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Longitudinal research on EFL teacher professional development in (Japanese) contexts: Collaborative action research projects

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Abstract

This study examined how secondary teachers (junior and senior high school teachers) of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan participated in collaborative action research and engaged in their professional development over four years. In particular, little is known as to how EFL teachers challenge their beliefs and implement innovative practices based on communicative language teaching (CLT) through teacher learning processes. Using a mixed methods design, the study identified three developmental stages regardless of years of teaching experience: (1) Challenging teacher beliefs through TESOL classes and modeling teachers who have done similar action research (AR) through trial and error teaching as they practice communicative activities; (2) Making sense of teaching through adapting and modifying theories of CLT; and (3) Building confidence in teaching by actually seeing students change. These stages overlap and are not mutually exclusive, depending on teacher and teaching context. The study reveals teachers' dynamic learning processes and professional development.

Keywords

action research, EFL, mixed methods, professional development, teacher learning

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I Introduction

1 Background

How teachers learn to teach in context has been the focus of general educational research for almost a century (e.g. Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Waller, 1932), and eventually a focus for teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), English as a second language (ESL), and foreign language communities (e.g. Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Kleinsasser, 1993; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). More recently, Cross (2010) reviewed language teacher cognition and practice research and noted yet again that language teaching practice and context need to be more fully understood. We address concerns that context matters to teachers of English as a foreign language (e.g. Kleinsasser, 2012; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008) and examine how junior and high school teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan participate in action research (AR); inquiring and collaborating in educational settings. We investigate and consider their theoretical knowledge, grounded contextual questions, and practical concerns (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995) to understand how they learn about and experience successful learning-centered and language-enriched teaching practices with empirical evidence of twenty-first century professional development (e.g. Avalos, 2011; Hargreaves, 2013; Kwo, 2013).

2 Theoretical perspectives: Professional teacher development

Professional teacher development concerns schools and classrooms where (junior and high school) teachers (and others) engage in continuous learning. (e.g. Avalos, 2011; Clandinin et al., 2013; Hargreaves, 2013; Kwo, 2013; Lieberman, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Little, 1993; Russ, Sherin, & Sherin, 2016). The context, content, and stakeholders play central roles in understanding and researching professional teacher development. As Avalos (2011) suggested, 'There is thus a constant need to study, experiment, discuss and reflect in dealing with teacher professional development of the history and traditions of groups of teachers, the educational needs for their student populations, the expectations of their education systems, teachers' working conditions and the opportunities to learn that are open to them' (p. 10). Such themes permeate ideas discussed, uncovered, and codified in various disguises of learning-enriched and -impoverished environments (Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin, 1993; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Quintero, 2017; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Professional teacher development identifies teacher learning needs using multiple sources of information on student processes and outcomes (e.g. Hawley & Valli, 1999), builds upon theories and practices regarding schools where students and teachers learn (e.g. Smylie, 1995), and challenges crucial curriculum, instruction, and teacher collaboration to produce shared understanding and investment, thoughtful development, and rigorous testing of selected ideas (e.g. Little, 1986). Kwo (2013) reinforced these and other issues while reminding the profession that teacher learning consists of co-constructing perceptions of problems and changing understandings of often held assumptions across professional life spans: 'Sustainable learning is a form of engaged living of educators as moral beings concerned with questioning and making choices through

which they can be too easily taken for granted' (p. 278). Clandinin et al. (2013) highlighted three main shaping forces of professional learning/development including 'prior influences, initial teacher training, and school contexts' (p. 255), and encouraged 'the kinds of continuing spaces needed on school landscapes to sustain and retain beginning teachers' (p. 257).

In a recent review of teacher learning, Russ et al. (2016) detailed perspectives of process-product, cognitive, and situative and sociocultural ways teacher learning have been researched. They proposed 'a learning theory approach that seeks to describe the dynamics of the learning process of teachers learning to teach' (p. 391). Focusing on what constitutes teacher learning, they identified the different interacting entities and processes involved in the complexity of teacher learning. They suggested, in part, that 'teacher learning might be understood as requiring existing everyday knowledge and practices to be deleted and replaced' (p. 422) and 'to understand teacher learning in terms of continuities between the everyday and the specialized, rather than to focus on discontinuities' (p. 423).

These and other issues may combine, at times, to create what Hargreaves (2013) classified as contrived collegiality on steroids (p. 227). Nonetheless, Hargreaves acknowledged 'Teaching is a profession with shared purposes, collective responsibility and mutual learning' (p. 234). He suggested that:

> teachers sometimes have to be drawn or *pulled* into professional learning communities, and sometimes they have to be drawn or driven or *pushed* by them. However, pulling should not be so weak that it permits no collaboration at all, and pushing should not be so excessive that it amounts to shoving or bullying. (p. 217, italics original)

The pushing and pulling may resonate with the ideas set forth in considering the 'every day and specialized' (Russ et al., 2016): creating dynamic learning forces of pushing and pulling in the everyday and specialized interactions of teachers (and students, among others) within learning environments.

3 Literature review: An overview

The earlier literature on second language teachers investigated the influence of personal belief systems, teacher pre-service and in-service professional development, and school contexts on language teachers' behaviors (Kleinsasser, 1993). Specifically, in the ESL/EFL arenas it was found ESL pre-service teachers' prior beliefs based on formal language learning experiences hindered development of alternative instructional practices and potential emerging beliefs, teachers favored a communicative approach but did not implement communicative activities in observations and offered fragmented knowledge about communicative language teaching (CLT) relying less on formal knowledge (e.g. Johnson, 1994; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999). Savignon (2002) attended to contexts in Asia, Europe, and North America concerning CLT,[1] considering the relationships between teacher education and contextual notions of CLT; she encouraged future study in various countries and learning environments. More recently, research has turned to studying teacher cognition and context, promoting a socio-cognitive focus (e.g.

Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, & Okada, 2018; Borg, 2006; Cao, 2014; Johnson, 2018; Kubanylova & Feryok, 2015) and promoting teacher and student voices about language and communication in context (e.g. Hafner, 2015; Martinez-Adrian, Gallardo-del-Puerto, & Basterrechea, 2017; Teemant, 2018). The meaning of language education pedagogical change has also received attention (e.g. Arnott, 2017). These studies continue to utilize qualitative methods and focus on a certain period of time, more often than not.

