go overseas to Hawaii for shopping and enjoying the sun. These activities with many people moving to a place to doing a similar action can be called mass tourism. An alternative to mass tourism is Special Interest Tourism (SIT), which means tourists’ experiences based on specific interests or needs of individuals and groups. Such activities include unusual hobbies or activities
following a personal need, such as health. In this essay, the author would like to describe three types
of SIT in Japan, which are medical tourism, sport tourism and farm tourism.

Medical tourism is a popular type of SIT nowadays. This means going to another place or
country to get medical treatment. In some countries, medical treatments are not available, and it’s
cheaper to get medical care in another country. In 2011, the Japanese government introduced medical
visas, so people can come to Japan for health reasons. According to the Japan Medical & Health
Tourism Centre (2017), many Chinese and Koreans come to Japan for cancer treatment because of
high quality service. The Japanese government is also planning to increase inbound medical demand
more.

Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing types of SIT. It could be participating or watching,
such as going to watch the Olympics. According to the UNWTO (2019), sport tourism was 25% of
all tourism profit, so there is a large market. Japan is also famous among foreign visitors for its
national sport Sumo and other martial arts like Judo. To increase sports tourism, Japan launched the
Japan Sport Tourism Alliance (JSTA) for outdoor sport tourism and martial arts tourism. This group
promotes domestic and overseas visitor sports tourism to help regional areas of Japan.

Farm tourism is also a popular type of SIT. It means doing farm activities or experiencing
rural life. It helps people relax from the stressful daily life. Japan is famous for its high-quality
agricultural products. Chiba Prefecture, for example, has areas and facilities where tourists can pick
fruit. The Japanese government is also attracting foreign visitors to participate in farming and learn
Japanese food traditions.

Special Interest tourism is helping the development of the tourism industry in Japan. The
Japanese government is also supporting many places and will make more efforts to promote special
interest tourism with domestic and international tourists from now on.

Nov. 16th, 2021, from [https://www.jmht.org/intro](https://www.jmht.org/intro).

UNWTO (2019). *How powerful is sports tourism?* Retrieved on Nov. 18th, 2021, from
[https://www.unwto/press/type/sports-tourism.html](https://www.unwto/press/type/sports-tourism.html)
Basic conversation follow-up questions

1. Have you ever thought about studying abroad?

2. What do you know about Osaka?

3. Do you like / enjoy listening Ted Talks? What’s your favourite way to study?

WH-opinion questions

1. What do you think about the new measures to stop the Corona virus?

2. Where is (would be) your recommendation for tourists to see in Tokyo?

3. Who do you think is (would be) a good ambassador to represent Japan at the United Nations?

Yes/No opinion questions

1. Do you think it’s a good idea to hold the Winter Olympics in Hokkaido next time?

2. Do you have any thoughts / ideas about gender differences in Japan?

Effect/cause – more difficult questions

1. What are some (other) effects of studying English overseas?

2. Do you know about any (other) causes of poverty in developing countries?
APPENDIX SIX – EXAMPLE OF SCORING FOR THE UNIT

For this project there are three parts to evaluate:

1. The group essay (50%)
2. The summary worksheet for discussion (10%)
3. The discussion (40%)

The group Essay (50%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of evaluation</th>
<th>scoring</th>
<th>Final score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introduction has good features such as background / statistics / and a clear thesis statement</td>
<td>0-10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body paragraphs have clear topic sentences and good supporting sentences</td>
<td>0-20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion states the main points and offers other interesting features like a recommendation</td>
<td>0-10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The words and grammar are of a satisfactory standard</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear attempts have been made to improve between first and second draft</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Summary Worksheet, including discussion questions (10%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of evaluation</th>
<th>scoring</th>
<th>Final score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summary carries the main points of the essay well</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The questions are effective at creating conversation</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discussion (self-assessment) (40%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of evaluation</th>
<th>scoring</th>
<th>Final score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had good control of discussion including follow-up questions and checking understanding as well as bringing people into the conversation</td>
<td>0-15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I kept ideas and content focused on my topic</td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used good discussion language as learned in class</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used no Japanese</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spoke fluently (keeping conversation smooth without too many pauses)</td>
<td>0-5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


INTRODUCTION

When making a lesson plan for university-aged students, one of the main difficulties that I have encountered is in choosing a topic that will grab and keep their attention for a full 60-minute lesson. With every year that passes, I find myself growing more out of touch with what “the kids” are into. They’re too old for Pokémon, right? Kpop? Disney? Is PPAP still funny? The only constant seems to be that if a nearly-40-year-old professor thinks that something is cool, it almost certainly isn’t.

