Hirao School of Management Review (2020), Vol. 10 pp.1-19
原稿種別：論文 (Article)

Hirao School of Management Review 第 10 巻

Designing Next Generation High School - University Collaboration Projects

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【Abstract】

This paper outlines an action research project and the design of a series of High School - University Collaboration (kodai renkei) endeavors aimed at boosting second-language learning motivation and learner engagement as well as raising awareness among teachers and administrators about the potential of well-designed kodai renkei activities. The first phase of this kodai renkei project was a series of telecollaboration sessions and reflective activities for a group of third-year high school students. The next phase was focused on sharing the design and findings of this action research. Third was the design and delivery of an instructional unit around the sustainable development goals (SDGs) for a group of eighty first-year students. The final stage was a teacher-training workshop for elementary, junior high and senior high teachers of English and other subjects.

【Key Words】

Kodai-Renkei, Action Research, Reflection, Self-Determination Theory, Learner Engagement

1. Introduction

The Japanese term *kodai renkei* (high school - university collaboration) is now common on university campuses and in high school hallways around Japan. This movement, as we understand it, is being promoted by the Japanese government (MEXT, 2019) to encourage interaction and cooperation among secondary and tertiary institutions while boosting effectiveness and efficiency on both sides of this equation. In all honesty, neither of us had previously considered these initiatives beyond the typical campus visits or guest lectures. We are thus pleased to share with readers a multi-phase research project that helped us better understand the what, why and how of

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kodai renkei activities. We have organized the paper chronologically to reflect how each stage of the project unfolded. Specifically, we introduce (1) the background for the collaboration, (2) a small-scale action research project involving four third-year high school students and two resulting joint presentations, (3) a workshop for twenty-two second- and third-year university students, (4) the design and delivery of an English summer camp for eighty first-year high school students, and (5) a workshop for primary, junior and senior high school teachers. Along the way, we include some commentary on each phase of the project, and conclude with lessons learned and areas for further/future research. Before offering some lessons learned through this collaboration, we outline briefly the conceptual frameworks that informed these activities.

2. Background

The current project developed from informal discussions regarding possible collaboration between the two authors (August, 2018), to planning for a mini teleconference lecture series (September), and finally to action research focused on telecollaboration and reflective journaling (October - December). The second author was teaching an elective course that started in April, 2018 for four third-year HS students. The course was titled LL SOKUDOKU ENSHU (Language Lab Speed Reading Workshop), and students expected to get training for certification courses like TOEFL. Early on, the teacher recognized that students lacked basic background knowledge needed for succeeding on such tests. Thus, the use of documentaries and news articles was decided on as a springboard for classroom discussions and deeper study.

3. Phase One - Smoothing the Transition from High School to University

One of the core themes that emerged before the summer break (2018) was economics, and two students chose to research and present on the topic of the escalating trade war between the U.S. and China, while the other pair chose cryptocurrencies. The first author was invited to watch these student presentations and offer suggestions for improvement using the LINE instant communications app (Line Corporation, 2019). At the same time, a list of possible lecture topics was presented to students and two themes were decided on: Asian Neighbors and the Japanese Education System. Eventually, the four telecollaboration sessions included one or more of the following activities: a short mini-lecture by the first author, student presentations with instructor feedback, instructor or student-led discussions.

As we were interested in how these telecollaboration sessions boosted or hindered classroom/task engagement (Philp & Duchesne, 2016) and learners' perceived fulfillment of the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), we chose a combination of reflective journaling (Francis, 1995) and descriptive feedback as proposed by Carol Rodgers (2006). Descriptive Feedback is defined by Rodgers (2006) as,

> …a reflective conversation between teacher and students wherein students describe their experiences as learners, with the goals of improving learning, deepening trust between teacher and student, and establishing a vibrant, creative community on a daily basis. (p. 209)

Both the reflective journaling and descriptive feedback interactions included a series of prompts (Table 1).

Table 1. Reflective Journaling and Descriptive Feedback Prompts

Reflective Journaling	What do you feel were the key takeaways from today's session? Describe in detail one or two points which changed you mentally. Describe in detail one or two feelings or emotions you felt during today's session. Was there anything that you struggled with in today's session? Explain.
Descriptive Feedback	What did you learn? How do you know you learned it? What helped your learning? What got in the way of your learning? What would have helped your learning more? How did you feel?