Japan's second language teaching and learning landscape echoes similar findings and commentary from the wider second language field. For instance, studies using language teachers in Japan reinforced and echoed various research studies and results that changing guidelines, standards, or curricula does not necessarily make a difference without sufficient and continuous opportunities for teacher learning in context (e.g. Nishino, 2011, 2012; Pacek, 1996; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). Pacek (1996) concluded a survey of 43 high school teachers of English after they had attended a one-year in-service programs and found that top-down innovation currently by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) did not portend change. Nishino (2011; see also 2012) revealed that while the majority of 139 senior high school English teachers had positive views of CLT, only 30 % reported actually using communicative activities in their classes after an Action Plan was implemented. Sato and Kleinsasser (2004) conducted a yearlong study in a Japanese high school with 19 senior high school English teachers regarding how they learned to teach and understood CLT. The triangulated data from these teachers' context, practices, and interactions revealed at least three rules in this particular teaching culture: (1) Managing students and managing various work took precedence over teaching; (2) Communication and collaboration centered on keeping pace with others and getting through the day, rather than solving teaching issues; (3) It was particularly important to teach the same way for the common test and to maintain classroom management. The majority of English teachers reinforced traditional practices (e.g. grammar explanation and translation) ignoring national guidelines. More recent studies continue this theme including difficulties of curriculum change through the introduction of new communicative textbooks (Humphries & Burns, 2015), lack of the government's support for clarifying the guidelines (Tahira, 2012), and difficulties in implementing a school-wide curriculum reform (Sato & Hirano, 2014). These findings offering various number of participants coalesce and tell a story that challenges both theory and practice in language learning and teaching in Japanese contexts.

From at least Malinowski (1923) and Firth (1930) to Larsen-Freeman and Freeman's (2008) 'postdisciplinarity' views on through to sociocultural notions concerning language teachers, teaching, and cognition (e.g. Cross, 2010; Golombek & Doran, 2014) and beyond, interest remains on relationships between languages, teaching and learning practices, situations, and contexts. Continued studies in contexts assist with further sketching second language teaching and learning landscapes (e.g. Kleinsasser, 2012, 2013).

4 Context review

a National. Findings above indicate that top-down change in the way English is taught are not readily adopted. Nevertheless, in the 1994 guidelines MEXT recommended that Junior and Senior High School teachers switch from traditional grammar-translation

lessons to communication-oriented ones. Simultaneously, MEXT mandated a new Oral English Communication class, which publishers attempted to base on the guidelines.

After revising guidelines again in 2002 for junior high school levels and 2003 for high school levels, MEXT unveiled its Action Plan to Nurture Japanese Who Can Use English for Communication, spanning from 2004 to 2008. This ambitious reform included nation-wide in-service teacher training of all public junior and senior high school English teachers, numbering about 60,000. The reform also stated that senior high school English teachers were to teach English only in English.

b Local. In response to the MEXT guidelines and wishes of some local English teachers eager to help their students use English, we developed and participated in a communicative language teaching research group to implement 'new ways to understand and use practice as a site for professional learning' (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 6). In 2000, we formed a Communicative Language Teaching Research Group (see Sato, 2003) that grew into a Center for EFL Teacher Development with a monthly workshop open to all interested English Teachers and an MA TESOL program by 2006. Mindful that published action research (AR) was rare, and even rarer within collaborative groupings (e.g. Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Burns, 1999, 2005), we decided that the distinguishing feature of our developing MA TESOL program would be to require multi-year AR projects. Our AR ideas were influenced by Carr & Kemmis (1986) and Kemmis & McTaggart (1986) and rooted in Dewey's reflective practice which sought what Milles (2003) described as 'developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on education practices in general, and improving student outcomes' (p. 4).

Here is basically the process of the AR yearly process used within this local Japanese context (giving some preliminary information about data collected below). Annual AR projects begin with an orientation to what AR is, followed by discussions in small groups of mixed new and experienced AR participants who describe their teaching issues and brainstorm ideas for AR projects that they think may improve their students' learning. These annual AR preparations occur during a two-day study trip in May, the second month of the Japanese school year. From June to February, AR participants attend the monthly workshop where they experience basic communicative teaching techniques such as integrated-skills language learning, communicative grammar teaching, extensive reading and communication strategies. Following each workshop, action researchers meet in small groups to report on their own AR and show their class handouts. AR participants collect data midyear, surveying their students' self-assessment of their learning and their feelings about the new way of learning. Survey results are included in the midterm AR report and presented at an August overnight study trip. At a March overnight study trip, final AR reports, handouts, and comparisons of mid-year and year-end survey results are presented and published as a book for participants.

II Problem statement and research questions

Although AR for teacher development has gained some attention in the academic literature (e.g. Gebhard, 2005; Pennington, 1996; Sowa, 2009; Tsui, 2012; Wallace, 1995),

there remains little documentation regarding how AR influences professional development including (language) teacher learning and curriculum development. This study seeks to reveal the extent to which Japanese teachers of EFL who are enrolled in an MA program and engaged in collaborative AR organized by university professors, are able to develop their teaching practices in school contexts as a result of their AR experiences (e.g. Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Burns, 1999; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). The following three questions formulate the research focus for this phase (three) of a larger research project:

1. How did EFL teachers learn to teach through continuous collaborative AR?
2. What did EFL teachers learn from the continuous collaborative AR?
3. Why did these EFL teachers have difficulty sharing their new ideas and working with other teachers for curriculum development in their workplaces?

III Methodology

1 Mixed methods design and procedures

By purposefully choosing certain aspects of quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed methods gain 'breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration' (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007, p. 213). In particular, beliefs are context-dependent (Pajares, 1992: Skott, 2015). Pajares (1992) claimed that 'beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do: fundamental prerequisites that educational researchers have seldom followed' (p. 314). Similarly, most recently, in *International handbook of research on teachers' beliefs*, Skott (2015) pointed out methodological issues. Scott claims that 'standardized instruments may impose a set of beliefs on the participants rather than elicit their own' (p. 20). Skott further explained:

> Because of these problems the task for the researcher is to infer or attribute beliefs to research participants based on different types of data. Verbal accounts complement, elaborate on, or specify inferences made from classroom observations in order to piece together an image of teachers' beliefs. This methodological triangulation is based on the assumption of belief stability across contexts (p. 20).

