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Contents

Research Papers

Discussions of Practice

Conference Report

Opening Doors for All in Self-Access

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We are delighted to present this new issue of JASAL Journal which follows the theme of the 2022 JASAL National Conference, inclusion and accessibility in self-access.

Although we certainly all hope that learners feel comfortable within our respective self-access facilities, existing research shows us that this is not something that can be taken for granted. Especially within Japan, numerous studies have highlighted the obstacles that dissuade learners from engaging in regular, active self-access learning (Gillies, 2010; Murray & Fujishima, 2016; Mynard et al., 2020). From the perspective of communities of practice, Wenger (1998) cautions us that the communities we create may, despite our best intentions and efforts, still appear as intimidating and inaccessible to newcomers.

> Practice can be guarded just as it can be made available; membership can seem a daunting prospect just as it can constitute a welcoming invitation; a community of practice can be a fortress just as it can be an open door. (p. 120)

A realization and heightened awareness of the potential barriers that may exist within self-access for learners with a diverse range of identities and needs has stimulated a recent movement within self-access in Japan advocating for greater inclusion and accessibility

(Thornton, 2021). This movement paved the way for the 2022 JASAL National Conference, and indeed this issue of JASAL Journal, which we hope will extend and deepen the conversation on these issues going forward.

Coming back to physical self-access spaces after the pandemic provided us with opportunities to reconsider whether our Self-Access Centers (SAC) are welcoming and comfortable spaces for **all** students regardless of their background, linguistic proficiency, learning styles, identities, needs, and the like. How can we create a SAC community where students feel safe expressing their authentic selves, and develop a sense of belonging and respect for one another? In this issue, we feature four research papers, four discussions of practice, and one conference report that share ideas to invite various learners to SACs while meeting their diverse needs and raising awareness of inclusion among students and faculty members.

We are grateful to all the reviewers and contributors who made it possible to publish this issue.

Nous remercions les évaluateurs et évaluatrices ainsi que les auteurs et autrices sans qui cette édition n'aurait pu être publiée.

本号の出版を可能にして下さった、寄稿者や査読者、その他ジャーナル運営に関わる全ての方々に、お礼を申し上げます。

In the opening research article of this issue, **Pemberton**, **Marzin**, **Mynard**, and **Wongsarnpigoon** report on-going and future efforts of inclusiveness of a Self-Access Center to acknowledge all users' identities and provide them with equal access and opportunities. Moving on, **Hooper**'s ethnographical study explores feelings of discomfort and sociocultural obstacles that new Self-Access Center users experienced and the efforts of a student-led learning community to reduce such anxiety and challenges. Keeping the theme of learner-created support structures, **Moriya** and **Kawasaki**'s exploratory study presents the impacts of peer advising among Japanese learners including expanding students' knowledge of language learning resources, facilitating self-reflection, and maintaining friendly relationships with students. In the final research paper, **Taylor**, **Ornston**, **Walters**, and **Thompson** illustrate, in a collaborative

autoethnographic study, the value of community of practice and beyond-class learning through their experiences of self-directed language learning using progress-tracker applications.

Proceeding to the Discussion of Practices section of the issue, **Griffiths** and **Dojoin** share their experiences of creating and implementing a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program which aimed to expose students to the SDGs and increase language proficiency while expanding their time in their self-access centers on two campuses. Next, **Kushida**, **Lege**, **Haughland**, and **Green** discuss the opportunities that a social and creative learning space facilitated by teachers - Maker Conversation - provided to Self-Access Center users. Practice indicates that curiosity and creativity sparked students' English communication skills. In a much-appreciated Japanese-language contribution to the issue, **Yamamoto** introduces a unique Student Assistant (SA) program aiming to support first-year college students with their mandatory English classes outside the classroom context. The paper describes the positive impacts on students' agency and motivation for both SAs and first-year students while working together through workshops in their self-access center. Our final article in this section shows how the push for accessibility in self-access learning extends beyond the tertiary sector, as **Chung** contributes a report on a self-access initiative that she has spearheaded in a public high school. By utilizing "in-between spaces" in school corridors and by following a promotional model influenced by social marketing campaigns, she has created an active language learning space that has continued to evolve and grow in popularity. Chung's study offers a fascinating perspective on self-access innovation going on outside the standard tertiary education bubble.

This issue concludes with a conference report by **McCrohan**, **Thornton**, and **Yamada**, who summarize two presentations given during a conference - *Learning from Students, Educating Teachers: Research and Practice* - organized by the Japan Association for Self-Access Learning in November 2022.

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Evaluation of SALC Inclusiveness: What Do Our Users Think?

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Abstract

One of the aims of our self-access learning center (SALC) is to be inclusive of all users who hope to use the resources, facilities, communities, and support for language learning—including students in all departments, LGBTQ+ students, and disabled learners and/or students with learning differences. In this paper, we share our ongoing efforts and ideas about how we can support our mission of inclusion, drawing on Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional model for understanding matters of justice in education. In an online survey, students from all departments were asked for their input on the inclusivity of our center. Several semi-structured interviews were also conducted with students and a lecturer. Based on insights from an interpretive analysis (Hatch, 2002) of the survey and interviews, we present learners' views on how effectively we have promoted inclusiveness, explore issues and themes that arose in our investigation, and summarize student suggestions on how our SALC can improve. Results show that students generally find the SALC to be inclusive but that a number of students have not thought about the issue, especially in regard to LGBTQ+ students and disabled learners. In line with the literature, the results also highlight the need to acknowledge all users' identities as well as provide them with equal access and opportunities. The implications of this investigation can help other self-access practitioners or those hoping to start new centers in welcoming and meeting the diverse needs of all potential users.

私たちのセルフアクセスラーニングセンター（SALC）は、全学部の学生、LGBTQ+の学生、障害のある学生や学習上の違いを持つ学生など、言語学習のためのリソース、施設、コミュニティ、サポートの利用を望むすべての利用者を受容することを目的の1つとしている。本稿では、教育における正義の問題を理解するための Fraser（2008）の3次元モデルに基づき、インクルージョンのミッションをどのようにサポートするかについて、私たちの現在の取り組みとアイデアを共有する。オンライン調査では、全学部の学生を対象に、当センターのインクルージョンに関する意見を求めた。また、学生や講師との間で半構造化インタビューを実施した。アンケートとインタビューの解釈的分析（Hatch, 2002）から得られた知見に基づき、私たちがどの程度効果的にインクルージョンを推進してきたかについての学習者の見解、私たちの調査で生じた問題や議題、および今後私たちがSALCを改善する方法についての学生の提案を要約する。本調査の結果から、学生は概ねSALCがインクルーシブであると感じているが、特にLGBTQ+の学生や障害のある学習者に関して、この問題について考えたことがない学生が多数いることがわかった。また、文献と同様に、すべての利用者のアイデンティティを認め、平等なアクセスと機会を提供する必要性が強調された。この調査から得られる考察は、他のセルフ・アクセス（自律学習）実践者や、新しいセンターの立ち上げを希望する者が、すべての潜在的な利用者の多様なニーズを歓迎し、満たすことに役立つと考えられる。

Keywords: inclusivity, accessibility, self-access language learning, students' voices

7

In this paper, we explore how self-access centers can better support learners' diverse needs in times of rapid change. We are learning advisors in a large self-access learning center (the SALC) at a mid-sized university which was established in 1987 near Tokyo, specializing in languages and cultures. The university has approximately 4,200 students, who major in English, International Communication, Global Liberal Arts, or other languages: Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, or Vietnamese.

The SALC is a place where users can individualize their language learning and develop autonomous learning skills. The first SALC was established in 2001 and was expanded into a new facility in 2003; the current SALC is situated in a very large, two-story building which opened in 2017. The SALC provides a variety of resources and events and is home to several student-led learning communities, i.e., interest-based social groups designed to facilitate interaction in the members' target languages (Watkins, 2022). Although we support students learning all languages, students and staff tend to associate the SALC with English because English classes and English-speaking teachers' offices are in the same building, there is an English-only policy on the second floor, and most of the study materials are written in English. In addition to the SALC, another facility, the Multilingual Communication Center (MULC), which opened in 2009, provides students majoring in Asian and Ibero-American languages the opportunity to practice languages and discover aspects of the target language cultures (For more information, see articles in "Language Acquisition and Language Use in the MULC…," 2019).

The SALC's mission has always been to support learner autonomy, language study, and language use, but in 2022, we updated our mission statement to reflect the changing times (Mynard et al., 2022). One specific aim of the revised mission statement was to be more inclusive of all students who would like to use the resources, facilities, communities, and support for language learning. In particular, we wanted to ensure that we were welcoming to students in all departments, including those majoring in languages other than English (LOTE); lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other (LGBTQ+) students; and disabled learners and/or students with learning differences.

Literature Review

As discussed in the process leading to the publication of our revised mission statement (Mynard et al., 2022), we are committed to considering the needs of an increasingly diverse

learner population. This involves respecting gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, first language, ability-based diversity, and other factors to ensure we are offering a supportive learning environment. One way to approach this is to draw on principles from Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which has its roots in neuroscience. UDL aims to offer various options for diverse learners through the removal of barriers in instructional design. Even if learners have yet to have their specific needs diagnosed (or would prefer not to disclose them), a UDL approach accommodates all learners by either scaffolding opportunities or reducing barriers to access (Tobin & Behling, 2018).

There are three principles associated with UDL (Rose et al., 2006). *Principle 1* calls for multiple means of representation of information. Students differ in how they perceive and comprehend information. For example, for some, visual or audio information is not accessible due to their disability. For others, perceptual or cognitive strengths or deficits affect the accessibility of information. Other factors such as dominant language or previous learning experiences also affect accessibility of information. In other words, we cannot assume a common background when making decisions about how to present information or learning opportunities, and learner needs will always be diverse. By design, self-access is ideally placed to provide multiple means of representation to appeal to diverse learners, but it is not often subject to evaluation from the perspective of physical, perceptual, or cognitive barriers.

Principle 2 supports the presence of multiple means of student expression. This means that creating a learning environment that allows learners to navigate it in different ways and express themselves differently is beneficial. The reason for this is that students do not share certain capacities due to physical disabilities, or strategic or organizational difficulties. Many students are better able to express themselves or participate in different ways, so creating alternatives is an important application of UDL. This may already be addressed in some self-access features, especially where many choices are already offered. For example, students can choose whether or how to participate in different activities and events: as an organizer, an active participant, or an observer or peripheral member (Hooper, 2020). Students can often participate in person, online, or through written contributions such as physical or online bulletin boards. However, some systems which may be efficient might not be very accommodating for all learners. Examples of these are online reservation procedures, methods of borrowing materials, or ways of getting support from teachers or learning advisors.

9

Principle 3 states that there must be multiple means of engagement. This takes into account that learners are motivated in different ways and have different views on elements of learning such as risk, challenge, and social interaction associated with language learning. This feature is likely to already be accommodated in good self-access design.

In addition to considering UDL principles, we draw on Fraser's (2008) three-dimensional model for understanding matters of justice in education. The first dimension is the redistribution of resources and wealth, the second is the recognition of the differences of marginalized groups, and the third is representation at the political level. Fraser's model incorporates attention to culture- and identity-based injustices and biases such as racism, sexism, or LGBTQ+ phobia while questioning status subordination (Keddie, 2012). While recent changes in Japanese legislative policy have pushed for inclusion and accessibility in the form of reasonable accommodations and the prohibition of discrimination in higher education, the implementation of these policies in practice is slow due to entrenched attitudes, cultural principles of social harmony, and administrative norms (Ree, 2015). As such, these matters are rarely considered when designing self-access facilities.

Ohara (2022) notes that diversity already exists in a SALC, but it is necessary to observe users' everyday practices in order to understand it. We have been doing this informally through our everyday work as learning advisors. In addition, we have been taking steps to be more inclusive while paying closer attention to UDL principles as well as matters of social justice. For example, we encourage a diverse range of students to plan events, community meetings, and exhibitions in different languages through word of mouth, social media, our SALC's website, posters across campus, and the SALC mission statement. We also provide materials intended to appeal to a wide range of SALC users and highlight the linguistic diversity of the SALC staff. However, we wanted to build on these initial steps by gathering input from our student body, so we formulated two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How inclusive is our SALC perceived to be for

- students in all departments?
- LGBTQ+ students?
- disabled learners and/or students with learning differences?

RQ2: What ideas do students have for making the SALC more inclusive?

Methods

The context for the study is the SALC described in the introduction, and the main participants were undergraduate students at the university who are almost all Japanese nationals, and who completed a survey and/or participated in an interview with one of the authors. In order to get input from as many students as possible, we included questions related to our research topic on our annual survey. The survey is administered online each year to all students at the university at the end of the first semester in July. The results help to guide decision-making for the subsequent year. In line with our revised mission statement, we included the following questions in the 2022 survey (the questionnaire was optional, bilingual Japanese/English, and students could respond in either language):

1. How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for students majoring in languages other than English? (Multiple-choice options: *Very inclusive, everyone feels welcome* / *Somewhat inclusive* / *Not particularly inclusive* / *Not at all inclusive* / *I have never thought about this issue*)

2. How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for LGBTQ+ people? (Same answer options as question 1)

3. How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for disabled learners and/or students with learning differences? (Same answer options as question 1)

4. Please could you let us know how we can make efforts to be more inclusive? (open-ended question)

5. Is there anything we can do to make the SALC a place you would like to visit more often? Feel free to share ideas (e.g., SALC environment, events…). (open-ended question)

We administered the survey to the entire student body using SurveyMonkey via the university's online portal and via email, with later reminders from teachers and learning advisors. Demographic data collected through the survey included students' majors but not their gender/sexual identity or potential disabilities; as the comprehensive survey was intended to gather information about all SALC services from the entire student population, we felt this information might be too sensitive in nature for some to answer in relation to the broad scope of the survey. There were 355 respondents, which is just under 9% of the university population and would be considered to be a low response rate. However, almost 80% of the respondents

identified themselves as regular SALC users (1–2 times a week), with more than 30% using the SALC three to four times per week and 12% of the respondents using the SALC five to six times a week. This means that the results may be skewed toward representing the viewpoint of frequent users. To overcome the low response rate and to understand the students' views in more depth, we conducted semi-structured interviews with English majors, LOTE majors, students who belonged to a SALC LGBTQ+ learning community, and one lecturer who taught a one-semester elective undergraduate course on disability studies. Interview participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Interview Participants

Name (pronouns)	Interviewee details	Year in university	SALC visits per week
Momo (she/her)	English major	4	5–6
Kenta (he/him)	English major	1	5–6
Akito (he/him)	English major LGBTQ+ student	1	5–6
Mari (they/them)	Global Liberal Arts major SOGIE* student	1	3–4
Shin (he/him)	Spanish major	3	1–2
Risa (she/her)	Vietnamese major	4	1–2

| Makoto (he/him) | Indonesian major | 3 | 1–2 |
| Lucy (she/her) | Lecturer | – | – |

Note. All names are pseudonyms.

*Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

We recruited the interview participants opportunistically. Either they expressed an interest in sharing their thoughts or volunteered after the authors invited them to participate in an interview. All interviewees provided informed consent for this research. The interviews were semi-structured, lasted approximately 30 minutes, and were conducted by one of the authors in the participant's preferred language (English or Japanese). We used a standard bank of question prompts but did not stick to these strictly. The initial questions were open-ended and flexible enough to allow participants to share their opinions openly, for example,

1. Why do you come to the SALC?
2. What could we do to improve the SALC?
3. Why do some students not use the SALC?
4. Do you think all students feel welcome in the SALC?
5. What can we do to encourage more people to use the SALC?

In addition, the teacher's interview was supplemented with her notes about learners' suggestions collected as part of a classroom project. The project required students to present innovative ideas to foster inclusivity at the university for disabled learners and/or students with learning differences.

In all but one case (due to an oversight), we recorded and transcribed the interviews and, when necessary, translated them ourselves. We sent summaries to all eight interviewees to check and invited them to add further details if needed. None of us were teaching any of the student participants at the time of the interviews, and all interviewees happily volunteered to help us with the research.

Data Analysis

13

We used SurveyMonkey to generate descriptive statistics for the closed-ended questions. We analyzed the open-ended and interview data qualitatively by conducting an interpretive analysis (Hatch, 2002). The aim was to let codes emerge naturally as it was our first time researching inclusivity in the SALC. Each interview was analyzed by the person who conducted it. The appendix contains a summary of all themes that emerged in the interviews.

Results

### RQ 1: Student Perceptions of Inclusivity

This section contains the results of our analysis. For each category of inclusivity, quantitative results from the survey are presented, followed by some findings from the student interviews.

Student Perceptions of Inclusivity Toward LOTE Majors

Responses to the question "How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for students majoring in languages other than English?" are shown in Figure 1. Most students felt that the SALC is either very or somewhat inclusive, while a small number felt that it is not particularly or not at all inclusive. Roughly 15% of students indicated never having considered this issue before. The 46 responses to the same question from students majoring in LOTE are also shown in Figure 2 and were generally similar to the overall population, with the majority feeling that the SALC was welcoming and inclusive. However, 152 survey respondents skipped this question, which made the interview data necessary in order to have a more in-depth understanding of students' views on this matter.
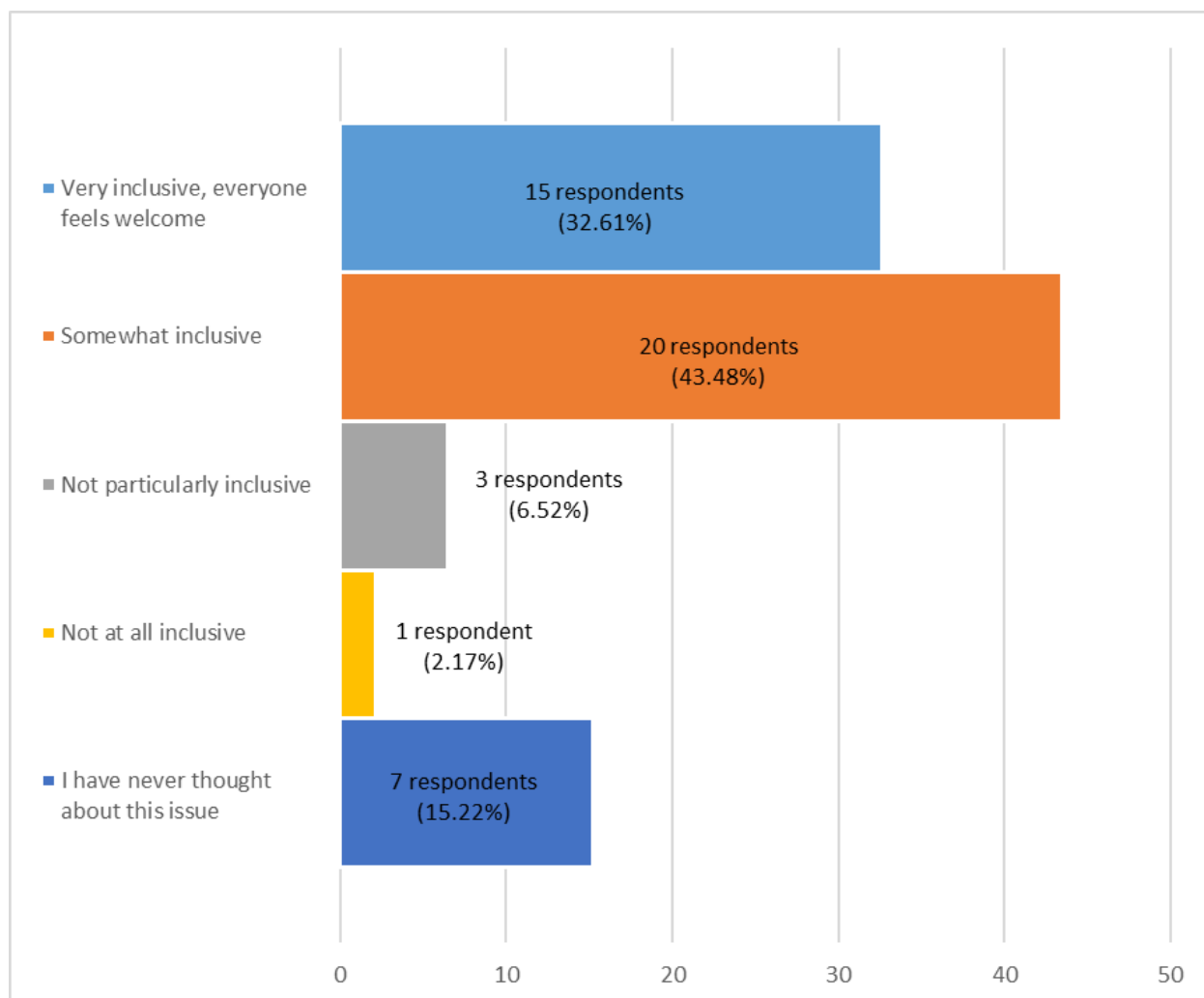
Figure 1

*Students' Responses on How Inclusive and Welcoming the SALC is for LOTE Majors (*N = 206*)*
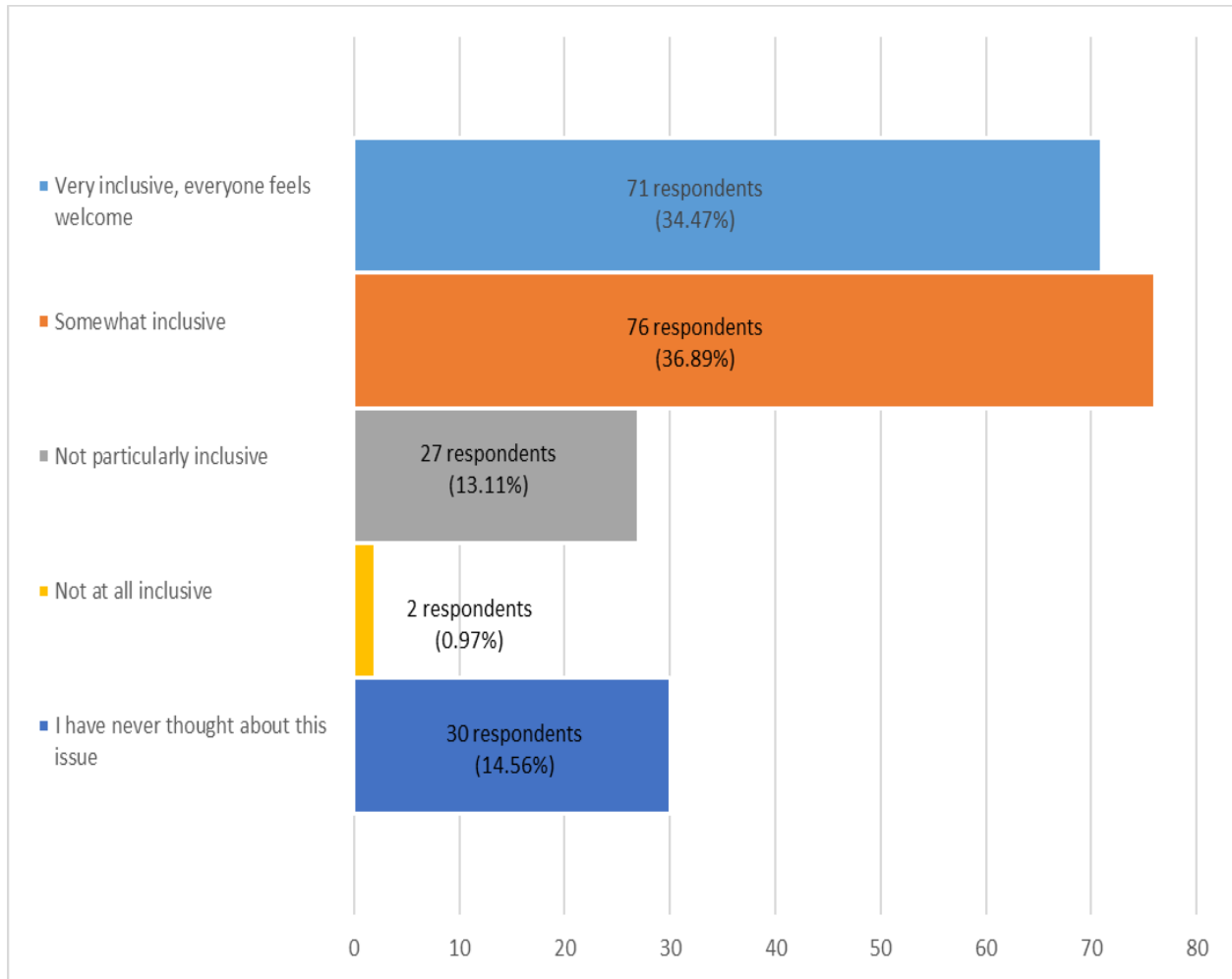
Figure 2

*LOTE Major Students' Responses on How Inclusive and Welcoming the SALC is for LOTE Majors (*n = 46*)*

Interviews

Interviews with English majors largely mirrored the responses shown in Figure 1. For example, Kenta, a second-year student and frequent user of the SALC majoring in English, felt that the SALC was very welcoming and students who want to learn English should set "goals to improve their English…The SALC is definitely a good place to obtain English skills…There are many opportunities if you seek them at the SALC." However, Kenta did understand that some students lack confidence and need a lot of support from peers, teachers, and learning advisors. Momo, a fourth-year English-major student who was another frequent user of the SALC empathized with LOTE majors and understood that they would feel more welcome studying in a place where they could easily find their friends. As someone studying Korean as an additional

16

language (even at an advanced level), she herself felt uncomfortable going to the MULC as she belonged to the English department.

Interviews with students majoring in LOTE revealed further perspectives. Shin, a third-year student in the Spanish department, believed students from LOTE departments felt treated as "outsiders" in the SALC by other students:

> When the Spanish major[s]…come to the SALC, at first I don't think they feel welcome because…it's like they feel like they [are] being treated as outsider: "You're not English major. Why you come here, go back to [the MULC]."

He suggested, however, that his peers did not necessarily perceive this treatment as negative: "not like in a bad way…The opinion that my classmates say…, 'Oh, I don't want to go to SALC because I *feel* like I've been treated as outsider by the students,' [emphasis added]"

Shin also expressed the belief that this behavior was not unique to the SALC and that it also applied to the MULC. He explained, "When English major goes to the [MULC],…they say, 'Go back to SALC, man. You're an English major,'…I don't think they feel welcome." Shin also had a unique perspective, as one of the relatively few students who frequented multiple areas of the MULC. He suggested that this territorial behavior was universal, also occurring between individual sections of the MULC: "The first time that I step[ped] into Thai area…they felt like, 'Who is this guy, we don't even know him. Why he's come here?'…I think that also happened to the SALC."

It is interesting that Shin related this rather matter-of-factly and not as a serious problem. Although space limitations and the scope of this paper preclude further investigation into the larger sociocultural context, it is possible that the perspectives of Shin and his classmates were affected by Japanese notions of group membership or the concept of *uchi* and *soto* [inner and outer group]. His comments also contain some parallels to the phases of access of social learning spaces described by Murray et al. (2018), such as the difficulties learners have "gaining access" and "fitting in" to social groups in such spaces (pp. 239–240), or balancing various demands on their time in order to keep their places in such groups. Further investigation in this area, for instance, ethnographic research on specific places in the SALC using a framework of

17

communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or Gee's (2005) affinity spaces, might give us better understanding of the issue.

We asked interviewees why some students, particularly those from LOTE departments, do not use the SALC. They noted that students from those majors had fewer opportunities to use it. Risa, a fourth-year Vietnamese major, said that students in her department had fewer compulsory English classes and might prioritize their major language:

> Once we've earned the credits and our English classes are over, we don't [learn] it anymore, so…it is difficult for me to keep up my motivation.…For example, in my case and that of Vietnamese majors, many want to learn Vietnamese, and English comes next.…Vietnamese majors don't have [required] English classes from the third year on.…I think that is one reason why the chances of coming to SALC decrease.
> [Risa's answers have been translated from Japanese]

Both Risa and Makoto, a third-year student majoring in Indonesian, further suggested that English classes held in the same building as the SALC provide an extrinsic reason for students to physically enter the SALC. Nearly all first-year students have some compulsory English classes there; however, this was not true of some interviewees whose first-year classes were held online due to the pandemic. As Makoto stated, "There are various classrooms…, but I have never had a class in this building."

Makoto believed that his peers used the MULC more due to familiarity with people there: "Our teacher is very friendly. [LOTE] major student think MULC is…more comfortable." When asked about faculty in the SALC, he said, "It's friendly, but English classes [are] only twice in a week. So it is difficult to become friendly. And there are a lot of friend[s in the MULC]." Although Makoto did believe that all students felt welcome in the SALC, he also stated, "Sometimes there are a lot of English major students…There's no classmates and friends. It's difficult. Uncomfortable."

Additionally, some statements reflected a belief that the SALC is mainly for English learning. Risa described one friend who had experienced difficulty talking to a SALC advisor due to the friend's (low) speaking proficiency. When asked whether they felt obligated to use English, she concurred: "There's a feeling that if we come to SALC, we should use English."

18

Makoto also indirectly expressed a similar belief. He suggested that his LOTE major peers "don't know the importance of English," indicating that they might only use the SALC to improve their English.

Student Perceptions of Inclusivity Toward LGBTQ+ Students

Table 3 shows students' responses to the question "How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for LGBTQ+ students?" Similar to the above question, a majority of respondents felt that the SALC was very or somewhat inclusive, while a small minority held the opposite opinion. However, nearly one third of students said that they had never thought about this issue.

Figure 3

Students' Responses on How Inclusive and Welcoming the SALC is for LGBTQ+ students (N = 206)
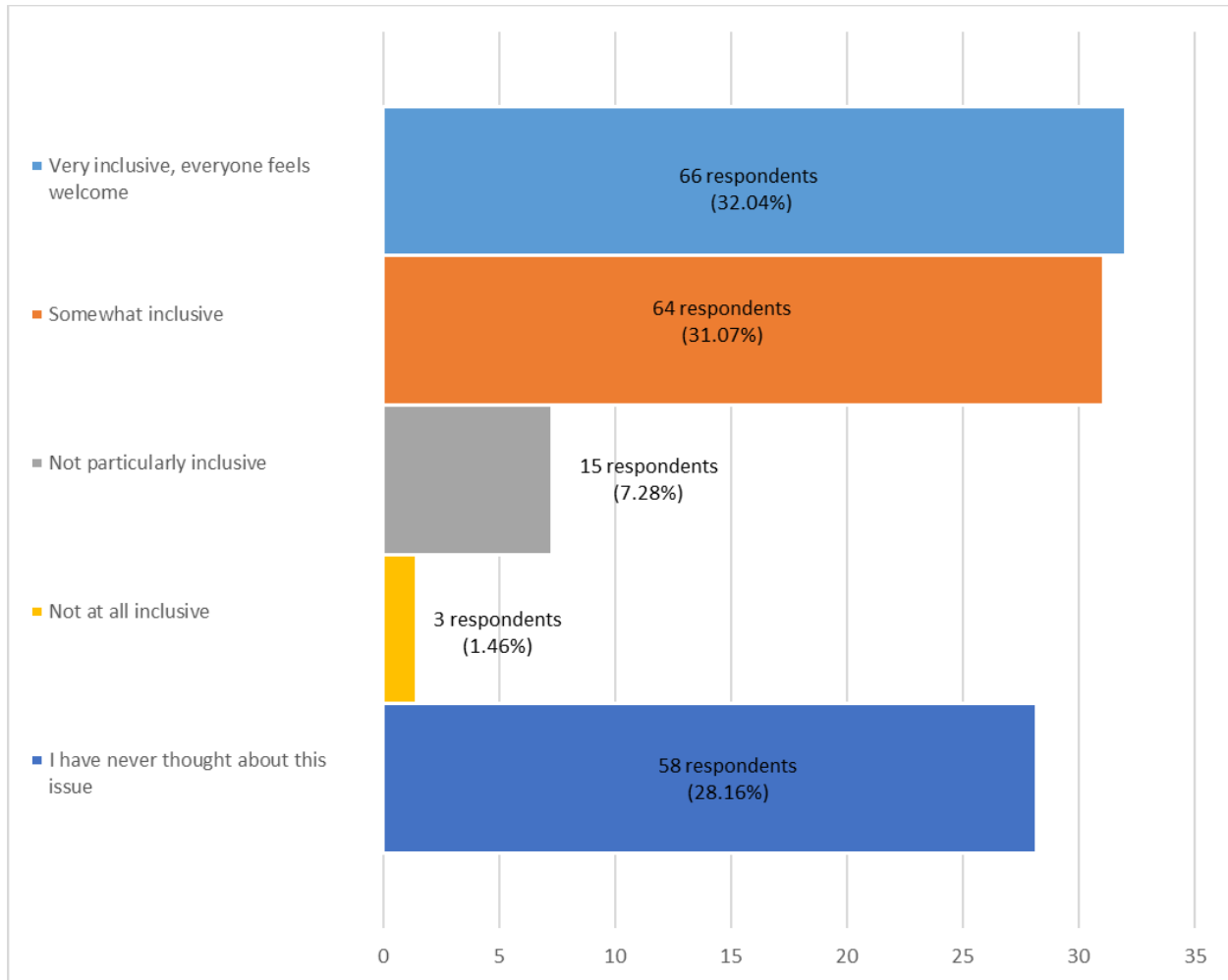
Interviews with the two frequent users (English majors Momo and Kenta) indicated that from the perspective of non-LGBTQ+ students, the SALC was inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ+ members, mirroring the results shown in Figure 3.