3.1 Data Analysis

Transcripts of the descriptive feedback sessions as well as students' reflective journaling entries were uploaded to NVivo qualitative software (QSR International, 2018). Thematic analysis (Table 2) was then conducted based on suggestions by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 2. Six Steps for Conducting a Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Step	Description
1. Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Creating interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching the themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back from the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

3.2 Preliminary Findings - Representative Student Comments

A sampling of reflective journal entries and comments from the exit interviews include:

- At the beginning of the project, I didn't even know what I didn't know.
- Now, I want to read more books in order to recognize what I don't understand. This reading provides me with a trigger for further studies.
- All of the professor's feedback made sense. We could have put in a bit more effort and done much better.
- Reflective journaling is time-consuming and tiring but we recognize the value.

- When talking with friends, some can't grasp what we are doing with reflection. Others regret not signing up for this course.
- A friend from another school said she envied us because they didn't have such activities.
- One of the reasons we tried so hard was that we felt some responsibility as pioneers of *kodai-renkei* activities.

4. Phase Two - Sharing Our Experiences

Our collaborations entered the second phase in early 2019 as we began planning for ways to share the design and outcomes of our study. We submitted proposals and were accepted to present at two academic conferences, the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) PanSIG conference in May and JALTCALL in June. PanSIG is described on their website as . .

> *. . . an annual conference held in May, and organized by many of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). The conference brings together leading scholars and practitioners in language education from Japan, Asia, and throughout the world. It is meant to be a smaller, more intimate conference than the annual international JALT conference (which is held each fall), and is a place where SIG members can network with each other.*

JALTCALL is . . .

> *. . . a Special Interest Groups (SIG) of JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching) for educators and researchers who share an interest in digital technology and language learning. We hold a major conference every year in early/mid June plus workshops at various times. We also publish refereed journal articles through the JALTCALL Journal.*

The abstracts for these presentations can be found in Appendix 1. While preparing for these presentations, the second author hosted a group of students (June) from Indonesia Education University who were visiting the Hirao School of Management (CUBE) as part of a student exchange program. She was also invited to speak to a group of second- and third-year university students at the first authors' university (July) about her experiences of studying for a master's

degree in the U.S. These students were enrolled in a project course aimed at preparing for overseas studies. This interactive lecture was focused on providing a bridge for these students to contemporary academic topics in English as well as practical advice for acculturating themselves when abroad.

Also, during the early part of 2019, the authors began collaborating on the design of an instructional unit for first-year students focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations (2015).

5. Phase Three - Inspiring First-Year Students with the SDGs

This phase of our collaboration was summarized in a presentation in November at the Global Issues in Language Education (GILE) symposium at the JALT National Conference in Nagoya, Japan (Appendix 1). We outline here the what, why and how of this phase of our collaborations.

5.1 What - The authors collaborated in designing and developing a unit of instruction based on the SDGs for eighty first-year high school students enrolled in an English program. The unit of instruction centered around a 3-day summer camp which culminated in group presentations (with skits) on the SDGs. The conceptual frameworks for the action research part of the project were again reflective practice, learner engagement, and self-determination theory.

5.2 Why - The rationale for selecting the SDGs as the core content for this unit of instruction is that learners would have likely heard about the SDGs but have limited understanding of the background and key features. At the same time, the importance and relevance of the goals had great potential in promoting both cognitive and emotional engagement.

5.3 How - The following timeline outlines each stage of the summer camp project.

Mid July - Students were introduced to the SDGs and the overall project in their regular English classes, divided into sixteen teams of five, and asked to choose one of the 17 SDGs to research. To gain a balance between group and individual work for the summer camp, students were also assigned the task of preparing a two-minute individual presentation on the topic of “If I had a superpower.”

Late July to Early August - Students worked individually and in groups (both face-to-face and via text messaging) to research their team's SDG, and prepare a briefing sheet. At the same time, they were working on their individual assignment.

August 19 (Day One) - As part of the first-day of the 3-day summer camp, students shared notes and began preparing slides and a script for the group presentation. They were assisted in these endeavors by their regular English teachers and Osaka City Native English Teachers or CNETs (assistant language teachers hired by Osaka City). Other activities were ice-breaking activities with the CNETs and preliminary individual presentations where eight finalists were selected.