This mixed methods research conducted over four years focuses on phase three of the larger study, following phase one (Mutoh et al., 2009) and phase two (Sato et al., 2009).[2] Moreover, as Krathwohl (1993) suggested, longitudinal studies further strengthen a research project as they encounter confounding effects (e.g. development processes, events studied, and accumulated experiences; p. 556) offering a 'panorama of techniques to gather data over time and determine the pattern of changes' (p. 32).

Table 1 sketches the mixed methods utilized in all phases of the research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the first author in either Japanese or English, tape-recorded, transcribed, and translated for analysis (see Appendix 1). Interviews lasted 30 to 50 minutes. Classroom observations were conducted either by the first or the second author, and field notes were documented and shared between the two. A second language acquisition (SLA) survey, 'Popular Opinions about Language Learning and

Table 1. Mixed methods procedures.

Phase	Year	Participants	Procedures
One	2007[a]	15	• SLA surveys (annually, at the beginning and end of school year) • Monthly reports (in English) • Mid-term, final reports (in English) • Interviews (15, in April, 2008) • Classroom observations (4 JHS and 4 SHS teachers) (twice each school year)
Two	2008	19	• SLA surveys (annually, at the beginning and end of school year) • Monthly reports (in English) • Mid-term, final reports (in English) • Interviews (19, in April, 2009) • Classroom observations (4 JHS and 4 SHS teachers) (conducted twice annually)
Three	2009–2010	5	• Essay based on SLA surveys • Interviews (5, in April, 2011) • Classroom observations (conducted twice annually) • AR final project[b] (in English)

Notes. SLA = second language acquisition. JHS = junior high school. SHS = senior high school. [a] In Japan school starts in April and ends in March. [b] The Action Research final project is a collection of three year's worth of action research consisting of a literature review, evaluation of each year's action research and conclusion, which is equivalent to an MA thesis.

Teaching' (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), was also conducted at the beginning and end of the AR. These same procedures were repeated in phase two and phase three. Moreover, we focused on five teachers for further data analysis and new interview questions were added in phase three so as to reveal dynamic teacher learning processes over four years:

- How did you teach English and what kind of beliefs did you have before joining the MA TESOL program?
- How did you change your beliefs through the MA TESOL program?
- When did you start to change your practices? Why?

By repeating in-depth interviews and classroom observations over four years, the study sought to gain better insight into teacher learning, professional development, and continuous collaborative AR.

2 Data analysis

Inductive approaches were used to analyze the qualitative data from interviews, observations, and documents (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 1993). Interview and observation data were carefully and recursively read, identifying any category that might encode cultural meaning (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The lesson plan, handouts and self-evaluation of each student's monthly AR report as well as their mid-term and final presentations were

Table 2. Number of action research (AR) participants by school level and year.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Elementary	(1)	0	0	0
Junior high school	7 (1)	4	6 (1)	9 (1)
Senior high school	7	13	9	6 (1)
University	0	(1)	(1)	0
Language school	0	1	2	1
Total	15 (2)	19 (1)	18 (2)	16 (2)

assessed (Glensne & Peshkin, 1992). Additionally, after Phase three, five MA TESOL students were requested to read and discuss the data with researchers' analyses to further authenticize its validity (see Lincoln & Guba, 1985; see also, for example, Alcoff, 1991; Elbaz, 1991; Josselson, 2007). Our analysis and data presentations were particularly assisted by Elbaz's queries: 'What kind of discourse is being used and to what extent does it allow the authentic expression of teachers' experiences and concerns?' (p. 10). In short, both qualitative and quantitative data appeared to contribute a 'breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration' (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 213) that neither method alone could have, thus offering greater reliability (Creswell, 2010).

3 Participants

Table 2 provides participant numbers in each AR project from 2007 through 2010. However, we focus only on secondary teachers (junior and senior high school teachers) for subsequent data analysis in this phase three because teaching context differs in each school level and secondary teachers were main participants. Additionally, we excluded native English-speaking teachers since they were assistant teachers and team-taught with Japanese teachers of English.

The first author selected five secondary Japanese teachers who represented this collaborative AR group and were enrolled in the MA program. As Table 3 indicates, based on years of teaching, two venerable teachers (Midori, Hiroko), one experienced teacher (Tomoko), and two beginning teachers (Momoko, Toru) were selected for the phase 3 analysis. Hiroko, Midori, and Tomoko entered the MA TESOL program and started their AR in 2007. Hiroko and Midori completed their AR final project (partial requirement of the MA degree) in 2009 and continued AR in 2010. Tomoko took a one-year leave of absence in 2009 for study abroad and returned to the program, completing her AR final project in 2010. Momoko and Toru entered the MA program in 2008 and completed their AR final projects in 2010.

IV Findings: Five Japanese EFL secondary teachers' professional development

1 Three developmental stages

According to the mixed methods data analysis, all five teachers, regardless of years taught, passed through three developmental stages in their AR journeys.

Table 3. Five selected teachers (pseudonyms) and their participation in data collection.

Name / Age (years) / Teaching (years)	2007: AR/Ob/Int	2008: AR/Ob/Int	2009: AR/Ob/Int	2010: AR/Ob/Int
Midori (female, SHS) / 52 / 29	*/*/*	*/*/*	*/*/	*/*/*
Hiroko (female, JHS) / 56 / 32	*/*/*	*/*/*	*/*/	*/ /*
Tomoko (female, JHS) / 38 / 15	*/*/*	*/*/*	leave of absence	*/*/*
Momoko (female, SHS) / 50 / 3		*/*/*	*/*/	*/ /*
Toru (male, SHS) / 42 / 7		*/*/*	*/*/	*/*/*

Notes. AR = action research. Ob = classroom observation. Int = interview. JHS = junior high school. SHS = senior high school.

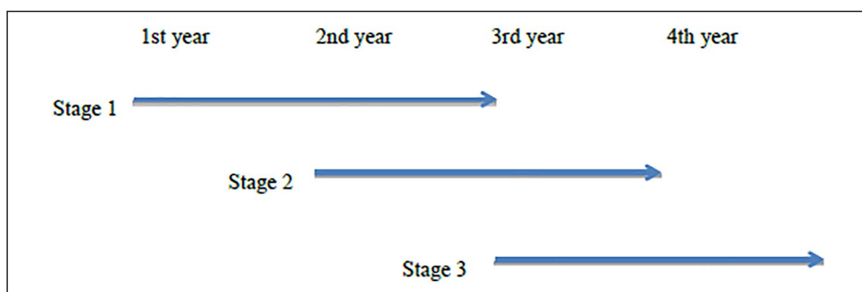

Figure 1. Three professional developmental stages.