Interviews with students from the SALC's LGBTQ+ communities provided further insight into this issue. One student, Akito, said that he generally finds the SALC to be a welcoming place, and he feels even more welcome when he can talk with learning advisors and teachers who accept him. However, he expressed some hesitation when sharing his identity with staff for the first time, as there is always some level of uncertainty about whether he will be accepted. When asked his opinion about LGBTQ+-friendly signaling, such as writing "LGBTQ+ ally" in advisor self-introductions online, Akito stated that such actions may be met with skepticism by some members of the community.

I guess they don't believe these person, like saying they are friendly for LGBTQ+. I heard many people say that. Like, "I can't trust ally people." They have worry in some way or some day they can…for example, like outing.

In other words, LGBTQ+ students worry that they may be outed or otherwise mistreated by staff members claiming to be LGBTQ+ allies. Yet, having close relationships with staff members deemed trustworthy seems to hold great value.

Another interviewee, Mari, stated that they find the term "LGBTQ+" too limiting and find the term "SOGIE" (sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression) to be more inclusive. "'LGBTQ+' sounds very minority, but I like 'SOGIE.' If people are straight, it's maybe sexual orientation. But in my case, I am gender expression. So it includes everyone…'SOGIE' is more helpful for students than 'LGBTQ+.'" They stated that the SALC, learning advisors, teachers, and students are generally welcoming to SOGIE students. However, they felt dissatisfied with the stereotypical coloring of the men's and women's restrooms in blue and red respectively, which is why they always use the multipurpose, accessible restroom for disabled people that is painted white. It seems interesting that the students commented on the coloring and not on the fact that restrooms are separated in a binary way.

Student Perceptions of Inclusivity Toward Disabled Learners and/or Students with Learning Differences

Table 4 displays students' responses to the question "How inclusive and welcoming is the SALC for disabled learners and/or students with learning differences?" Similar to the previous two questions, the majority stated that the SALC was very or somewhat inclusive, while a small minority held the opposite opinion. Again, nearly one third of students had never thought about this issue.

Figure 4

Students' Responses on How Inclusive and Welcoming the SALC is for disabled learners and/or students with learning differences (N = 206)

21
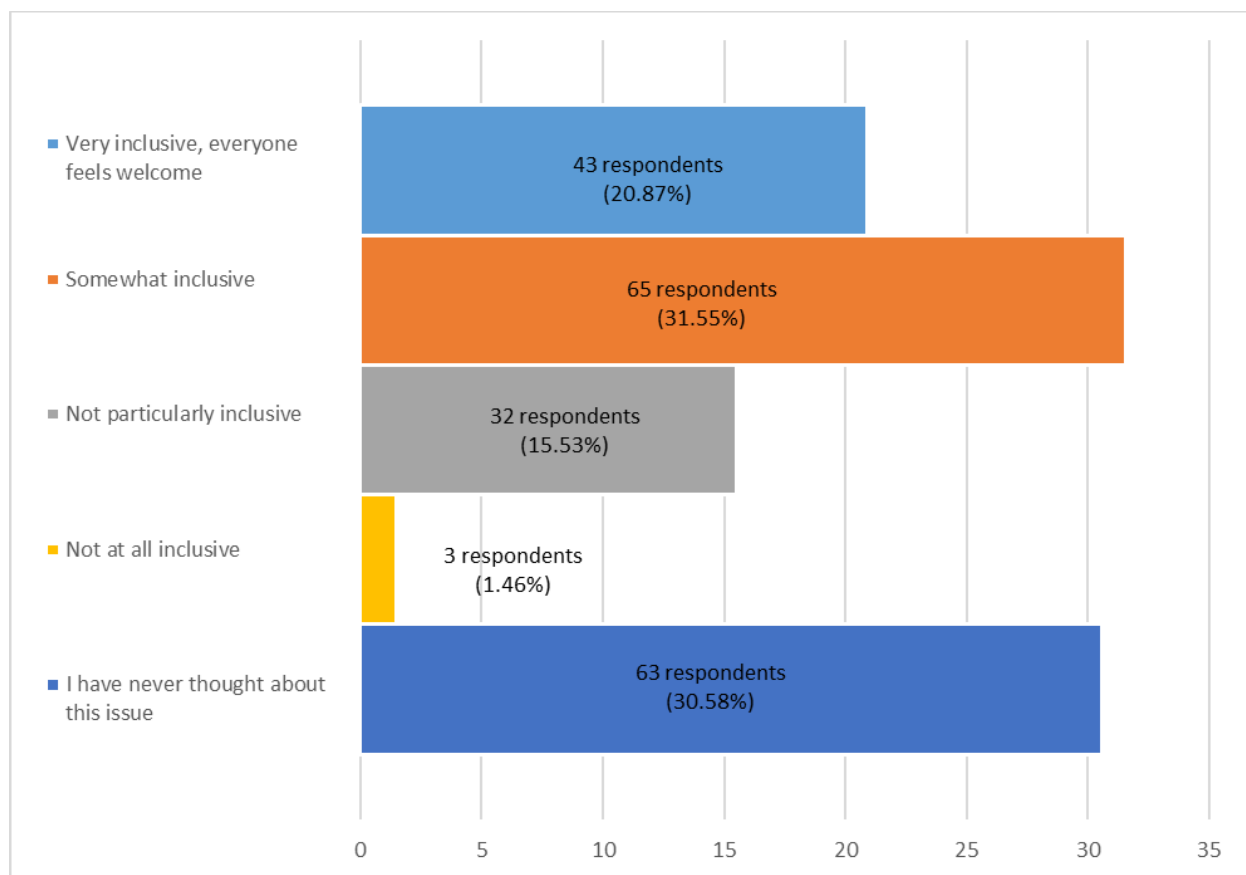
Interviews with the two frequent users Momo and Kenta, who do not identify as disabled, mirrored the results in Figure 4, and neither perceived any particular barriers apart from some slopes that could make access to some SALC areas difficult for wheelchair users.

To gather further insights into students' perceptions of and suggestions for the SALC's future actions for making an environment more welcoming to disabled people, we interviewed a teacher in our university, Lucy. She summarized her students' opinions from the presentations they gave in her disabilities studies class.

While most of her students do not have or do not claim to have any disability, their perceptions indicate that after a semester of studying visible and invisible disabilities in different contexts (including the United States and Japan), they were able to evaluate positively the SALC's sensitivity to the needs of disabled learners and/or students with learning differences. Nonetheless, Lucy's students acknowledged that compared to other educational institutions or public places in Japan, the SALC offers a reasonable degree of accessibility for this category of

students, but simple and more complex changes could be made, some of which are listed in the following section.

Research Question 2: Students' Suggestions to Make the SALC More Inclusive

To further understand students' opinions about how to make the SALC more inclusive, two of the researchers collaboratively conducted a typological analysis (Hatch, 2002) of the responses to the two open-ended questions from the online survey. One question asked respondents to indicate efforts we can make to be more inclusive; the other asked what the SALC team could do to make it a place they would like to visit more often. Table 2 contains the results of the coding.

Table 2

Coded Student Suggestions About How to Make the SALC More Inclusive

Code	Occurrences	*n*%	Representative quote
Welcoming behavior	20	26.3	"Communicate with various people equally."
Accessible facility	12	15.8	"I think you can make an environment in which those with physical disabilities can also use the second floor smoothly."
Inclusive services	12	15.8	"Hold events relating to diversity."
Understanding attitude	10	13.2	"Respect each other's opinions."
Disseminating information	10	13.2	"Displaying information related to LGBTQ+ on a regular basis, not only during Pride month."

Normalizing	7	9.2	"You can interact naturally with those from different nationalities or situations, just as you would with other students."
Other	5	6.8	"Having diversity."

From a total of 76 items, we generated seven codes. Two researchers coded the items together through discussion until they reached an agreement. The most frequently occurring code was *welcoming behavior*, where students suggested making an effort to communicate, help others, and be respectful. Responses related to *accessible facility* urged changes to the design of the building or making the facilities easier to use. Students also requested *inclusive services* such as events and workshops. The *understanding attitude* category included trying to learn and gain more knowledge about the experience of others. *Disseminating info* included putting up educational posters, displays, and videos in the SALC. The *normalizing* category involved not treating social minorities as though they are anything unusual. Lastly, the *other* category consisted of general or unclear comments. Of the 76 items, 71 of them indicated who should take the actions, including *staff* (49.3% of responses), *everyone* (46.5% of responses), and *students* (4.2% of responses). Not only does this indicate that students expect the SALC team to act on their suggestions, but that, to a certain extent, they want to be a part of such changes.

The students we interviewed offered further suggestions. LOTE major students suggested the following:

- Taking measures to change students' mindsets that the SALC is only for English learners, for instance by hiring student staff members majoring in LOTE
- Providing opportunities to learn LOTE or about other cultures using English (e.g., materials in LOTE, workshops, communities)
- Offering support for students' practical English-related needs, such as job interview practice
- Continuing to offer online services to support students who lack opportunities to come to the SALC
- Promoting students' use of SALC services through reminders or guidance on how to use them and encouragement, particularly after their first year

- Holding events which appeal to all students
- Disseminating information about SALC events and services more widely across campus and online
- Facilitating LOTE major students' use of SALC services by promoting the availability of advising services in Japanese, listing specific details in lecturers' online profiles in order to help students feel comfortable talking to them, or offering support appropriate to individual students' proficiency.

Students belonging to the LGBTQ+ communities gave these suggestions:

- Offering more faculty-led LGBTQ+ workshops to act as an indicator as to which staff members are "safest" to approach
- Providing workshops and events about SOGIE issues as a way to educate students and create a more inclusive atmosphere
- Avoiding stereotypical colors for men's and women's restrooms
- Holding social events where students can meet learning advisors outside of the SALC in order to make the advisors seem more approachable

Further, in their final presentations, Lucy's students offered some of the following suggestions for making the facility more inclusive to disabled learners and/or students with learning differences. We have divided them into changes regarding materials and those regarding services:

Materials

- Replacing the existing vending machine with one with a universal design allowing easier access
- Adding handrails outside of the SALC and an elevator closer to the building entrance (the elevator is now located in the center of the facility)
- Adding automatic doors, especially to enter the building
- Making smart pencils, magnifiers, and (speech recognition) software available to assist users in notetaking or reading, for example
- Changing the existing map of the SALC to a barrier-free map

- Adding braille block tactile paving and a voice guidance system in strategic places (in front of the stairs, for example)
- Replacing the existing restroom signs with bigger ones
- Using accessible fonts and color palettes in promotional posters
- Avoiding decorating handrails and placing objects in the way of passageways

Services

- Making interpreters or note-takers available (including volunteer students)
- Training staff about disability issues through workshops or online courses
- Adding an accessibility policy and statement to the SALC website and documents

Some of these propositions suggest similar actions, including organizing events to raise awareness and increase the visibility of LOTE, LGBTQ+, and disabled learners. Other suggestions, such as purchasing materials or changing part of the SALC layout to foster further accessibility, would require consultations with the university administration. Some suggestions, such as adding automatic doors, are less feasible but good to keep in mind as we consider the limitations of the space.

Discussion

These findings provide insights into SALC users' opinions on how well the SALC team currently supports inclusivity and considers their needs, interests, and goals, as well as possible actions for improving our facility's inclusiveness and accessibility in general.

Results of the survey and the interviews indicate that the majority of students believe the SALC is somewhat or very inclusive toward LOTE majors, LGBTQ+ students, and disabled learners and/or students with learning differences. This coincides with measures already taken, including advising services available in six different languages, workshops about non-Anglophone cultures, and support for various student-led communities (e.g., French or LGBTQ+ communities). Students' survey responses also show that some (15 to 31%) have never reflected on the inclusiveness issues mentioned above. Drawing on Fraser's (2008) dimensions of recognition of the differences of minorities and representation for encouraging further justice in education, our findings indicate a need for further acknowledging the multiple and non-static

26

identities of the SALC's users. Results also suggest the significance of listening to students' opinions and giving them a voice in decisions that directly affect their learning process and well-being as learners to build spaces and provide resources around those views. According to users' comments, interventions should include providing guidance and opportunities that reflect the diversity of our users' profiles and needs, such as including relevant and specific details in lecturers' online profiles in order to encourage students to talk with them, or tailoring support to individual students' language proficiency. Additionally, in line with the three UDL principles (Rose et al., 2006), the results highlighted the importance of providing equal access to the spaces and resources to all types of SALC users and offering them opportunities to engage with the diversity of needs and identities that our mission promotes. According to the comments, such actions might include making information available in multiple LOTE, adapting strategic locations to meet disabled learners' needs (e.g., adding braille block tactile paving and voice guidance systems), or organizing events to give the LGBTQ+ community more visibility.

There were some limitations to the study. As most survey respondents were frequent SALC users, responses may not reflect the opinions of less frequent users, in particular those who choose not to use the facility due to the very issues we investigated. Also, demographic data for LGBTQ+ students and disabled students were not collected, and students outside of these particular groups may not be able to accurately understand the experiences or perspectives of those groups' members. Further, we were not able to recruit disabled students to interview directly and had to rely on a teacher who summarized her students' ideas.

Conclusion

The present paper illustrates the importance of incorporating students' voices when evaluating educational facilities. Outcomes of a survey and individual interviews allowed us to gain further awareness of students' views and (current and future) needs concerning the SALC's mission for and actions towards inclusivity, specifically in terms of spaces, materials, and services. Some next steps for improving our facility's inclusiveness and accessibility include reviewing our educational services. Our findings echo Kara's (2021) reminder that it is the responsibility of any educational facility to meet the diverse needs of all learners, as well as her recommendation to make the facility's mission explicit in order to foster a more inclusive environment. Concrete and short-term actions include adapting materials in the SALC's

27

curriculum to the learners mentioned in this article, encouraging further student agency in organizing and participating in events (e.g., supporting LOTE and LGBTQ+ student-led communities), improving and diversifying the dissemination of these activities (e.g., posts on social media or class announcements using audio, video, and written support), and increasing collaboration with staff, including student staff and faculty in other language departments (e.g., holding LOTE events in the SALC). We will continue to collect students' opinions in our annual survey, which might include questions intended to evaluate our efforts for inclusiveness and help us consider actions for the future. Furthermore, in order to better understand students' perceptions of the inclusiveness of campus facilities (including, for instance, the MULC in addition to the SALC), continued research might also address group membership in those spaces or the issues of access described by Murray et al. (2018). Such research might also involve ethnographic observation and collaboration with LOTE faculty in spaces such as the MULC.

To guide us and colleagues working in different settings through such changes, we suggest consulting relevant literature, including *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (UNESCO, 2019), *The Equal Opportunities Handbook* (Clements & Spinks, 2000), and *The Guide to Creating Inclusive Learning Spaces* (Drexel University, 2020). We are also considering an inclusivity audit, as suggested by Lavolette (2022), where experts evaluate the facility and feasibility of the suggestions made.

In the near future, one helpful approach might be to develop our own institutional guidelines that can be used to systematically evaluate new and existing facilities and learning opportunities to ensure that the SALC continues to meet the needs of diverse learners in the coming years.

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Appendix

Themes That Emerged From the Interviews (*N*=8)

Themes	Momo	Kenta	Akito	Mari	Shin	Risa	Makoto	Lucy
The SALC is generally welcoming and inclusive for all students	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Some students lack confidence to use the SALC	•	•	•		•		•	
Other facilities on campus (e.g., the MULC) suit the needs of students in certain departments better than the SALC	•			•		•	•	
Students majoring in LOTE prioritize their major language, with the SALC being perceived as a place for learning English only				•	•	•	•	
Students from certain departments have fewer opportunities to visit the SALC				•		•	•	
Events or services, and wider promotion of them, can encourage students to use the SALC more	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Personal connections with faculty or staff encourage students to use the SALC or other centers	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Simple and more complex changes in terms of resources and services should be made to ease access for all users		•	•	•	•	•	•	•

31

Mind the Gap: Student-Developed Resources for Mediating Transitions into Self-Access Learning

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Author biography

Daniel Hooper is an associate professor in the Department of English Communication at Tokyo Kasei University. He has been teaching in Japan for 17 years in a variety of contexts including primary/secondary schools, English conversation schools, and universities. His research interests include teacher and learner identity, reflective practice, self-access learning communities, and communities of practice.

Abstract

Making the transition from classroom language learning to a self-access center (SAC) can be a daunting prospect for many learners. This study examines the discomfort experienced by learners transitioning into a SAC and the different cognitive, social, and symbolic resources (Zittoun, 2007) that can help to scaffold this environmental change. Based on observational and interview data collected from a longitudinal ethnography of the Learning Community (LC), a SAC-based student-led learning community, this study determined sources of anxiety for new SAC users and the ways in which the learning community attempted to address these issues. This study's findings revealed how gaps in knowledge between exam-focused English study in secondary education and communication-focused English in SAC social learning spaces contributed to learner anxiety in addition to insufficient social scaffolding for SAC newcomers. The LC members responded to these problems by operationalizing learners' existing skills, proactively engaging new members, and providing low-anxiety modes of access to new knowledge. This study highlights the various sociocultural obstacles that SAC newcomers must negotiate and the valuable role of student learning communities as socializing agents bridging the gap between learners' past and future worlds.

教室での言語学習からセルフアクセスセンター（SAC）へ移行することは、多くの学習者にとって困難なことである可能性があります。本研究では、SACに移行する学習者が経験する不安感と、この環境変化の足場となる認知的、社会的、象徴的資源（Zittoun, 2007）を検討する。本研究は、SACを基盤とした学生主導の学習コミュニティであるLCの縦断的エスノグラフィーから収集した観察データとインタビューデータに基づき、SACの新規利用者の不安要因と、学習コミュニティがこれらの問題に対処しようとした方法を明らかにした。その結果、中等教育における試験中心の英語学習とSACの社会的学習空間におけるコミュニケーション中心の英語との間にある知識のギャップが学習者の不安につながり、さらに、SACの新規利用者に対する社会的足場が十分でないことが明らかになった。このような問題に対して、LCメンバーは、学習者の既存のスキルを運用し、新しいメンバーを積極的に巻き込み、新しい知識にアクセスするための不安の少ない方法を提供することで、対応した。本研究は、SAC新入生が乗り越えなければならない様々な社会文化的障害と、学習者の過去と未来の世界のギャップを埋める社会化エージェントとしての学生学習コミュニティの貴重な役割を明らかにするものである。

Throughout our lives, we pass through multiple different worlds or frames. A new job, a new class, a new group of friends - all of these life transitions come with both challenges and opportunities. As we transition into a new "sphere of experience" (Zittoun, 2006), we face discontinuity and must renegotiate the knowledge, identities, and sense of the world that we bring with us from the past. This "rupture" is often accompanied by feelings of anxiety and discomfort that, if unaddressed, prevent us from taking advantage of the opportunities for learning and growth that change lays at our feet. Conversely, if we are afforded means to deploy our existing knowledge, if allies in our new world hold out their hands to guide us, and if we can orientate ourselves within the instability we face, entering these new worlds enriches both our learning and sense of self.

For many, entering a self-access center (SAC) represents a transition into unfamiliar territory. Compared with the teacher-centered and exam-focused classrooms of many Japanese high schools, the "foreignness" of a SAC with its relaxed atmosphere and appearance, multilingual staff, and starkly different educational tenets can be at once alluring and intimidating for learners (Mynard et al., 2020; Murray & Fujishima, 2016). In particular, SAC social learning spaces can be a daunting proposition to learners fresh out of secondary English education as the chasm between their high school grammar lessons and an SLS's free-form and conversationally-oriented activities can appear uncrossable. It is only through access to transitional aids within a SAC that these learners may gain the confidence and support necessary to bridge this gap and continue to actively engage within a self-access environment.

To explore the transitional challenges that students face when initially engaging in self-access language learning and the various resources that may be deployed to help them negotiate this rupture, this study examines the formation and continued practice of the LC, a SAC student learning community. By utilizing Zittoun's (2006, 2007, 2008) conceptual framework relating to life transitions to analyze data from an approximately 18-month longitudinal ethnography, I hope to contribute to the understanding of the pressures learners face when entering SACs, and how practitioners and SAC users might mitigate the negative impact of these ruptures.

Transitioning into Social Learning Spaces: Possibility and Uncertainty

A wealth of studies exists indicating the value of SAC social learning spaces (SLSs) for the development of L2 conversational proficiency, building social connections, and encouraging learner identity negotiation (Mynard et al., 2020; Kurokawa et al., 2013; Murray

& Fujishima, 2016). One element of many SLSs, and indeed SACs more broadly, that has been argued to positively contribute to their developmental potential is their status as *heterotopic* spaces (Murray & Fujishima, 2016). The concept of *heterotopia* was originally proposed by Foucault (1986) and is described by Igarashi (2016) as "a place that is capable of juxtaposing several spaces in a single real space and that creates an illusion of other places that are not there or nowhere" (p.51). The argument for SACs, and particularly SLSs, being heterotopic comes from the fact that many contemporary examples in Japan simultaneously embody elements of the home culture and numerous other cultures outside its borders. For example, SLSs are often characterized by their multicultural and multilingual nature and sometimes even feature a pseudo-foreign aesthetic with international flags and signage in English and other languages (Mynard et al., 2020; Hooper, 2023). Of course, the international flavor of many SLSs can be a draw for students and may allow them to foster a sense of membership within an imagined community of international L2 users. This phenomenon can be observed in a range of studies both inside and outside of Japan (Mynard et al., 2020; Balçıkanlı, 2018; Kurokawa et al., 2013) and is encapsulated in the following description of the L-café, an SLS at Okayama University.

> 'L-café is like an airport to me,' one of my friends described the L-café to freshmen who were interested in going there. 'Everybody is from different countries, all different languages are spoken, and all this makes the atmosphere so special that L-café seems to be anywhere but Japan.' (Nakamoto, 2016, p. 81)

Despite the apparent benefits of the heterotopic nature of SLSs, however, Murray and Fujishima (2016) caution that the *liminality* or "in-betweenness" (Turner, 1967) of such spaces can also be a source of anxiety for some. The hybrid nature of a SAC SLS - not quite Japan but not wholly foreign - cuts both ways, representing "a space of possibilities" (Murray, 2018, p. 110), but also potentially creating a sense of *displacement* (Igarashi, 2016) or discomfort to the uninitiated. Learners' experiences of displacement within SAC environments have been well documented and this recognition has contributed to a recent movement seeking to enhance learner accessibility within the field of self-access in Japan (JASAL, 2022; Thornton, 2021).

Within Japan, the struggles experienced by students transitioning into self-access language learning environments, and more specifically social learning spaces, are arguably

exacerbated further by a persistent ideological divide within Japanese English language education between the study of English as an academic subject primarily for test-taking purposes (*eigo*) and the development of oral communicative proficiency in the language (*eikaiwa*) (Mynard et al., 2020). On top of the fundamental emotional upheaval that comes with any major life transition, Japanese students often experience additional *rupture* (Zittoun, 2006) - instability, confusion, or discomfort - stemming from the relative incoherence of the *eigo* and *eikaiwa* ideologies. While junior high school and high school English classes often feature frequent L1 use and few opportunities for conversation practice, when students enter SAC SLSs, they are often required to adhere to English-only language policies and find it difficult to converse with other students who are already highly proficient in *eikaiwa* (Mynard et al., 2020). According to Zittoun (2008), whether transitional rupture leads to negative (non-developmental) or constructive (developmental) change depends a great deal on what resources individuals have access to within a new environment or situation. Zittoun categorizes three types of resources that she argues may have a positive mediational effect on those experiencing life transitions: 1) cognitive - already-acquired knowledge or skills that can be operationalized in the new setting, 2) social - people who aid through affective support and socialization, and 3) symbolic - cultural artifacts that engage the imagination beyond the immediate physical setting (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Transition, Rupture and Mediational Resources
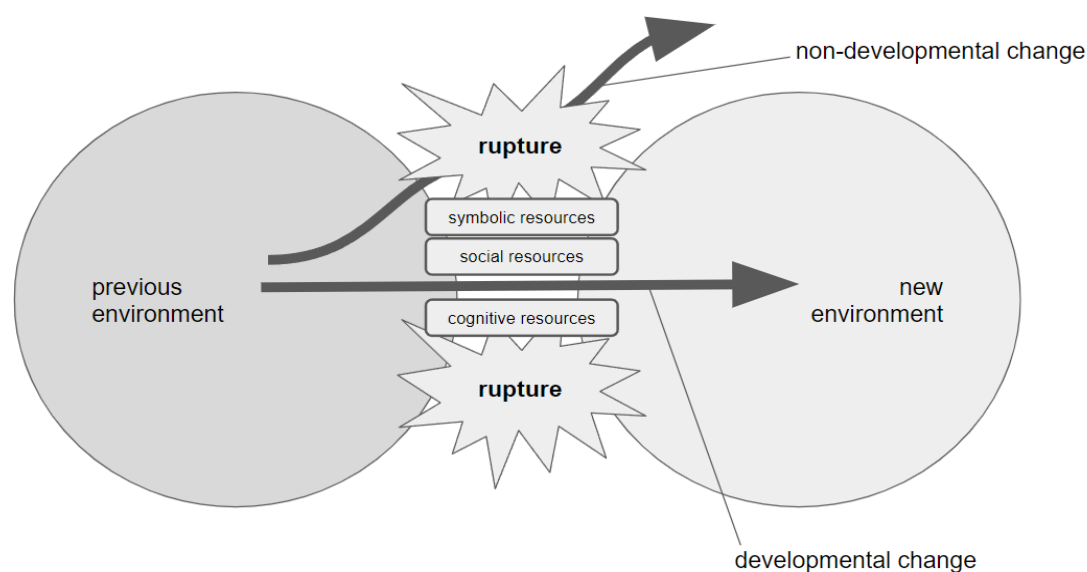
If students transitioning into a new learning environment have a means of accessing these various transitional resources, it is more likely that they will be able to constructively process the displacement/rupture experienced in heterotopia such as SAC SLSs and engage in positive transformative change.

Self-Access Student-Led Learning Communities

One approach within self-access language learning and also general education that has been posited as a measure to address the struggles that students face in their transitions across institutional and ideological boundaries is that of student learning communities (SLCs). SLCs are small intentionally-created communities of students that aim to enhance both individual and collective learning in a given area decided on by the group (Hooper, 2020; Watkins, 2022). Much of the existing literature on student learning communities has emerged from studies of higher education in the US where they were proposed as a way to facilitate out-of-class learning and also offer support to freshmen students who may be struggling with transitioning into tertiary education and university life in general (Lenning et al., 2013; Tinto, 2003, 2020). Drawing upon Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy, Tinto (2020) highlights the role of learning communities in addressing the needs of first-year university students struggling with different manifestations of rupture including a lack of belonging and low self-efficacy. One participant from Tinto's (2020) research described the emotional and learning support that participation in her learning community provided.

> In the cluster we knew each other, we were friends, we discussed everything from all the classes. We knew things very, very well because we discussed it all so much. We had discussions about everything… it was like a raft running the rapids of my life. (Tinto, 2020, p. 19)

SLCs are a relatively recent phenomenon within self-access language learning with much of the literature stemming from the promotion of interest-based learning communities at Japanese universities (Hooper, 2020; Kanai & Imamura, 2019; Watkins, 2021, 2022). These SAC learning communities are student groups who meet and learn collaboratively based on language learning objectives or simply because of a shared interest such as music, movies, or social movements. Watkins illustrated in a recent study (2022) how students'

participation in these SLCs was linked to satisfaction of their three Basic Psychological Needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017) (see Figure 2) of *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*.

Figure 2

Three Basic Psychological Needs (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Autonomy	"the need to self-regulate one's experiences and actions" (p. 10)
Competence	"our basic need to feel effectance and mastery" (p. 11)
Relatedness	"feel[ing] cared for by others" and "feeling significant among others" (p. 11)

Watkins found that participation in SLCs satisfied learners' *autonomy* in that it allowed them to become the locus of control and exercise volition regarding what they learned, when and how they learned it, and who they learned it with. In addition, learners' need for *competence* was met as the student community leaders strived to create safe, low-pressure environments in which everyone could take risks without fear of embarrassment or derision. Power distribution was also evident in the SLCs, with members frequently being given opportunities to actively contribute to the stewardship and innovation of their community. Finally, *relatedness* satisfaction was observable in many SLCs as senior members were encouraged to proactively engage in prosocial (benevolent) behavior and support newcomers' emotional needs. This atmosphere of mutual helping was further reinforced by the fact that each SLC developed a shared goal/interest or community *domain* (Wenger et al., 2002) that in turn stimulated the formation of a coherent group identity. Watkins' study illustrates the potentially positive mediational role of SLCs for both senior students developing leadership skills and for junior students negotiating educational transition. In the following study, I hope to build upon the existing self-access SLC research and explore how such student communities may contribute to the fostering of developmental change from students' transitions into SAC environments and reduce negative affect created by displacement and rupture.

Using the existing research outlined here as a foundation, in this study I will investigate salient causes of rupture for students entering SACs or SLSs. Furthermore, I will examine the different (cognitive, social, and symbolic) mediational resources that learning community participation may afford students transitioning into a SAC environment.

Methodology

Setting and Participants

This study is based upon a larger-scale longitudinal ethnographic case study (Hooper, 2023) of the LC (pseudonym), an English conversation SLC located in a university SAC. The LC was formed by students in the SAC of a small, private university located in the Kanto region of Japan. The community was formed in 2017 and then continued in an online format from 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each LC meeting featured one set conversation topic decided on by the leaders or chosen from suggestions from LC members submitted in a weekly feedback form. During each session, members would move into small groups, discuss the topic bilingually, research any words they couldn't express in English using a website called DMM Eikaiwa, discuss the topic again in only English, and finally meet back as a whole group to share and discuss any new phrases or vocabulary they had learned. The LC met once a week and all of the community's activities were planned and managed by a small group of student leaders. The student leaders were in turn provided institutional support and opportunities for intentional reflective dialogue (Kato & Mynard, 2016) by Keiko (pseudonym), a learning advisor who supervised a number of learning communities in the SAC. The participants of the current study included numerous LC members spanning three different generations as well as several other relevant stakeholders among the SAC staff who could offer insight into how the LC community functioned and its role within the SAC as a whole (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

List of Study Participants (Hooper, 2023)

LC participants		
Commenced participation in study in autumn 2019		
Ryoya	English major	LC leader (in his 3rd year) from Apr. 2019 to Jan. 2021
Yuki	English major	LC leader (in her 3rd year) from Apr. 2019 to Jan. 2021
Harumi	English major	LC member (in her 3rd year) from Apr. 2019 to Jan. 2021
Tenka	International communication major	LC member (in her 1st year) from Sept. 2019 to Jan. 2021
Mizuki	International communication major	LC member (in her 1st year) from Jun. 2019 to present
Commenced participation in study in spring 2020		
Sara	English major	LC leader (in her 4th year) from Apr. 2019 to Jan. 2021
Riri	English major	LC member (in her 2nd year) from Apr. 2019 to present
Hinako	English major	LC member (in her 2nd year) from Apr. 2019 to present
Natsuko	English major	LC member (in her 2nd year) from Apr. 2019 to present
Former LC participants and SAC staff (commenced participation in autumn 2019)		
Kei	High school teacher	LC leader from 2017 to 2019
Keiko	SAC learning advisor	
Yukiko	SAC administrator	
Amy	SAC director	

Data Collection

LC member participants were selected through purposeful sampling carried out via a simple questionnaire based on their level of experience and degree of comfort and active participation in the community. I also conducted participant observation of LC sessions once a week for a one-year period and took detailed field notes on the LC's practice based on Spradley's (1980) "nine dimensions of descriptive observation" - space, object, act, activity, event, time, actor, goal, and feeling (see Appendix). Furthermore, I collected written or oral language learning histories for each LC member participant based on a model developed by Murphey and Carpenter (2008). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant and focused primarily on their impressions of the LC and what role they perceived the community to have for them personally as well as within the SAC. For all language learning histories and interviews, participants were informed that they could respond in either

English, Japanese, or a mixture of the two. My proficiency in Japanese allowed me (with support from a range of Japanese L1 speakers) to conduct all of the language learning histories and interviews bilingually. This choice was made in order to facilitate the deepest possible responses from my participants and also to help them feel more at ease during the data collection sessions. Finally, artifact collection was conducted over an approximately two-year period where I collected slides from each LC session, minutes from LC leader meetings, and promotional materials for the LC. All data collection procedures were approved by the institution's research ethics board and transparency relating to my study was consistently maintained with SAC staff for the duration of the research.

Data Analysis

For the current study, I revisited the original data and inductive codes that I developed (utilizing NVivo 12 software) through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) from my original ethnographic case study (Hooper, 2023). The reflexive thematic analytical process is guided by the following six stages: (1) familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. Upon revisiting my original codes and themes, I subsequently used Zittoun's (2006, 2007) sociocultural theory of life transitions to deductively recode the data based on the following categories:

- rupture
- cognitive resources
- social resources
- symbolic resources

In the following sections I will address these categories in detail and will attempt to illustrate the rupture that LC members faced in the SAC and how their community worked to respond to these struggles.