August 20 (Day Two) - After traveling to the Nishinomiya Campus of Konan University, students were given an overview of the university and the Hirao School of Management by the former Dean as well as graduates of Osaka Nishi Senior High School (NISHI). This was the second year for Konan to host NISHI for this summer camp. Students then received mini-lectures in the morning on the topics of Global Footprint and Public Speaking. In the afternoon, after moving to the Shirakawadai campus, the three Konan professors judged the eight individual presentation finalists and offered constructive feedback. Groups then practiced their presentations and received feedback. Teams worked late into the night practicing and polishing their presentations/skits. Other activities included an English Olympics in the gymnasium.

August 21 (Day Three) - Day three started with morning exercise in the gymnasium. Students then delivered their five-minute SDGs presentations, which included a short skit. The audience and three Konan judges completed evaluation sheets for each group. The three judges offered general comments on the presentations and then gathered in a separate room to tally the scores. The closing ceremony included final reflections by the judges, awards to the top three individual and group presentations, and a message from student representatives.

Late August to Mid September - Students were asked to reflect on the learning experience and write reaction papers for the university introduction, the mini-lectures (Global Footprint & Public Speaking), and the overall summer camp. Students gave revised versions of their same presentations in the communication class with CNETs and other students assessing. A video recording of the August mini lecture on public speaking was used to review key points with the CNETs who had not attended the summer camp but were regularly working with NISHI students.

In this way, teachers could coordinate a series of classes focused on public speaking and review key ideas when preparing students for these follow-up presentations.

Fall/Winter - Students completed a short questionnaire (Appendix 2) asking about any changes to their lifestyles in relationship to the SDGs.

5. 4 Results - Responses to peer assessment (late August - early September) and the above mentioned questionnaire both hint at deeper learning and higher levels of learner engagement. Here we offer a brief sampling of encouraging comments we received regarding both public speaking and the SDGs:

- I would like to do my best with what the professor told me after the presentation. I want to make sure I don't fail in the presentation from now on.
- I realized once again that I needed to study more in order to improve my English ability.
- I don't like speech until now, but I learned how to enjoy speech in this lesson . . . so, I want to grow by taking advantage of these lessons.
- I learned to perceive things from various angles.
- So far, I have never thought about the earth, but I've changed my way of thinking . . . I thought I have to change my life style . . I share them with my family.
- During the summer, the most I learned was about SDGs. Two months ago I had no idea about the 17 goals and I had a precious opportunity to give a presentation on what we learned about it. Without this opportunity, we would never have the chance to discuss SDGs and share ideas about how to solve the problems with my classmates.
- The most precious experience for me was being joined by professors from Konan University. At CUBE, one of the professors provided timely advice for giving presentations. This helped me prepare for both my individual and group presentations. Especially, how to relax through deep breathing, and the proper use of gestures. Although I couldn't make facial expressions at all, I will continue to work on it.

6. Phase Four - Teacher Training Workshop

The next phase of our collaboration was the planning and delivery of a workshop for Osaka City as part of their educational research activities. The second author lectured on the topic of "Peer Power in Teaching Presentation Skills in Two *Kodai Renkei* Projects." Participants then observed a fifty-minute communication class. Finally, the first author conducted a workshop titled

"Conceptual Frameworks for Improved Trajectories in EFL Class." The workshop (including presentation and classroom observations) was attended by roughly forty teachers, including elementary, junior high school, high school and CNETs. Some of the more salient comments from the feedback sheet include:

- The concept of *kodai renkei* is interesting. I think it has its good points but it definitely might have challenges as well. Putting responsibility on the students is really good because we are making them accountable for their own results. I firmly believe that spoon feeding is not a good way to learn. (CNET)
- I got some ideas that help me to reflect on lessons when they didn't go well. (JHS)
- It was an amazing class for me. I never imagined students assessing each other. We never did this when I was a high school student. (Elementary)
- It is hard to make an ideal form connecting elementary, junior high and high school English education because each level is disconnected. Most elementary school teachers have not learned how to teach English professionally so we lack confidence. However, I can set the class I observed today as the goal and will try to guide my students in the future. (elementary)
- I learned a lot of practical tips. When I have students give a presentation, I showed them their evaluation but I didn't have them write reaction. So, I will do it next time. (HS)
- What I remember the most is the phrase, "put the power in your students' hands." This phrase made me realize the role of teachers. (HS)
- Through this session I gradually came to understand theoretical backgrounds. It was a good opportunity to reflect on myself — long, long way to go! (HS)

7. Conceptual Frameworks

The aim of this section is to provide readers with a better understanding of the frameworks we used throughout the project. Specifically, we review the concepts of learner motivation and engagement as well as reflective practice.