- Stage 1: Challenging teacher beliefs through TESOL classes and modeling teachers who have done similar AR through trial and error teaching as they practice communicative activities (at least one to two years)
- Stage 2: Making sense of teaching through adapting and modifying theories of CLT (at least one to two years)
- Stage 3: Building confidence in teaching by actually seeing students change (at least one to two years)

These three stages overlap, as displayed in Figure 1.

a Stage 1-1: Challenging teacher beliefs through TESOL classes Teachers' initial beliefs about language learning and teaching were revealed. Three of the five teachers reported their initial beliefs, while the other two were not sure about theirs.

Midori, Hiroko, and Tomoko reported that they taught in a traditional way.

> I taught grammar explicitly because I did not know any other ways. I had my students prepare for exams by using mechanical drills. (Midori/Interview/2011)

> I relied on pattern practice, drills, and memorization. (Hiroko/Interview/2011)

> I introduced new words, had students translate each sentence, and practiced chorus reading. (Tomoko/Interview2011)

Momoko and Toru were not sure what their beliefs were.

> I did not have clear beliefs about how to teach English. I taught as I was taught as a student. (Momoko/Interview/2011)

> I did not have beliefs about how to teach English as I started my career as a music teacher. (Toru/Interview/2011)

Tomoko explained why she relied on traditional ways of teaching. As a novice teacher, she attended training held by the Municipal Board of Education and was told ‘to avoid explicit grammar explanation and translation of every English sentence in the textbook’ (p. 5). She reflected in her AR final project:

> However, it did not take long until I noticed that avoidance of explicit teaching confused my students. They said that they needed more explicit grammar teaching and Japanese translation of the textbook. The saddest thing for teachers is not being trusted by their students. As a result, to earn the trust from my students, I began devoting more time to grammar explanations, drilling, and memorization . . . I was struggling to find answers: how can students effectively learn English, what is communication, and what academic ability do students have? I assume that many in-service teachers are engaging in a similar struggle. (Tomoko, AR Final Project, 2010, pp. 5-6)

All five teachers learned theories about second language acquisition (SLA)[3] and second language teaching (SLT)[4] through the MA TESOL program and challenged their beliefs. Three teachers reported how surprised they were when learning about SLA and SLT.

> I was shocked to learn that imitation is not effective in SLA. (Tomoko/Interview/2011)

> My preconception about language learning was destroyed. (Momoko/Interview/2011)

> I was astonished by SLA. I learned that my teaching style was out of date. (Hiroko/Interview/2011)

Midori reported how she changed her initial beliefs in SLA. This is an excerpt of her essay written in September after her first semester (2007).

> Looking back on my lessons, I have realized that my teaching was mostly based on behaviorism. Or rather, I did not know other ways to teach language because this was, and still is, a common approach at high schools. I usually presented correct forms of the target language, let students practice them with controlled exercises, and then they produced the language in a little more meaningful yet controlled practice. However, through my experience, I realized that students could not acquire the language as I had expected. I decided to take this course to find out why. Through this course, I have learned that students need more exposure and interaction in English. What makes exposure possible is a lot of comprehensible input using the four skills and recycling what students learn. Through interaction, students have chances to notice their language use. (Midori/SLA essay/2007)

However, it took them some time to put theories into practice. Momoko and Tomoko revealed that it took time for them to adapt new ideas in their classes.

> I could not make use of the theories in my classes immediately. I put them into practices little by little. (Momoko/Interview/2011)

> Although I learned theories, it took me about one year to incorporate them in my class. (Tomoko/Interview/2011)

Eventually, developing beliefs began to manifest.

> Integrating language skills is good. (Momoko/Toru/Interviews/2011)

> Students need many chances to interact with each other, not like teacher-centered classes that I used to rely on. (Tomoko/Interview/2011)

Classroom observations documented Tomoko's class on January 23, 2009 (her second-year teaching after starting her MA study, see Appendix 2a). In her early pair work, she struggled getting students to use more English. When students started to use Japanese, she said, 'You can't speak Japanese here!' After 25 minutes, she returned to the textbook and teacher-centered teaching.

b Stage 1-2: Modeling teachers who have done similar AR All five teachers reported modeling lessons of teacher(s) more experienced in AR than themselves. For instance:

> I learned how to integrate speaking and writing from Ms Takayama. (Midori/Interview/2011)

> By modeling Midori's handouts, I learned how to teach grammar. (Tomoko/Hiroko/Interview/2011)

Nonetheless, modeling other teachers and using their ideas did not automatically change teaching practices (see Toru's class, February 18, 2008, his first-year teaching after starting MA study, Appendix 3a). Toru modeled Ms Tsuda's effective handouts for skill integration in reading using a three-part reading framework (see Brown, 2007 for details). Though Toru conducted it properly, he struggled getting students to use English in class.

c Stage 2: Making sense of teaching through adapting and modifying (at least one to two years) Stage 2 started in the second or the third year. Teachers experienced successful teaching: more communicative activities, modifying/improving previous activities, and more students speaking in English. Their voices:

> I tried AR without understanding it in my first year. In second and third year, I could increase communicative activities steadily. (Hiroko/Interview/2011)

> I imitated other teachers in my first-year AR. I started adapting their handouts to my teaching context from the second year. (Momoko/Interview/2011)

In her final AR project Tomoko reported that her teaching had become more consistent and explained the reasons for more communicative activities in her class.