Findings

Problem

Rupture

In terms of the discomfort or uncertainty that learners experienced in the SAC that catalyzed or influenced their participation in the LC, several causes of rupture were frequently observed based on a number of linguistic and social factors. As has been found in other studies of Japanese language learners' experiences in higher education (Mynard et al.,

2020; Miyahara, 2015), the ideological shift from *eigo*-oriented classes in secondary education and *eikaiwa*-focused instruction in university was found to be a key factor impacting how my participants were able to transition to SAC engagement. Many participants stated that their junior high school and high school classes were focused primarily on preparation for entrance examinations and that they generally lacked opportunities for communicative English use. Consequently, in most cases, their experiences in secondary education were discussed in negative terms. Furthermore, the majority of participants displayed a clear international posture (Yashima, 2009) and indicated a strong desire to develop their proficiency in *eikaiwa*.

> Researcher: If you were going to explain to an alien, (laughs) how could you describe the type of person who goes to the LC?
> Mizuki: Hmm. They are so friendly, so I can talk with them easily, and so they want to improve their English skill, especially in speaking. (Mizuki, December 6, 2019)

Despite this apparent motivation to develop their English oral proficiency, however, a common theme was the rupture that the majority of LC members experienced when initially transitioning to the university and the SAC as freshmen. In particular, these feelings of rupture were related to one SLS within the SAC, the Chat Space. The Chat Space was an English-only space in the SAC that was perceived by the LC members to be for highly-proficient English speakers, a notion that was reinforced by the frequent presence of international exchange students in the space and the "free chat" model with no set conversation topics. This meant that LC members often reported negative experiences related to the Chat Space where they unsuccessfully attempted to join in the activities there or felt intimidated, judged negatively, or believed that their presence burdened other Chat Space users.

> Riri: I tried [to] join and I walked around the Chat Space. But they speak really good English so I felt nervous and I [went] back to...
> Researcher: So the gap was, you felt it was too much?
> Riri: Yeah. Like, if I got used to the community, maybe I'm okay. But [it was] the first step to join, so…(Riri, January 8, 2021)

Furthermore, some members felt that *eikaiwa* proficiency was a ranking criterion within some areas of the SAC, with the ability to fluently converse with "native speakers" representing the benchmark for success. This meant that the students transitioning from *eigo*-oriented environments sometimes experienced identity threat and feelings of inferiority that, due to their longing to be fluent English speakers in an international community, could lead to feelings of intense anxiety.

> Sara: If [native speakers] don't understand what I say, I have to explain more and maybe my brain stop[s] and nanka, word ga detekonaku natte… **(like, the words don't come out…)**
> Researcher: You feel like people judge your English or…?
> Sara: Yeah, yeah. So, I'm so scared of people who judge or make a ranking. (Sara, July 16, 2020)

The rupture stemming from a perceived gap in *eikaiwa* proficiency was further compounded by social rupture from the free-form nature of certain SLSs, which made it difficult for newcomers to break the ice and insert themselves into an already-established social group. It was against this backdrop that the LC was formed. From its earliest iterations, it was clear that the community was designed in order to act as an alternative to areas like the Chat Space and provide support for those students keen to develop their *eikaiwa* competence, but struggling with their transition into the SAC.

> [SAC] dewa eigo wo hanashitaikedo chotto nanka hairizuraina toka omotteru hitokara shitara sugoi ii community da to omou kara souiu eigo wo benkyou shitai kedo ibasho ga nai tteiu hito no tame no ibasho ga LC no rooru na ki ga shimasu ne.
> **(The LC is a really great community for people who want to speak English in the SAC but feel it's hard to enter. I feel like the role of the LC is a place for people who want to study English but have no place to belong.)** (Kei, February 15, 2020)

Solutions

In the following sections, I will discuss how the LC responded to the issues described in this section, the cognitive, social, and symbolic resources that the LC afforded, and how

the community maintained an accessible environment for members across multiple generations.

Cognitive Resources

Cognitive resources are "forms of technical, reasoning or heuristic expertise, and practical or formal knowledge" (Zittoun, 2007, p. 7) that may be mobilized in order to negotiate transition and rupture. Clearly, one key type of knowledge tied to rupture among the LC members was linguistic knowledge. Firstly, due to a gap between the *eigo* that they had learned in secondary education and the *eikaiwa* proficiency that was prioritized in contexts like the Chat Space, many of my participants found that the knowledge that they brought with them did not translate into their new learning environment. This led to non-developmental change in the form of feelings of inferiority, anxiety, and sometimes complete withdrawal from participation. In response to this situation, the LC's practice developed as a bridging of the two ideologies of *eigo* and *eikaiwa* - a liminal "third space" (Kramsch, 2009) in which members could operationalize their previously-acquired knowledge (*eigo*) while moving towards developmental change and the development of new knowledge and skills (*eikaiwa*). Based on different ideological traits of both *eigo* and *eikaiwa*, one can see that within the LC, members selected elements from each that they felt suited their own particular needs and dispositions (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Hybridization of Eigo and Eikaiwa in the LC (Hooper, 2023)
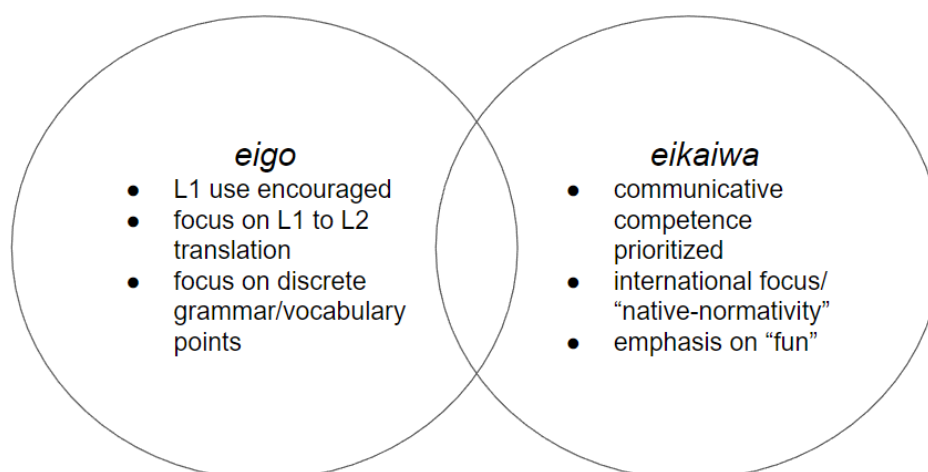
In LC meetings, members were initially given an opportunity to discuss the weekly topic together in both Japanese and English and then had time to find translations online for anything they could not initially express in English.

You can practice speaking English and vocabulary or grammar because in that group they can use English, they can use Japanese also. So, if you can't understand, you can use Japanese and you can check each other or you can ask senior students. So, you don't have to be more nervous or need not hesitate. (Tenka, December 4, 2019)

The LC's language policy provided newer or less confident members with opportunities to utilize the L1 knowledge they brought with them, was more aligned with the study practices they experienced in secondary education, and acted as a source of scaffolding while they attempted to develop their *eikaiwa* competence and social bonds. The ability to switch between their L1 and English also was observed to have afforded multiple opportunities for peer teaching within the community among both senior and junior students alike. This bilingual co-construction of knowledge can be seen in the following observation of the final vocabulary sharing portion of an LC session.

One of the freshmen is kind of checking if "dokutoku no nioi" means "unique smell", but then Mizuki is drawing on one of the previous sessions when they talked about the difference between "smell" and "odor", etc. So they are sharing knowledge. (Observation, December 1, 2020)

The community practices developed by the LC leadership essentially enabled its members, and particularly newcomers to the SAC, to deploy the skills and knowledge that they brought with them from their previous sphere of experience (secondary education). This allowed even inexperienced LC members to engage actively with the community while also providing an affective "safety net" for those who would be too anxious to participate in the free-form, English-only environment of the Chat Space.

Social Resources

Social resources refer to people who can be drawn upon during transitions for knowledge, emotional support, and guidance with socialization into a new sphere of experience (Zittoun, 2007). As stated in the previous section, support for newer LC members was a clear focal point within the community. Social resources for LC newcomers were facilitated in a number of key ways including: 1) deemphasis of *senpai-kōhai* relationships, and 2) leadership expressions.

As previously discussed, the issue of being ranked while participating in a SLS was identified by several LC members as a potentially negative influence on newcomers. This notion of ranking or hierarchies being antithetical to an accessible community was also reflected in the LC's approach to *jouge kankei* or seniority-based hierarchies in which *kōhai* (juniors) are commonly required to act in a differential manner to their *senpai* (seniors). Due in part to past negative experiences in other communities and partly influenced by Keiko and the autonomy-supportive culture of the SAC, the LC leadership cultivated an environment in which these traditional hierarchies were flattened and both *senpai* and *kōhai* were encouraged to interact with each other in a friendly and open manner. This welcoming atmosphere represented a key tenet of the community and was highlighted in promotional materials for the LC.

> "Yeah, so we have freshmen and senior students together. So we can cooperate with each other and the seniors will always talk to new students. It's that kind of friendly place, where it becomes a community for all students." (SAC Newsletter)

During LC meetings also, the LC leaders would proactively engage with newer members and would try hard to provide them to contribute to the community during group work and the final vocabulary share sessions. Furthermore, the de-emphasis of *jouge kankei* was frequently reinforced through the language I observed being used by LC leaders as they introduced the nature of the community to new members.

> "Senpai to iu ka, kyonen kara kita hito." **(Not *senior*, a person who started last year.)** Wow, that's interesting. That was an interesting choice of words, like deemphasizing the senpai thing. (Observation, July 14, 2020)

The ethnographic data from this study revealed that leadership practices in the LC had a considerable impact on the nature of its community of practice. I identified three key types of leadership expression that the LC leaders implemented - democratizing, caretaking, and scaffolding (Hooper, 2023). The last expression - scaffolding - can be observed in the decisions surrounding the community's language policy and the continued efforts taken to actively engage newcomers in the LC's practice through knowledge sharing. Democratizing leadership practices are evident in proactive calls for feedback (shared in a weekly Google

Form) where the LC leaders would ask the membership for ways to improve the community, highlight any problems or struggles they experienced, and contribute new topics for the community to discuss. The aforementioned efforts to flatten the power dynamic of the community and facilitate a freer sharing of ideas and opinions between *senpai* and *kōhai* alike further reinforced this push for a democratically-managed community. Essentially, the democratization of the LC by its leadership helped to maintain an environment in which even complete newcomers could vocalize anxieties they were experiencing during their transitional period. These concerns could then be taken up by the leadership and fed back into the LC as affectively-supportive countermeasures in a constantly-evolving social process.

> Ryoya told everyone, "As I always say, [the LC] is not just for me and Yuki. It's for you guys. That's why we always do this, always do the questionnaire." (Observation, November 17, 2020)

Finally, the caretaking role of the leaders involved sharing useful information casually with new members about classes, study strategies, learning materials, and so on while also ensuring that the community remained in alignment with the overall autonomy-supportive mission and tenets of the SAC. The leaders' relationship with Keiko was a central element of this as all of the LC leaders were SAC peer advisors who were enrolled in a leadership course with her. This interdependent brokering relationship (Wenger, 1998) allowed the leaders to have constant access to intentional reflective dialogue with Keiko, and conversely afforded Keiko valuable insights into what was actually happening in the learning communities on the ground level, thus enabling her to support them more effectively in the future.

Symbolic Resources

A person using a symbolic resource might be someone using a cultural artifact such as a book, movie, or piece of music in order to make sense of and gain orientation within transitional rupture (Zittoun et al., 2003). Another trait of symbolic resources is that, unlike their previously-discussed cognitive and social counterparts, they allow a "distancing beyond the here-and-now" (Zittoun, 2007, p. 7). There were found to be a number of symbolic resources utilized within the LC in order to help its members to move towards developmental change during a turbulent time in their learning lives. Perhaps the most influential example of a symbolic resource in the LC was DMM Eikaiwa, a website that members used to research casual conversational or slang phrases online so as to supplement the cognitive resources they

brought with them into the community. The members would use the site to find posts written by English speakers from around the globe (but primarily from Inner Circle countries like the US and the UK) who would respond to questions asked by Japanese English learners (see Figure 5). DMM Eikaiwa was particularly important to the LC in that it afforded them access to what they determined to be "native" or "natural" English in lieu of direct access to "native speakers."

Figure 5

Sample DMM Eikaiwa Post (Hooper, 2023)

Several LC members had negative past experiences interacting with "native speakers" and participating in sites like the Chat Space that threatened their identities as competent English users. However, as previously discussed, they also strongly desired to develop their *eikaiwa* competence and possessed a strong international orientation with many members hoping for future engagement with an imagined community of international English users. DMM Eikaiwa, therefore, functioned as a powerful symbolic resource affording the community access to their desired imagined community and its associated knowledge without risking panic, demotivation, and other forms of non-developmental change.

Conclusion

This study illustrated that the rupture students experience when transitioning into SAC environments, and in particular SLSs, may be the result of a gap between their previous sphere of experience (secondary education) and the new environment and culture they are faced with. These feelings of rupture are arguably exacerbated by English-only language policies and a perceived lack of linguistic or social scaffolding for newcomers. However, examining this situation in a more positive light, it can also be recognized that institutionally-supported student learning communities have enormous potential in contributing to SAC accessibility through the provision of cognitive, social, and symbolic resources for learners in transition.

This study has a number of implications for SAC practitioners. In terms of SAC practice, the insights gained regarding the LC community's deep understanding of SAC users' affective struggles and needs reinforce the immeasurable value of active student participation and management within SACs. The emergence of communities like the LC can serve as a barometer to administrators of surreptitious problems within SACs that may have thus far slipped under the radar. Furthermore, by examining Keiko's pivotal support role in regard to the LC, this study also highlights potential future avenues into which the learning advisor role may expand such as community support and leadership counseling. In sum, this study sheds light on the mutually-beneficial nature of dialogic relationships between SAC staff and student learning communities for the purpose of creating more supportive and accessible learning environments.

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Space	First real on-task exploration of online functionality on Zoom, struggled with navigating the virtual space due to issues relating to host status and breakout rooms - two of the three organizers had to stay in the main room (Yuki couldn't manage breakout rooms at all due to iPad issues), discussed how much easier face-to-face scenario was, SAC still 'present' through Ryoya's Zoom background of the SAC and the slides background of the [meeting area], the main Zoom room and the chat function still allowed all members to throw out ideas to the whole group, discussed the importance of not meeting up in person (institutional rule)
Object	Objects are essentially linked to iPads and maybe computers, but the organizers also used cell phones to contact each other when they had a crisis with the breakout rooms, requested members to use online search engines (eikaiwa sites?) rather than dictionaries, they shared all vocabulary from the chat in a separate document on Line later in the week, they gave out a survey at the end of the session to request members' feedback and ideas for potential topics
Act	Before the session, the organizers were assigned different roles (mainly by Ryoya), my observation was limited to the main room but the session started with general housekeeping and an explanation of the group's aims, flow in terms of stages (Japanese discussion/research of English/English conversation/group share), and introduction of the topic - everything was done in Japanese or bilingually by Ryoya, the organizers moved members into breakout rooms and took turns to go through monitoring their progress, another organizer broadcasted messages to the breakout rooms informing members of when each new stage should begin, when everyone came back to the main room, members wrote in their phrases into the chat, the organizers picked out certain phrases and asked the members to describe/explain them, the organizers also offered supportive comments, asked questions, joked, and tried to relate the phrases to everyday life
Activity	I couldn't see much of the activity as it was going on in breakout rooms, in the main room the organizers were discussing issues related to management of the session and considerations about topic choice, technology, etc. in Japanese together, before the start of the meeting, more established members joked and chatted with the organizers in casual Japanese
Event	The main events in the session appeared to be - a) pre-session (chatting, joking, organizing, setting up), b) greetings, housekeeping and introducing the community, c) Japanese conversation in breakout rooms, d) English (online) research in breakout rooms, e) English conversation in breakout rooms, f) whole group sharing time, and g) final housekeeping and greetings

53

Time	Yuki is in charge of time management. The organizers arrived about 15-20 minutes before the session started (12:00), other established members started showing up (12:10), session starts at 12:20, introduction to session (12:20 -12:30), breakout rooms from 12:30 - 12:45, some members showed up late (around 12:28 and 12:42), session ends at around 13:00
Actor	Ryoya appears to inhabit 'main' organizer role - he takes lead on all explanations and delegates roles to other organizers, Yukiko (SAC liaison) is also present throughout to offer support and monitor session (?), Yuki is given time management role and Sara is in charge of managing breakout rooms, each organizer takes turns (except Yuki due to technical issues) to move between breakout rooms, 31 members in total for this session, each member has a number next to their name to denote year in university (how about senpai-kōhai?), Tenka shares vocab in whole group stage, so does another 2nd year student (regular) and another 3rd year student (seems like regular), Ryoya and Sara offer supportive comments and ask questions during this stage, a first year student also explains a phrase to the group, one more (2nd year?) student explains another phrase, Ryoya has a very active role during this stage and is often at times akin to an entertainer, finally organizers and Yukiko have a short debriefing chat after other members have left
Goal	According to Ryoya's explanation and slides, the LC is to "Enjoy talking in English" and "Find useful vocabulary for daily conversation", comfort seems to be a thing because of the language policy, their concern over the appropriateness of the topic (marriage), and the numerous disclaimers about only showing their camera or offering an explanation in the session if they're comfortable, I noted that affect seems to be a big consideration, laughter as a big part in providing a fun and relaxing atmosphere appears to be key, Ryoya states that it doesn't matter what year they are (thus challenging senpai-kōhai) but he also asks the older members to help the newer ones (maybe this is senpai-kōhai lite?), not only the topic and phrases, but the language they all use with each other (both English and Japanese - "later") is casual/slangy and this appears to be part of the domain
Feeling	I guess the feeling I got from the session was structured but casual. They appear to have a clear idea of what they want to do but try to do in an accessible way, laughter was a common thing - lots of jokes in both Japanese (mainly) and English being cracked, I guess the other thing would be relatability - they link all of the phrases to everyday life and even their own experiences - the language policy also appears to assist them in this, Ryoya and Sara in particular appeared to be almost entertainer-like in their management of the group and often made jokes and humorous comments during the latter stages, they would also sometimes make comments about the members they already knew establishing familiarity with each other, finally one thing that struck me was how active the sharing session was and how engaged members seemed when they were analyzing vocabulary and its nuances (lots of smiles and laughter)

Supporting First-Year Students Through Written Advising: Thematic Characteristics of Comments by Peers

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Abstract

This study observed written peer advising among Japanese learners, analyzing the advisee's concerns with respect to the peer advisor's comments. Although written peer advising combines both the collaborative aspect of peer support and the in-depth advice of asynchronous advising, previous studies on this approach are rare. Therefore, this exploratory study investigates the characteristics of written peer advising in relation to the findings from previous studies on written advising. The participants included 62 first-year students (advisees) and 69 second-year students (peer advisors) over the course of two years. The data included 62 concerns from first-year students and 193 pieces of advice written by second-year students. In all, 28 concerns from first-year students regarded English learning, 14 related to learning in general, and 20 were on the topic of career paths. The second-year students' advice was coded for each chunk of meaning in a top-down fashion, resulting in 779 cognitive, 581 affective, and 222 metacognitive items. The authors also identified the subcategories "experience," "opinion," and "empathy" in a bottom-up fashion for advice that did not fit well into the coding scheme. The findings of this study are three-fold: creating opportunities to expand students' knowledge of L2 learning resources; facilitating self-reflection through dialogues with advisees and the inner self, reflected through consultation with advisees; maintaining harmonious hierarchical relationships between first- and second-year students (*senpai-kohai* relationship in Japanese settings) through empathizing with and disclosing similar experiences as a strength of peer advisors. This study confirms the considerable potential for written peer advising in L2 learning, suggesting the strengths of both peer support and asynchronous advising.

本研究では、日本人学習者を対象に文書ピアアドバイジングを実施し、アドバイジーの悩みとピアアドバイザーのコメントを分析した。ピアサポートの協働的側面と非同期型アドバイジングの深いアドバイスという側面を併せ持つ文書ピアアドバイジングであるが、先行研究は限られている。そのため本研究では、文書ピアアドバイジングの特徴を、文書アドバイジングに関する先行研究の知見を踏まえつつ探索的に検討した。参加者は2年間で1年生62名（アドバイジー）、2年生69名（ピアアドバイザー）であった。データは1年生が書いた62の悩みと、2年生が書いた193のアドバイスを含む。1年生からの悩みは英語学習について28件、学習全般について14件、進路について20件であった。一方、2年生のアドバイスは、意味のまとまり毎にトップダウン式で複数のコードを付した結果、cognitive 779、affective 581、metacognitive 222となった。また、ボトムアップ式でコーディングの枠にうまく該当しないアドバイスについては、experience、opinion、empathyなどのサブカテゴリーを確認した。本研究の知見としては、L2学習資源に関する学生の知識を拡げる機会の創出、アドバイジーとアドバイジーの相談を通じて映し出される内なる自己との2種の対話による内省の促進、ピアアドバイザーの強みとして類似する体験への共感と開示による調和的な先輩・後輩関係の維持という3点である。本研究の貢献としては第二言語学習における文書ピアアドバイジングの大きな可能性を裏付けたことであり、それはピアサポートと非同期型アドバイジング双方の強みを示唆するものであった。

This study is an exploratory investigation of the influence of written peer advising among university students who have difficulty with English. In advising in language learning (ALL), an advisor provides guidance and support to learners to enable them to achieve their language learning goals (Mynard & Carson, 2012). Language advisors may be teachers, tutors, or other professionals specializing in language learning. However, these advisors generally provide advice on learning strategies, learning resources, and techniques to improve language proficiency, instead of exercising the skills required for teaching. They can also help learners identify their strengths and weaknesses, set goals, and develop action plans to achieve these goals. ALL is intended to help learners become more self-directed and reflective in their own language learning (Kato & Mynard, 2016). It empowers learners to take responsibility for their learning and helps them identify and address challenges that they may encounter along the way (e.g., Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981; Raya & Vieira, 2020). Overall, ALL is a valuable opportunity for language learners to be autonomous, as it can provide individualized support and guidance to help learners meet their language learning goals in a more holistic way (Mynard, 2020).

Using the written advisory comments of *senpai* (second-year students) to *kohai* (first-year students), we as part-time lecturers investigate the quality and possibilities of written peer advising. As with all forms of ALL, written advising is a process of providing guidance and support to individuals seeking advice or assistance, where the communication takes place in written form, such as in a learning management system or through email (Thornton & Mynard, 2012). This approach has become increasingly popular due to its convenience, accessibility, and inclusivity for providing individualized support when combined with face-to-face sessions (e.g., Mynard & McLoughlin, 2014; Navarro & Thornton, 2011; Shelton-Strong & Mynard, 2018). Among the main reasons that written advising is an important topic is that it addresses the growing need for more flexible and accessible forms of advising. Many students have busy schedules or are unable to meet with their advisors in person, making written advising a more convenient option; this trend has become more pronounced due to the worldwide pandemic. In addition, written advising can be helpful for those individuals who prefer to communicate in writing, leading to deeper-level reflection (Mynard & Thornton, 2012). Another reason that the study of written advising is important is that it allows for personalized and individualized support. Written advising can thus be tailored to meet the unique needs and goals of each individual, and it can be used to provide feedback that is as in-depth and detailed as other forms of advising, as well as

allowing for a useful record of advice and feedback for future reference. For these reasons, knowledge of the benefits and challenges of written advising can inform the development of effective advising programs and practices in various contexts.

In response to the worldwide pandemic, many institutions have implemented online advising, and asynchronous advising has gained popularity as well, allowing for the benefits of advisory practice without restrictions of time or place (Peña Clavel et al., 2020). Due to the pandemic, the first-year students included in this study had limited access to social interactions with their classmates due to the implementation of online courses. There were also few opportunities to meet and exchange information with those older than them (*senpai* in Japanese). Specifically, these opportunities included attending lectures, making friends, and general campus life. However, in L2 learning, this limited scope for social interaction could have a detrimental impact on expanding the group Zone of Proximal Development, which is the area where learning takes place collaboratively (Van Compernolle & Leontjev, 2020). In response to these considerations, we considered that written peer advising may be a fruitful means of encouraging peer interactions, even asynchronously, and that it could be a fruitful topic of study. From the above, we will first introduce written peer advising within the field of ALL. Following that, an overview of written peer advising as implemented in our study and the data obtained from it are presented, and the paper concludes with a discussion.

Literature Review

Typology of Advising

ALL is currently practiced in a variety of forms, which basically fall into two major categories: synchronous and asynchronous (Mynard & Kato, 2022). Furthermore, if we incorporate the peer component of this study, another axis of classification is needed. In relation to this, Table 1 groups advising research into four categories: synchronous-asynchronous (measuring the temporal nature of the session) and advisor-peer advisor (denoting who conducts the session) classifications. As indicated in Table 1, many studies of synchronous advising have been conducted around the world. Most previous studies discuss synchronous sessions by advisors (top left), although in recent years, with the development of advisor training and the trend toward collaborative learning among learners, synchronous sessions by peer advisors (top right) are also being seen in some cases.

Table 1

Synchronous-Asynchronous and Advisor-Peer Advisor Classifications

	Advisor	Peer Advisor
Synchronous (Face-to-face, Online)	Tassinari (2016), Yamashita (2015), Yasuda (2018), for example	Howard (2019), Ishikawa (2012), Moriya (2022), for example
Asynchronous (Written)	Six studies* (e.g., Karaaslan & Güven-Yalçın, 2020; Mynard, 2012; Mynard & Thornton, 2012; Shelton-Strong & Mynard, 2018; Thornton & Mynard, 2012; Uzun & Güven-Yalçın, 2020)	No known studies

Note. Studies combining multiple types of advising (e.g., written advising and synchronous online advising) were included. We searched all papers published in JASAL, Relay, and SiSAL Journals.

On the other hand, there are still few studies on asynchronous advising. As seen in the lower-left, most studies of asynchronous advising focus on advisor-learner relationships, not peer relationships. While asynchronous advising and peer support may positively influence both advisors and advisees, to our knowledge, no known studies have been conducted in this area (lower right). The reason for this is not clear, but such a type of session in this quadrant enables a flexible session format for both learners and peer advisors, free from spatial constraints and time constraints. Mynard (2022) analyzed the themes of 170 self-access papers and conference presentations published in the past three years and found that advising received the greatest attention (22/170). However, taking into account that there are 59 SALCs registered with the Japan Association for Self-Access Learning (JASAL) Language Learning Spaces Registry (n.d.) as of 2022, this is not a large number, suggesting the need for more diverse forms of advising research in the future.

Written Peer Advising

Written peer advising is a form of ALL that combines elements of peer support and written advising. Previous studies have identified the social and collaborative aspects of peer support (Manning, 2014). Indeed, several studies have reported that collaboration among

peers positively affects emotional regulation through empathy (Imai, 2010) and the formation of friendly learning communities (Mynard et al., 2020). Moreover, through this support, near-peer role models (Murphey, 1998) mediate interlocutors' self-access learning through collaborative dialogue (Swain & Watanabe, 2013). Tandem language learning, which is a supportive activity in which proficient speakers of different languages learn each other's language and engage in collaborative dialogue, is an example of near-peer role models being utilized in the field of self-access (Little & Brammerts, 1996). Mukae (2021) analyzed three pairs of social interactions and found that "the development of reciprocal and equal relationships" (p. 47) was revealed by active self-disclosure. Therefore, peer support (peer advising in this case) can complement the support of professional advisors and may be particularly helpful for students who may be hesitant to seek professional support. In light of this, it can be noted that peer advisors themselves must learn a certain amount about L2 learning and autonomy to advise, so experiencing peer advising is almost synonymous with thinking about their autonomy (collaborative agency; Little, 2022).

Although there has been little research done on written advising, several scholars have indicated the possibility of promoting deeper-level reflection on the language-learning process (Mynard & Thornton, 2012). This reflective process has advantages for both learners and advisors (Thornton & Mynard, 2012). Additionally, two studies in Turkey have reported positive influences on advisee engagement and ownership in the learning process (Karaaslan & Güven-Yalçın, 2020; Uzun & Güven-Yalçın, 2021). To clarify this further, Thornton and Mynard (2012) used a bottom-up analysis of 122 comments by advisors to generate common categories. In all, they identified four categories, namely, metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and administrative, and 14 subcategories. They found that advisors are able to pay attention to multiple elements of the learning process from a multifaceted perspective using even limited textual information. Taking up these results from a written peer advising perspective, it should be noted that peer advisors, in written advising, can develop practices taking a multifaceted view of L2 learning. The categories also enable us to compare how peer advisors work with professional advisors. Drawing on these studies, therefore, we can assume the benefits of written advising, even when conducted by peers.

Based on prior research, we propose that written peer advising can have a positive influence on both peer advisors and advisees. On this assumption, our study analyzes the content and quality of written peer advising to *kohai* by *senpai* peer advisors. To address this issue, this study aims to answer the following research questions (RQs) to cover both

perspectives:

RQ1: In written peer advising, what kind of concerns do first-year students (*kohai*) bring to second-year students (*senpai*) for consultation?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of the comments that peer advisors provide?

Methodology

Participants, Data Collection, and Analysis

This was a two-year study in which we implemented two courses per year. The participants were 62 first-year and 69 second-year students. All of them were undergraduates majoring in business administration, with English proficiency levels of approximately CEFR A1–A2, feeling that they struggled to learn English. In 2020, there were 38 students in course A and in course B, and in 2021, there were 24 students in Course C and 31 in Course D (Table 2). All four courses had a main focus on TOEIC preparation and promoting learner autonomy through advising tools (referring to tasks listed in the Learning Advising Skills Guidebook created by Sojo University, 2020; Yasuda, 2020; workshops conducted by the first author in the past, to list a few).

Table 2

Course and Participant Information

	Course for first-year students	Course for second-year students
2020	Course A (38)	Course B (38)
2021	Course C (24)	Course D (31)
Total	62	69

Table 3

Five Steps for Implementing Written Peer Advising

	Content
Step 1	Introducing the concept of autonomy and what advising is (60 min.)
Step 2	Collecting concerns about English learning and other related ones from 1st-year students by showing an example of written advising
Step 3	Showing these anonymized concerns to 2nd-year students
Step 4	Collecting written advice to 1st-year students
Step 5*	Showing anonymized written advice to 1st-year students

Note. This study did not include data from Step 5.

The data collection procedure was divided into five steps for implementing written peer advising (Table 3). In Step 1, we briefly introduced the concept of autonomy and what advising is to both peer advisors and advisees within 60 minutes. As noted earlier, the purpose of these courses was to foster learner autonomy; therefore, an introduction to autonomy and ALL was given early in the courses. In Step 2, we collected concerns with respect to English learning from first-year students by showing a sample of written advising (a consultation with a fictitious advisee and response by the first author). In Step 3, we showed the anonymized concerns written by the first-year students to second-year students digitally. Then, we collected written advice given in response, as Step 4. The instructions used for Steps 2 to 4 are in Appendix A. Finally, we gave the anonymized written advice to the first-year students, but we could not present data for Step 5, as these data in Step 5 were too limited. Considering students' proficiency and the purpose of these activities to foster autonomy as part of in-class activities, all activities were conducted in their L1, Japanese.

For the data analysis in our study, especially for RQ2, we adopted the four categories described by Thornton and Mynard (2012, p. 143) as a coding scheme. The four overarching categories were divided into 14 subcategories, as follows: metacognitive, five subcategories; cognitive, two subcategories; affective, four subcategories; administrative, three subcategories). Following a specific coding procedure, the second author divided the comments into semantic clusters and applied the closest matching code from a coding scheme in a top-down fashion. Those clusters that did not correspond to the coding scheme were given novel code names in a bottom-up fashion, based on the context. Finally, the first author also checked the analysis, and ambiguities and unclear points were resolved through

discussion. Actual coding samples can be found in Appendix B.

Findings and Discussion

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics of written peer advice. In total, we collected 62 topics (concerns about English learning or other related concerns) from first-year students. Of these, 41 topics received a peer advisor response, as the second-year students were allowed to freely choose which concern they wished to answer. In all, 69 second-year students participated in our study as peer advisors and wrote 193 pieces of advice, or about 2.8 comments per individual. The data were used as a basis for further discussion of each the RQs.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Written Peer Advising

	Topic*	Responded	Peer Advisor	Advice
2020	38	24/38	38	106
2021	24	17/24	31	87
Total	62	41/62	69	193 ($M = 2.8$)

Note. All first-year students submitted one concern.

Characteristics of First-year Students' Concerns

The first RQ was posed to clarify the characteristics of first-year students' concerns. The topics were broadly classified into three types ("English learning," "learning in general," and "career paths"). The details are shown in Table 5. "English learning" was the most common concern in both 2020 and 2021, and this also included requests for specific advice on how to prepare for English exams (e.g., TOEIC and in-class tests) and how to address each skill (e.g., to be able to have a daily conversation when traveling abroad), in line with learners' interests. "Learning in general" includes consultation on how to learn in a university setting, going beyond L2 learning; in addition to the excerpts in Table 5, it includes requests for tips on how to manage time in the face of many assignments and how to be motivated in one's university courses (e.g., K2: "I know I have an assignment, but I often put it off and get around to submitting it just before the deadline. How can I ensure I have enough time to complete my assignments?"). The subcategory "career paths" covers concerns on post-

graduation paths and future dreams. For example, as shown for I1 in Table 5, the question regarding the societal needs of English is also included in this theme because the concern of the question goes beyond the individual student. In addition, several respondents had yet to decide what they wanted to do (e.g., Q2: "I have entered university but have not yet decided what I want to do in the future."). One interesting feature is that in 2021, there was the same number of concerns in the "English learning" category, implying that there is some interest among first-year students, but this interest may remain vague for them.