My strategy for this year’s group of first-year students was to listen in during their orientation. They took part in many warm-up activities that involved introducing themselves to each other and asking some basic questions about their hobbies and interests. I was surprised to hear that outside of the usual suspects of “sleeping”, “eating”, and “Netflix”, many students expressed an interest in traveling. Even the students who hadn’t traveled much themselves showed interest and asked follow-up questions about their partners’ experiences. This seemed like a good jumping-off point to build an English communication lesson around.

In this task, students are required to make a travel guide for a city that they would recommend for travelers to visit on vacation. They discuss the key attractions of the destination, as well as give good advice on how to get around the city and what to eat and do there. Students warm up for the lesson by taking part in group or pair discussions on various travel topics. Students prepare for the main
task by reading an example travel guide to Dublin, in my home country of Ireland, and then model their own travel guide on that before presenting it to the group.

**PRE-TASK 1** Discussion Questions (Appendix 1)

Students are presented with a list of discussion questions related to the topic of travel. They are told to walk around the classroom and find a partner to talk with, using the questions as the basis for their discussion. Students discuss topics such as their interest in travel, their favorite destinations, where they would like to travel to in the future, and the type of vacations they enjoy. The instructor walks around the room to monitor the discussion and when it seems that students are coming to the end of the list of questions, instructs them to switch to a new partner and discuss the topics again. After a second round of discussion, students return to their seats.

**PRE-TASK 2** Read and Answer Questions (Appendix 2)

Students are shown a reading exercise on the subject of a travel guide to Dublin, Ireland. The guide includes four main headings: Where to Stay, How to Get Around, Where to Eat, and What to Do. Each section contains two or three sentences explaining the details of the city. Students take a few minutes by themselves to read over the text silently. They can use the dictionary to check any words that they don’t understand. The text is also made available to students ahead of time on their online e-learning system, so they don’t have to strain to read it from the projector screen. When everyone has read the text, they find a new partner and answer some comprehension questions about it. These questions are divided into two categories; true or false questions, and a gap-fill activity. Students can work together to find the answers from the text. Finally, there is a discussion question about Dublin for them to talk about together.

**MAIN TASK** (Appendix 3)

Students receive a handout with the same layout as the travel guide they read previously, arranged under the same headings of Where to Stay, How to Get Around, Where to Eat and What to Do, and are encouraged to add any other topics they would like to mention. They are given eight to twelve
minutes (depending on their level) to prepare some notes that they will use in their presentation of
the guide. Students don’t have to write full sentences or lots of details in this stage, just make sure
that they have some ideas for each section that they will be able to expand on in the following
discussion.

After having some time to prepare, students separate into groups of four or five, and take turns
presenting their travel guide to their group. If any students are struggling at this point, I prompt them
with some simple sentences they can use. For lower levels, sentence structures such as “X is good
because ….” or “I like X because ….” tend to work well. For higher levels, “I recommend ….-ing
…… because…” or “You had better (not) …. because …. ” will challenge them a little more.

Students are encouraged to ask follow-up questions to the presenters, in order to find out more
information about the destination.

**POST TASK**

Students are called on individually to share which travel destination they found most interesting from
the presentations they watched, and to share some details about it or why they liked it.

This post-task activity can also be expanded into homework by asking students to research one of the
locations they were interested in but haven’t visited themselves, and write a travel itinerary for an
imaginary trip that they would take there.

**CONCLUSION**

This task is easily adjustable for different levels. For lower level students, the handout and
presentation could be ignored in favor of a discussion activity based on the reading exercise. For
advanced students, they could turn it into a longer project across many classes where they produce
their own ‘travel show’ with some creative use of green screens and video editing software. However
you decide to adapt this lesson plan, it provides an opportunity for students to practice reading and
speaking about a topic that interests them. By giving them the freedom to choose their own
destinations, students can feel like they have some input and are more likely to stay focused on the
discussion.
About the author

Claire Ryan is a full-time assistant professor at International University of Health and Welfare. She has a Master’s degree in English and her academic interests include learner autonomy and student motivation.

APPENDIX 1

Find a partner and discuss the questions

- Do you like to travel? Why or why not?
- What cities and countries have you visited?
- Which place was your favorite? Why did you like it?
- Which place did you not like? Why didn’t you like it?
- Where would you like to visit in the future?
- When you are traveling, what is most important for you? (food, sightseeing, beaches, shopping, museums, etc.)