> With the positive survey results from the previous year's AR, I determined to increase communicative activities . . . I started communicative activities from the very beginning. My teaching was more consistent compared to the previous year. (Tomoko, AR final project, 2010, p. 30)

Tomoko's classroom observation documented the improvements in her teaching (see Appendixes 2a and 2b). She developed a communicative activity focusing on 'can' using a group interview task. Compared to her difficulty having students use English previously, this time they could, due to successfully organized group work.

d Stage 3: Building confidence in teaching by actually seeing students change (at least one or two years) Stage 3 began from the late second year of AR to the fourth year, depending on the teacher. For instance, Toru wrote that his teaching became systematic at the end of the second year (Toru/AR report/2010). In 2009 Toru moved to a new high school which was assigned by the prefectural Board of Education in 2008 to experiment with an English curriculum reform project. The first author was designated as project advisor. He appointed Toru to make a team with the same grade level teachers. Toru wrote:

> Adjusting to systematic teaching after moving to the new school in my second year of AR was difficult. I was at a loss. Not only Dr. Sato but also other teachers in our MA TESOL course helped me greatly. Thanks to them, my teaching gradually changed. (AR final project, 2011, p. 99)

Toru reported 'My students started to talk longer by using conversation strategies[5] and write more in the second semester. That impressed me' (Interview/2011). In addition, Toru's classroom observation revealed that his teaching of reading was consistently based on the three-part reading framework: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading (for details, see Brown, 2007, and Appendix 3b). After pre-reading, students practiced reading aloud in pairs and reading silently to check the time. The post-reading activity was exchanging information with rotating pair partners about 'The job I'm interested in,' which was related to the reading topic. Toru gave three general questions to spark each student's thinking. Students aimed for two-and-a-half-minute conversations. Toru reflected on the 2009 school year:

> Many students mentioned that speaking tests, small talk and timed conversations using conversation strategies were useful for making their conversations longer and making them realize that they were speaking English more fluently. In December, I was surprised and happy that most students finally managed a three-minute conversation using basic conversation strategies. (Toru, AR final project, 2011, p. 44)

Toru wrote what he learned in his AR Project Conclusion:

> In the second[-year AR] project, three teachers volunteered to make a team. We discussed goals and objectives, and showed the syllabus to our students at the beginning of the school year. Moreover, we had a weekly meeting for sharing our teaching ideas and materials. As a result,

> the student survey showed much better outcomes than the first project. In short, teacher collaboration and a systematic approach to communicative language teaching were indispensable for improving students' English ability. (Toru, AR final project, 2011, p. 102)

Midori likewise said she began to see the right direction. She responded to the question 'How useful was the MA TESOL program to you?':

> I began to see the right direction about how to teach compared to before I took the program . . . I used to teach randomly through trial and error. Now I think about goals, how to achieve the goals, and what kind of approaches are available. So, I do think the MA TESOL program is very helpful for better organizing my lesson plan and teaching.

She went on to say that she started to change her teaching and gain confidence after her second-year AR project.

> I was surprised to see that my students started to focus on communicative activities and none of them were sleeping in my class . . . They even got a better score compared with other teachers' classes . . . I realized that this way of teaching was right and I gained my confidence. (Midori/Interview/2011)

Hiroko built her confidence after seeing students' improvement on the Board of Education's English test. In her third-year AR, she taught English to third-year junior high school students who would sit for high school entrance examinations toward the end of the 2009 school year. She wrote:

> Noteworthy results were how students' test scores improved; in April, the average marks of students at my school were 4.5 points below the average for the test which was given by our city. In July the average marks of the classes I was in charge of improved showing 5.5 points over the average of our city and in December it greatly improved showing 11.0 points above the city average. (Hiroko, AR final project, 2010, p. 52)

2 Learning through continuous collaborative AR

Three teachers, in particular, emphasized the importance of reflection and continuous experimentation through AR. In their words:

> I used to quit using a new activity if it didn't work well. Then, through AR, I came to reflect on my teaching. I started to think why it did not work well and how I could modify my handout. (Midori/Interview/2011)

> I started to reflect on my teaching, trying a minor change to improve my class.
>
> (Toru/Interview/2011)

Moreover, Midori wrote that continuous AR helped her deepen her understanding of language learning.

> What I learned in the research of the previous year became the basis for the project of the next year, which connected to the research of the third year. Thanks to this, my understanding toward language learning was deepened. I became able to set clearer goals, to develop better materials, and to gradually acquire perspectives of the future curriculum of the English studies at my school. (Midori, AR final project, 2010, p. 76)

Similarly, Momoko reflected that the recursive process of AR developed her teaching.

> After three years of my study in MA TESOL program, I am now able to assess and improve my own teaching through the recursive process of AR. This is one of the most important developments as an English teacher. The recursive process of setting a goal, making a plan, giving lessons, reflecting on the lessons, and revising a teaching plan is an essential way to improve my teaching. (Momoko, AR final project, 2011, p. 6-7)

Tomoko reported that 'I learned the importance of learning from my students to improve my class. Now I always think about how my students learn' (Tomoko/Interview/2011). Tomoko also learned much from the student survey data as well as from their comments. She said:

> Additionally, the students' comments in questionnaire surveys showed positive feelings about the student-centered English class . . . The students had been generally used to a teacher-centered lesson style . . . Pair and group work throughout the year caused students to undergo a paradigm shift, because each student needed to be active, and class had to be student-centered. When learning in a limited class hour was maximized in this way, students thought that their classes enhanced their experiences in English and they started to be more responsible for their own learning. (Tomoko, AR final project, 2010, p. 60)

3 Difficulty sharing new ideas and working with other teachers

Phase 3 provided further evidence about why teachers in weak teaching cultures had difficulty sharing their ideas with their colleagues. Tomoko admitted that 'Teachers are busy with students' behavioral problems and school events, so they are not concerned about teaching' (Tomoko/Interview/2011). Lack of communication seemed to make it difficult for teachers to reach a consensus about teaching. Similarly, Momoko reported that 'most teachers find their own way of teaching' (Momoko/Interview/2011). Teachers seemed to be reluctant to challenge their beliefs about teaching. She wrote:

> Every year, I talked with my colleagues about CLT, and they sometimes observed my classes; however, collaboration did not happen because teaches believed strongly in the value of their own teaching. It would have been ideal to work together, developing materials, constructing testing, and designing curriculum. (Momoko, AR final project, 2011, p. 92)

Even occasional lesson studies that are considered as professional development opportunities became live shows. Momoko explains:

> We had a lesson study, and an inspector came from the prefectural Board of Education. However, the teacher taught in a way different from his 'lesson study'. He rehearsed his lesson study performance a couple of times, only for that occasion. (Momoko/Interview/2011)

Midori and Toru worked together in the same high school where the curriculum reform project started in 2008. Midori elaborated on the difficulty changing teachers' beliefs including her own, which resulted in lack of teacher collaboration:

> It was a conflict between theories and teacher beliefs: not only my colleagues' beliefs but also my own beliefs. It was very difficult to get teachers without the background knowledge of L2 acquisition convinced of the ideas which lie under the teaching plans and procedures I prepared. They sometimes ignored or misunderstood the procedures. They seem to have a strong teacher belief in the back of their mind that memorization and drill questions are the most powerful tools for language learning. When there was little or no progress in the results of mock tests, they felt uncomfortable with communicative teaching and tried to swing back to the traditional grammar teaching . . . Such teacher beliefs sometimes come back to me like a flashback and make me nervous. Also the differing positions teachers held on language learning seemed to have caused an unfriendly atmosphere among them, which affected the teacher collaboration in a negative way. (Midori, AR final project, 2010, p. 77-78)

Fortunately, Toru could collaborate with the same grade level teachers, which led to better student outcomes. Toru reported:

> I always worried whether colleagues would effectively use my handout because it seemed that no one could use the handout anyone else made without his or her explanation. Without teacher collaboration, we could not achieve the goals . . . However, I fortunately had the great privilege of working with two other teachers belonging to second-year students with active collaboration. Thanks to them, we could have a meeting on a case-by-case basis for sharing how to conduct each activity and make use of the results from their feedback. (Toru, AR final project, 2011, p. 101)

Even within the same English department, where top-down curriculum reform was implemented, teacher collaboration may vary from one grade level to another.

V Discussion

This study revealed dynamics of learning processes as teachers involved themselves with their learning and professional development (e.g. Russ et al., 2016). In particular, the study identified the three developmental stages through which these EFL secondary teachers went through by challenging their previous beliefs and implementing CLT practices in their classrooms. Their AR examined, challenged, and supported their own learning and teaching (e.g. Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The teachers provided evidence of moving from individually considering teaching by trial and error, and through AR implementing to more public and deliberate inquiry and experimental processes (e.g. Ball & Cohen, 1999). This study documents some of the processes of teacher learning using continuous and collaborative AR. We clarify these trends through responding to the research questions and developing further inquiry that guides the discussion.

1 How did these EFL teachers learn to teach through continuous collaborative AR?

These five teachers offered evidence that they developed through three stages as they modified and developed their beliefs and practices through AR, regardless of years teaching. The finding supports Russ et al. (2016), who suggested teachers involve themselves with ‘existing everyday knowledge and practices to be deleted and replaced’ (p. 422). The three stages include (1) Challenging teacher beliefs through TESOL classes and modeling teachers who have done similar AR through trial and error teaching as they practice communicative activities; (2) Making sense of teaching through adapting and modifying theories of CLT; (3) Building confidence in teaching by actually seeing students’ change. These stages overlap, depending on teacher and teaching context. Yet, these teachers’ initial beliefs about language learning and teaching were challenged through the MA TESOL program including learning and discussions about SLA and SLT. They could not apply theories into practices immediately. All five teachers modeled other teacher(s) who had done similar AR that was successful. These teachers took at least one to two-years participating in trial and error teaching before adapting new ideas and theories into their classes successfully. It took another two to three years before these teachers developed confidence by actually seeing their students’ successful learning and change in their classroom interactions and from what they were documenting in their AR. Three teachers indicated their improvement by developing similar meanings: teaching becoming more ‘consistent’ (Tomoko), ‘systematic communicative language teaching’ (Toru), and ‘a right direction about how to teach communicatively’ (Midori). From this point of view, these teachers made sense of teaching by developing theoretical understandings of knowledge and skills (e.g. Hawley & Valli, 1999; Kwo, 2013; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008). It is worth noting that teachers resist changing their beliefs and practices in general (e.g. Fives, & Gill, 2015; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1994, 1996; Skott, 2015); nonetheless, gradual development occurs as documented with these teachers through their evidence promoting at least three development stages. Skott’s (2015) review of teachers’ beliefs considered that: ‘beliefs are generally considered temporally and contextually stable reifications that are likely to change only as a result of substantial engagement in relevant social practices’ (pp. 18-19). These social practices can be manifested in university and school environments where teachers work on AR with themselves individually and with professors, colleagues, students, and others collectively. This leads to at least one continuing query possibly focusing on context specific beliefs (Fives, & Gill, 2015; Skott, 2015); can or will teachers sustain newly developed beliefs or change them in different teaching contexts after they stop collaborative AR?

2 What did they learn from the continuous collaborative AR?

Continuous collaborative AR helped teachers form habits of reflection, experimentation, and learning from students. Momoko shared a recursive process of setting a goal, making a plan, giving lessons, reflecting on the lessons, and revising a teaching plan to improve teaching. The participating teachers came to reflect on their teaching, modify their materials, and deepen their understanding of language learning and teaching. Moreover, as

Midori highlighted, AR offers gradual and recursive processes of learning over periods of time: 'What I learned in the research of the previous year became the basis for the project of the next year, which connected to the research of the third year.'

These teachers learned from their students as well as other teachers through collaborative AR. For example, Tomoko confirmed the importance of student-centered activities as she received more positive comments from her students. Momoko was able to improve her teaching based on support from other teachers. She also found that her participation in AR assisted her students in noticing their improvement when they tried self-evaluation. In her final AR project she confirmed AR as a beneficial way to improve teaching and learning. Crookes (1993) recommended AR 'as a means of critical reflection on teaching and on the sociopolitical context in which teachers find themselves' (p. 137). As language teachers continue to struggle to improve teaching and learning, how might these five teachers consider AR when finished with their MA TESOL program? Are they willing to be mentors for those who start AR? Will they be able to involve their colleagues in collaborative AR in their workplaces? These and other queries await further investigation.

3 Why did these five teachers have difficulty sharing their new ideas and working with other teachers for curriculum development in their workplaces?

Tomoko, Momoko, and Hiroko reported they had difficulty working with other teachers because their colleagues were reluctant to change their beliefs about language teaching. Even when they could share their handouts with their colleagues, they were not sure if colleagues actually used them. Hiroko reported that her colleague used such handouts as she liked by skipping some activities. Beliefs are difficult to change and tend to self-perpetuate, and beliefs must be clarified, challenged, and even criticized against new beliefs to make existing beliefs malleable (Fives & Gill, 2015; Pajares, 1992). Otherwise, teachers may continue to teach in the same way (e.g. Hargreaves, 2013). Richardson (1994) argued that 'Teachers make decisions on the basis of a personal sense of what works [and] perpetuate practices based on questionable assumptions and beliefs' (p. 6). This triggers further query: How are teacher beliefs examined and challenged in teaching contexts? How can reluctant teachers be encouraged to challenge their beliefs and practices? How might AR offer professional development opportunities in learning environments and not on or about them?