Table 5

Thematic Topics by First-year Students

	Count	Excerpts*
English Learning	2020: 19 2021: 9	"I would like to speak English, but I don't have a particular goal in mind and I can't continue learning English. First of all, I want to be able to hear what the other person is saying in English, but I am not good at listening in tests and my study is not going as well as I would like. I would like to know if you have any advice on listening." (A1) "No matter how much I study English, I cannot improve. Even if I learn new words and phrases, I forget them immediately, and I still don't know how to put sentences together. I don't know if I am studying the wrong way or not. What should I do?" (S1)
Learning in General	2020: 8 2021: 6	"Is there any way to concentrate in online classes?" (A2) "As a university student, I don't know what kind of notes to take in class... I would also appreciate any advice on how to study before a test." (G2)
Career Paths	2020: 11 2021: 9	"What kind of English will I need in society?" (I1) "I want to get a qualification that will be useful in the future, but I am wondering what I should get. I would appreciate it if you could tell me about any qualifications that have actually been useful or that you would recommend." (P2)

Note. Alphabets and numbers in parentheses are assigned for our analysis and have no particular intention other than identification.

Thus, it is clear that, after entering university, first-year students have concerns that go beyond their English studies to their university studies more broadly and their future in the study environment. Some of these concerns, which could have been resolved by the students through speaking frankly with those around them, may have been suppressed by the students since entering the university. In this connection, written advising, which enables a text form of dialogue, helps promote "aha" moments (see Kato & Mynard, 2016) through languaging (Swain, 2006). Since the onset of the global pandemic, SALCs have been seeking to increase opportunities for students to interact with each other, and the results of this have been reported in several papers (e.g., Horai, 2022; Kanduboda & Liu, 2021; Yamamoto et al., 2021). However, not all institutions have been able to hold SALCs or similar interactive events. Therefore, it would be a valuable activity simply to provide an opportunity for class instructors to solicit concerns from learners and provide advice, as in the case of written advising.

Characteristics of Peer Advisors' Comments

RQ2 was posed to clarify what written advice was actually given by the peer advisors. The results of our analysis are presented in Table 6. As indicated in Appendix B, there was not always a one-to-one correspondence between the chunks of meaning and the encoding, but in some cases, multiple codes were assigned for thorough analysis. For details on each subcategory, please refer to the original paper (Thornton & Mynard, 2012). However, among the subcategories in "others" found in this study are the following. "Experience" includes comments that share the personal experiences of the peer advisor (e.g., K: "Having clear goals, I can start over from high school-level English and study for the TOEIC. I scored 500 on the TOEIC due to my English studies."). "Opinion" includes comments that provide personal opinions on the advisees' topics, as in the following example:

> I: You want to improve your attitude towards English, but I think it is okay to remain uncomfortable with it. This is because I believe that, while struggling, we can improve our awareness by making steady progress, one step at a time.

"Empathy" includes comments that agree with the concerns of the first-year student (e.g., M: "I am still very poor at English, so I understand how painful it is for you not to know where to start when studying for a certification or exam."). In light of the results presented in Table

6, three points are particularly noteworthy: first, there more items were found in the cognitive category, followed by the affective category, than in the metacognitive. Second, we could not identify any comments in the administrative category. Third, we have a category termed "others," formed from the three subcategories that did not fall into the coding scheme used. The following paragraphs discuss these three points in more detail.

Table 6

Coding Results by Category and Year

	Metacognitive	
	2020	2021
Goal setting	33	14
Connections between activities and connections to goals	3	7
Time management	1	5
Evaluating leaning gains	0	11
Learner self-awareness	98	50
Total	135	87
	Cognitive	
	2020	2021
Activities and strategies	213	424
Learning materials	92	45
Total	305	474
	Affective	
	2020	2021
Rapport-building	101	115
Praising	4	13
Encouraging	78	95
Affective factors of language learning	101	75
Total	284	298
	Administrative	
	2020	2021
Eliciting more information	0	0

Admonishing	0	0
Giving module information	0	0
Total	0	0

	Others*	
	2020	2021
Experience	32	51
Opinion	82	78
Empathy	41	46
Total	155	175

Note. Some of the "opinion" codes partially overlapped with "learner self-awareness" and "activities and strategies." Similarly, some of the "empathy" codes partially overlapped with "rapport-building."

In Thornton and Mynard's (2012) study, the largest number of comments were categorized as affective (160), followed by the metacognitive (94) and cognitive (79) categories. In our case, the peer advisors had most comments categorized as cognitive (779), followed by the affective (581) and metacognitive (222) categories, showing a different ordering. This difference may be due to the instructions to the second-year students, which called for "one specific proposal," as written in Appendix A. Although this phrase is not limited to specific study materials or methods, second-year students may have interpreted it to mean this. This may be because peer advisors needed to be metacognitively aware of their own English learning to be able to provide advice in the metacognitive category. It would be worth further investigation on this point to see whether advisees' perspectives on L2 learning would change after experiencing several sessions of advising. However, even with this in mind, the variety of learning materials (e.g., websites, SNS, applications) and strategies (e.g., replying to favorite artists on social media or connecting English learning to various activities done to support one's favorite artists, *oshi-katsu* in Japanese) that were proposed was remarkable. Professional advisors may be more likely than our students to be familiar with a wide variety of information about English learning, but even they cannot know all of it. Therefore, peer advising, which can be conducted based within reciprocal relationships, may be able to function as peer advisor training to enrich peer advisors' knowledge of L2 learning resources, as in the case of reverse mentoring (Kato, 2019).

The administrative category was not identified in our data; this can be regarded as a

limitation of this study, but it is also a unique result that is tied to our peer advisors' awareness of their own peer, not professional, status. In addition, awareness of being a peer may have contributed to the peer advisors' empathetic attitude toward the first-year students and their sharing of their own experiences (including, sometimes, stories of failure). Of course, this rapport-building forms part of the basis of advising, but these results may highlight this feature in particularly in this peer advising setup because the advisors were not qualitatively superior at English. In addition, the advisor-advisee relationship exhibits an overlapping aspect in a peer advising setting. By advising the first-year students, the second-year students may have had an opportunity to think about themselves a year previously, writing into a kind of mirror. Even if this was not the case, reflective dialogue is essential in facilitating a smooth ALL session (Kato & Mynard, 2016), and peer advisors may become engaged in two dialogues, one with the advisee and another with the inner self that is reflected through the advisee's consultation. This could explain why so much self-disclosure was seen in the experience and empathy subcategories.

The three subcategories that we combined to form "others" may have emerged because the peer advisors were actively involved in the consultation of first-year students from a peer's perspective. This result is consistent with Imai's (2010) finding that disclosing negative emotions facilitates social interactions, even in writing in our case. Additionally, in the case of the following excerpts, experience-sharing is important, which adds to Imai's observation that disclosing negative emotions and experiences facilitates social interactions. Following this regard, it is essential to acknowledge that both positive and negative emotions/experiences can have this facilitative nature. For example, the following three excerpts show that they are empathetically reflecting on their own past in response to A1's consultation and offering specific advice based on their own experiences:

Excerpt 1

   Advisee A1: I have had a weakness in English since I was a junior high school student. However, I am now required to take three English courses at university. As expected, I need to improve my awareness. However, I don't know what to do because I am not good at English, including vocabulary, grammar, listening, reading, and speaking. Please let me know if there is any good way to improve my awareness.

   Peer Advisor D: I have also had a hard time with English until now. So, at first, I started to watch foreign movies more often, which motivated me to want to go there someday

and learn to speak English. From there, I gradually added vocabulary apps, solved them in my free time as if I was playing a game, and looked up the grammar used in conversations in foreign movies. If you make English a part of your daily life, you will lose your sense of dislike for it. …

Excerpt 2 (Another Piece of Advice to A1)

Peer Advisor H: Frankly speaking, it is okay to feel bad about it. I like English, but it is one of the subjects I am not good at. No matter how much I studied in junior high and high school, I could not get a good score or even understand it. However, I liked foreign movies, foreign music, and handsome people from other countries, so I created an environment where I could listen to them frequently. Perhaps because of this, I felt that the number of times I could hear and understand words on listening tests and in college classes increased. …

Excerpt 3 (Another Piece of Advice to A1)

Peer Advisor L: In fact, I was not very good at English in junior high school and high school, and after entering university, I was worried that I would still have to learn English. In high school, I even got a red mark in English, and I even gave up on it because of my character, which never lasts long in anything I do. Finally, however, I got the best grade in one of my English classes in my first year of university by changing my study style a little. …

Although the consultation content was identical for all three, the peer advisors provided advice that was only possible due to their own experiences. For example, Peer Advisor D provides advice on using vocabulary applications derived from his experience watching foreign movies; Peer Advisor H recommends using foreign movies and music to improve listening skills, again from personal experience; and Peer Advisor L's own success story of having the highest grade in an English class is used as the basis of their advice. Observations of this type have not been published in previous studies on written advising and can be seen as a unique feature of the potential of written peer advising based on a harmonious relationship between peers.

Conclusion

In this study, we identified unique characteristics of written peer advising, including the following: creating opportunities to expand students' knowledge of L2 learning resources; facilitating self-reflection through two dialogues with advisees and the inner reflection through advisees' consultation; maintaining a friendly *senpai-kohai* relationship through empathizing with and disclosing their own similar experiences as a strength of peer advisors. This study confirms the mutually beneficial relationship that arose from peer support and the strength of asynchronous advising arising from written advising, which affords more time to think about the content of the consultation. These aspects confirm that written peer advising has considerable potential in advising in language learning.

This study had some limitations. For instance, there was only one exchange, not multiple exchanges, between peer advisors and advisees in this written advising session. Another limitation can be the lack of investigation into what advisees see as beneficial or somewhat uninformative for them in terms of the advice received from peer advisors. In other words, what advisees do with the advice they receive. Further studies may investigate whether and how written peer advising discourses will change over multiple exchanges. Here it may be interesting to see the difference from the written discourses of a professional advisor and an advisee. It would also be interesting to see how the relationship between the advisee and the peer advisor changes through multiple interactions, especially where the advisee and peer advisor are both learners.

In conclusion, as for pedagogical implications, written peer advising can be a part of classroom activity, which can be implemented across students in different courses and different years for respecting and leveraging the mutual relationship between *senpai* and *kohai* in Japanese settings. In general, thinking about oneself and doing something for oneself may be considered to lead to one's own development, but in written peer advising, thinking and acting for the sake of one's peers paradoxically also contribute to one's own development through the mirror of others. By resonating with each other's concerns, written peer advising will foster collaborative agency and autonomy even with distant colleagues.

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Appendix A

Instructions for first-year students (upper) and second-year students (lower)

If you were able to consult a peer advisor in writing about your academic or career concerns, what kind of advice would you like to seek? Take a look at the "example of written advising," and try writing to a peer advisor with your concerns.

Written Advising to First Year Student's Concerns

- Write two responses each in Japanese of approximately 300-500 characters in response to concerns actually written by 1st year students, as a senpai or peer advisor in life.

- Write as if you are actually advising with the first-year students (there is no perfect advising, so don't feel pressured). The important thing is to be kind and considerate in helping them with their concerns, using your strengths.

- The consultation topics include not only English learning but also various topics such as daily life and job hunting. Therefore, write responses for at least one person in English learning and one person in other topics.

- Include at least one specific proposal (such as "you might want to try using XXX," "I recommend YYY," or "Why not try going to ZZZ in March?") by referring to the "example of written advising."

Appendix B

Coding samples (*italics*) following the coding scheme by Thornton and Mynard (2012)

I must study for qualifications and school exams, but I am unsure where to start. I would also like advice on how to continue to study English since I don't study English daily.

Thank you for your consultation. My name is N, your advisor. I am still very poor at English, so I understand how painful it is for you not to know where to start when studying for a certification or exam (*Rapport/ Affective/ Empathy*). However, I have overcome this problem by making my own efforts, and I would like to introduce them to you (*Experience*).

First of all, I review the worksheets and materials covered in class (*Materials/ Activities and Strategies*). The final exam, for example, tests "whether you understand what you learned in class," so the best thing to do is to study what you did in class (*Activities and Strategies*). I think the best way to do that is to review the videos from that time, resolve the questions on the worksheets, and so on (*Materials/ Activities and Strategies*).

The next thing I think important is to "listen to the class." It is a prerequisite and may seem like a negative phrase, but you cannot review it without it (*Activities and Strategies*). When reviewing, I think the best way to learn is to discover things on your own, such as "Oh, this was explained in this way," so definitely attend class, listen, and take notes! (*Activities and Strategies*)

As for daily study, I often study during my "bath time" (*Activities and Strategies*). I started doing this because I felt bored while taking a bath and found it very effective (*Experience*). What I do is look at sites with English words on them on my phone (*Materials/ Activities and Strategies*). If you go out of your way to devote time to it, you will not be able to continue, so if you do something light, such as a website, when you feel you are usually bored, you can make it a habit (*Activities and Strategies*).

I'm not quite done yet, so let's work together! (*Encouragement*)

Using Progress-Tracker Applications for Peer-Supported Independent Language Learning and Development: A Collaborative Autoethnography

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Abstract

Progress-tracker mobile applications are being increasingly used by individuals and groups of peers for health, fitness, and other self-improvement purposes. These tools offer great potential for language learners, especially in social language learning settings where thriving learning communities are readily established. This paper shares the story of a team of researchers with diverse language learning needs and attitudes as they undertook a period of self-directed, application-supported language learning together, with the aim of gaining insights into the experience of utilizing these peer support progress-trackers in order to better seed and spread this practice in the social language learning space in their institution and beyond. Taking a collaborative autoethnographic approach, rich data was provided by reflective journaling and weekly sharing sessions, alongside information recorded by the applications themselves. The shared stories illustrate the value of learning communities to the participants and established that the progress-trackers helped even the reluctant learners in the group to sustain study habits as well as to engage in proactive behaviors which led towards increased authentic target language use. The team identified a number of valuable application features and developed a deeper understanding of ways to encourage peers in their learning journeys. Most importantly, the team learned how to select appropriate challenges to track which can become long-lasting habits, supporting language learning and development.

進捗管理モバイルアプリケーションは、健康、フィットネス、その他の自己啓発のために、個人またはピアグループによってますます使用されるようになってきており、特に活発な学習コミュニティが容易に確立できるソーシャル言語学習環境において大きな可能性を秘めている。この論文は、多様な言語学習ニーズや考え方を持つ研究者チームが、進捗管理アプリケーションを使った自己管理型の言語学習を共に行った際のストーリーを紹介し、ピアサポート進捗管理アプリケーションを活用した経験についての洞察を深め、彼らの大学やその他のソーシャル言語学習空間においてこの実践を広めることを目的としている。本研究は、共同作業による自己エスノグラフィーのアプローチを採用し、参加研究者４人が進捗管理アプリケーションに記録した情報とともに、それに基づく各自の振り返りのジャーナリングと参加研究者による毎週の共有セッションによって豊富なデータが提供された。共有されたストーリーは、参加者にとっての学習コミュニティの価値を説明し、進歩の遅い学習者でもグループの中で学習習慣を維持し、本物の目標言語の使用を増やすことにつながる積極的な行動を取ることができることを立証した。研究チームは、多くの価値あるアプリケーションの機能を特定し、学習過程において仲間を励ます方法について理解を深めた。最も重要なことは、言語学習と発達を支える長期的な習慣となり得る、適切な課題を選択する方法を学んだことである。

Keywords: progress-tracking applications, peer support, independent language learning, learning communities, language learning habits

There has been a proliferation in recent years of mobile applications for adopting and maintaining target behaviors or habits, informed by research in the field of behavioral sciences which shows that tracking and rewarding behaviors can lead to successful habit formation, and that social support can enhance this process (Clear, 2018; Duhigg, 2022; Fogg, 2020; Wood, 2019). Such progress-tracking applications have been investigated in a range of settings, including business, healthcare, and fitness, showing clear benefits (Bozan & Gewals, 2018; Jackson & Bourne, 2020; Pfund et al., 2019; Rivera-Pelayo et al., 2017). Tracker applications have the potential to support independent language learners in establishing and maintaining the behaviors necessary for language learning and development to occur, but they do not appear to have been embraced so far in social language learning spaces.

In this paper, four colleagues with a background in self-access language learning share a project in which we set out to use two progress-tracker applications designed for use in peer groups to support our own language learning endeavors, initially for a period of four weeks. Taking a collaborative autoethnographic approach, the aim of the study was to gain insights into the experience in order to effectively seed and spread this practice in the social language learning space in our institution.

Habit-Building

Clear (2018) defines a *habit* as "a routine or practice that is performed regularly—and, in many cases, automatically" (p. 6). Wood (2019) explains that when a behavior leads to an immediate reward (a dopamine release), the brain builds an association between the context and the reward response. The context, or cue, becomes a prompt for the behavior. Duhigg (2022) notes that "cues can be almost anything, from a visual trigger, such as a candy bar [...] to a certain place, a time of day, an emotion, a sequence of thoughts, or the company of particular people" (p. 25). The reward can be extrinsic or intrinsic, and the sense of satisfaction in completing the activity can be the reward. With enough repetition, the cue will continue to trigger behavior even if the rewards stop (Wood, 2019). Habits do not require willpower because the cue triggers the behavior automatically (Duhigg, 2022; Wood, 2019).

It is possible to deliberately form habits. A behavior can be turned into a habit by repeating it in the same way (Wood, 2019). There must be a cue, and an immediate reward, which creates a "habit loop" (Clear, 2018), in which craving the reward leads to noticing and

responding to the cue. Clear (2018) recommends measuring progress with a habit-tracker (application) as the feeling of satisfaction generated by the visual evidence of progress is itself a satisfying reward. Making target behaviors small and easily achievable facilitates habit formation; Clear (2018) recommends selecting activities which can be completed in two minutes, and Fogg (2020) just 30 seconds. It takes many repetitions for a habit to be established; Clear (2018) argues that it takes "hundred, if not thousands" of repetitions, while Wood (2019) suggests that a new eating habit takes 65 days and an exercise habit approximately 90 days to form. Forming new habits leads to change on an identity level. Clear (2018) argues: "Your habits are how you *embody* your identity… the more you repeat a behavior, the more you reinforce the identity associated with that behavior" (pp. 36–37).

Social forces influence habit formation and maintenance in several ways. Clear (2018) and Wood (2019) argue that people align themselves with group norms, so it is helpful to join a culture of people who exhibit the target behaviors when trying to establish a habit. Sharing progress with peers also helps to increase feelings of accountability, because people do not want to be seen as failing; "knowing that someone is watching can be a powerful motivator" (Clear, p. 210). Duhigg (2022) explains how seeing others succeed and receiving their support helps people form new habits: "Your odds of success go up dramatically when you commit to changing as part of a group. Belief is essential, and it grows out of a communal experience, even if that community is only as large as two people" (p. 93). Fogg (2020) discusses supportive comments which can help the habit-formation process, noting that feedback should always be positive and aim to alleviate doubt or uncertainty. He provides a number of techniques, such as celebrating a single success, applauding a positive trend, recognizing consistent effort, and (with less successful outcomes) noting that things could have been worse with the phrase "at least…" or recognizing what has been achieved despite difficulties.

Although unintentional study habits, including maladaptive habits, have been studied (Bailey & Onwuegbuzie, 2002; Sabbah, 2016), deliberate habit-building has not been a major focus in language learning research. However, there has been considerable exploration of behaviors associated with successful language learning, which learners may select as target habits. The things which good language learners do to learn a language are sometimes referred to broadly as *strategies* (Griffiths, 2008; Naiman et al., 1996). Griffiths (2008) notes that these strategies can be deployed automatically, i.e., they can become habitual. In the field of self-

access language learning, the tasks which learners choose for themselves are usually described as *learning activities*, rather than strategies (Lee, 1998; McLoughlin & Mynard, 2018). Researchers have explored how learners can continue pursuing these activities over time. McLoughlin and Mynard (2018) identified interest or enjoyment as one factor which helps learners continue activities, which may indicate habit-loop formation, with learners repeating the activity in anticipation of the reward of experiencing pleasure. Cheng and Lee (2018) noted that peer support helps learners persist in self-directed language learning and Kao (2013) found that when language learners support their peers, they demonstrate skills such as showing empathy, encouraging use of strategies and resources, sharing experiences, increasing confidence, and establishing friendship.

How the Project Started

This project arose from activity taking place in Lounge MELT, the social language learning space at Gifu Shotoku Gakuen University, Japan. In September 2021, inspired by the Linguistic Risk-Taking Passport (Griffiths & Slavkov, 2021; Lyon et al., 2019; MacDonald & Thompson, 2019), some students who use Lounge MELT began attempting challenges to stretch their linguistic comfort zones, such as "ask a question in class," "read a graded reader," or "make a social media post in English." The students were excited about this process and expressed eagerness to maintain some of these behaviors long-term. This led to discussions about how to make long-term habits, and students shared the difficulties they had sustaining independent learning activities over time. To help students like this, Clair, the director of Lounge MELT, started to consider introducing smartphone progress-tracker applications, which could provide supportive features such as instantaneous visual rewards and reminder notifications, as well as allowing peer encouragement even when off campus. There were two indications that students would find these tools helpful. First, in April of 2021, student staff in Lounge MELT had switched from paper to smartphone applications to log their working hours. Second, around the same time, frequent users of the lounge had begun forming learning communities using the application Studyplus (Studyplus Inc., 2021), discovering the affordances of using a digital tool to track their study time and share study notes.

Before introducing progress tracker applications to students, Clair invited MELT learning advisors Kumiko and Alexandra and faculty member Jason to use trackers in this group project

to gain first-hand experience using these applications to support our own learning. We believed that this would ultimately help us spread the practice more successfully, as we would be able to tell students about our experiences and show them our progress. Our aims were (a) to develop an understanding of the process of adopting new habits for language learning growth; (b) to familiarize ourselves with the various features of the tracker applications; and (c) to gain credibility for this approach by "walking the walk" (i.e., using the applications ourselves, rather than just recommending that students try using them). In our belief that "walking the walk" would lead to greater uptake of habit tracking, we drew on Clair's previous experience engaging in an action research project (Taylor, 2010) in which students dramatically increased their use of a vocabulary application when she, as class teacher, met the same weekly targets in the application (learning Japanese) which her class was aiming for (in English). Other language educators have taken a similar approach to influencing learners; Day and Bamford (2000) and Miller (2009) encourage teachers to read for pleasure in front of students and talk about their reading to turn students into readers, and Ellis (2006) interviewed teachers who share stories about their own learning strategies to help students understand how to learn, an approach also taken by Wyner (2014). Similarly, Maley (2022) "walks the walk" with environmental activism in his language classes, modeling the behaviors he hopes students will follow.

Project Outline

We each selected three to four target behaviors to attempt to sustain (i.e., to turn into habits) for four weeks during July 2022 (see Table 1), one of which ("use a recently learned word or expression in real life") we all shared as a group challenge. We selected this group challenge because it was already common behavior among successful Lounge MELT users and because it could be easily shared, irrespective of our target languages, while motivating us to use the language authentically rather than study it out of context. Our individual targets were chosen to meet our personal learning needs or wants.

To track our progress, we used the application Keystone (Jalabert, 2022) for the first and second week, then a different application, WithPeers (WithPeers Limited, 2020), for the third and fourth week. We switched to the WithPeers application because Keystone was still under development in July 2022, and some features were not fully functional at that time. However, Clair and Alexandra continued to use Keystone (alongside WithPeers) throughout the month due

to its superior features. All members made some use of Keystone (Jalabert, 2022–present) after the four-week project period ended, and Clair and Alexandra continue to use it to date, ten months from the start of the project.

Table 1

Participants and Target Behaviors

Name	Native language	Target language(s) and CEFR level	Target behaviors/habits	Schedule
Alexandra	English	Japanese (CEFR B1/2) Spanish (CEFR A1)	•Practice writing kanji for at least five minutes on an application for Japanese children	Daily
			•Practice flashcards for at least five minutes on Anki for kanji/vocabulary recognition	Daily
			•Complete at least one lesson on Duolingo or Anki for Japanese reading/grammar/vocabulary	Daily
			•Complete at least one Spanish lesson on Duolingo	Daily
			•Use a newly learned word or expression in real life (group challenge)	Weekdays
Kumiko	Japanese	English (CEFR C1)	• Watch *The Great British Bake Off* (Love Productions, 2010) for 15 minutes, learning new words and phrases	Daily
			• Listen to one episode of *The British English Podcast* (Baxter, 2020–present) with the transcript, studying the words on Quizlet	Weekdays
			• Read *The Vanderbeekers and the Hidden Garden* (Glaser, 2018)	Weekends
			•Use a newly learned word or expression in real life (group challenge)	Weekdays
Jason	English	Japanese (CEFR B1)	•Parse all Japanese email before resorting to translation software	Daily
			•Read one *NHK Easy* (News Web Easy, n.d.) news article	Daily
			• Use a newly learned word or expression (initially limited to one from the previous day's NHK story) in real life (group challenge)	Weekdays

Clair	English	Japanese (CEFR B1)	•Complete one set of five words in the vocabulary application iKnow (DMM, 2022)	Daily
			•Study at least five kanji in the application KanjiBox (duVerle, 2021)	Daily
			•Use a newly learned word or expression in real life (group challenge)	Weekdays

Note. CEFR=Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020)

The Progress-Tracker Applications

Keystone and WithPeers are both free iOS applications available for iPhones and iPads. In Keystone, the user enters a target behavior (e.g., learn vocabulary items, do graded reading), sets any metrics to track (e.g., number of words or pages), and decides their schedule. The user then identifies a trigger or prompt for the behavior, sets up reminder notifications, and decides which friends to share progress with (see Figure 1). On completion of the activity each day, the user slides their finger to mark the activity "done" and sees animated celebration emoji. The user then advances a "level." After each completion the user can record metrics and reflections in a private journal and make a post (including a photo) to their followers, who can respond to the comment with stickers and text comments, starting a conversation thread. In early versions of the application, users could only post after reaching a "milestone" by advancing five levels (Figure 2), a restriction which has since been lifted. There was also a "challenge" feature, now unavailable, in which a group of users compete to achieve a group goal (Figure 3). Keystone allows an unlimited number of daily targets.

Figure 1
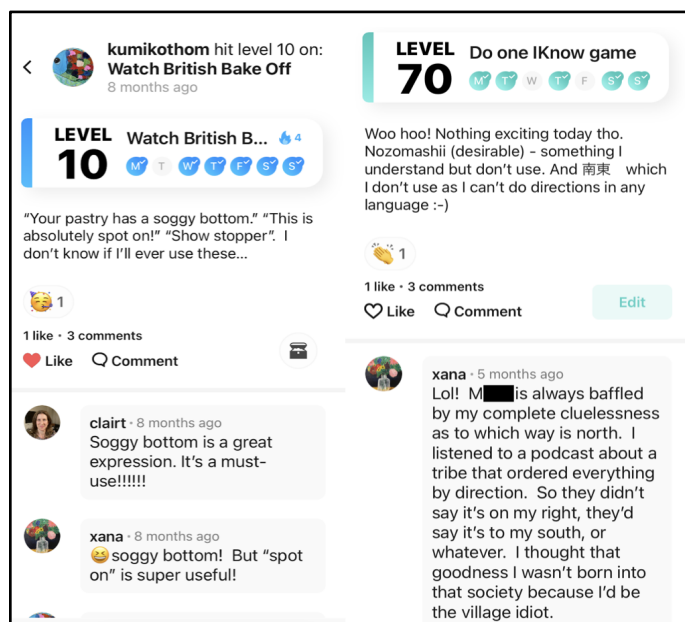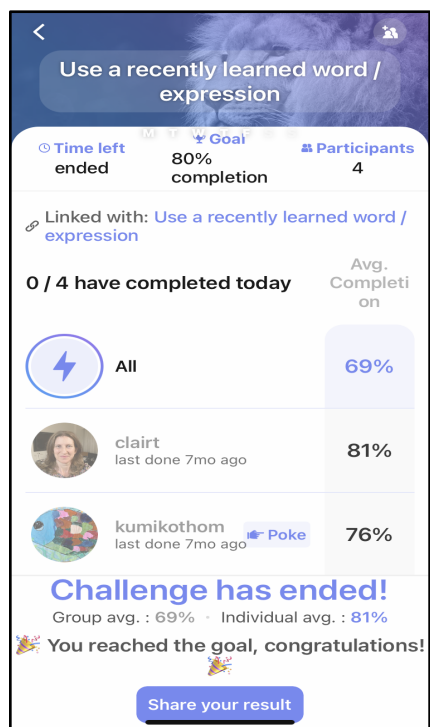
*Creating a Habit on Keystone*

Figure 2

Milestone Posts and Comments on Keystone

Figure 3

Completed Keystone Challenge

In WithPeers, users can add a maximum of three goals, setting a target value for the calendar month (e.g., N times, words, or pages). The user then selects "commit" and a bar appears. The user checks in, enters the appropriate number (e.g., one time, five words), and adds a photo and/or comment post. Their followers (peers) can see the post and choose to "like" the post but cannot respond. As the user moves towards their monthly target, the bar fills with color (see Figure 4). Peers in the group appear on a leaderboard in order of achievement. Each month begins afresh and there is no way to accumulate levels or progress once the calendar month is over. This video (Taylor et al., 2022) demonstrates the features of both WithPeers and Keystone, including animations which cannot be shown in screenshots.

Figure 4

Goal Creation and Tracking on WithPeers
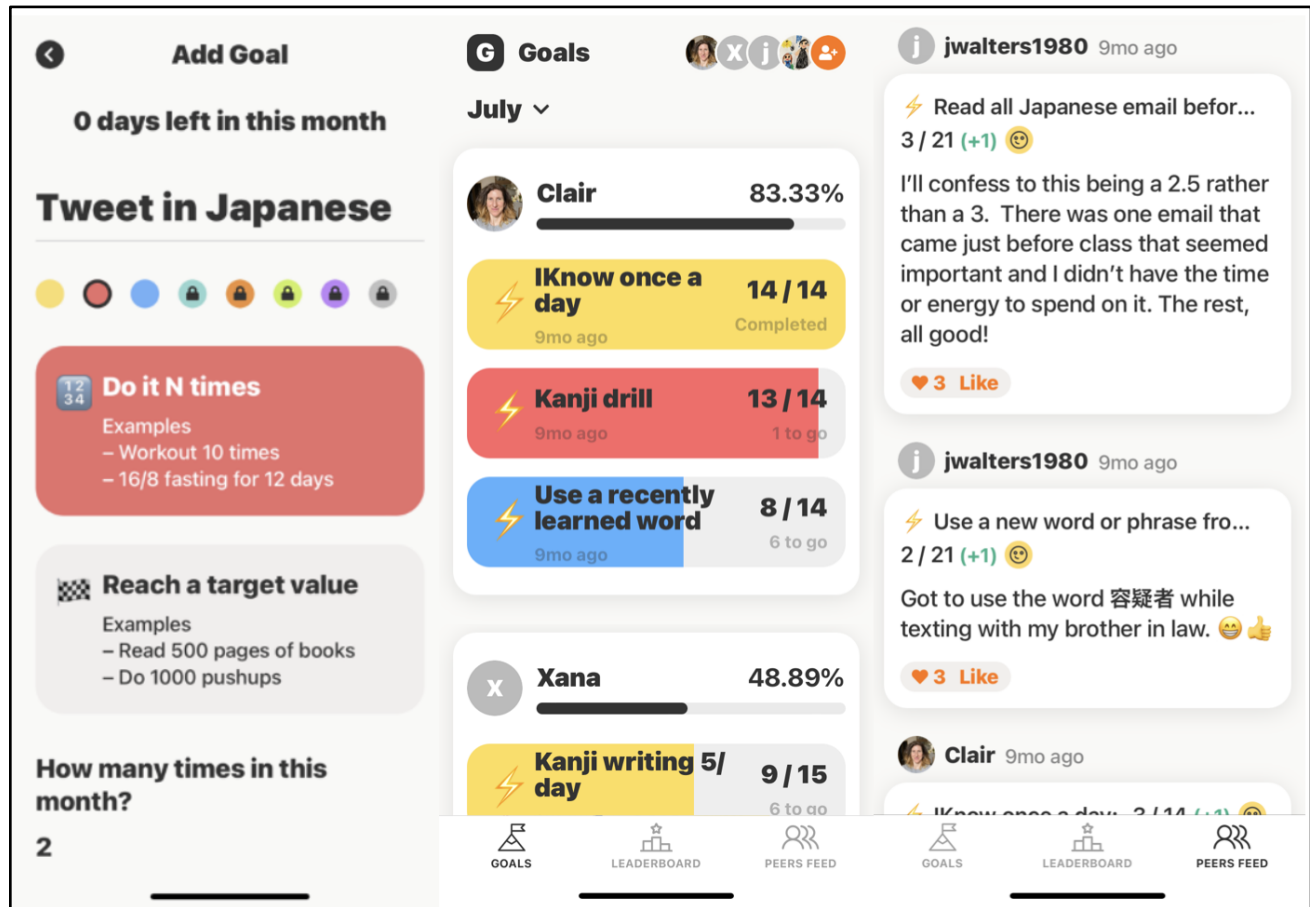
Methodological Approach

This project is a collaborative autoethnography (CAE). This project—in which we each worked solo on our separate target behaviors, but also provided peer encouragement through the tracker applications and shared the common experience of using those applications to support learning—lent itself ideally to the practice of alternating between solo and community reflection which characterizes and enriches CAE (Chang et al., 2013).