APPENDIX 2

Read the text

- Ireland is a beautiful country full of fascinating travel destinations, from beaches to mountains to cities. Many people start their journey in the capital city, Dublin. Dublin is a lively and exciting city with many interesting things to see and do. Let’s learn about it!
- Where to stay
  Temple Bar is a famous spot for tourists, but it can be noisy and expensive, and is not very popular with the locals. For a more relaxed trip, try staying a little outside the city center, in Ringsend, an area with wonderful shops, restaurants and cafés. It’s well connected by bus and you can reach the city center in ten to fifteen minutes.
- How to get around
  Dublin city is served by the Luas - a light rail transport system that crosses the city on two lines, from north to south and east to west. While it reaches many of the main tourist sites in the city, you can easily navigate on foot as well. Dublin is a very walkable city - just make sure to bring an umbrella for sudden rain showers!
- Where to eat
  As Ireland is an island, you of course have to sample some fresh seafood on your trip. Dublin Bay prawns are a particularly popular delicacy. If the weather is cold, a bowl of traditional Irish stew can be found in many restaurants and is a delicious, warming meal. Dublin is a vibrant, multicultural city and you can find cuisines from all over the world there.
- What to do
  No trip to Dublin would be complete without a visit to Trinity College to view The Book of Kells, an ancient manuscript written by monks in the 9th century. For something a little more modern, the Guinness Storehouse tells the story of how Ireland’s most famous drink is produced.
APPENDIX 3

Now make your own travel guide

- Choose a city that you would recommend to travelers. Write about it using these headings:
  - Where to stay:
  - How to get around:
  - Where to eat:
  - What to do:
LESSON PLAN:

Create a Stock Market Portfolio

Timmy Ang

INTRODUCTION

This is a task-based survey project aimed at post-secondary upper intermediate to advanced learners. The project aims to teach basic company research through group work and to explain investment strategy in front of class with a basic Powerpoint presentation. There will be a considerable amount of pair work activities to promote discussion and to brush up on their speaking abilities. The task can be accomplished within three to four weeks and is suitable for class sizes of fifteen to thirty students.

Depending on time constraints, certain steps of the task can be omitted or developed in more detail. The difficulty and language should be adjusted accordingly to the levels of English ability of the students. One website recommended for simplifying text is Wordify (https://rewordify.com/).

GOALS

- Familiarizing students with basic research concepts and investment knowledge.
- Introducing the students to the capital markets, in particular the American stock market.
- Promoting ethical investment with socially responsible companies.
- Creating a portfolio of companies to invest in and to reason and explain their choices.
- Improving students' group work communication and presentation skills.
MATERIALS

- Whiteboard for writing instructions and summarizing learning points
- Projector and Powerpoint software for showing presentations
- Wifi-enabled internet access for research and accessing materials
- An email address to register for Yahoo! Finance portfolio creator
- Tablet or smartphone devices
- Various worksheets (see Appendices)

PRE-TASK

Although they exist around the world, stock markets and the concept of investing will be intimidating for non-business major students and so it is advisable to provide enough information and gradually ease into the main task.

Ask for a show of hands to check who knows about the stock market. Play the video on stock market 101 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJg-rF3bLH0&ab_channel=EasyPeasyFinance), repeat and turn on the subtitles if necessary. Ask the students questions to check comprehension.

- What is the stock market?
- What happens when you buy a stock?
- Why would you buy a stock?
- Why does the stock price go up / go down?
- How can you buy a stock?
- What are some brokerage companies in Japan?
- How would you choose a company to invest in?

Afterwards, the lecture is supplemented by teaching a few selected stock market-related vocabulary items (https://www.nasdaq.com/glossary). Provide either a printout or ask the students to take notes. I sometimes ask them to try and spell the words. For assessment, I often course the vocabulary and create some exercises using a premium account from Textivate (https://www.textivate.com/).
In addition, show students the basic process of researching a company. Follow the outline provided on Upstox (https://upstox.com/learning-center/online-trading/what-is-fundamental-analysis-and-how-to-do-it/). For higher level students you can elaborate on the differences between fundamental and technical analysis (https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fundamentalanalysis.asp).