Furthermore, Midori and Toru, working in the same high school where English curriculum reform was initiated, revealed that some teachers who believed in traditional teaching made it difficult to promote collaboration among teachers. Midori confessed it was difficult to convince teachers without the background knowledge of L2 acquisition and teaching which underpinned innovative lesson planning. Luckily, Toru could collaborate with two other teachers who worked for the same grade level. Consequently, they continued the project for three years and achieved the goals while increasing student outcomes (see Sato & Hirano, 2014). From this point of view, teacher collaboration can lead to improved student outcomes (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Sato & Takahashi, 2008). Nonetheless, it seems difficult to involve all English teachers, especially reluctant

ones in a curriculum reform project. How can teachers who work in weak school cultures transform school cultures? How can AR, including administrators in AR, change school cultures?

VI Conclusion

This study revealed how secondary teachers were involved in collaborative AR research projects and provided insights into their contextual development processes; contexts including people in secondary learning environments. This study revealed possibilities and challenges these teachers faced in working on curriculum development and reform within their schools alongside colleagues and with their professors and graduate student colleagues. Milles (2003) suggested 'Action research has the potential to be a powerful agent of educational change' (p. v). Nonetheless, without developing collegial collaborative teacher cultures, innovations can be marginalized and curriculum development impoverished (see Sato, 2002; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). The participating teachers in this study interacted with school and university stakeholders in Japanese teaching contexts; providing further evidence of what Savignon (2013) noted about similar patterns of difficulties in both Western and non-Western contexts: 'individual teacher beliefs and practices were strongly influenced or reinforced by the school culture' (p. 139). Longitudinal case studies such as the one here offer nuanced and complex findings for both research and practice. Nonetheless, there continues to be need for larger sample sizes, additional quantitative and qualitative data, and a means to better understand language learning and language testing *of, for, and as* learning (e.g. Davison, 2013; Earl, 2013). Acknowledging the findings here may not be easily generalized, we encourage similar studies attempt to document teachers' contexts worldwide and add to the burgeoning professional development literature of teacher education in general, and language teacher education in particular.

Conflict of Interest

Also, if this study is part of a larger study or if you have used the same data in whole or in part in other papers, both already published or under review please state where the paper is published and describe clearly and in as much detail as you think necessary where the similarities and differences are and how the current manuscript makes a different and distinct contribution to the field.

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Notes

1. Savignon (2002) refers to CLT as 'The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence' (p. 22).

2. Phase one of the larger study (2007) started with 15 teachers (1 elementary, 7 junior high school, and 7 senior high school teachers). All 15 teachers stated that collaborative AR encouraged them to reflect on their daily teaching, to improve their practices, and to adopt ideas from other AR teachers it into their professional work. Yet, many also reported difficulties implementing AR and limited sharing of AR ideas. Phase 2 data (2008) showed similar results for the collaborative AR (action research) group of 19 participants.
3. The textbook used for SLA was 'How Languages were learned' (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).
4. The textbook used for SLT was 'Making Communicative Language Teaching Happen' (Lee & VanPatten, 2003).
5. Many teachers refer to communication strategies as 'conversation strategies'.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire on an action research project

1. How many workshops did you attend this year?
2. Which ones were most useful? Why? Did you try out some of the new ideas in your class?
3. How was the monthly report? Was it difficult? What did you learn from other teachers and advisers?
4. How was your action research? Did it help you to improve your teaching skills? In what ways?
5. What did you learn from your action research?
6. What were some of the difficulties in implementing action research?
7. Did you have chances to talk about new ideas or your action research with your colleagues in your school? Did you have a chance to make a report on your action research in an English department meeting?
8. Did you have a chance to collaborate with your colleagues in your school? For example, did you have a weekly meeting with other English teachers? Did you have a chance to talk about teaching problems? Did you share your handouts with other teachers?
9. Do you think you can involve other teachers in action research in your school next year? Why or why not?
10. How do you want to improve your teaching or curriculum next year?
11. What is your goal or goals for the next year's action research?
12. Please state in your own words what you think the good points and bad points of action research are.

Appendix 2a. Tomoko's class on January 23, 2009 (her second-year teaching after starting an MA study) 3rd-year junior high school students (39).

Time (minutes)	Activity
0–5	After greeting teacher gives students a work sheet and tells them what they are going to do in English. The lesson is based on the textbook titled 'Let's read: Family rules.'
5–10	The teacher makes nine groups of four or five. She reviews the previous lesson (Part 1) based on the work sheet. The first activity is a vocabulary review. Students make pairs (facing each other). One student asks 'What does ___ mean?' The other students answers in Japanese. The second one is a review of the text. There are two questions about the content. Students work in pairs. Four or five students open the textbook to find answers.
10–20	The teacher change pairs (students next to each other). The next questions is 'Let's talk about ourselves,' which is related to the topic of the lesson. There are two questions and hints so that they can choose the answer. The first one is 'When you were small, did you always behave well?' The teacher gives a short time so that students can choose the answer from the hints. Then, she has students check the answers in pairs. Those who finish quickly start to chat in Japanese. The teacher says to them 'You can't speak Japanese here!' The teacher moves to the second question: 'What did your parent(s) do to you as a punishment?' She gives some time so that students can choose their answer from the hints. Students start to use Japanese while they choose the answer. Some ask their classmates in Japanese. The teacher says in her loud voice 'Choose the answer without talking' in Japanese. Then, students check the answer in pairs. After that, the teacher checks the answer in class. She makes students raise their hands according to each hint. For example, 'Whose parent yelled at you?' Some students laugh.
20–45	The teacher tells students to open the textbook (Part 2). First, she plays a CD and students listen with the textbook open. Second, the teacher have students repeat several new words after her. Third, students read the text silently. After that, the teacher tells students to read the text in pairs. However, about half of the pairs translate the text into Japanese. The teacher says 'I will give you a handout with Japanese translations tomorrow. In fact, in the work sheet, there is a sentence. Check the meaning of the text with your partner.' Then, the teacher moves to reading practice. First, she plays the CD and stops it little by little so that students can repeat after the CD. However, the speed is too fast for them. For the second reading practice, the teacher reads each sentence together with students. After that, the teacher has students read the text by themselves and then with pairs.
45–50	The teacher gives feedback on pronunciations such as 'laugh' and 'said'. There are a couple of minutes left. She tells students to read the text by themselves one more time. Finally, she tells them to keep the work sheet in their files. Class is dismissed.