7.1 Learner Motivation & Engagement

The concept of motivation is prevalent in both educational psychology and second-language acquisition (SLA) literature. Russell, Ainley and Frydenberg (2005) are often cited for their distinction of motivation as why we do what we do (reasons for behavior) and engagement as

energy in action (the connection between person and activity). In SLA contexts, Dörnyei (1994) described motivation as concerning "those factors that energize behaviour and give it direction" (p. 516). Dörnyei and Otto (1998) highlighted the need to view motivation as a process, and defined it as "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out" (p. 64). This last definition seems to blur the distinction between motivation and engagement, and we are thus drawn more to Reeve's (2012) delineation of motivation as "a private, unobservable psychological, neural, and biological process that serves as an antecedent cause to the publicly observable behavior that is engagement" (p. 151).

A Dynamic Model of Motivational Development organized around student engagement and disaffection was proposed by Skinner & Pitzer (2012). Their depiction highlights the relationship between the two constructs, with motivation built on both context and self, while engagement is represented as action. Importantly, this dynamic model of motivational development includes the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness from self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These basic psychological needs are grouped under self as the individual's perceptions of how well those needs are being fulfilled will determine the extent to which they will engage in an activity. In a more fully developed conceptual framework (Fig. 1), identity is viewed as being part of the self system and influencing learner perceptions of basic psychological need fulfillment, but also with the context as a contributing source or influence on this identity. Investment, on the other hand, is viewed as the interface between motivation (context & self) and engagement (action). Conceptually, this investment will strengthen as an individual's perceived competence, autonomy and relatedness increase. Finally, the concept of flow experiences has been included in the action stage, and highlighted (bold lettering) as the highest expressions of classroom engagement. The choice of "flow experiences" over "flow" was intended as a way of keeping the focus on experiences that learners have in the classroom.

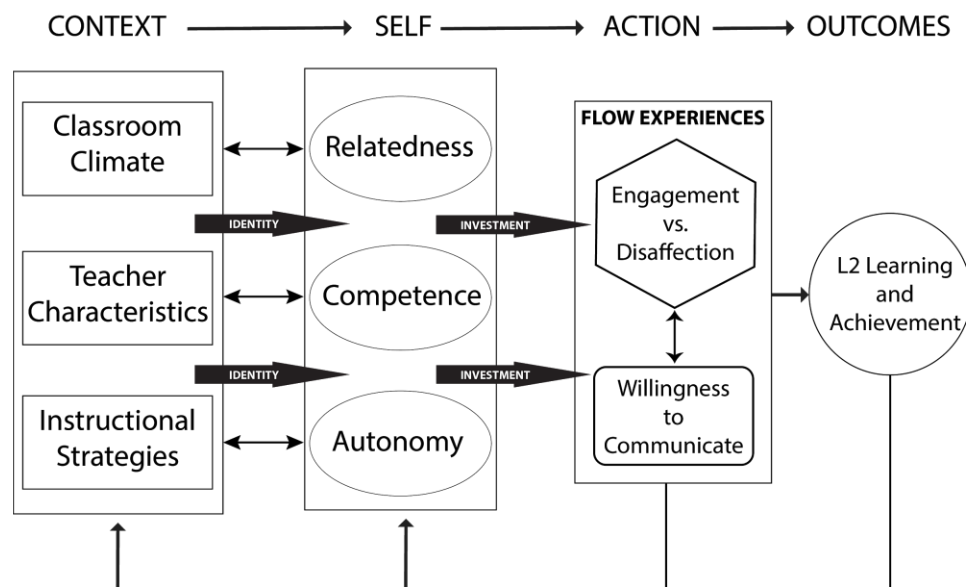

Figure 1. Fuller conceptual framework for investigating classroom engagement (Jones, 2018)

Attempts at defining learner or student engagement have aligned more or less with the key types of engagement most often described in the literature, namely behavioral, cognitive and emotional. Skinner and Belmont (1993) contrast engagement with disaffection, focusing on the "intensity and emotional quality of children's involvement in initiating and carrying out learning activities" (p. 572). Hu and Kuh (2002) define engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes" (p. 555). Finally, Philp and Duchesne (2016) view engagement as "a state of heightened attention and involvement, in which participation is reflected not only in the cognitive dimension, but in social, behavioural and affective dimensions" (p. 3). For the purpose of the current study, we have adopted Assor's (2012) definition of engagement as "the amount and quality of actual efforts and actions aimed at reaching a certain goal" (p. 422). This definition used in our teaching contexts highlights the distinction between motivations to learn a language (intentions) and language learning behaviors (actions) while at the same time including quantitative and qualitative dimensions to those behaviors.