**TASK**

**Step 1 Warmup**

Students are asked to break into pair work to discuss the following questions from the ESL Discussions (https://esldiscussions.com/s/stock_markets.html). I usually ask my students to send me a video file of their conversations. For this task I have chosen the website Flipgrid (https://info.flipgrid.com) to store, present, and comment on their videos.

**Step 2 Create a Stock Portfolio**

Explain to the students what a portfolio is. Form new groups of three to four students. Load up your browser and demonstrate to the students how to register and how to add a stock in a portfolio from Yahoo! Finance (https://finance.yahoo.com/portfolios). It’s important to carefully go through the terms shown throughout the website. Show a snapshot of a particular stock, for example, TESLA and then ask the students if they understand the information displayed and to give time for questions. Challenge the students to explore the site on their own (Figure 1). On the conversation tab of the stock, see if the students can sort through the noise, it provides a source of additional information (Figure 2).

Proceed to tell them to look for companies they might be interested in and then to do research on them. As a group they must decide to choose three stocks to include into their portfolio which have a strong chance of increasing in stock price. The students should be able to explain why they chose the stock. They are then given one class to research, discuss, and prepare the slides for this presentation.
In order to guide them I usually provide a worksheet (Appendix A). The worksheet scaffolds the presentation (Step 4) later on by providing the necessary information for it.

Apart from the Yahoo! website, allow the students to freely use their phone to research on other websites. You may allow Japanese websites provided that the students are responsible for translating, paraphrasing, and summarizing the information in English towards the worksheet and presentation. During the groundwork go around the class and give constructive feedback on their choices as well as assist them with their language presentation content, phrases and gestures.
Step 3 Ethical Investing

To bring about students' involvement in real-world issues, teach the students about corporate social responsibility. Ask the following questions.

- What does it mean to be socially responsible?
- Why is it important to be socially responsible?
- Why is accountability important?
- When is a company socially responsible?
- What aspects of the organization or society are covered by a socially responsible company?
- What are the possible effects of a company not being socially responsible?
- Would you pay more for a company’s products or services if they were socially responsible?
- How should a company be punished for not adhering to corporate social responsibilities?
This leads to a lecture on ethical investing and investing in socially responsible companies. Ask the students to reflect on their own personal beliefs and values. How do values change across cultures? Explain to the students the potential consequence of continuing to support companies who engage in harmful and unethical business practices.

Step 4 Presentation

The students are asked to present their portfolio in front of class and are given around ten to fifteen minutes each and will also have to answer questions from the class after. I use the rubric below to evaluate the students (https://www.liveworksheets.com/gf1802213ly).

Figure 3 Rubric for presentation

**POST-TASK**

At the end of the semester or after several weeks of classes you can check on the results of the stock portfolio performance. Students can discuss the results and learn new phrases expressing excitement and surprise. The purpose of this activity is to also familiarize students with the risks and benefits of
investing and as an option you may also teach to higher level students the concept of compounded interest.

Later, I ask my students to read the article on Ello (https://www.elllo.org/english/Mixers/T111-Million.htm). They will submit a ten to fifteen sentence graded essay on what they would do if they won a million dollars. This serves to segue into possibly more investment discussion on financial planning.

● Why is it important to save money?
● Do you keep track of your spending?
● Are you familiar with any financial planning applications or websites?
● What age do you want to retire?
● What are your spending habits like?
● What does the term “don’t put all of your eggs in one basket” mean?
● Aside from investing in the stock market, where else can you invest your money?

In addition, I will discuss an interesting article on the unfortunate luck some lottery winners have (https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/01/opinion/nocera-the-bad-luck-of-winning.html). In the future, for business classes I will extend this activity to span an additional two to three more topics, covering the 2008 financial crisis, Occupy Wallstreet Movement (OWM), and the most recent Gamestop amateur investment trend.

CONCLUSION

This activity covered various facets of what an English teacher can include in a task-based lesson plan or syllabus such as financial markets, technology literacy, language acquisition, and social issues. With carefully guided group conversation and supported research work culminating in a presentation, students have the opportunity to engage deeply and the teacher can successfully accomplish class learning goals.
Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock Pick Worksheet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the name of the company?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is their chief executive officer (CEO)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the ticker symbol?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What industry is the company in?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What products/services do they provide?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the current stock price of the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the earnings per share (EPS)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the current P/E ratio?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Give me a recent news headline on the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you expect the company stock to perform this year?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What other websites did you utilize for your research?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are the companies financials for the past year (sales, earnings, debt, assets)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide efforts on the company’s social responsibility efforts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>