Appendix 2b. Tomoko's class on January 21, 2011 (her fourth-year teaching after one-year leave of absence for study abroad): 2nd-year junior high school students (40).

Time (minutes)	Activity
0–5	After greeting teacher gives students a work sheet and tells them what they are going to do in English. The title of the work sheet is 'Let's recruit a new worker' in Japanese. There are eight companies (A to H) and descriptions of each new worker listed on the work sheet. They are written in Japanese. For example, a Chinese restaurant (A) wants a new worker who can speak Chinese, can make a signboard, can make a lot of dumplings, and can sing Chinese songs at Karaoke. A pet shop (E) wants a new worker who can wash dogs, can talk with dogs, can talk with cats, and can clean pets' houses well.
5–10	The teacher makes eight groups of five and assign each group one company. First, she tells each group to decide the name of the company. Then, she tells each group to make four questions by using 'Can you ___?' according to the information on the list.
10–15	The teacher introduces key expressions for the interview including 'Hello. My name is . . .' 'How do you do?' 'Please take a set.' 'We are asking you some questions.' 'Do you have any questions?' and so on.
15–40	The teacher chooses one student from each group and gives each student a card (from A to H) which includes the answers of four questions. For example, the card A includes answers such as 'I can speaking Chinese.' 'I cannot make dumplings.' 'I can make a signboard.' 'I cannot sing Chinese songs.' She tells each student to go to each company and each group to interview the person. Each group member asks one question to the person and writes the answer on the work sheet. After finishing the first interview in each group, the teacher choose the second student from each group and gives each students a different card (from A to H) with different answers to the four questions. The repeat the same procedure four times.
40–50	The teacher tells each group to decide one person they want to hire and write reasons according to the work sheet. For example, 'We want . . . because she can dance well, can juggle, and can speak English well.' After that, she asks one student in each group to report. Finally, she tells everyone to evaluate today's class based on the evaluation on the work sheet. There are three categories and space for comment. Fun (4, 3, 2, 1) Easy (4, 3, 2, 1) Useful (4, 3, 2, 1) Comment ______________________________ ________ The class is over.

Appendix 3a. Toru's class on February 18, 2008 (his first-year teaching after starting an MA study): 2nd-year senior high school students (39).

Time (minutes)	Activity
0–10	Teacher introduces the observer and begins class. The teacher distributes the work sheet: Unit 9 from 'True Stories' and tells students to look at the picture, and then read the first question: 'What does she have in her right hand?' He gives them a brief time to read the question silently and then read it aloud. He asks students to guess. They start guessing and he writes their guesses on the board in English: candy, button, drugs, sugar, earring, contact lens. Students seem familiar and comfortable with this format of brainstorming. Then, the teacher asks them to guess what she has in her other, left hand. He writes their guesses: cake, chicken, liver, coffee jelly. He tells students to read question 3 and 4, then talk with a partner about what they think the story is about. After giving instructions in English, he repeats in Japanese. He says 'Do you think it's a simple story? Talk and guess!' Students talk enthusiastically in Japanese. The teacher asks them to give their ideas and several speak up. He calls on several others.
10–14	The teacher says in English 'I'll give you four minutes to read this story.' Students start to read silently.
14–15	The teacher tells in Japanese 'What is the story about?' One student explains it briefly in Japanese.
15–25	The teacher distribute another work sheet and tells students to write their report of the story in Japanese. Everyone writes with focus.
25–30	The teacher calls names of six students to read their story summary to classmates in Japanese. They are attentive and commented in Japanese.
30–37	The teacher write seven words from the story on the board. He tells students to guess the meanings of the words by finding them in the story and thinking about the meaning of the sentence. Students actively look for the words and explain the meaning in Japanese, with the teacher modifying in a couple of cases.
37–50	The teacher tells students to take out their homework and put their desks together with a partner. Students put their desks facing each other. The teacher has students exchange papers and read each other's writing. Time is up.

Appendix 3b. Toru's class on April 26, 2010 (his third-year teaching after starting his MA study): 2nd-year senior high school students (35).

Time (minutes)	Activity
0–10	Teacher introduces the observer and begins class. For small talk in pairs, the teacher writes three questions on the board including 'How was your weekend?' 'What did you do?' and 'How was it?' Everyone participates in the activity by using English. The teacher changes pairs and ties it two more times. Students seem to be familiar with small talk at the beginning of the class.
10–25	The teacher tells students to take out the work sheet (Lesson 2, Part 1). In the previous class, it seems that they finished checking the content of Part 1 and start practicing reading in pairs. One student read one sentence and the partner just listens and repeats it. They take turns doing this. After that, the teacher tells students to read the text of Part 1 silently. He tells them to read as fast as possible and check the time. After finishing reading, each student writes down their reading time on their work sheet. The next activity is mind-mapping on the work sheet. The directions on the work sheets say 'You are going to complete your Fun Essay: The job I'm interested in. Write the most important words in the circle and write key words around the circle.' After four minutes, some students start to talk in Japanese. The teacher moves to the next activity based on the work sheet.
25–50	The teacher introduces three questions about the topic including 'What type of job are you interested in?' 'What do you want to study for getting the job?' 'Where do you want to work? For example, in an airport, in an office, etc.' Students write their answers by using their mind-mapping. After that, the teacher introduces a model dialogue including some conversation strategies such as 'Oh, really?' 'Oh, I see.' 'Sounds fun!' Also, the model includes a line for a follow-up question. The teacher tells students to keep talking with their partner for two and a half minutes based on the model. Students start talking with their partner next to them. Then, the teacher tells them to change their partner (behind or in front of them) and try again. All the students participates in the activity. The teacher walks around. After that, he choose one pair and have them talk as a model. He asks the class 'What are some good points?' Several students reply. The teacher tells students to talk again with their partner next to them. Class is dismissed.