Ethnography can "straddle the lines of scholarship and praxis applications" (Hernandez et al., 2022, p. 9). From the outset, this project had a practical aim: to help our students who struggle to start and sustain behaviors which advance their foreign language development. Transformation was an intended outcome of this endeavor. We aimed to adopt new language

89

learning habits, to become more successful foreign language users, changing ourselves so that we could become better role models and change agents in our social language learning space and our institution as a whole. Hernandez et al. (2022) define transformation as "substantial and potentially sustainable change in knowledge, insights, and/or behaviors that can take place in individuals, communities, and organizations through the process of ethnographic enquiry" (p. 2).

We collected data from multiple sources to record our learning journeys. The progress trackers applications were one source of data, providing details of the number of times we completed our target activities and also providing a record of our posts and comment threads. To "make the inner workings of [our] minds visible" (Chang et al., 2013, p. 22), we wrote journal entries and held weekly meetings in which we discussed our experiences.

We each wrote six journal entries in total, using written prompts to stimulate reflection. We uploaded these texts to a shared Google Drive folder so that we could read each other's reflections. First, we completed our first journal entry in June 2022, prior to starting the project, in which we reflected on our learning history, target behavior choices, and aspirations for the project. We then wrote a journal entry at the end of each week of the one-month project period in July 2022. Finally, we each wrote another journal entry in December 2022, seven months after the project began, reflecting on our trajectory over this period, exploring how we managed to sustain the habits and how we have developed our understanding of target behavior choices.

We held weekly meetings during the month of July 2022, always preceded by reading each other's journal entries. In these meetings we discussed our challenges honestly and openly, making ourselves vulnerable in a way that encouraged deep sharing (Ellis, 2004; Yazan, 2020). The structure of the meetings evolved over the course of the month. During the first meeting, we experimented with the application, trying to fully understand the detailed functions. In subsequent meetings, more time was used for oral retellings of the reflections we had shared in writing, allowing the high-quality listening provided by our team members to draw out and clarify our thoughts, a practice Mann (2002) calls "talking into understanding." In later meetings, we began to identify areas in which we needed to read more research to deepen our understanding and created a working document to plan how to introduce progress-tracker applications to students, informed by our discoveries. All meetings concluded with the team deciding the prompts for the following reflection journal entry. The meetings were recorded and

played back to produce meeting notes which summarized the content, with the most salient parts transcribed in full.

Our approach to reviewing the scholarly literature in the field of habit-formation and behavior change was unconventional, and we do not "hide the messiness" (Ellis, 2004, p. 252) of our study. Rather than reading extensively before selecting our target behaviors and starting the habit-tracking process, we made the decision to embark on this endeavor with a very basic knowledge of the field and explore the literature as our journey unfolded. We anticipated that if we set about this endeavor closely following the recommendations of behavioral researchers, we would have a friction-free experience which might be less useful for learning about the kind of pitfalls and challenges our students might experience when they attempt to use the applications without the benefit of this knowledge. Through experiencing some difficulty, discussion, reflection, and dialogical interaction with the scholarly literature, a deep understanding was gained, allowing us to identify ways to guide students towards a smoother journey.

As is typical of CAE, our data collection-analysis-interpretation process was "iterative rather than linear" (Chang et al., 2013, pp. 100–101). Meaning-making was ongoing throughout the journal writing, reading, reviewing, and discussions, and culminated in the analytic process of story-writing (Chang et al., 2013; Ellis, 2004). Presentation of findings in autoethnographic projects can take "a variety of forms—short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, […] and prose" (Ellis, 2004, p. 38). In this paper, we decided to present our findings as four separate stories. We made this choice in order to illustrate our different learning trajectories and to preserve the multivocality of our diverse group. The stories were written through a process of revisiting the data collected by the applications, the reflections, meeting notes, additional email meetings, and the working document, selecting the most significant details to highlight key learnings. The story writing entailed a long process of discussion, drafting and redrafting, reading each other's stories, suggesting, and editing to identify the most important findings and communicate them evocatively.

Findings

Alexandra's Story

Living in Japan for over two decades, learning Japanese has always been a struggle for me. My inattentive type ADD and aphantasia (inability to visualize images in my mind) make it

particularly challenging for me to learn kanji. I have repeatedly given up studying after a week or two, feeling like an utter failure, resulting in uneven Japanese skills which are ill-suited to most standard language learning programs. Still, I aspire to become a functional, literate adult.

I had never participated in an online or app-based learning group as a student before, nor had I ever successfully used any digital learning method. In fact, it had been over 30 years since I last experienced any external feedback on my language learning. Although I had low expectations of myself and felt trepidation due to my long-term negative relationship with Japanese learning, I was interested in trying new technology and discovering ways to support our students in their language learning.

Initially, my three Keystone tasks were a minimum of five minutes daily of kanji writing, kanji recognition, and Japanese reading/grammar/vocabulary. I added a fourth target of Spanish on Duolingo to compare the enjoyable experience of learning a relatively easy new language with my fraught relationship with Japanese.

I found the Keystone app visually appealing and easy to use. It was satisfying to swipe away habits as I completed them. I could time and stack habits to fit my study into my morning routine. Talking it through in our second meeting, it became clear that although I wasn't learning to love kanji, I was studying every day, just like I do the dishes, because it was a task that had to be done. For the first time in decades, I was overcoming negative self-talk and repeated failure and maintaining a regular study routine, achieving a 100% completion rate for all the targets in the first two weeks. Spanish was enjoyable and Japanese learning had become a daily chore rather than an existential crisis.

Our group challenge, to use a new word or phrase in daily conversation, was the most difficult task for me to complete as it depended on manufacturing conversations in Japanese. Thanks to my teenage daughters' patience with my sudden random attempts to discuss things like the immortal soul in Japanese, I managed to complete this task on 9 out of 10 days. Although the task was difficult, bonding over our group's efforts to use obscure phrases and vocabulary was sometimes the highlight of my day. For example, Clair commented, "My word yesterday was 乗馬警官 [kibakeikan]" and I just had to know how she worked "mounted police" into casual conversation.

Unfortunately, due to travel and illness, I was not able to participate fully in the following two weeks using the WithPeers app and my overall completion rate for my Japanese

targets was just 49%. Although I enjoyed the freedom to post whenever we wanted, I missed the ability to respond to posts, creating back-and-forth discussions. Additionally, in With Peers, being faced with the total number of times I would need to complete the tasks that month felt more daunting than seeing my daily Keystone to-do list.

After summer vacation, I returned to Keystone. It has been ten months since we started this project and I am still studying Japanese and Spanish daily. Some of my study materials have changed, but my motivation level has not. I am using the same kanji writing app and have 200 completions (78%), but I am now using Wanikani for kanji recognition and vocabulary thanks to hearing about Jason's experience in one of our weekly meetings. I have 166 completions (99%). I also read aloud daily from a book of science facts for children (なぜ？どうして？3年生) with 146 completions (86%).

Participating in this project has shown me the importance of "walking the walk." I had recommended daily reading aloud to my students for decades but had never tried it myself. It is, in fact, effective, improving my grammar, vocabulary, kanji, and fluency. Spanish continues to be my most enjoyable task with 293 completions (96%).

Using Keystone has helped me build a daily study routine and gain confidence in my language-learning abilities. Participating in this project has completely rewired my brain. For over 20 years, I despised studying kanji and found any excuse to avoid it. Yet, the other day, I woke up at 4:00 am with a driving need to review the kanji I would be doing on Wanikani that day. I couldn't fall back to sleep until I looked them over.

Initially, joining the group for this project helped motivate me and keep me accountable. I learned additional vocabulary and practical tips from other members, but more importantly, the comments and discussions made me feel like I wasn't struggling alone. Positive feedback from group members such as Clair commenting, "Gosh, level 20 is awesome!!" helped me feel pride in my progress, even on hard days. After experiencing the change in myself as tiny habits have grown and transformed me into a dedicated language learner, I am now starting to use Keystone with students and look forward to seeing how it works for them.

Kumiko's Story

As a wife of a Canadian and a mother of two daughters we are raising bilingually, my long-term objective is to be able to have more complex conversations in English. I have been highly motivated to improve my English, but I was always making excuses for not having enough

time and had had no active language learning habits for some years, though I use English in my daily life. For the first four weeks of this research project, I set three targets—1) study with the podcast for 15 minutes on weekdays, 2) watch the BBC program British Bake Off for 15 minutes every day, 3) read an English book on weekends—in addition to the group challenge which was to use a newly learned word in real life.

I was able to study with the podcast for 20 out of 20 days. I watched the program, however, for only 18 out of 28 days (a 64% completion rate) as I realized that adding this activity was too ambitious. I managed to do the weekend reading on 7 out of 8 days (a completion rate of 88%). For the group challenge, I used a recently learned word/phrase 17 out of 20 days (a completion rate of 85%; though the app displayed this as 76%).

At first, I completed my targets mainly because of feeling pressure, knowing my group members were watching my progress. But after a week, I did them because I felt the joy of learning English again and was proud of using my time well. I started to feel reluctant to track my progress, finding even just swiping the phone screen each time a little bit 単調で面倒 [tanchou de mendou, monotonous and tedious], and streaks and the progress chart did not give me any 達成感 [tasseikan, sense of accomplishment]. In the third meeting, I asked, "When do you realize something has become a habit?" I felt I did not need to track any more.

While the WithPeers app had limited interactivity, the Keystone app had a feature which allowed me to interact with the peer group by adding comments to the posts I or the peer group had made. This was only available when you reach a milestone, and I know some people might think it is an odd restriction, but to me, the fact that I could not write or get a comment each time made the milestones feel special and stimulating. Encouraging positive comments from the peer group became like 自分の努力に対するご褒美 [jibun no doryoku ni tai suru gohoubi, a welcoming reward for my efforts], and it became enjoyable sharing my learning progress. I also wanted to encourage and support my peer group in their continued efforts with the same positive comments, and this exchange comments feature helped me feel part of a learning community.

Ten months have passed, and I have continued to use the podcast and view the program. I finished the book and have started another one. But I do not do these things on a daily basis, as I do not want to turn my English study into a daily 'chore.' I do not need tracker apps to continue my English learning.

I realized that apps can help me make habits if I choose the right target and the right amount of activity, which I can combine with my daily routine. Thus, I decided to study one lesson a day of beginner-level Spanish on Duolingo, an application which has progress-tracking features, using Keystone as extra habit-building support for the first 20 days. I have continued now for 163 days.

Jason's Story

Before COVID, prioritizing Japanese study had been a challenge. However, during the pandemic, daily reviews using a subscription-based, timed-repetition kanji study application I truly enjoyed helped me to pass the N3 proficiency test, and I was making progress toward N2. When my weekly work commute increased by 12 hours in 2022, Japanese study unfortunately became my first sacrifice. This project, I felt, might help me to establish a new study routine.

I set three reasonable targets to kickstart my habit-tracking journey. First, I aimed to read and comprehend Japanese work emails without relying on translation tools. Second, I committed to reading a nightly article from Japan's NHK News Easy website. Finally, I joined the group in using one new word or phrase daily—adding the challenge of selecting my target language from the previous night's reading.

During the first two weeks, I consistently completed the reading task, but encountered issues with the other targets. Deciphering Japanese emails proved impossible on days when no emails arrived, and incorporating language from news articles into casual interactions was difficult due to limited opportunities.

My Keystone interactions were comparatively infrequent—and at times I struggled to make them feel personal rather than obligatory. I found it difficult to wear both participant and researcher hats while feeling sincere in my participation—was I leaving comments and taking screenshots because I felt it was truly helpful to the others, or was I simply trying to generate useful data for the project? Using these features never became habitual, but knowing my progress was visible to others was enough to keep me coming back. At our first in-person meeting following week one, I had a breakthrough when the others told me they felt energized by my comments—as simple as they were, I had not expected that they would impact anyone. This feedback motivated me to interact more frequently with their posts. Our second group meeting helped me to take this engagement further—I mentioned that my tracking applications were located deep in a subfolder on my phone, and my peers suggested increasing their visibility by

placing them on my home screen, which helped me engage more frequently with the social features of the comparatively feature-light WithPeers app in the second half of the project. Though I never developed the same enthusiasm as my teammates, these key moments were invaluable in helping increase my engagement.

In my first two weeks with Keynote, I completed my news reading every night but was only successful in achieving the other two 71% of the time. When we switched to WithPeers in week three, I continued to struggle with these more situational habits that were sometimes impossible to complete. While changing my email-reading habit mid-stream would have presented difficulty, I adapted my third habit by choosing "any new word or phrase" for conversation (rather than pulling language from my NHK article) to better match my team members' approach to the group challenge.

I found that I much preferred WithPeers' more minimalist interface, and enjoyed steady progress with all of my chosen habits. I managed 86% completion for my Japanese email, was able to use a new word in conversation 90% of the time, and completed 71% of my nightly news readings—sometimes even going on to read one or two more articles just for fun!

When the project ended, I replaced my selected habits with activities I had always enjoyed—such as re-subscribing to my favorite timed-repetition kanji software, reading Harry Potter in Japanese, and having more proactive text chats with my Japanese in-laws. I briefly tracked my activity using the applications, though I soon left them behind. Although they did help me to re-establish a study routine, the project's most unexpected and enduring benefit for me was the experience of weekly journaling and group sharing. Reflections and discussions sparked feelings of connection and support that never seemed quite authentic while using the apps, and reinforced my understanding of the value of reflective practice and of sharing the journey with others. While I may not be the target market for these apps, I understand how they could be valuable virtual spaces for many, including the students I teach.

Clair's Story

My free time is really precious, and I resent spending any of it learning Japanese. I made myself study to pass the N2 proficiency test, but after that I stopped trying and slid backwards. In this project I wanted to turn that around. I set myself three targets. I decided that every morning, after looking at my Facebook feed, I would complete one set of five words in the vocabulary app iKnow, which I had used with success in the past. At night, in bed, I would study five kanji in

96

KanjiBox. The last target was the shared challenge, which was to use a newly-learned word in real life.

In retrospect, that challenge was not well chosen. In a normal day I only encounter a few minutes of transactional Japanese, but I suddenly found myself having to start conversations and manipulate those conversations so that I could use an obscure word like "牧場 [bokujou, ranch]." I struggled. Nevertheless, with the peer accountability and support, I did it. I went out and spoke to people, even though I usually avoid speaking Japanese whenever possible. It was hard, but I managed all ten weekdays in the first two weeks. I also completed the iKnow activity every day and studied five or more kanji on 13 of the 14 days during this period. On one day, I managed as many as 15 kanji.

This was all thanks to the encouragement and inspiration provided by Xana, Kumiko, and Jason. I'm often critical when I speak to myself in my head, so it was nice to have people show an interest (asking how I'd used a word in conversation, for example) and say kind things (such as: "You deserve to be on weekend mode!"). When I posted about a "weird vocabulary hole" I had, Xana replied "I'm with you in that hole!" Other people admitting their struggles helped me judge myself less harshly.

I loved seeing what other people were doing in Keystone posts. I got vivid mental images of Kumiko watching Bake Off and learning about "soggy bottoms" and apologizing to her husband for "talking his ear off." I could see Alexandra telling her cat in Japanese that there was plenty (豊かな[yutakana]) of food to eat, and I saw Jason reading his NHK news stories. It made me feel less alone. Some people go to a coffee shop to study near other people. I felt the app helped me do something similar, seeing the others in my mind, working on their language skills, as if they were in the next room.

We switched to WithPeers because we wanted to post more frequently, but I immediately realized that this app did not work for me. Our reflections and discussions showed that everyone was frustrated by the app's limitations. The biggest problem was that we could not reply to posts. Also, entering a number when a target was achieved was less satisfying than swiping. I missed Keystone's animations. I missed seeing the words "Perfect Day" (which Keystone displays when all your habits are done) and the Lou Reed lyric that automatically plays in my mind when I see those words. I missed seeing my level go up, showing the total number of times my target has been achieved. I missed choosing emoji to send, proudly looking at my bank of earned emoji, like

97

treasures. So, I went back to Keystone and attempted to track my progress in both apps in weeks three and four, recording 14 out of 14 successful days using iKnow, 13 out of 14 studying kanji, and 8 out of 10 for the group challenge.

The four-week project finished, but I'm still using Keystone ten months on. The app has developed, and we can post every time we complete a target. I have now reached level 224 for my vocabulary activity, a completion rate of 77%, and level 173 for kanji, a completion rate of 59%. I modified the final target, making it easier to achieve. Instead of trying to use a new word in real life, I decided just to greet people in Japanese, which still forces me to interact, because it often leads to a conversation. My completion rate is 75%, and my best streak is 11. I feel better about myself as a Japanese learner and user.

Even as we planned how best to introduce habit trackers in MELT, I could not resist introducing Keystone to a few students, alongside a similar app for Android users. It is exciting to see students experiencing success and it makes me smile when they comment on my progress. The connection is so powerful and intimate, and I am confident this will take off in MELT when we promote it widely.

Discussion

Habit Building

Our habit-building experiences illustrate well-established findings in the field of behavioral science. Reluctant learners Alexandra and Clair were both able to establish durable learning habits by committing to small target behaviors taking five minutes or less (Clear, 2018; Fogg, 2020), and Kumiko reduced her ambitious targets to make a more sustainable learning system. Jason and Clair both found setting small target habits (study five words, read one short news story) often led to doing more, indicating that these targets functioned as "gateway habits" (Clear, 2018, p. 163) which affect how the subsequent chunk of time is spent. The importance of cues for triggering behavior was also evident. In putting the applications on his home screen, Jason experienced the significant impact of managing his environment so that the visual cue triggered the new habit of using the applications (Clear, 2018; Duhigg, 2022). Wood's (2019) claim that we "grow to love the things that we repeatedly do" (pp. 204–205) is supported by the reduction in the negativity towards Japanese study which Clair and Alexandra experienced over the months of repeated learning activity.

Our struggles with the group challenge showed that "using a new word or expression in real life" was not an optimally-designed target behavior, particularly for intermediate learners. This target relies on the availability of others to interact with, and on the conversation serendipitously moving in a direction which allows the natural use of the vocabulary item. This means there is no "stable cue" (Wood, 2019, p. 132) to trigger the habit. For intermediate learners, newly-learned vocabulary does not feature in everyday, transactional encounters, and achieving the target behavior requires not only a willingness to initiate interactions but sufficient language proficiency to sustain them, and to steer conversations towards topics which may present opportunities to use the selected words. In this group, only Kumiko had a proficiency level appropriate for this challenge, as Figure 5 demonstrates. Fogg's (2020) recommendation to "imagine yourself doing the behavior on your hardest day of the week" (p. 62) helped Clair formulate a more achievable target to build up from ("to greet someone in Japanese").

However, the group challenge was effective in encouraging all of us to engage in proactive, social behaviors leading towards increased authentic target language use, and helped expand our comfort zones, leading to feelings of bravery, elation, fun, and group bonding. Notably, the peer progress-tracker applications supported some level of success in sustaining this habit, despite the difficult level. This indicates that such applications can be valuable for students who wish to pursue behaviors in which they use the target language, taking linguistic risks.

Figure 5

Keystone Thread Discussing the Group Challenge
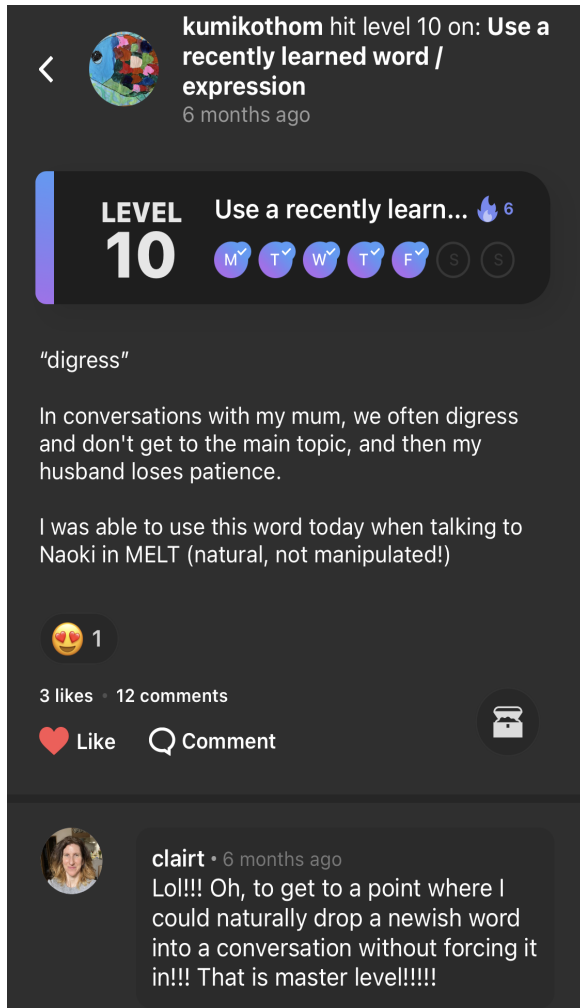
Using the Tracker Applications

The diversity in our experiences shows how different learners can have very different experiences with the same tool, depending on preferences, needs, feelings about the target language, stage of their learning journey, time constraints, and other personal factors. Gender differences (Nyikos, 2008) may also be one factor relevant to the different level of engagement with the social interaction in Keystone experienced by Jason. Our experiences demonstrate Fogg's (2020) claim that individuals respond to different rewards. The screen-based Keystone animations served as a powerful reward for Clair and Alexandra, but were less effective for

Jason, who values face-to-face human contact, and Kumiko, who finds intrinsic enjoyment in the learning activities themselves.

Using a different application for weeks three and four helped us establish which application features are most valuable for peer-supported independent learning. We found the ability to respond to comments and interact was essential. We also valued having the option to post frequently. There were three other features which we identified as important: a simple, satisfying way to mark activities done, the ability to see continuous progress, and a daily task list.

Peer Support

The power of the peer group to support change and sustain target behaviors was evident. Being part of the group reduced feelings of isolation, and, as Clair explained in her story, the shared posts even generated the sense of adult parallel play which people experience when they engage in study or work activities in social spaces such as coffee shops (Weiner, 2022). We would not have had such transformative experiences had we embarked on this progress-tracking endeavor alone.

This project provided rich information about the ways in which peers can support others. Encouragement, through stickers and celebratory comments, was helpful, and we enjoyed discussing our study methods and the language points we were studying, providing a window into our language-learning processes. Admitting struggles and commiserating were among the most powerful support techniques used in the group. Overall, the peer support via the application and the weekly meetings displayed the features of positive communication: Greeting (to create human contact), asking questions, complimenting, disclosing (to deepen relationships), encouraging, and listening (Mirivel, 2019, p. 53). There were abundant examples of Fogg's (2020) supportive techniques (discussed above) in the Keystone comment threads.

Limitations of the Project

This was our first attempt at a CAE project, and it presented some challenges. Jason's story highlighted how difficult it can be to switch between so many hats; the learner, the peer supporter, the researcher, and the faculty member or learning advisor who is planning how best to support students in adopting new behaviors to support their learning.

Moreover, we realize that our commitment to this project as researchers added an extra layer of pressure to maintain use of the application and sustain our target habits which students

using the applications will not benefit from, as well as other support from the reflection processes of journaling and weekly meetings which clearly contributed to our outcomes. It is difficult to gauge the extent of these effects, and we recognize that each language learner will have a multitude of factors influencing their journey.

Applications of the Findings

Acknowledging these limitations, the project has already helped us start to introduce progress-tracker applications to students. Clair and Alexandra have made fledgling attempts to share Keystone and HabitShare (2022), a similar application for Android devices, inviting students into their communities. Some students have already built up a significant habit streak, and students have, without explicit training, displayed similar tendencies towards positive communication in their comments (Figure 6), following the existing community practices.

Most importantly, the project helped identify potential pitfalls for language learners. These include selecting targets which are situation-dependent (and cannot be built into a daily routine), those which take up too much time, or are simply too difficult. Using these findings, we have produced a leaflet, with practical suggestions (such as putting the application on the smartphone home screen) which may help students have a smoother experience (see Appendix).

Figure 6
Screenshots of Student Activity on Keystone (Left) and HabitShare (Right)
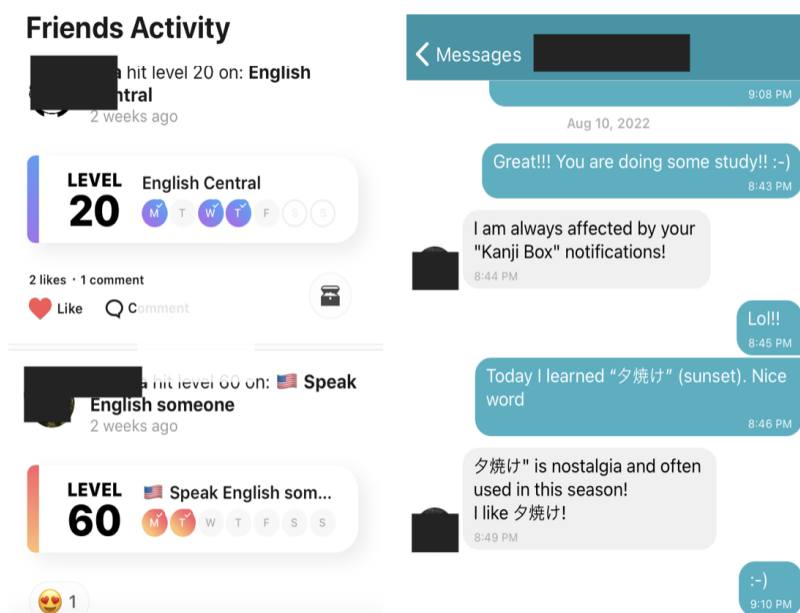
Conclusions

This project has had considerable transformative power, helping the team build and sustain new habits for language learning and development, while gaining valuable insights about the process of doing this in a peer group. We identified key interface options that enable this practice, including the option to post each time an activity is completed, to respond to posts in a comment thread, to mark activities as completed in a satisfying way, to view progress over time, and to see a daily task list. We also developed a better understanding of designing target habits, and the importance of selecting target behaviors which are simple, have a stable cue (which the learner can be sure to encounter), and take little time. We developed an awareness of the kinds of interactions in the application that can help peer learners: in particular, sharing (examples of the language being learned, successes, strategies, and difficulties) and providing positive responses in words and emoji (showing interest, celebrating successes, offering sympathy and positively reframing difficulties).

The CAE process was an enriching and revealing process, connecting colleagues who had not previously known each other and making us more aware of the diversity of our experiences of foreign language use and learning. Alm and Ohashi (2020) found that their CAE endeavor exploring informal learning brought them closer to students and their students' experiences. Similarly, reflecting on and sharing our learning experiences in this project has led to a deeper awareness and appreciation of the rich inner experiences of our students as they make their own language learning journeys.

With our personal experience of using the applications, we can introduce these tools to learners in our social language learning space with a sense of self-congruence; we are "walking the walk." We hope that the pamphlet we have designed will help this practice flourish in our social language learning space, with learner communities forming so that more students can benefit from the affordances offered by progress-tracker applications.

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Appendix

Leaflet (English and Japanese versions)

TIPS

✳ Put the app on your home screen.

✳ Make 1~3 daily habits.

✳ Chose fast, easy habits.
(Think: Can I do this even on a really busy day?)

✳ If you have successful learning habits already—keep going! Don't stop. Add a tiny extra habit after you finish doing the learning habits you usually do. Or make a small improvement to one of your current learning habits.

✳ Set a time of day.
(eg. "while I get dressed", "on the bus/train", "after I brush my teeth")

✳ Swipe **immediately** when you do your habit and say, "Yay! / Good job! / I did it!"

✳ Follow some friends

✳ Share your progress!

✳ Support your friends with emoji and nice comments

WATCH THE VIDEOS

Keystone   HabitShare

"A slight change in your daily habits can guide your life to a very different destination"
—James Clear

POWER HABITS!

Your habits make you what you are. If you run every day, you are a runner. If you dance every day, you are a dancer. And if you use English every day, you are an English user, an English speaker.

Start some habits and become the English speaker you want to be!

Research shows that when you track your habits, you succeed. We recommend these habit tracking apps:

or

Keystone   HabitShare
iPhone   iPhone/Android

Many MELT students use these apps to develop their English.

Join us!

EXAMPLE

• In the morning, after I brush my teeth, I will say one thing I plan to do that day in English, e.g. "Today, I'm gonna go to the gym."

EASY STARTER HABITS

• After breakfast, I will read aloud in English for 1 minute (textbook, website, literally anything!)
• While I get dressed in the morning, I will listen to songs in English
• On the train/bus I will review five TOEIC words
• In the car, I will sing along with an English song
• While waiting for the bus/train, I will do some Quizlet/the British Council Grammar App
• When I arrive at school, I will say "Hello" to someone in MELT
• On the way to class, I will greet someone in the elevator in English
• I will eat my lunch in MELT
• I will ask a classmate/senpai how their study is going
• At the end of class, I will thank the teacher
• Before I leave the campus, I will do some EnglishCentral
• When I get home, I will say one sentence to my pet or an object I like (a trophy, a model, a soft toy, etc.) in English.
• After dinner, I will review one page of the previous day's class
• After I finish my homework, I will post a tweet in English
• When I use social media, I will like a tweet/post written in English
• In the shower, I will practice one minimal pair (e.g rice/lice, fur/far, very/berry).
• While I take a bath, I will watch one Cake app video
• Before I brush my teeth, I will practice one minimal pair (eg. walk/work, run/ran, math/mass, ear/year) with Siri/dictation
• At night, after I brush my teeth, I will say one thing I did that day, e.g. "Today, I talked to my friend."
• In bed, I will read a page of a graded reader

コツ

✱ アプリをホーム画面に置く

✱ 毎日の習慣を1~3つ作る

✱ 早くて簡単な習慣を選ぶんで
（「 本当に忙しい日にもできるな？」
と考える）

✱ もしあなたがすでに成功した学習習慣を持っているなら、そのまま続ける！いつもやっていた学習習慣をやり終えたら、さらに小さな習慣を追加する。あるいは、現在の学習習慣の1つを少し改善する。

✱ 時間帯を設定する
（例）「 着替えながら」「 バスや電車に乗るとき」、「 歯磨きした後」

✱ 習慣を実行したらすぐにスワイプして、「 やったー！」／「 よくやった―！」／「 やったー！」と言う

✱ 友達を何人かフォローする

✱ 進捗状況を共有する！

⊘ Completed Lyrics training
★ 70th completion
Hold my hand by Lady Gaga
♥ Like ◯ Comment (1)

✱ 友達を応援する

ビデオを見て

Keystone　　　HabitShare

「 日々の習慣のわずかな変更が、人生をまったくちがう目的地へと 導き かねない。」
―ジェームズ・クリアー式

LOUNGE MELT　　MELT Annex

強力習慣!

あなたの習慣が、あなたを作っている。毎日走っていれば、あなたはランナーです。もしあなたが毎日ダンスをするならば、あなたはダンサーです。そして、もしあなたが毎日英語を使うなら、あなたは英語の使い手、英語の話し手なのです。

何か習慣を始めて、あなたがなりたい英語スピーカーになりましょう！

研究によると、習慣を記録すると、成功するそうです。おすすめの習慣追跡アプリをご紹介します：

Keystone
iPhone　　　HabitShare
iPhone/Android

多くのMELT生がこれらのアプリを使って、英語力を伸ばしています。
ぜひご参加ください！

例

∗ 朝、歯を磨いた後、その日にする予定のことを一つ、英語で言う。例えば： "Today, I'm gonna go to the gym"

CREATE A HABIT

Base details ?

😊 Say "Today, I'm gonna ___"

Cue (optional) ?

I will do my habit...