7.2 Reflective Practice

Reflection and reflective practice as central to the learning/developmental process. For learners, educators and administrators, reflection is a necessary step toward improving the structures, platforms and processes that promote meaningful, lasting change (i.e. learning). Reflection is also

at the heart of learning cycles proposed by authors such as Dewey (1933), Kolb (1984) and Rodgers (2006). Dewey (1933) defines reflection as a deliberate cognitive process, or “the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.” Carol Rodgers (2002) distilled from writings by Dewey four criteria she feels characterize his concept of reflection and the purposes it serves.

(1) Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society. It is a means to essentially moral ends.
(2) Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry.
(3) Reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others.
(4) Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and of others.

Kolb (1984) also recognized the value of **peer** or **group reflection**, “to learn from their experience, teams must create a conversational space where members can reflect on and talk about their experience together.” Research shows that learning is most effective under certain criteria: it is experiential (often problematic), it can personally engage the person who is in the position of learning, and the desire to learn is tied in with a need to learn. Learners who find themselves actively engaged in a collaborative effort with their educator and peers will have a more effective and authentic experience. Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) is a combination of a learning cycle comprised of 4 processes and 4 learning styles: **Diverging** (concrete, reflective), **Assimilating** (abstract, reflective), **Converging** (abstract, active), **Accommodating** (concrete, active).

8. Lessons Learned

We would like to conclude with some reflections on what worked, what didn’t and where these collaborative endeavors have led us. We have organized this under two key headings: conceptual frameworks and professional development. Again, our three main conceptual frameworks for the various phases were reflective practice, basic psychological needs (as part of self-determination

theory) and learner engagement. On the topic of professional development, we look at how these *kodai-renkei* endeavors benefitted other teachers as well as our own personal growth.

8.1 Conceptual Frameworks

Looking back to the early stages of this collaboration, it was a lucky coincidence that we focused on the three conceptual frameworks mentioned above. During our early meetings in Canada, the first author shared his recently completed research on learner engagement in university EFL contexts (Jones, 2018) which centered on self-determination theory, as well as research he was doing on the topic of reflective practice in study abroad programs (Jones & Leacock, 2019). While the second author had implicitly been putting many of these ideas into practice, the theory helped her develop her own understanding of these conceptual frameworks how they support classroom practice.

Reflective practice ended up being a core concept throughout the collaboration, starting from the teleconferencing sessions with third-year students. As we decided to make this an action research project, we needed a way to gather data on how learners viewed these interactions. As mentioned earlier, student responses to reflective prompts provided a window into what these four students were learning as well as how they were struggling. These responses also helped us understand how best to advise and help them bridge the gap to future university studies. At the same time, the second author gradually recognized the value of reflection in the learning cycle and began using more reflective activities in her other classes. Reflection was worked into lesson plans for first year students throughout the following spring and into the summer camp and beyond. Reflection was also designed into the program for first-year students in the form of three kinds of activities (general reflection on units of instruction, self assessment of progress toward learning objectives, and reactions to assessments and comments by teachers and other students).

One early decision was to focus our analysis of incoming data on the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Although we are still analyzing the data, there are early indications that these needs played an important role in determining the strength and persistence of learner engagement. For example, several students commented on how the repeated, focused practice helped them in terms of confidence and satisfaction with their performance. In many or most English classes in Japan student performances are normally only evaluated by the teacher, and feedback may or may not be provided. At the same time, the lack of criteria makes it difficult to improve their performance. In this project, students received feedback from their teachers, guest teachers (professors) and peers. At the same time, there was a clear

criteria, and students had several opportunities to practice and improve. The following excerpt, translated from Japanese, offers support for this claim:

Receiving advice directly from professors was a great honor, and I also tried to listen in to advice they were giving others and make efforts in those areas as well. I am so satisfied that I could present without being as nervous as I expected. I believe this was due to having many opportunities to practice.