After ⌄　　I brush my teeth ⌄

◀　　　Next

簡単なスターター習慣

・朝食後、1分間英語の音読をします（ 教科書、ウェブサイト 、文字通り何でもOK！）
・朝、服を着ている間に、英語で歌を聴く
・電車・ バスの中で、5つのTOEIC単語を復習する
・車の中で、英語の歌に合わせて歌う
・バス・ 電車の待ち時間に、Quizlet/the British Council Grammar Appをやる
・登校したら、MELTの誰かに「 Hello！」と声をかける
・教室に向かう途中、エレベーターの中で、英語で挨拶をする
・MELTでお弁当を食べる
・クラスメイト や先輩に学習の様子を聞いてみる
・授業の終わりに、先生にお礼を言う
・キャンパスを出る前に、EnglishCentralをやる
・帰宅後、ペット や好きな物（ トロフィー、模型、ぬいぐるみなど）に対して、英語で1文言ってみる
・夕食後、前日の授業の1ページを復習する
・宿題を終えたら、英語でツイートする
・ソーシャルメ ディアを利用するときは、英語で書かれたつぶやき・ 投稿に「 いいね！」をする
・シャワーの中で、1つの音の最小限のペア練習をする（ 例： rice/lice, fur/far, very/berry）
・お風呂に入りながら、Cake Appのビデオを1本見る
・歯を磨く 前に、Siri/ディクテーションで最小限のペア（ 例： walk/work, run/ran, math/mass, ear/year）を1つ練習しておく
・夜、歯を磨いた後、その日にしたことをひとつだけ言う。例えば、「 今日、友だちと話したよ」
・ベッド で、グレーデッドリーダーを1 ページ読む

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Projects in Japanese Higher Education: Creating Meaningful SDGs Materials for Self-Access Learning Centers

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Abstract

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being promoted actively in higher education around the world to bridge the gaps between university curricula and global issues like gender inequality and climate change. To promote the SDGs alongside English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Konan University, the authors introduced an SDGs project that was used in the Self-Access Learning Centers (SALCs) on two campuses. The main goals of the project were to: (1) expose learners to the SDGs through their time in the SALCs, (2) increase language proficiency on SDGs-related topics, and (3) expand learner time in the SALCs. A 12-week program was drafted to align with existing offerings in these contexts. This paper will offer an overview of how the project was conceived with the self-access staff, academic staff, and support from university offices. Next, the implementation of the pilot and rollout stages will be discussed with an overview of the successes and challenges of implementing such a program over two campuses. Lastly, the challenges and future directions for the project will be outlined based on student and teacher feedback. Although the pilot project was largely a success, the hurdles of keeping the project going require additional buy-in, collaboration, and endorsement from the university at large.

ジェンダー不平等や気候変動などの地球規模の問題と大学のカリキュラムとのギャップを埋めるために、国連が提唱する持続可能な開発目標（SDGs）が世界の高等教育で活発・推進されている。甲南大学では、外国語としての英語（EFL）と共にSDGsを推進するために、2つのキャンパスにあるセルフアクセス学習センター（SALC）で使用されたSDGsプロジェクトを紹介した。このプロジェクトの主な目的は以下の通りである。（1）SALCでの学習を通してSDGsに触れる。（2）SDGs関連のトピックに関する言語能力を高める。（3）学習者のSALCでの学習時間を拡大することである。12週間のプログラムは、これらのコンセプトで提供されている既存のプログラムと整合するように起草した。本稿では、セルフアクセススタッフ、アカデミックスタッフ、大学事務局の支援を受けて、どのようにプロジェクトが構想されたかを概観する。次に、トライアル版とロールアウト版の実施について、2つのキャンパスでこのようなプログラムを実施した際の成功と課題を概観する。最後に、学生や教師からのフィードバックに基づき、このプロジェクトの課題と今後の方向性について概説する。パイロットプロジェクトは概ね成功したが、プロジェクトを継続するためには、大学全体からさらなる賛同、協力、支持を得る必要がある。

As the world struggles with emerging global challenges such as global warming and gender inequality, universities are continually faced with pressure to adapt curricula to meet students' future needs. As such, universities around the world have attempted to adopt, promote, and link the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into their university curricula, sustainability efforts, and research funding. The SDGs are an action plan that targets 17 of the most pressing challenges to humanity (United Nations, 2015) (Figure 1). Sustainable Development (SD), as defined by Brundtland (1987, p.41), is the "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In addition, universities find themselves at another important inflection point in their adoption and promotion of the SD concepts. The SDGs act as a powerful blueprint for how to integrate SD into all aspects of our lives, and university education plays an essential role if these goals are to be accomplished by 2030. As such, many Japanese universities have begun the process of actively promoting the SDGs, which is essential for current students and future generations to understand, mitigate, and find solutions to these challenging global issues.

Figure 1

The Sustainable Development Goals (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2020, p. 4)

However, universities have been slow to integrate the SDGs into curricula due to several reasons including policy misalignments, challenges to grounding the SDGs contextually and meaningfully into curricula, proactive leadership, and unclear learning objectives, to name a few (Jodoin, 2023; Maley & Peachey, 2017; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). Reassuringly, many language programs in Japanese higher education are looking at innovative ways to expand students' understandings of these dynamic, interconnected global challenges through best-practice Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (McKeown, 2002) or more recent frameworks developed through new fields of study such as, Language Education for Sustainable Development (LESD) (Jodoin & Bilici, 2022). One area that offers many opportunities to integrate Sustainable Development practices is Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) within Japanese higher education.

Context

Japan has been very active in the field of SALL in recent years (Mynard, 2019). SALL is usually supported by a Self-Access Learning Center (SALC), which should provide "an inclusive and autonomy-supportive space which contains services and facilities catering for diverse language learners" (Mynard, 2022, p. 6). Konan University has two SALCs. Both were designed under the notion of *on-campus study abroad* in that they can provide space for students to experience second language study outside the classroom and encourage learner autonomy by providing a range of student-selected activities. The Okamoto campus SALC is named *Konan Language LOFT* and includes several well-established self-access offerings such as self-access material, tasks, and interactive events (Yamamoto, 2017), which were even adapted to online formats during the Covid-19 pandemic (Yamamoto et al., 2021). The Nishinomiya campus SALC is named the *English O-Zone* and offers a combination of organized events, like the SDGs project, and self-access materials. Student assistants are an integral part of both SALCs as they work together alongside teachers to facilitate many activities.

SDGs Project Creation and Implementation

The SDGs project at Konan University was borne out of a gap identified in self-access offerings to students. Although there is currently considerable visibility of the SDGs in Japan, as well as substantial student interest in them, there were no English language SDGs-focused materials available in either of the Konan University SALCs. The authors identified that the

creation of said materials could fill this gap by innovating on contemporary approaches. The project was viewed positively by the university faculty for three reasons: (a) the ability for students to attend sessions at either SALC based on their availability, (b) the possibility of attracting not only first- or second-year students from language courses, but also third- or fourth-year students from a wide range of faculties, and (c) the language and cognitive skills related to understanding and discussing the SDGs were seen as transferable skills to future employment. Furthermore, the project touched upon the concepts of language learning, learner autonomy, and learner motivation which are the core values of the SALCs on both campuses. Thus, for these reasons, this project was considered unique by university stakeholders.

The project was pitched to the authors' managers and other staff connected to the SALCs. The stated goals of the project were to: (1) expose learners to the SDGs through their time in the SALCs, (2) increase language proficiency on SDGs-related topics, and (3) increase learner time in the SALCs. A 12-week program was drafted to align with existing SALC offerings. As it was logistically impossible to cover all 17 SDGs in any depth, a subset was created. Table 1 shows the six SDGs selected which the authors considered the most accessible and interesting for students. Two weeks were scheduled on each SDG with materials taking a reading or listening focus on alternative weeks to account for learner preferences, strengths, and weaknesses. Reading materials were short, graded texts adapted by the authors or visual texts such as infographics, graphs, and maps. Listening materials were designed from YouTube videos with closed captions in English available. The practicalities of each weekly session and the roles of the participants were pitched as follows. The weekly sessions were envisaged as content-based language workshops. Full time language teachers, who teach a range of language courses within the university and complete a range of duties in the SALCs, act as guides or leaders as they manage each session via the created materials and tasks. Student assistants provide further facilitation and support to small groups and individual students as required. The student assistants were advised that this should occur in a just-in-time learning approach by providing small chunks of information at the point of need, and that this could be done in L1 or L2, but L2 was preferred. Students are required to learn about a specific SDG via a series of collaborative tasks related to the reading- or listening-focused materials, and then discuss and share their ideas and opinions with other students. Moreover, this approach is reflected in the two phases of the sessions. In the first phase, students learn vocabulary connected to SDGs. Then, the students

view, read or listen to information about SDGs to gain a better understanding. Following that, they discuss and check understanding with other students, student assistants, and teachers. In the second phase, discussion questions prompt students to think about SDGs on global, regional, national, or local levels. Then, they share opinions on SDGs issues or listen to opinions of others. Lastly, they discuss possible solutions to SDGs issues.

Table 1

SDGs Included in the Program

SDG Number	Focus
SDG 2	Zero Hunger
SDG 6	Clean Water and Sanitation
SDG 7	Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 10	Reduced Inequalities
SDG 14	Life Below Water
SDG 15	Life On Land

The project received approval for a four-week trial in the 2022 Spring semester with SDGs 2 and 6 selected for this stage of the project. Various faculty and administrative staff connected to the SALCs took responsibility for campus-wide advertising. The four-week trial was considered successful as most sessions had ample attendance and teacher observations noted materials were well received by the students. However, the teacher observations also highlighted the need for student assistant training, ensuring materials were available to them prior to each session, and providing briefings to the student assistants before each session. These adjustments would better ensure student assistants could help facilitate each session in an informed and prepared way. The project received approval to be rolled out in its 12-week format in the 2022 Fall semester. This was to be done in a *soft* manner meaning the project was not included in student course information and orientation materials but was advertised to students on campus and online. The schedule of the 12-week format can be seen in Appendix A.

Materials Development

Materials development under the specifications outlined above were balanced with best-practice ESD. This process was a challenge for the authors, who wanted to strike a balance between a suitable SALC activity and a meaningful SDGs content experience. As this was part of the SALCs, the activities were designed so that they were self-contained, easy to navigate for teachers and student assistants, and allowed for extensions outside of each session. In addition, best practice ESD involves offering students meaningful activities around the SDGs that not only raise interest and offer information around the SDGs, but also engage student values, beliefs, and norms (VBNs) (Bronfman, Cisternas, López-Vázquez, de la Maza, & Oyanedel, 2015). In other words, producing activities that offer opportunities for language learning as well as engaging students' ideas, values, and beliefs around major global challenges was important for this project's success (Jodoin & Bilici, 2022, p158-159). Generally, the materials were divided into listening and reading activities with a general flow as seen in Table 2, which also included various forms of additional support. An example of a 2-page reading material can be seen in Appendix B. Several design rules were agreed upon early in the materials development process to ensure consistency between materials developers, ease of use, and longevity of the SDGs project. The following general rules were considered for the materials development:

- Each material should be one page double-sided. This is so that the materials could be easily stored online, and used as a self-contained, minimal activity thus keeping any printing to a minimum.

- Materials should be created so that experienced teachers as well as the student assistants can easily use them. This was to ensure that the materials could have longer-term use within the program.

- Materials should have elements that challenge student VBNs and allow students to continue to study on their own after each session. This included discussion questions that attempted to focus more on what students believed or valued rather than typical language-focussed questions, which rely on finding information from a text or listening. Moreover, self-access follow-up activities were offered at the end of each activity sheet.

- Materials should be easily accessible and save resources. Padlet, a web application, was used to enable easily accessible materials, facilitate in-person sessions, and eliminate the need to print out worksheets, which is in line with the SDGs.

Table 2

Session Activities and Additional Support in the SDGs Project Materials

Session Activities	Additional Support
Reading/Listening 1 (Global level)	Language and content support notes
Reading/Listening 2 (Regional level)	L1 gloss for essential vocabulary
Discussion (Individual level)	Discussion aid
	Visuals for essential content
	Videos for additional content
	Self-access follow-up activities

Student Attendance and Feedback

Table 3 shows the number of attendees for both campuses at different stages of the project. The pilot stage was well attended but this did not translate to the 12-week program. In both project stages, the authors noted many attendees made informal comments during sessions about their high level of interest in SDGs. However, there were a similar number of comments that sessions were challenging. During the 12-week program, *Konan Language LOFT* attendees were asked when logging attendance via an online form, *Did this activity inspire you in a good way?* All responses (*n*=31) were positive with 28 attendees choosing *Strongly Agree* and 3 attendees choosing *Agree.*

Table 3

Total SDG Project Attendees

	Konan Language LOFT	English O-Zone
Pilot stage (4 weeks)	57	16[1]
Rollout stage (12 weeks)	31	29

[1]The trial at the English O-Zone ran for two weeks.

Table 4 shows additional comments from these attendees which mirrored the informal comments mentioned above. Overall, the SDGs project had positive student feedback from attendees.

117

Table 4

Attendee Feedback Comments from the 12-week Program at Konan Language LOFT

Feedback comments
興味深いアクティビティをありがとうございました。[Thank you for the interesting activity.]
難しい内容だったけどなかなか勉強になった。[The content was difficult, but I learned a lot.]
とても楽しかったです。[It was a lot of fun.]

Discussion

Via the combined analysis of teacher, student assistant, and SALC staff observations, as well as the various feedback sources outlined above, it was clear to the authors that several challenges had presented themselves throughout the project. Student perceptions of the SDGs were divergent, as they were simultaneously interested in them yet felt daunted by their inherent challenging and interdisciplinary nature. Assisting the students in finding the right balance between these perceptions during sessions was essential. Students were aware of the SDGs sessions thanks to campus advertising, but this did not result in well-attended sessions every time. Disseminating more information on the nature of the sessions during yearly student orientation and via other detailed promotional material should mitigate this problem. For students that did attend sessions, very few attended subsequent sessions thus hindering any chance of a community of practice (CoP) developing, in which learners with shared concerns or passions interact and learn collaboratively (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Finding ways to encourage regular or repeat attendance, such as increased campus advertising and stronger links with other academic classes, should develop a cohort of like-minded attendees.

The future direction of the SDGs project is likely to be shaped by several enhancements. Next year it will be linked to pre-departure study abroad preparation and other globally focused university programs. These two factors are likely to increase attendance by motivated students. Additional teachers will also be participating in the program and developing materials in the next

118

academic year. This should allow the project to expand in terms of teacher and student assistant involvement, as well as the possibility of scheduling multiple sessions per week on each campus. Moreover, a more robust student feedback form will be considered that not only looks at the value of language learning in the SDGs sessions but also considers indicators of student VBNs around SDGs content.

In terms of challenging VBNs, the SDGs project encountered mixed results. One-off sessions with limited ongoing attendance are not ideal to have a lasting, meaningful experience with the content. The future enhancements to the SDGs project alongside a more robust way to measure student experience using a more detailed feedback form will improve the ESD element of the project.

Lastly, the authors feel that the main goals of the project were mostly successful with an eye to continue making future enhancements to the SDGs project overall. The first goal was to expose learners to the SDGs through a SALC experience. Although the idea of challenging VBNs was limited by the scope of the project, student exposure and interaction with SDG ideas was positively reviewed by students as seen from student feedback. The second goal was to improve language proficiency using SDG-related topics. Again, no conclusive measurements were taken, but we are confident that exposure to scaffolded language activities in SALC settings is beneficial to student language proficiency. The final goal was to expand learner time in the SALCs, which was largely a success, but can be improved further in future iterations of the project.

Conclusion

Although the SDGs project faced many hurdles such as initial buy-in and support from the university, materials development challenges from organizational constraints, and integration of meaningful SDG content through challenging VBNs, the project has found many successes. The fact that Konan University is now looking to support the SDGs project more deeply through university programs is a positive sign that the university understands the value of the project and the importance of having SALCs that encourage student autonomy and engaging content. More importantly, feedback on the project has been overwhelmingly positive from students, student assistants, and staff. Another notable success is that the faculty-initiated SDGs project is one of the first cross-campus collaborative efforts between the two SALCs, setting a precedent for

university-wide accessibility and inclusivity. The continued longevity of the SDGs project combined with the significance of SDGs-related content is secure in the short-term for the university SALCs. Ultimately, this will likely benefit our students' understandings and relationship with timely and essential global issues through their improved communicative competence and content knowledge.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix

Appendix A SDG Project Poster from Fall 2022

Appendix B Sample Reading Activity

Name:_____

Date:_____

Task **SDG2-1R**

Checked by:

1. **Scan the QR code and answer the questions below on SDG 2.**
   Source: https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/prevalence-of-undernourishment

   A. What does the infographic show? Circle your answer.

   | poor countries | undernourished countries | polluted countries |

   B. According to the infographic, what countries in East Africa and South East Asia are undernourished?

East Africa	South East Asia

   C. According to the infographic, what three countries could be places where the United Nations (i.e. the UN) should focus on **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)**?

   D. Looking at the countries above, what do you think are some possible causes of their hunger problems (**SDG 2**)?

2. **Scan the QR code and answer the questions below based on the information in the article:**

   A. SDG2 has four parts. What two parts are included in the story?

   | end hunger | achieve food security |
   | achieve improved nutrition | sustainable agriculture |

   Take notes on the questions below:

   B. According to the article, how many people in the world experience hunger?
   C. Where does Onigiri Action provide food? How much food has it provided?
   D. What is happening in each of the steps below?

   THANK YOU!

3. Discussion Questions:
   A. **Explain what you think SDG 2 is in your own words.**
   B. **According to the article you read today, what do you think are some solutions to this problem?**
   C. **Is there anything that people in Kansai can do to solve this problem?**
   D. **Is there anything you can do to solve this problem?**

SDG Compass

English Word	Japanese Translation
undernourished	栄養不良の
hunger	飢え
not for profit organization (NPO)	エヌ ピーオー
ingredients	材料
social media	ソーシャルメディア (SNS)
donate	寄付
school meals	学校給食

Discussion Aid

- I think that…
- The solution to hunger is…
- I believe that **Kansai people / I** can solve this problem by…
- In my experience, I think that…
- For Example,… / For instance,…

Learn More about **SDG2:**

Learn More about **Onigiri Action:**

2
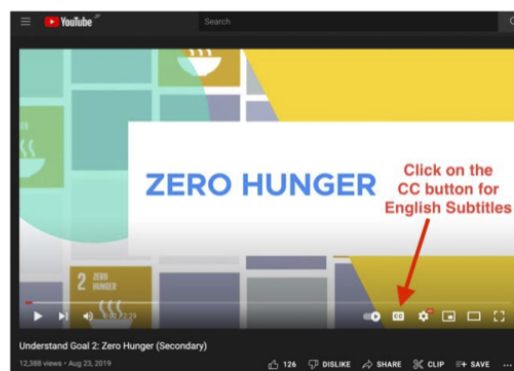
Expanding Access to Social Language Learning Through Maker Education

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This report describes a new service, Maker Conversation, introduced in the social learning space of the Self-Access Learning Center (SALC) at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Chiba, Japan. Drawing on the principles of Maker Education (Opperman, 2016), daily Maker Conversation sessions provide an opportunity for students to engage in casual conversation with a teacher-facilitator and other students while working on a hands-on project such as modelling, electronics, or arts and crafts. The service was introduced with the aim of increasing the variety of opportunities for authentic and situated use of English in the SALC, while also sparking students' curiosity and creativity and expanding access to students who might otherwise be uninterested or hesitant to use the space. This report explains the rationale for introducing Maker Conversation, looks at some initial feedback from students, and suggests future directions for improving the service based on our experience running it so far. This report may be helpful for others who are looking to expand the options for speaking practice and attract a greater range of users in their own self-access spaces.

Context

The Self-Access Learning Center at KUIS provides a variety of facilities and services to support students in their language learning and foster lifelong language learner autonomy. One of the aims of the SALC is to facilitate opportunities for students to interact with others in their target language. These opportunities include short, one-to-one conversation sessions with teachers from the English Language Institute (ELI) that can be reserved in advance, a language-exchange scheme with international students, student-led learning communities based around mutually-shared interests, and various workshops and events throughout the year. In addition to these, the English Lounge is an English-only social learning space that provides a relaxed environment for students to interact in English with their peers, international students, and teachers. With a philosophy that draws on social constructivist views of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), the English Lounge is a space where students can co-construct knowledge through interaction, learning collaboratively with and from each other. Some students come specifically for conversation practice with other students or with the ELI teachers on duty there, while other students come to meet and make friends, eat lunch, play boardgames, do homework assignments, and relax between classes. Conversations in the English Lounge are unstructured with no set topic, and students are free to come and go as

they please. Until the introduction of Maker Conversation, there were no regularly planned teacher-led activities in the lounge area that were not solely focused on conversation.

All facilities and services in the SALC are optional for students to use and are non-incentivised. While there are many students who actively take advantage of the opportunities mentioned above for language practice, there are also large portions of the student body who do not. Some students choose not to partake because the offerings do not meet their learning needs, goals, and interests, while others recognise the potential benefits but are hesitant to join. Previous research in the SALC (Mynard et al., 2020) has shown a variety of reasons for this hesitation, including students' worries that their language level is not high enough to participate, concerns about their ability to sustain a conversation and find topics to talk about, and anxiety about navigating social relationships with fellow interlocutors. With regards to the English Lounge, there is also a perception of the space being a closed community of regular users that is difficult for newcomers to enter. These are common challenges faced by social learning spaces (Bibby et al., 2016; Murray & Fujishima, 2016). In this context, the Maker Conversation service was introduced to offer an alternative style of language practice that takes advantage of the affordances of Maker Education to capture students' interest and ease access to the social learning space for otherwise-hesitant or uninterested students.

What is Maker Education?

Since the early 20th century, educational theorists such as Dewey, Montessori, and Froebel have highlighted the value of hands-on experiences as a central part of the learning process. Taking this concept even further, Harel and Papert's (1991) *constructionism* claimed that meaningful learning occurs through the construction of sharable objects. In the early 2000s, the proliferation of makerspaces (open-access areas containing various tools and materials) enabled educators to reconceptualise the integration of hands-on construction into the learning process. Educators quickly observed that learning took place felicitously in makerspaces as learners engaged in collaborative, iterative design projects. Makerspaces were in essence social constructivist learning environments (Alley, 2018), wherein learners could engage in the co-creation of knowledge.

Based on these observations, practitioners such as Dougherty (2013) developed an educational model, Maker Education, that promotes student learning by completing collaborative, hands-on projects and using an iterative design process where students build, test, and refine their creations. These projects may range from simple to complex, and span

mediums from handcrafts to electronics and robotics. Maker Education frameworks such as *Maker Elements* (Maker Education Initiative, n.d.) and *Learning Dimensions of Making and Tinkering* (Bevan et al., 2018) emphasise the role of student agency, distributed experience, and the importance of process rather than an end product. Furthermore, collaboration and sharing are core parts of Maker Education, which "embraces the ability to share not only the projects, but the joyful process of making with videos, blogs, and pictures" (Martinez & Stager, 2019, p. 37). Researchers have found Maker Education to be a practical methodology for developing content area knowledge and soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration (see Martin, 2015).

Early in the development of Maker Education, practitioners quickly noticed that it could motivate English language learners who had difficulty participating and interacting with their peers in other educational settings (Murphy, 2018). Educators are also beginning to experiment with Maker Education to simultaneously teach content and language (Alley, 2018). Because the method is student-focused and motivating and eschews the high-pressure trappings of traditional testing, Maker Education is quite inclusive. The authors thereby felt that Maker Education had the potential to solve the problem of hesitancy in self-access learning while sparking their interest in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) topics and would be a natural extension to our SALC's social learning spaces.

Maker Education at KUIS

The Maker Conversation service was developed as an extension of the Maker Education Project at KUIS, which started in 2018 with the development of integrated classroom activities, modules, and an elective class. This project was initially funded through university grants and later by a grant from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. These funds have been used to purchase materials, conduct studies with participants, and further develop the curriculum.

The Maker Conversation service was trialled in the SALC in 2019 (Lege et al., 2021) and was fully introduced in spring 2022 after a Covid-related hiatus. 90-minute sessions are conducted once a day in one area of the English Lounge, with an average of 3-4 student participants each time, many of whom are regular attendees. The sessions are facilitated by ELI lecturers as part of their SALC duty requirements. A facilitator selects and prepares materials for the day's project(s), and students come and join freely throughout the period. There are a variety of activities available from technology-based projects like 3-D printing,

taking apart electronics, and working with circuits, to arts and crafts such as knitting, drawing, and stamp making. As an example, one of the facilitators brings a box of yarn, floss and tools that can be used for knitting, crochet or cross stitch, based on the inclination of different participants. See Appendix for more examples of activities. Facilitators aim to structure activities in a way that allows students to participate at their own pace and join or leave the activity at any point during the session. Facilitators play a dual role in both guiding the activity and ensuring the flow of the conversation among participants. They introduce activities, help students to choose what to do or how to do it, and provide encouragement. At the same time, they introduce new topics when the conversation lulls and try to include students who are more reticent to speak or too absorbed in their project by asking them easy-to-answer questions.

When setting up the service, we envisaged that several factors would make the program more accessible and attract students who wouldn't otherwise use the space for speaking practice. For students who might want to speak with other students but find the unstructured, open nature of the English Lounge intimidating, having a set task to focus on and build a conversation around could ease participation. In addition, the drop-in nature of the sessions may be good for busy students who want a break from studying without having to commit to an extended period of time or pre-book an appointment for the activity. Furthermore, all activities are related to STEAM subjects, which are often not offered as part of regular classes at a language-focused university. We felt that this could potentially attract students to explore new areas of interest. Students are also encouraged to make requests and give suggestions for activities, which can increase their agency in the program.

Initial Feedback From Students

The first data that showed whether the service had been successful in its aim of expanding participation came from the annual SALC student feedback survey (Nguyen & Mynard, 2023), conducted in July 2022. 43 of the 355 survey respondents stated that they had used the Maker Conversation service. Of these 43 service users, 18 responded that they never used the English Lounge, and 16 responded that they never used the one-to-one conversation appointment service with teachers (see Figure 1). Among these, 11 responded that they never used either. While not all users of the Maker Conversation service participated in the survey, it can still be understood from the results that the service had been successful in attracting a

number of students who did not use the two main other speaking practice services that were available in the SALC at that time.

Figure 1

Maker Conversation Service Users' Usage of Other Speaking Practice Services (N=43)
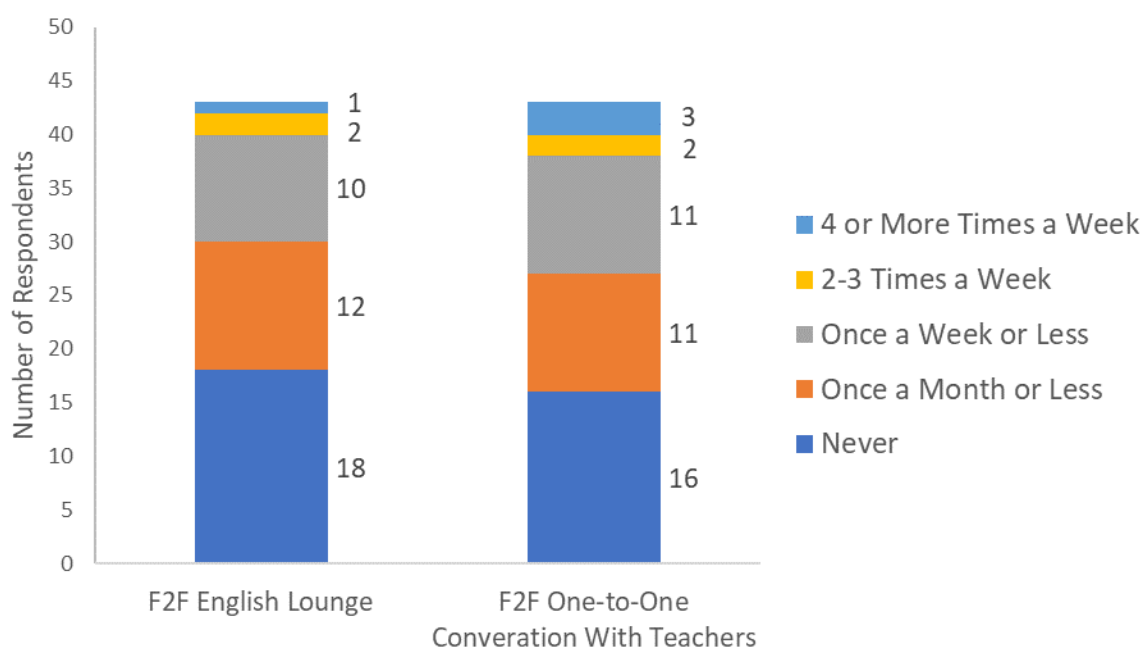
The general SALC survey did not collect detailed feedback on Maker Conversation, so while the data showed that a wider range of students were choosing to use the service, it didn't provide any insight into why this was the case. Beginning in September of 2022, we therefore started to gather specific feedback from Maker Conversation participants, consisting of an ongoing, optional post-session survey given as a QR code. All directions, questions, and answer choices are written in both Japanese and English. The survey gathers data to determine what sections of the student body are using the Maker Conversation service, what benefits, if any, the participants perceive they gain from it, and to what extent it fits into the range of services offered in the SALC. At the time of writing, 22 responses have been submitted. In addition to multiple choice questions regarding the respondents' year, department, and usage of other SALC services, two open-ended questions have yielded some useful insights:

1. What, if anything, do you enjoy about Maker Conversation?
2. Has Maker Conversation been useful for improving your English? If yes, in what

ways? If no, why not?

Of 16 responses to the open-ended question "What, if anything, do you enjoy about Maker Conversation?", eight mentioned the hands-on project, and eight commented on the opportunity to converse in English. Examples of such comments include the following: "何か作業をしながら英語が話せて、英語で話すだけでなく他の体験もできて新しい発見ができること" [I could talk while working on something, and it wasn't just speaking English but also having other experiences and discovering new things]; "作業しながら自然な流れで話をできるのが楽しかった" [I enjoyed having a conversation that flowed naturally while working on something]. One response mentioned that the participant particularly enjoyed having a topic for discussion. Four responses pointed out that the participants enjoyed the opportunity to speak with other students, including those from outside their own department. Three participants commented that they enjoyed interacting with teachers.

In response to the question "Has Maker Conversation been useful for improving your English?", 13 participants responded "Very useful", six responded "Moderately useful", and three responded "Slightly useful" (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Responses to the Question, "Has Maker Conversation been useful for improving your English?" (N=22)
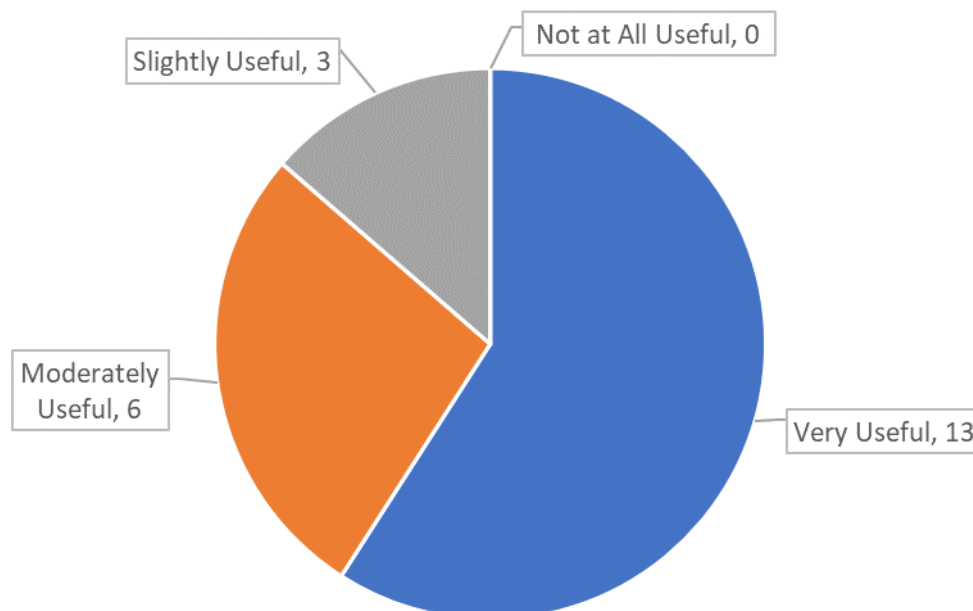
When asked in what ways Maker Conversation was useful, students not only expressed appreciation for the opportunity to get used to natural conversation and learn useful phrases for interacting, but also mentioned several advantages that could be gained specifically from Maker Conversation and not from other SAC services and conversation activities. Responses included the following: "クラス外で先生とお話して、また作りながら話せるので、話題がつきないので英語をしゃべり続ける機会を得られました" [I could talk to the teacher outside class, and because we could talk while making something, we didn't get stuck for topics, so I had the chance to keep talking in English]; "クラフトをしないと使わない英語を知ることができたし、手を動かしながらお話できたから。でもクラフトに夢中になって話せない時があったのは少し残念です" [I learned some English that I wouldn't have used if I hadn't done crafts, and I could have a conversation while working with my hands. However, sometimes I got so absorbed in the craft that I couldn't speak, which was a bit of a shame]. According to these responses, the service provided a venue for natural English conversations and opportunities for students to learn English while working on a hands-on project, although occasionally making was so

engrossing that students had trouble simultaneously producing the target language due to cognitive load.

These survey results show that Maker Conversation is specifically beneficial for students seeking additional opportunities to converse in English while learning new skills or participating in novel activities. Participants were able to engage with content and language that was situated in a relevant, meaningful context which not only offered a situated learning environment but also seemed to create an informal, inviting social learning space where students could interact with their peers and the facilitator. Framing the service around the creation of a hands-on project rather than as a language practice session seemed to reduce barriers and encourage students to participate who may not have made use of other SAC services. However, these assumptions are based on a small dataset, so the survey will continue to be made available to Maker Conversation participants with the aim of gathering additional information on the efficacy of the service and further improving student experiences.

Suggestions for the Future of the Program

After reflecting on our usage figures and initial student feedback, we have identified areas where improvements could be made to our Maker Conversation program, primarily aimed at improving access to the service and attracting more students. A significant limiting factor is the current lack of accessibility and inclusivity caused by constraints in time and space. Students only have access to a small set of materials when a facilitator is scheduled, which restricts the number of students who can participate to an average of 4-5, depending on the activity, and limits the variety of projects that can be completed. To address this, an open-access, dedicated Makerspace would be ideal for allowing more students to join without the need for a facilitator. Alternatively, creating a moveable storage cart with a selection of materials could provide more agency for students in choosing their projects and allow Maker Conversation to reach more students.

A further issue is related to the burden on facilitators for planning and organising activities. Therefore, creating a ready-made menu of possible activities would make the project easier for facilitators to manage, thereby allowing for additional sessions and leveraging facilitators' interests and skills. Additionally, this menu could also be used by students to give them more autonomy in selecting the activities that best suit their interests. It

would also make it easier for students to try leading sessions themselves. With some training and support from teachers, this could give them an opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Another challenge with Maker Conversation is access to materials. Through funding, our project has been able to purchase 3-D printing equipment and a variety of other supplies. However, it is important to find less expensive ways to expand the diversity of materials to reach a wider range of students. One approach is to collect donations of old technology, magazines, stationery, clothes, and other materials that can be repurposed. Additionally, there are many free resources available online such as makeprojects.com, pinterest.com, and youtube.com that can be used to inspire and design activities.

Finally, we want to expand the reach of our program and access a wider range of students. Our survey indicated that the majority of participants became aware of Maker Conversation because they saw sessions in progress, meaning that they were already in the SALC. In the next year, we will be looking at advertising more widely around the campus through campus news media to attract a more diverse range of students who might not be regularly in the SALC.

Conclusion

Maker Education is a promising framework for social language learning spaces with a focus on collaboration, learner agency, and process rather than the end product. When we introduced the service, we hoped that it would not only provide an alternative speaking practice opportunity for existing SALC users but also make it easier for hesitant users to access the space and engage students who otherwise had no interest in using the SALC. Initial feedback suggests that we can celebrate some success in attracting new users, with students expressing appreciation both for the opportunity to try out a novel activity and for the way those activities help facilitate conversation. Moreover, by providing opportunities for students to engage with content from the STEAM disciplines through Maker Education projects, the service allows students to draw on their past experiences, make connections, and engage with the content and their peers in their target language. Despite the apparent benefits of Maker Conversation as an alternative social learning space, there remains work to be done so that the service can reach more students and address their diverse needs. Looking forward now to the next year of offering the service, we intend to continue to try to increase accessibility in order to reach as wide a range of students as possible, while simultaneously

working to ensure that the service provides a rich, engaging language practice environment for participants.

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Appendix

List of Some Possible Maker Conversation Activities

Crafts	- Making simple projects using everyday materials - Paper crafts (origami, paper making, decoupage) - Fibre arts (knitting, weaving, embroidery) - Stamp making
Arts	- Making collages - Sculptures - Painting - Drawing
Design thinking activities	- Responding to a problem or a challenge by building something, - e.g., building a bridge or a tower with a set of limited materials such as spaghetti and marshmallows
Using maker technologies	- Making simple Arduino projects (https://www.arduino.cc/) - Little Bits (https://www.littlebits-jp.com/) - Makey Makey (https://makeymakey.com/) - Designing 3D models and printing them with 3D printers - Using applications such as Scratch (https://scratch.mit.edu/) to create games/applications
Tinkering	- Repairing/taking apart electronics - Demonstrating how a product works
Freeform creation	- Building using Lego, Play-Doh or other materials - Upcycling materials into new creations

学生の主体性に着目した**Student Assistant**制度構築の予備報告

A preliminary report on building a Student Assistant program from a learner agency perspective

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要旨

Student Assistant(SA)制度は日本の高等教育機関で活用が進んでいるが、その活動内容は多岐に渡り、また活用の場によって求められるスキルや特性も異なる。同時に、多くの現場では学生に与えられる役割が事務補助的なものに制限されていることも指摘されている。和洋女子大学国際学部ではSAとなる学生及び支援を受ける学習者の主体性に着目し、初年次英語教育において同制度の導入を2022年度実施した。本稿では同大学での英語自律学習支援アプローチを取り入れたSA制度導入までの経緯及び、主な活動内容を報告した。また、SA及び1年生に対し行ったアンケートや聞き取りで得られた学生の声を基に、実践に対する考察を行った。特に、1年生にとって先輩との関わりがロールモデル構築に繋がり、動機付けの面で好意的に作用したことが示唆された。同時に、SA学生も内省や意見交換を重ねながらサポートを提供する中で、高い主体性を身に付け、彼女たちの自信に繋がったことも明らかになった。結びとして試験的な取り組みを行った1年間を振り返り、今後の協働的SA制度充実化並びに研究の可能性についても論じる。

キーワード：Student Assistant, 主体性、ピアサポート、自律学習

This paper presents the Student Assistant (SA) program developed at Wayo Women's University in Japan. While the SA program is gaining popularity in Japan, the roles assigned to students vary depending on the educational institution's goals. Moreover, it is pointed out that the educational practice has been limited to administrative assistance for teachers. In 2022, the Faculty of Global Studies at Wayo Women's University initiated its SA program aiming to support first-year students in mandatory English classes, adopting a learner-autonomy approach. This paper details the program's implementation, rationale, and overview, including the ongoing institution's self-directed English learning support. Additionally, the data collected from questionnaires as well as interviews highlight the SA program's positive impact as role models in first-year English language courses, particularly contributing to learner motivation. The growing sense of agency as well as confidence within the SAs is also found to be a crucial aspect in developing a student-centered SA program. Finally, the paper discusses the program's future development implications and potential research opportunities.

Keywords: Student Assistant, learner agency, peer support, autonomous learning

学習者中心の学習パラダイムの転換（Barr & Tagg 1995）が2000年以降日本の高等教育機関でも活発に議論されるようになり、近年では学生の学びの質に着目した教育的取り組みの実施に関する実践・研究報告が見られるようになった。中でも、大学学部課程における学生主体による学習支援の形の一つとして、スチューデント・アシスタント（以下SA）制度の活用が日本国内でも進んでおり、現在およそ半数（47.4パーセントの大学がその取り組みを実施している（日本学生支援機構, 2021）。和洋女子大学国際学部では2022年度に初年次英語教育支援の一環として同制度導入を開始した。本稿では制度導入の経緯並びに1年目における運営方法、実際の活動内容に加え、スチューデント・アシスタント活動に従事した学生たち及び支援を受けた1年生の意見を報告する。また、1年目の取り組みを基に、今度の活動への提言及び研究の可能性について論じる。

日本国内外におけるSA制度の普及

SA制度は2000年に文部省高等教育局が発表した報告書「大学における学生生活の充実について—学生の立場に立った大学づくりを目指して—」（文部省高等教育局, 2000）で提言された、学生中心の教育環境整備を発端とする。この質的転換は学生の主体性を尊重する教育的取り組みを後押しするものとなり、それまで大学院生によるティーチング・アシスタント（TA）の活用に留まっていたものが学部上級生まで拡大しSA制度の確立に至った。この質的転換は学生の主体性を尊重する教育的取り組みを後押しするものであったが、その役割は教育機関によって多岐に渡ること、また各授業担当の教員の裁量によっても内容が異なるため、実態把握が難しく、統一化された教育的理念や制度構築には至っていない（佐藤, 2019）。また、立山（2013）が指摘するように、SAの活用の背景には学びの質向上が前提にある一方で、実情としては授業の内容には直接関わらない補助業務（例：資料配布、出席票の回収、PC設定）を任せるに留まっている現場があることも指摘されている。最近の日本学生支援機構（2021）による調査では、これらの直接的な教育活動ではない内容が業務の大半であることも明らかになっている。

141

一方外国語教育、とりわけ課外での自律学習支援の現場では既に日本国内でも多くの活用事例が報告されている。これらの活動は指定の授業や教員に学生を配置するのではなく、独立したセルフ・アクセスセンター等で運営されていることが一般的である。サポートを提供する学生はPeer AdvisorやPeer Tutorといった名称で呼ばれ、教育機関の特色及び個別の学生のニーズに合わせた学習サポートの提供がなされている（Howard, 2019; Kodate, 2020; Ohara & Ishimura, 2020参照）。中には、自主的にリーダーシップを執り、学習グループを運営するケースもあり（Yamamoto & Imamura, 2020参照）必ずしも制度ありきで学生主体の学びが生まれるというわけではないことも示唆される。

今回本稿で紹介する取り組みは正課授業におけるSA導入であったが、これまでの課外外国語学習支援実践・研究事例を基に、独自のコンテクストに合ったSA制度構築を行った。

和洋女子大学国際学部グローバルラウンジにおける取り組み

和洋女子大学国際学部は2020年度に設置され、グローバルラウンジは同学部学生の主体的な外国語学習を目的とするセルフ・アクセスセンターとして開設された。同時に、同年から2021年度にかけては新型コロナウイルスの影響下、学内施設利用が制限されており、多くの学習支援活動はオンラインで行われた（Imai et al., 2021; 山本・川島, 2022を参照）。その活動では上級生が中心となった学習グループも形成され、Zoomを利用した定期的なワークショップや、学生による学習相談等を教職員の支援の下実施した。結果として、オンライン上の交流を、効果的な学習方法の共有機会、また大学生活全般の相談の場として一定数の下級生が定期的に利用していたこともあり、翌年度以降の学習支援活用も期待できる結果となった。同学部SA制度導入においては、この前年度の活動が土台となったことを特筆したい。2022年度には学内施設の利用制限も緩和され、感染症対策を講じた上でグローバルラウンジ内での対面活動を開始する運びとなった。現在は学習教材貸し出し、教員による英会話や学習ワークショップ実施の他、SA活動の中心スペースとなっている。

和洋女子大学国際学部SA制度の成り立ち

　日本国内の多くの教育機関が直面するように、「大学全入時代」において学生の多様な学力に対応することは和洋女子大学でも急務となっている。また、2020年度から2022年度にかけ、リモートでの授業が続く中、大学内のアンケート調査でも学生同士の繋がりが希薄化し、大学での学びに対する意義を見出せないといった声も聞かれ、学力面でのサポートに限らず、より包括的な策を講じる必要を教員間でも認識していた。同大学国際学部でも教授会を通じ教育支援の形について模索する中、その一手として既に全学的に活用されているSA制度の可能性を議論した。国際学部では、将来の進路としても観光・航空業界をはじめとし英語を積極的に利用したいと考える学生が多くを占め、2年次までの必修科目でもある英語能力習得は学びの要として位置付けられている。一方で2021年度に行った学部全体でのアンケート（山本・川島, 2022参照）では自律的に学習に取り組んでいる学生は極めて少ないことも明らかになっており（約13パーセント）、消極的学習姿勢に対し働きかけをする具体策を英語教員間でも話し合った。その中で、先述の2021年度に実施した学生主体の学習支援活動を踏まえ、「英語力向上を見据えた学習に対する主体性育成」を目指し、2022年度より試験的にSA制度を初年次必修英語コミュニケーションクラスに導入することが決定した。

和洋女子大学国際学部SA活動概要

　和洋女子大学国際学部では全4クラスの必修英語コミュニケーションクラスが開講されており、2022年度はそれぞれに1ペアのSAの配置がなされた。SA制度は、同大学において基本的に授業を担当する教員にその活用が委ねられているが、同学部では前述の「英語力向上を見据えた学習に対する主体性育成」を対象クラスの共通目標と定め、担当する専任教員間で全体的なSA活動方針を精査した。とりわけ、Murphy and Arao (2001) で提唱されるnear-peer role modelのアプローチに基づき、一年生にとって社会的に近い存在であるSAの積極的な課外英語学習への関与を促すことで、学生主体のサポート確立を目標とした。具

143

体的には、授業で行う自律学習課題の一環として、SAによる英語学習に関連するワークショップ実施を決定した。この自律学習課題では、授業外での学びに積極的に取り組ませることを目的としており、授業内での学習計画、目標設定に加え、SAによるワークショップや英会話レッスンへの参加並びに内省レポートが一連の流れとして含まれる。この実施により、教員とは違った先輩との交流を通じ生まれる支援によって、1年生の動機付け及び主体性に変化が生まれることを期待した。

　これらの目的を踏まえ、2022年3月下旬よりSAの募集を開始した。募集内容は学内のポータルサイトから告知し、志望動機書、GPA及び英語・日本語による面接を基に選抜を行った。選考においては、英語力以上に、1年生をサポートする意欲を重視した。その結果、同学部内2学科の3年生から各4名、合計8名が選出された。活動実施内容は表1の通りである。

表1

SA活動内容

week	授業内での活動	授業外での活動
1-4	クラスタスクのサポート グローバルラウンジオリエンテーション Graded readers選書のアドバイス ワークショップの宣伝	ワークショップの準備 SAミーティングの参加 ランチイベントの実施（後期）
5-12	クラスタスクのサポート ワークショップの宣伝	SA workshopの実施 （各ペア2回ずつ）
13-15	期末プレゼンテーションのサポート 期末振り返りの参加	SAミーティングの参加

　活動の形態としては、それぞれの学生の強みや弱み、また担当するクラスの属性（主には英語力）を鑑み、二人一組のペアを1年間固定し、互いに協力し合いながらサポート活動を行うこととした。対象のクラスは英語話者教員によ

るコミュニケーション課題が中心であるが、SAには日本語使用を推奨し、1年生が授業内外で気軽に質問ができる環境作りを目指した。前期は主に授業内でのスピーキング課題における練習のサポートや、課外英語学習を推進する目的でのグローバルラウンジ紹介、及び課外ワークショップ活動に重きを置いた。

　対面での学習支援はSAである3年生にとっても初めての体験ということもあり、事前研修は教職員を交え入念に行った。初回研修の中では、SA内でそれぞれの目標や不安に感じることを共有し合いながら、チームとして支え合い、成長する重要性を確認した。また、授業2週目に行われるグローバルラウンジ利用や図書館での多読本の借り方に関するオリエンテーションの練習を全体で行い、お勧めの書籍やグローバルラウンジでの過ごし方のアイディアを出し合う時間も設けた。同じ学部であっても、初対面同士の学生が大半であったが、研修後は打ち解けた様子が見られ、授業開始までの期間には、オリエンテーションの練習をペアで自主的に行ったり、活発にワークショップについて話し合ったりする様子も見られた。学期開始後も、前期における活動がSA学生の今後の成長にも関わる重要な時期であるため、隔週でミーティングを行い、授業内での心配事や質問、また成功体験をSA内でも共有する機会を作った。このミーティングでは、教員はあくまでファシリテーターの立場を取り、学生同士の意見交換を尊重した。前期の中頃から、前述の自律学習課題の一環である1年生向けのワークショップ（SA Workshop）を開始した（図1参照）。SA学生たちはミーティングの中でアイディアを出し合い、授業時間や空き時間を利用し、教職員のアドバイスを得ながら各ペアで自主的にスライドやハンドアウトの準備を行った。ワークショップの内容は「英会話を楽しむフレーズ」「アニメ映画で英語を学ぼう」等、学生の興味や強みに合わせた内容となり、ペアごとに工夫を凝らした全8回のワークショップを開催した。前述の自律学習課題と連動していたため、1年生の参加は一回以上を必須としたが、SA学生の呼びかけにより、複数回参加する学生も多く見られた。

　前期の終了時にはSA全体で活動の振り返りを行い、ワークショップの改善点の他、更なるサポートの提供として授業外での個別相談、ゲーム大会開催といったアイディアがSA学生の間で出された。

　後期の活動はペア同士の繋がりも強くなり、SA学生による主体的な1年生への働きかけが見られた。授業内での活動では、スピーキングタスクの練習やプレゼンテーションのアイディアを共有するなど、英語学習の先輩としても助言を行う姿が見られた（図2参照）。同時に授業前後には、大学生活における問題や、学業に集中できないといった相談に対し親身にアドバイスをする様子も窺えた。後期のワークショップでは前期に比べ学生たちの英語学習における成功体験や困難を共有するナラティブ形式のものがトピックの半分を占め、これも変化の一つとして特筆すべき点である。前期に話し合われた授業外での活動も学生たちが主体となり昼休みを複数回使い実施した。

図1

SAワークショップの様子

図2

授業活動の様子

SA学生の声

　筆者がSAのファシリテーター、またSAが実際に支援に入る授業の教員であった点を踏まえ、SA学生活動について、アンケートで明らかになったデータを基に、参与観察的視点から活動の様子を報告する。今回採用となった全てのSA学生（8名）は英語学習の意欲を高く持ち、「英語力を活かしたい」「英語力を今後更に伸ばしたい」という理由から応募をしたことが面接時に明らかになった。また、英語教員を志す学生も多く、教授経験に興味を持ち、1年生のサポートをしたいという強い意思も見られた。その他「就職活動に役立てたい」といった学習面以外での意欲も示された。同時に、英語力に不安を持つ学生もおり、SA活動開始時点で行ったアンケートで「正しく教えられるか」「分からない英語の質問を受けたらどうしたら良いか」といった懸念も共有された。

　前期の活動では、その充実感を示す声も聞かれる一方、SA学生内で1年生とのコミュニケーションに戸惑う様子がミーティングの中で見られた。彼女たち自身が「英語ができる先輩」と認識されることに自信が無いといった不安や、ワークショップで人前に立って話すことに不慣れである点を心配する声も上がっていたことも事実である。しかしながら後期に入り後輩から感謝の声を受けることで、授業外で声を掛けられるといった距離の縮まりをSA学生自身が感じる機会が増え、不安感は徐々に薄れていったことも定期ミーティングの中で共

有された。後期の最終ミーティングでは、積極的に目線を1年生に向ける、話しやすい雰囲気を作れるよう失敗体験も共有する、といった具体的な行動をそれぞれの学生が考え、実践していたことが報告された。「先輩として教えることではなく、一年生の気持ちに寄り添うことが大切」といった、スキル以上に、学習を支援する伴走者的な立ち位置をSA学生たちが主体的にサポート役に従事する中で会得したことも大変興味深い。何より、最終ミーティングでは自分たちの声掛けに1年生が反応をしてくれることに大きなやりがいを感じ、相互的に高め合える雰囲気の中1年間活動ができたことへの喜び、互いへの感謝が各SAから語られた。

1年生の声

　サポートを受ける1年生の間でも、前期と後期ではSA学生との関わり方に違いが見られた。大学生活に慣れることを最優先にしていたこともあり、前期はSAに対してもより事務的な質問が多く（例：本の借り方、課題の取り組み方、教員による説明の確認など）、また自ら話しかけアドバイスやサポートを求める姿勢は頻繁には見られなかった。後期はSA学生もその変化に気付く程、授業内外で積極的に一年生から質問する姿勢が見られた。中には、学生生活全般に関わる相談を受けることもあったようで、SAが「英語学習の先輩」以上の存在として認識されていたことも考えられる。

　学期末に行った、対象クラス履修後アンケートにおいては回答者80名（1年生全体の約89パーセント）中、72名（90パーセント）がSAによるワークショップは「自分の英語学習にとって有効なものであった」と回答しており、その理由として、「先生たちにはできないアドバイスを貰えた」「自分が思っていた不安と同じような不安も先輩も持っていたと知れて安心した」「いつも和ませようという雰囲気を作ってくれ、気軽に相談できた」「英語学習に対し意欲が上がった」といった点があがった。こうした回答からは、SAによるサポートが1年生の英語必修授業における学習姿勢に好意的であったことが示唆された。中でもSA学生を「憧れ」とし、彼女たちの英語学習方法を実践しているという

148

学生の回答が複数あり、教員よりも心理的・社会的に近い存在の先輩学生による教育的介入が主体性育成に効果があり得ることも確かめられた。

考察

　試験的な取り組みとしてSA制度を初年次必修英語の授業に導入し、結果としてサポートを受ける1年生並びにサポートを提供する3年生の学生両者にとって主体的な学びの場を提供する機会となったことが1年間の活動の様子、そしてアンケートや聞き取りの中から明らかになった。前述の通り、SA制度自体は様々な教育機関で実施されている一方、今回の取り組みでは他教育機関での取り組みを持ち込むのではなく、SAの興味や強みを尊重しながら、学習者オートノミー、主体性を促す心理的欲求に対する教育的アプローチを基に、初年次の授業におけるニーズに合った制度を構築することを重視した。SA学生の成長という面においては、開始前 はサポート役として大半の学生が不安を抱えていたが、クラス内外での1年生との対話を通じ自信を付け、また「サポート」を自ら熟考・定義し、実践できる主体性を身に付けたことが窺えた。対象授業を履修した1年生に対する調査からは、このようなSA学生の主体的活動が、初年次英語教育における動機付けの側面において好意的に作用したことも示唆される結果となった。上記で紹介したデータはあくまで予備調査的位置づけだが、1年間を振り返り今後SA制度を運営する教員が考慮すべき点をいくつか挙げておきたい。

　第一に、SAの活用には教員自身がその役割を「指導者」から「ファシリテーター」と再定義する必要があるということである。SAを教員が行う事務的作業の補佐と定める教育機関もあるが、所謂教員主体 [teacher-centered] の授業では、SAの教育的活用は見込めない。本実践ではいかにSAを授業内外で主体的に活動させることができるかを重視しているため、授業の構成やタスクの内容にも気を配った。SA学生が自らの経験を基に、教室内での活動サポートに入ることが理想であり、今回の取り組みにおいては具体的に、スピーキング課題の準備過程において、困難を抱える一年生と一緒に辞書を使いながら文を考え

149

る、アイディアを共有するといった機会を意識的に作ることで、SA学生も気負いせず、自然とサポート役に従事できていたようである。また、事前に授業内容を共有し、どの場面でどのような手助けができるかをSA学生と話し合うことも重要である。彼女たちも、学習者であることを念頭に置き、少しずつ役割を増やしSAとしての成功体験を増やしていくことが望ましいと言える。今回の経験から、教室内の学生のニーズは勿論のこと、SA学生との対話を通じ、彼らの目指す学習者像や、サポートの形をうまく引き出していくことも教員に求められることを筆者自身も実感した。SAを活用した授業作りには入念な準備が前提となることも言及したい。

　加えて、SAの主体的参加を継続させる上で、内省を促す機会の重要性を今回の取り組みで再認識することができた。事前に決められた業務をこなすのではなく、主体的に考え、行動することが求められた当該のSA制度では、成功・失敗体験両者に関しても、その後の振り返り過程がSA学生の成長を促していたことは彼女たちの体験談からも明らかであった。特に、ワークショップや面談の時間を使い、「次はどうしたら改善できるだろう」といった疑問を投げかけることで、学生同士の積極的な意見交換や教員にフィードバックを求めるといった姿勢を後押しすることに繋がったと実感する。ファシリテーターの立場として、手間はかかるが、定期的にミーティングを開く、短時間でも対話をする時間を設ける、といった取り組みがSA学生のやる気を維持することに貢献すると言える。

　当該の実践例では、SA学生の活用方法は各授業の教員に委ねられていたこともあり、制度の概念についても今後一層議論を重ねていく必要があることも課題として挙げられる。SA制度構築に関しては、前述の通り担当授業教員内で意見交換が行われた一方、教員向けガイドラインの制定までは至らなかった。大きな理由としては、各教員が今回対象となったクラスを既に長期的に教えていたこともあり、SA導入に際し指導の形をどこまで変える必要があるか、十分な共通認識が持てなかったことが考えられる。その結果、SAとの協働に対するアプローチの違いも見られ、今後この制度を持続的かつ学生主体のものと位置付

150

けるのであれば、教員がファシリテーターとして行うべき役割の明示が求められるだろう。

　本稿では、試験的取り組みの報告と限定的なデータ共有に留まるが、今後はSA学生の主体性 [learner agency] の変化や、サポートを受ける対象学生の英語学習意欲・エンゲージメントといった側面の調査も行うことを検討している。現段階では次年度以降も同制度は継続する予定であり、今後は今回一期生となったSA学生たちにメンターとして関わってもらうことも検討している。1年生の間から「憧れ」といった声が上がったように、SA制度を通じ学生同士の学びの場がより活発になり、「なりたい自分像」を構築する機会が増えることで主体的な学びを尊重する学習者コミュニティが広がることを願っている。

終わりに

　SA制度の活用は、今後より一層日本の教育機関で議論されていくことが予想される。学生の主体性こそ、教育機関の活力を生み出し、学びへの意欲を高められることに繋がる。本稿で紹介した取り組みは、小規模の実践例であるが、SAの導入を検討する上で、対象となる学生・授業並びにSAとして活躍が見込まれる学生のニーズ把握が成功を決定付ける重要な一歩ではなかろうか。また、教員自身が協働的学習環境を作る上で、果たすべき役割を活発に議論し、どのように双方の学生の主体性を伸ばしていけるのか模索することが、充実したSA制度構築に繋がると確信している。筆者自身も、次年度以降もその発展に積極的に寄与したい。

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A Campaign Model for Out-Of-Class English Learning in an In-Between Space

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In-person self-access learning centers (SALCs) and language learning spaces (LLSs) are traditionally located within libraries, confined rooms, or behind closed doors (see examples in Kurokawa et al., 2013; Miller et al., 2007; Taylor & Nagao, 2022; Thornton, 2020; Warrington & Parsons, 2020), adding an extra physical barrier between students and their access to learning resources. While unbounded learning spaces such as the English Speaking Practice Area located within a SALC (Wongsarnpigoon & Imamura, 2020) exist, "in-between" spaces described in this paper can also be used as LLSs. In contrast to destination spaces or open spaces, the "in-between" is where students move from one place to another. In addition, LLSs can also operate like display booths that are often seen in campaigns or on orientation days on post-secondary campuses. Although the use of a campaign model in an in-between space has proved to be successful for the English LLS discussed below, the role of such spaces may be overlooked in the existing SALC and LLS literature. In this practice-based paper, I hope to address this by providing a new perspective on the selection and operation of learning spaces.

The English Language Learning Space

The school described in this paper is a public high school in Tokyo and was founded in April 2021. It is a technical school where students focus on home economics and welfare classes. I was assigned to the school as an assistant language teacher (ALT) in December 2021 and soon realized that most students tend to struggle with basic grammar and conversing in simple English.

As it was a new school, out-of-class language learning such as English display boards or clubs were non-existent. In Popenici & Brew (2013), they noted that campus corridors with unorganized wall displays meant that students could not see the promotion of a "welcoming and stimulating [learning] environment" (p. 155). Similarly, the lack of English display boards could be a sign of not having an English-learning atmosphere within the high school of this paper. Thus, I established the LLS described here in January 2022 to foster such a learning environment for the students. I formed the LLS by putting some English display boards along the corridor. Through playing games and conversing over various topics on the displays with me at the LLS, I wanted to help students see that English is relevant to their lives. For the purpose of promoting learner autonomy, defined as learners taking control over their learning (Benson, 2011), the space was used to provide students with the choice of accessing curated English knowledge outside of regular classes whenever they wanted to.

In addition, due to school policies, students who wish to contact their teachers are required to call the teachers' names at the staff room's door and wait outside. They are rarely allowed to enter the room. In terms of classroom hours, I only teach 50-min English lessons held three to five times per semester. Besides interactions at school events or brief greetings along the hallways, this extra step at the staff room's door was needed before they could contact me about anything. The LLS was, thus, aimed at breaking down this access barrier and helping students build stronger ALT-student relationships with me.

I started the project by creating ornaments and obtained a whiteboard from the English department head to display the samples. I then distributed these ornaments to all the students who came through the school entrance in the morning of Christmas Eve in 2021. After the event, I had a conversation with the department head and received approval for displaying the whiteboard at another selected space. As the school only had first-year students before April 2022, the LLS was chosen at the front of the open common space between the homerooms of all first-year students (see Figure 1). It is in the in-between space of the corridor and the space behind it. Students often pass by this space as they use the nearby stairways to go home or to get to other rooms above.

Figure 1

Map Showing the Location of the LLS
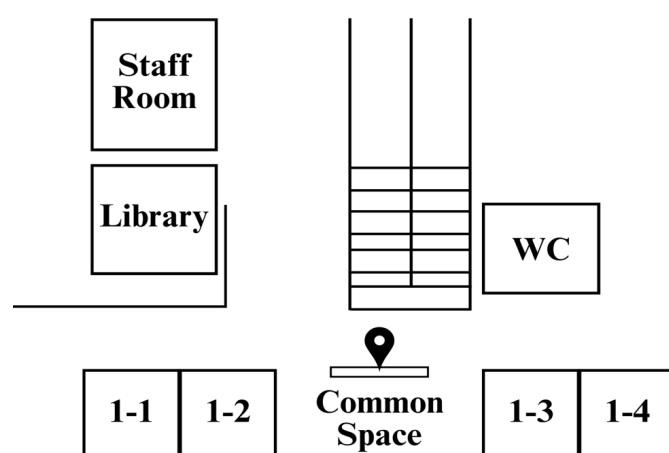
With few resources available, the LLS was only operated by myself at fixed time intervals. I started facilitating the space during all of the 10-minute breaks between classes on Thursdays and Fridays. I later changed the schedule as I had new teaching duties in the following school year. The facilitated hours were changed to Mondays between 10:30 a.m. to

10:40 a.m. and 2:05 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., and Tuesdays between 11:30 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. and 2:05 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. After-school hours (3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.) on Mondays and Tuesdays were also ALT-facilitated hours. I pushed a table, a chair, and a whiteboard to the front of the space during the first two months of its establishment (see Figure 2). As the space gained recognition, I added more whiteboards and no furniture was used as students tended to stand and leave soon after the interactions. I introduced quick mini-games, followed by interactive board content that elicited tangible actions. The whiteboards were always visible so that students could interact with the content whenever they wanted to. Souvenirs from my home country became prizes for frequent users. Students earned points towards the limited, first-come-first-serve prizes, and points were tracked with point cards. I eventually started tracking by noting down student numbers and recording them in a spreadsheet. In addition, Hooper (2023) found that language policies supportive of L1 usage at social learning spaces helped reduce anxiety among their users. To alleviate anxiety in less-proficient students at the LLS described here and help reinforce previous knowledge for those who translated for their peers, the use of Japanese was accepted.

Figure 2

Initial Setup of the LLS

Taking it to the In-Between Spaces

Located near stairways, washrooms, the library, the staff room and most importantly, along the corridor, the LLS in this high school is highly visible and well-traveled. There was already a natural flow of students who always passed by the space before the LLS's establishment.

Rather than using any empty rooms on campus, I chose an in-between space for the LLS. In Augeri's (2020) terms, in-between spaces are transitional spaces. These spaces are "between the formal and informal ones" (17:42) and are the ones that bring a "physical and functional continuity in the teaching and learning practices" (18:09). Hallways, corridors, waiting areas, entrances, or even stairways are all in-between spaces. They are the spaces where people pass by and are on their way to other destination spaces, such as classrooms (formal) and common spaces (informal). These spaces are significant but they have been overlooked in spatial research (Dale & Burrell, 2008, as cited in Shortt, 2015). Augeri (2020), however, showed that there is an increasing trend in the use of these transitional spaces on campuses.

This idea of in-betweenness resonates with Van Gennep's idea of liminality (2019). Although liminal spaces were originally seen as temporal and figurative spaces of ritual transitions, Shortt (2015) noted that Van Gennep (1909/1960) "also saw [these] spaces as constructs of the physical kind [...] in ritual[s]" (p. 638). High school students could be seen as students who have been through elementary and junior high schools, and are transitioning into the post-secondary or working environment. As an interesting parallel to these temporal states, the students of this school using this in-between space could be seen as undergoing a transition. They could be gradually familiarizing themselves with the ideas of self-access and autonomous learning at SALCs and LLSs found in post-secondary institutions.

Although there are multifunctional rooms and gym spaces in the school described in this paper, these rooms are required to be booked ahead of time and these bookings would add extra workload to other colleagues. In addition, traditional classroom arrangements still dominate the school environment. Each of these classrooms has orderly lined-up chairs, tables, and a podium at the front. These are comparable to "the arrangement[s] of [...] classical lecture theatre[s] [that communicate non-verbal] message of formalism to students" in universities (Strange & Banning, 2001, as cited in Popenici & Brew, 2013, p. 146). When compared to these formal classrooms, a liminal space is one where students "might experience freedom of some kind" or "liberation from 'structural obligations'" (Turner 1982,

157

as cited in Shortt, 2015, p. 637). In business settings, a liminal space may also give rise to "opportunities to share secrets and speak honestly" (Sturdy et al., 2006, as cited in Shortt, 2015, p. 637). Shortt (2015) also pointed out that physical liminal spaces are "semi-private [and] semi-public" (p. 639). Thus, putting the LLS in an in-between space meant that classroom formality could be replaced by casual, low-stakes conversations. Students shared their personal stories with me in this space, building a friendly connection and interpersonal bonds.

A Campaign Model

I was inspired to model the operation of the LLS after campaigns that used social marketing (SM) theories in their practices. SM was defined by Lee et al. (personal communication, n.d., as cited in Lee & Kotler, 2020, p. 8) as "a process that uses marketing principles and techniques to change priority audience behaviors to benefit society as well as the individual." Some of the successful social marketing campaigns, including the initiative "to persuade more people to get a flu shot" in Canada (Government of Canada, 2019, as cited in Levit & Cismaru, 2020, p. 246), had aligned well with the *4Ps* (*Place*, *Product*, *Price*, and *Promotion*) strategies in the SM context. In addition, the setup of the LLS was modeled after the campaign or display booths, seen on the streets or orientation days on post-secondary campuses, with large posters hanging down from tables or displayed on bulletin boards placed behind tables, leaflets to be handed out, and campaigners promoting positive social behaviors to passersby.

Applying the *4Ps* of the SM mix strategy described in Levit & Cismaru (2020), the use of an in-between space with high visibility could be seen as the selection of the *Place* (one of the *4Ps*). Learning English through games and conversations, accessing me as a social resource, and developing autonomous learning behaviors could be seen as the *Product* of the campaign. The time a student spends at the LLS and the potential anxieties felt during our interactions could be seen as the *Price* of the *4Ps*. Finally, for *Promotion*, the campaigner, which is myself in this context, acts as a messenger who promotes the idea that English is relevant to the lives of the students in the school.

To reduce the *Price* for the students, I observed that the optimal duration of interactions in a 10-minute recess was between two to three minutes. As opposed to English clubs, the campaign format required little time and commitment from the students. They had the freedom to choose when to participate. Somewhat lengthier conversations were possible during after-school hours, a time when students tended to stay around near the LLS. From a

student's perspective, I hoped that the benefit of having quick and manageable learning could weigh down some of the costs of their time spent at the LLS.

Although the interactions were short, I always tried to make sure that students left with sticky notes (see Figures 3 & 4). These could be thought of as the physical branding or *Promotion* of the LLS, where students could be reminded of the space and the knowledge they had just gained. Photos of the prizes were also shown on a display board as a promotion strategy. I learned that students were interested in these prizes as I gave some of them out to groups of winners of classroom games when I first started teaching at the school. To further promote the LLS, classroom hours in the following school year were also allotted to show the new batch of students these actual prizes.
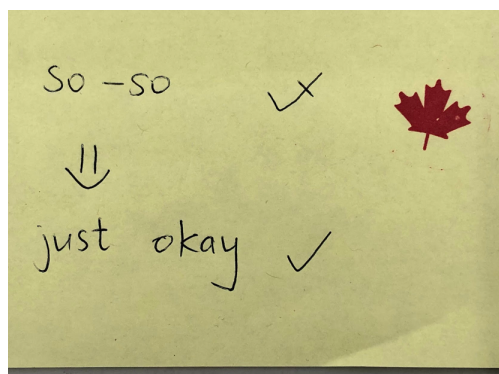
Figure 3

Sticky Note with Stamp, Drawing, and Translation

Figure 4

*Sticky Note Suggesting More Natural Expressions*

Activities and Display Boards

During the first two months of the LLS's establishment, I invited students to participate in mini-games. I later introduced short writing tasks and added more whiteboards to the space. Rather than having these boards on fixed walls, the LLS had moveable, double-sided whiteboards that could be pushed to the front of the common space, which welcomed interactions from passersby. The boards, as shown below, contained interactive games, including interactive flashcards (see Figures 5 & 8), prompts to act out the vocabulary (see Figure 6), polls (see Figure 7), matching games (see Figure 8), crosswords, takeaway cards, and QR codes that linked to recommended YouTube videos and audio online. I updated these contents monthly according to my observations on the interests received from the students. To help students find tangible topics to converse with me about, I changed the focus of the displays to content-based learning instead of grammar-based learning by the third month of the LLS's establishment. Topics on the boards included my home country, my weekend in Japan, diversity, and recommendations on books and music. Students interacted with these boards with my guidance and facilitation most of the time. I also observed that students started sharing about themselves when I openly talked about myself.
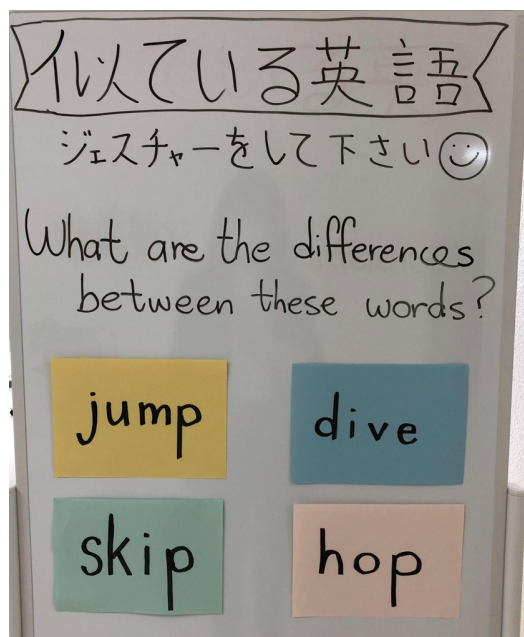
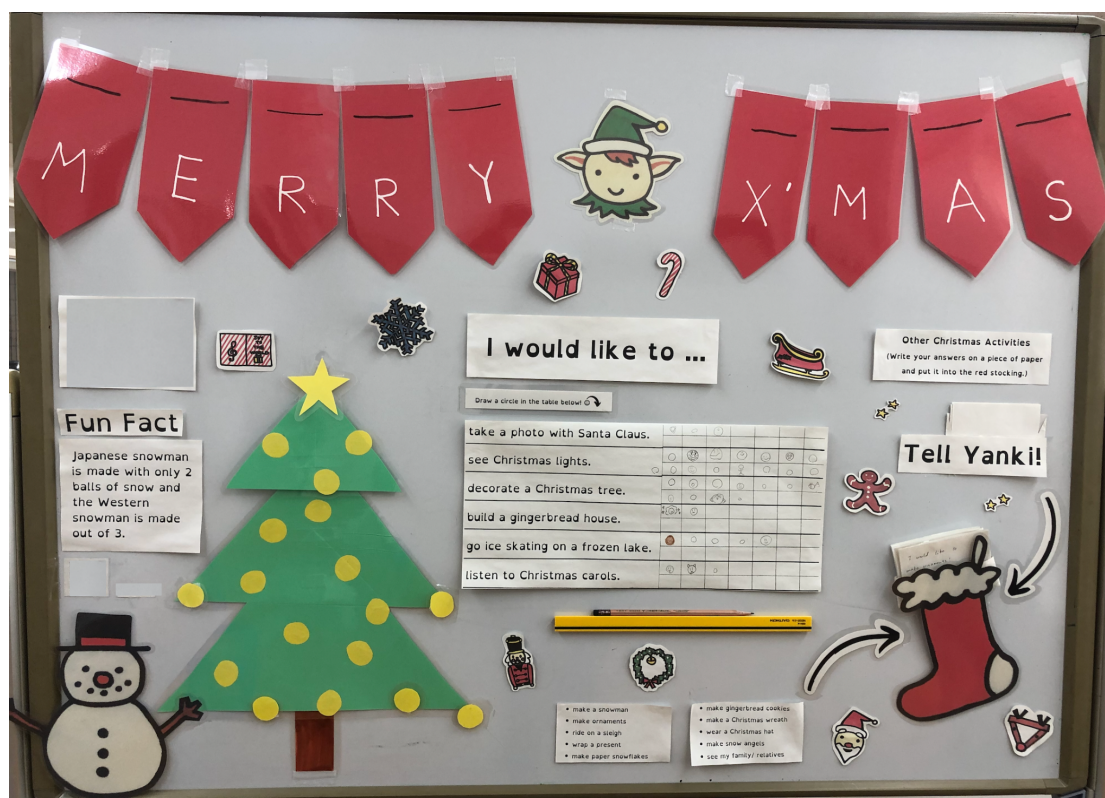**Figure 5**

Interactive Flashcards on Display
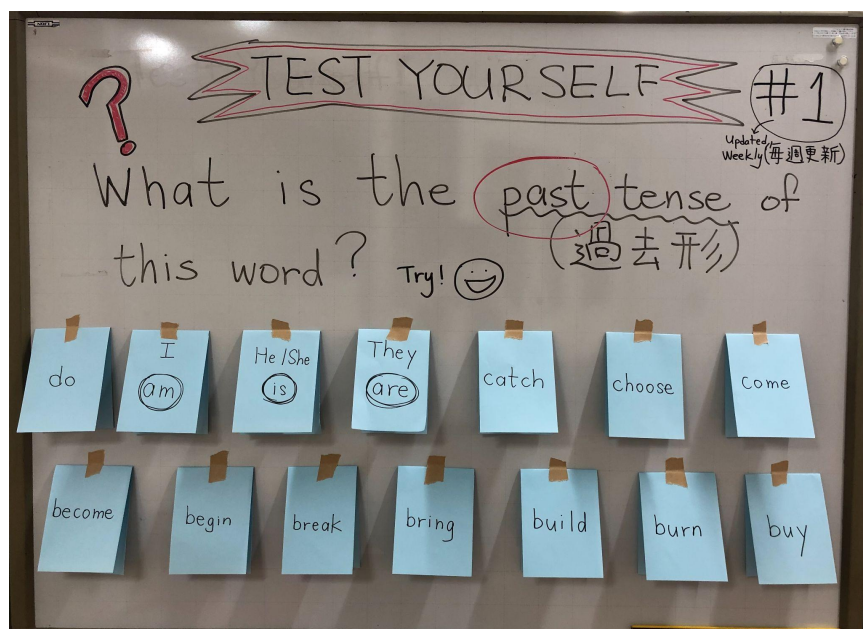
Figure 6

Board Prompting Actions

Figure 7

Christmas Board with Writing Prompts and a Poll

Figure 8

Flippable Content and Word Matching
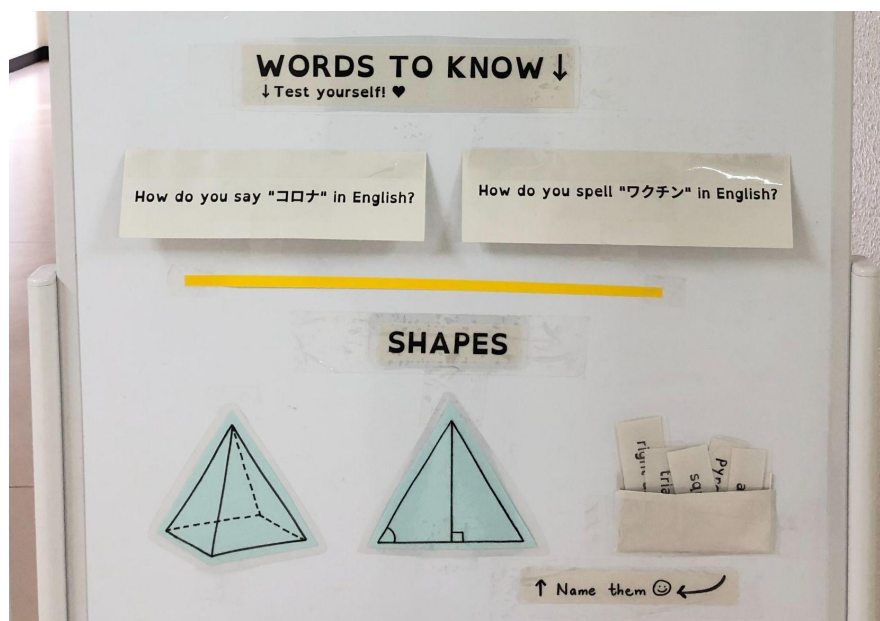
Successes

With the use of the in-between space and the campaign model, I had reached more than half of the student population (75 out of 142, 52.82%) by March 2022, three months after the LLS's establishment. There was only one grade of students, with a total of 142 students, before April 2022. An additional grade of students was admitted for the April 2022 to March 2023 school year. By late February 2023, I had reached a total of 484 contacts in the 275-student school, where I counted each contact as conversing for approximately two to three minutes or completing a task on the displays with me. I noted down all the contacts on sticky notes at the LLS and recorded them in a spreadsheet after each session. In terms of the number of participants since the LLS's establishment, there were a total of 194 out of 275 participants (70.55%) by late February 2023. Fourteen students received prizes for accruing a total of seven visits, while three out of 14 students received another prize for accruing a total of 14 visits to the LLS.

Besides these successes, the high visibility of the in-between space meant that passersby could see the ongoing interactions. Students seemed to be curious about what their peers were doing and often came over to find out more about the space and the activities themselves. The campaign format, where I greeted the students who passed by, helped recruit

participants. Based on my observations, some students appeared to feel sorry for me in this role and joined out of pity. Some others were conforming to social norms as a student facing the authority of a teacher. They came forward to the space with seemingly confused expressions when I was calling out to them. This was especially evident for those who seemed to be less familiar with the LLS. I might have also attracted participants as a non-Japanese teacher, as students were interested in someone from a different background. Moreover, those who appeared to me as the shyer ones were also showing more willingness to participate with time by taking the initiative to come forward to the space. Regulars gradually moved from only interacting with the boards to initiating conversations about themselves with me. Other teachers also interacted with the boards, completed writing prompts, and acted as role models. When I removed the boards for an update, a student asked me for the reason that the LLS had disappeared. I also overheard students discussing what they had learned on their way down the stairs. I observed that some students were trying to earn prizes and were well aware of the number of times they had visited. Finally, some students reported that they interacted with the boards when no one else was present to facilitate the space.

Limitations

Although there were a lot of successes, I had observed that there were students who ignored the LLS as they passed by. While some refused to join the sessions, others avoided eye contact or walked around to avoid the space. These could be explained by the motivational factor, "event novelty" (Nicholson & Pearce, 2001, as cited in Martin et al., 2022, p. 174), concerning the reasons people attend events in general. In the context of the LLS of this paper, the sessions that I facilitated could be seen as regularly held campaign events. Students were exposed to the LLS permanently and my greetings repeatedly. Such exposures might have led to greater recognition of the LLS. The novelty of the space, however, might have decreased, leading students to think of the space as the new normal.

I also found it difficult to continue facilitating without any student helpers and gradually developed two subtypes of burnout as defined by Maslach et al. (1996). Emotional exhaustion "is the tired and fatigued feeling that develops as emotional energies are drained", which was the case when I found that I "[could] no longer give [...myself] as [I] once could" (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 28). I became less energetic towards inviting students to participate. I also displayed depersonalization, where I had "indifferent, negative attitudes towards [my] students" such as "exhibiting [...] distant attitudes" (Maslach et al., 1996, p. 28). I became

more selective in choosing which students to invite and started ignoring those whom I judged to be busier or likely to refuse to participate. These actions might have given rise to a less inclusive LLS.

In the era of advanced technologies, students could also access information online by themselves "without the knowledge of their teachers" (Benson, 2011, p. 18). They may simply prefer learning without the curated LLS displays that I had created.

Moreover, students had different priorities. There was little time during the recess sessions to move between classes or to use the washroom when needed. I observed that after-school sessions helped reduce time constraints. Students, however, needed to make use of their time to work on assignments after school and had other conflicting responsibilities such as part-time jobs and club activities. They had to choose between language learning at the LLS or fulfilling other responsibilities.

Finally, other students resisted as they interestingly declared in English that they "[could] not speak English." Some students also told me that they did not like to read English words. Such avoidance resonated with the coping methods used by language students in other studies. Iizuka (2010) found that "giving up, ignoring, or distancing oneself from difficult situations" were "passive strategies" (p. 109) students in her study used to cope with foreign language anxiety in class. Although the LLS described in this paper is in an out-of-class context, the students mentioned had employed a similar strategy of distancing themselves from English speaking and reading.

Moving Forward

To address the above limitations, I am moving forward with ways to better reach and involve the students. For example, the LLS had remained on the same floor since its establishment. To create novelty and have an even greater reach, I am going to take advantage of the moveable displays and switch the LLS between different floors. As the classrooms of the new batch of students are located on a floor above with a similar floor plan, the in-between spaces of the floors above can be used as LLSs by moving the whiteboards upstairs.

As the present results were mostly observations, I am going to use questionnaires to evaluate from a student's perspective. In addition, the LLS was maintained by myself only. Students generally acted as participants. They, however, may know what most interests them and how to reach out to other clubs to turn competitors into collaborators. For example, Von

Joo et al. (2020) suggested reaching out to other programs on campus in their tertiary context to connect with more users.

I also established the LLS with the assumption that Japanese students are passive learners. Other researchers, however, cautioned "against deploying cultural stereotypes [...] to mask Japanese learner's aspirations for autonomy, emphasizing that [learner autonomy is] an educational goal, and any current incapacity of Japanese students should be considered transitional" (Aoki & Smith, 1999, as cited in Stroupe et al., 2016, p. 45). Chan (2001) also found similar results where her students in Hong Kong were "more amenable to autonomy" (p. 515) than the expected stereotypes. In addition, Benson (2011) stated that there is a consensus that "learners who lack autonomy are capable of developing it" and "autonomous language learning is more effective than non-autonomous learning" (p. 16).

With the popularity of the LLS and a new school year coming up, I plan to set aside class time to recruit volunteers to facilitate the LLS, create a new name for the LLS, and get ideas for the content of the displays. This idea was inspired by Chan (2001) and the Happy English Valley, a self-access center in a Hong Kong secondary school (Miller et al., 2007). Miller et al. (2007) found that the students "were always happy to be included in the decision-making process" and "a culture of ownership was clearly evident" (p. 226) with such an approach.

I tested this idea of having co-creators in October 2022 where students created Halloween displays (see Figure 9). I gave chocolates to the students as incentives, and the activity was well-received. Rather than restricting students to "the role of consumers of products selected and presented by others" (Benson, 1994, as cited in Malcolm, 2004, p. 346), a student-owned campaign format in an in-between space is the way forward in achieving greater learner autonomy.

Figure 9

Halloween Display

Final Thoughts

At the time of writing, I am in the progress of helping students achieve greater learner autonomy in the LLS. Any replications by educators and student volunteers at other learning institutions should note the lack of student-owned displays and student helpers in this LLS. Although this LLS's current operation has its limitations and areas of improvement are needed, the use of an in-between space and the campaign model had been successful in reaching a large student population, establishing a visible English learning presence, and building stronger teacher-student connections. These would not have been possible before the setup of this LLS. I encourage educators and student volunteers in other learning institutions to consider establishing or taking their SALCs and LLSs to the in-between spaces on their campuses, breaking down that extra physical barrier to English learning resources. The campaign model is also a way for students with little time commitment to learn English outside of regular class time and can be easily replicated by facilitators of different SALCs and LLSs in various institutions. In addition, ALTs in Japan may find the use of in-between spaces helpful in breaking down access barriers that arise from staff room policies such as those observable in the public high school setting of this paper.

166

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Report on the JASAL Forum at JALT2022. Motivation in Self-Access Learning: Listening to Student Experiences

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The JASAL Forum, a 90-minute conference session organised by the Japan Association for Self-Access Learning (JASAL), was held online at the international JALT2022 conference on November 13th, 2022. In this year's forum we were happy to welcome two speakers, Gerardine McCrohan from Kagawa University, and Etsuko Yamada from Hokkaido University, who each presented on projects inspired by the overall conference theme: *Learning from Students, Educating Teachers: Research and Practice.* As self-access language learning (SALL) and self-access centres (SACs) themselves are in their very nature student-centred, this theme was a good fit for this year's forum. Over 20 participants joined the forum, and the presentations were followed by some lively discussion (see below). The next sections contain summaries of the two presentations, which are then followed by an account of the discussions which took place during the forum. As these are short summaries rather than full research papers, methodologies are only given in brief.

The Motivation Behind Consistent Self-Access Center Attendees
(Gerardine McCrohan)

The SAC at Kagawa University aims to provide a space for students to study alone or in groups, to socialise, and hold events in a relaxed atmosphere. Despite having a wide range of classes and activities, teachers and staff at the SAC have found that while a small number of students become regular attendees, often attending the SAC several times a week and in some cases every day, the majority of students attend only sporadically if at all.

To try to understand why some students attend frequently for extended periods of time, a 3-part multi-choice questionnaire was administered at the end of the autumn semesters of 2019, 2020 and 2021. In total, 28 students whom the research team (the author, other teachers and staff of the SAC) identified as frequent attendees completed the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was then tabulated to facilitate comparison and analysis. This study aimed to answer three questions:

1. Why did these students first attend?

2. Why did they continue to attend?

3. Could feedback from these students help us to create an environment that would encourage more students to attend frequently?

Part 1 of the questionnaire focused on focusing on gathering background information.

There was an almost even split between male and female students, and 65% of frequent attendees were first or second years with slightly more students in their second year than first year. Students considered their spoken English abilities to be low to intermediate.

Part 2 of the questionnaire focused on their first experience attending the SAC and what motivated them to continue attending. Questions were multi-choice and students could usually select more than one answer. Nearly all the students indicated that a recommendation (from senior students, friends, and teachers) was how they first heard about the SAC. Improving their language ability (academic factors) and making friends (social factor) were important motivating factors for first attendance. When asked to choose one reason for their continued attendance, the majority of students indicated either social (55%) or academic (27%) responses as their primary reason for continuing.

Part 3 of the questionnaire surveyed the type of classes and events students attended, how often they attended these, and how they would rate the quality of these events. Students rated classes/events highly, attended a wide range of these, and "dropped by " the Global Cafe at least 3.3 days/week on average.

Although interesting data was obtained through the questionnaire, the multi-choice nature of the questions did not give students the opportunity to freely express their opinions regarding their experiences at the SAC. We therefore decided to conduct interviews and to date, the author (McCrohan) has conducted 15 follow-up interviews which were then transcribed and analysed to determine what common themes emerged.

The interviews opened by asking students what their purpose was the first time they attended the SAC. The majority of students, as in the questionnaire, mentioned a recommendation as the means through which they heard about the SAC. Moreover, 6 students (40%) said they initially went for primarily academic reasons while only 3 (20%) mentioned social reasons. The remaining students attended to get "bonus points" for their regular classes . However, when asked why they continued, 6 of the attendees (40%) said they continued to attend primarily for social reasons, while 5 (33%) said it was primarily for academic purposes, including getting bonus points from some teachers for SAC attendance. When we removed students who mentioned this bonus points incentive as their primary motivation for attendance, only 2 students said it was primarily for academic reasons.

From these interviews it appears that the academic reasons for their continued attendance declined in importance while the social elements increased. This is similar to what has been found in other studies such as Hughes et al. (2012). This change was reflected in

172

their use of vocabulary with increased usage of words and phrases associated with the social side of the SAC in the interviews.

Of particular interest was students' feeling of responsibility for the successful running of the SAC and a desire to help others. From the survey, students expressed a wide range of areas for which they felt they had a responsibility for (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Student Areas of Responsibility (in %) (n=28)
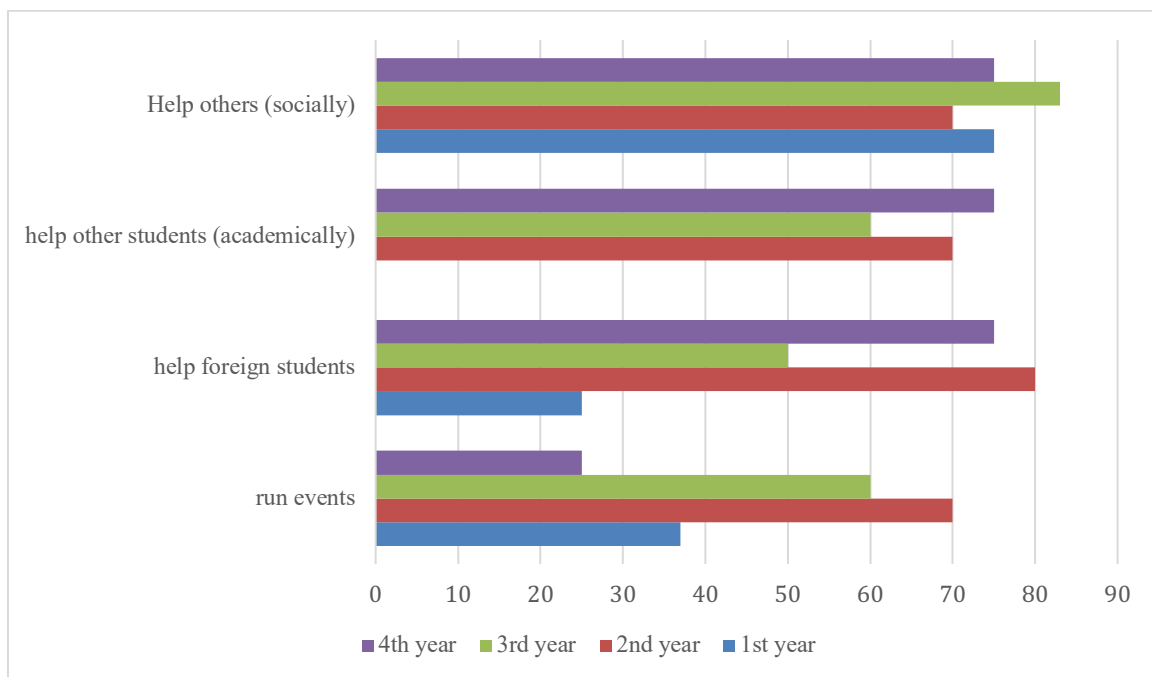
In the interviews, students again mentioned having a sense of responsibility for the success of the SAC. From these, we learned that "Helping foreign students" included a very diverse range of activities such as assisting them with their Japanese language studies, or going with them to attend a medical clinic. In addition, many students believed they also had a responsibility to help other Japanese students. For those in the upper grades, this often included academic support while helping socially was common for students in all grades.

Three main findings emerged from the research. First, since many students indicated that a recommendation was how they learned about the SAC, the most efficient way to attract new attendees may be to encourage current attendees to bring their friends and recommend it to more junior students. Second, offering students the opportunity to assume a more managerial role in the SAC gave students both a sense of community, something other researchers have found to be important in student attendance at a SAC (Murray & Fujishima,

2013; Oblinger, 2006), and a sense of responsibility for the success of the SAC. Finally, building relationships with international students, and between Japanese students across faculties and grades, cannot be underestimated. This leaves the team, and all those involved with running a SAC, with an interesting conundrum: What is the best way to balance having good-quality academic activities while helping students build strong social networks? If we could achieve this balance, we hope that the number of frequent attendees would increase, making the SAC a warm, inviting, social, and academically stimulating space.

Learning from L2 Speakers of Japanese: The Effect on Japanese Students' English Learning

(Etsuko Yamada)

The continuation of self-directed English learning is a challenge especially for students after the compulsory stage of English education. Many students have studied English for university entrance examinations and after these they complete the accredited compulsory English courses during the general education stage at university. In the case of Hokkaido University, many students tend to have difficulties in setting their own direction for their English learning by themselves after they are released from these extrinsic motivations of studying English exclusively for credits and exams. To support them in continuing their English learning, a half-a-year non-credit course which consists of an intensive English learning strategy course, followed by a five-month monitoring period, is now offered to Japanese undergraduate students in 2nd to 6th years (some medical science majors have six-year undergraduate programmes) who have already completed compulsory foreign language courses.

This intensive course is the context for this study. It is conducted in Japanese by the author (Yamada). The intensive course consists of five sessions (90 minutes each): Goal-setting, English proficiency/skills needed, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, Plan-Do- Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, and learning strategies. A total of 60 students participated (divided into two groups) in summer 2022 and their own self-directed study was monitored for five months (using an online community in Google Classroom, monthly face-to-face meeting sessions, and a monthly goal setting and reflection form) after the intensive course.

This study explored a dimension added to the intensive course this year to raise L2 speakers' awareness of their own mother tongue, Japanese. The following two activities were added to the course:

(1) Discussions in Japanese on language learning experience with international students "learning Japanese" (advanced level L2 speakers of Japanese were invited to a session).

(2) Listening to Japanese speeches by L2 speakers of Japanese (three levels: with beginners, intermediate, and advanced) and paying attention to what kind of elements differentiate the levels of their speeches.

In (1), the aim was to make students aware of what it means 'to use a foreign language in real communication' through interaction in Japanese with international students. Japanese students without authentic experience of having used foreign languages for meaningful purposes tend to have difficulties in understanding what their potential and realistic goals are, as their experience of English use is limited to controlled conversation in classrooms or online. It was assumed that they could gain a better sense through this activity in their mother tongue.

In (2), the aim was to help Japanese students perceive the difference of oral proficiency levels, as they can have a better grasp of the levels in their mother tongue, Japanese. It is important for them to identify what kinds of elements differentiate the levels, which would help them become more aware of the skills they need to aim to acquire in English.

Under a loose research design, it was decided to make the research question open: what are the learnings from the activities involving the L2 speakers of Japanese? For the investigation, students' reflection notes were used as data, as the data should ideally be what students produced without being conscious of my research question. Participants' consent to the use of their productions in the course for research purposes was gained in advance, in accordance with the institution's ethics procedures.

Thirty-six Japanese students who joined in the above two sessions were asked to write whatever reflections. Student perceptions related to "L2 speakers of Japanese" were extracted from their descriptions. Twelve related themes were identified and grouped into two main categories. For (1), two key concepts were observed: *sympathy* (such as sharing the difficulties of language learning, whatever the target language is) and *inspiration* (being

motivated in their English learning, stimulated by international students using their L2). Five themes related to the former and three, to the latter. For (2), one key concept was noted: *a model to aim for* (managing well-structured/abstract topics and a wide range of vocabulary). Four themes fall into this category. The students started understanding what an advanced level learner can do in more detail, instead of a vague and idealised image of English native speakers.

Initially, the author (Yamada) expected that the Japanese students would learn about the strategies and beliefs of L2 speakers of Japanese, as these kinds of aspects are common regardless of the target language. The international students had already acquired advanced-level Japanese language skills and it was assumed that they would have acquired numerous strategies which the Japanese students could apply to their own English learning. However, the study revealed that the effect of the activities was actually more on the psychological side: the Japanese students' motivations and aims for their own English learning. Through interacting with learners of Japanese in their mother tongue, the Japanese learners of English became more aware of what is required to be a successful L2 learner, and the range and levels of L2 skills that learners have. This understanding represents a more nuanced understanding than a single idealised and unrealistic image of native speakers' fluency and pronunciation that they might feel pressured to aim for.

To conclude, one implication of this study is that the addition of opportunities to interact with L2 speakers of Japanese could lead to a realistic and effective goal setting for English learning and broaden Japanese learners' views on English learning. Educators could enhance student motivation for learning by increasing opportunities to meet and interact with international students and to be familiar with their L2 (Japanese language) learning experiences. As Little (2000) states, "learner autonomy is a matter of developing and exercising a capacity for independent learning behaviour in interaction with other learners," (p.26). When promoting self-directed learning, such environments and occasions to meet and interact with various students need to be considered and ensured on campus. SALL facilities may be ideal places for these interactions to take place.

Discussion

In their presentations, McCrohan and Yamada highlighted the importance of integrating student input into decision-making for SALL, whether it is about what persuades

learners to use self-access facilities, or what can be learned from interacting with students with different learning experiences, in Yamada's case learners of English interacting with learners of Japanese as part of a SALL course. These voices can inform our decision-making and remind us how we may be able to motivate our learners to engage more deeply in SALL.

As the forum included both experienced SALL practitioners and newcomers to the field, the Q&A session focused on what to bear in mind when attempting to start a new self-access centre, or revive flagging facilities. The following advice from the presenters, moderators and participants was given.

> *Linking the facilities to institutional goals and mission statements.* By showing how a SAC can fit smoothly into the existing system, and help the university achieve its own objectives (international exchange etc.), you can get more stakeholders on board. SACs can provide support for international students or make your institution a more attractive option for potential students, so highlight the marketing/publicity advantages too.

> *Identifying sympathetic colleagues who may be interested in working with you.* There can sometimes be some suspicion from other faculty about the purpose of SALL facilities and what they may represent in terms of extra workload, so identifying colleagues who share your vision can be vital. Some may have worked at institutions with similar facilities before, so find out about their prior experiences (understanding that they may not be 100% positive ones) and get as much input from them as possible to ensure their buy-in when putting together a proposal.

> *Visiting other facilities.* JASAL has a registry of SACs and there is likely to be at least one not too far away. Virtual visits are also possible. Most SALL practitioners will be delighted to share their experiences with you. Check out their social media posts for ideas of their activities.

> *Identifying core groups of users or potential users* to involve as formal or informal student staff/volunteers. Harnessing the enthusiasm of students will go a long way! If there is no budget available to pay students, set up a small volunteer team and get their input on simple things like making posters, brightening up a space etc. Recruit from your classes or ask other instructors to identify potential students. International students may also be looking for ways to make Japanese friends and can be a great resource. Courses like the one Yamada describes above can also be very effective in

attracting the kinds of students who are intrinsically interested in improving their language skills through SALL activities.

Starting small. Even if you don't have a budget, starting conversation sessions at lunchtime or in office hours, or providing a cupboard or a small space with some games or materials, can be a good starting point from which to build. Once it's popular, lobby for a bigger space to use!

Holding events. Cultural workshops by international students, or study abroad reports can be popular events that students can easily take part in. More ambitious ideas raised in the forum include a presentation contest, "Model United Nations" events, etc.

As McCrohan's research highlighted, and is well-documented in the literature (Murray & Fujishima, 2013; Mynard et al., 2020), the social function of a SAC is what tends to convince students to keep coming back, so activities which focus on building a community of learners will be key. Additionally, the opportunity to interact with international students, as Yamada's study highlights, is also appreciated by Japanese users of SACs. Gathering user input and reactions, through studies such as those described by the presenters in this forum, can help to keep facilities and services relevant and interesting to students, and help guarantee the success of SALL at any institution.

Acknowledgement

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