In designing the program for both third and first-year students, we took into account the psychological need of autonomy, and this seems to have paid off in the form of psychological investment on the part of students. During phase one, the umbrella themes of economics and education were decided by the authors, but students decided specifically what to research and present on. There was evidence in their comments that this boosted their sense of responsibility and focused their efforts. Although the SDGs were chosen as the theme for the summer camp, groups of first-year students selected the specific goals they wanted to focus on. Again, student reflections bear out the fact that having this choice helped motivate them.

Finally, there was ample evidence that students valued, enjoyed and learned from interactions with their teachers, the guest speakers and their peers. Taken together, we have support for the claim that the need for relatedness was met and that this helped strengthen learner engagement. The following comment (translated from Japanese) highlights the educational and psychological value of having students work in groups:

Although it was difficult for us, during summer vacation we got together and researched on problems surrounding the SDGs and we discussed how to present what we learned and what kind of skit can convey the contents to other students. Although there were some difficulties, it was a really valuable experience to cooperate in a group in making and giving a presentation. I have a great sense of achievement in overcoming the various challenges of this project.

8.2 Professional Development

In this section, we want to stress how the project intentionally and unintentionally benefitted other teachers, as well as how each stage has pushed us personally as teachers and researchers. First, in terms of our own development, we have both come to better understand the structural and

procedural challenges on the opposite side of the high school/university equation. At the same time, we both have a better appreciation of the need to balance theory with practice and vice versa. The various stages of this collaboration have given us both a better understanding of the trajectories and transitions from early school experiences with learning English up through junior high, high school and university.

Although not a part of our original plans, our collaboration has provided several opportunities for professional development for other teachers and administrators. The comments offered above under phase four offer a glimpse at the value of these opportunities. The decision to collaborate in preparing a workshop for Osaka teachers was made in late summer after the success with the summer camp. NISHI was responsible for organizing an event for the city-wide high school foreign language teachers group (*Osaka-shi kotogakko kyoiku kenkyukai - gaikokugoka*). We thought this would be an excellent opportunity to share our experiences with other teachers (not only English teachers) at NISHI as well as other Osaka city high schools, junior high schools and elementary schools. In terms of NISHI teachers and CNETs, we feel this workshop and our continued collaboration have provided an example of concrete ways to engage learners and push them to higher levels of learning. By this, we do not mean just getting into university but succeeding at the tertiary level and beyond. At the same time, we feel these experiences have given these teachers a better understanding of the important role of theory and conceptual frameworks in designing lessons and curriculum. For other teachers, we hope the experience gave them a better understanding of active learning models and how *kodai-renkei* can be leveraged for improved language education at all levels.

9. Concluding Remarks

In closing, we feel these activities have given us both a better understanding of the challenges on each side of the HS-Uni equation and ways we might help students make the transition to higher education. We also believe our experiences provide one of many models for how high schools and universities can work together, and hope the collaboration activities described in this paper inspire others to view *kodai renkei* more than just *demai jugyo* (guest lectures) and *kengaku* (campus visits). On a cautionary note, we both believe it is a mistake to equate *kodai renkei* activities with marketing or promotion. These endeavors have different goals and the focus of *kodai renkei* should always be about education, with end goals of improved teaching and learning on both sides.

To tell the truth, we never imagined this collaboration expanding beyond the teleconference meetings we had back in the autumn of 2018. Having said that, we feel things progressed quite

organically. Deciding to share findings from the action research part of our collaboration via presentations and publications was a natural step. Also, we were already obligated to prepare the summer camp, and this collaboration went quite smoothly as we had already been working together. And finally, sharing our experiences with other teachers seemed like a logical follow-up to other phases. We would like to encourage other teachers to use the ideas outlined above in their own classrooms and *kodai renkei* activities.

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Appendix 1 - Joint Presentation Abstracts

Successful High School to University Transitions

presented at PanSIG2019, Nishinomiya, Japan

May 19, 2019

Abstract - The transition from high school EFL courses in Japan (grammar-translation focused) and those offered at university (more of the same or a complete de-emphasis of grammar) has been cited as a source of frustration and decreased motivation (Ryan, 2008). In this presentation, teachers from both contexts offer an overview of an action research project in which they collaborated in designing and delivering a series of interactive lectures for a small group of students enrolled in an advanced English course at a public high school in western Japan. These EFL lectures had a business and economics focus, and were used as a springboard for discussing with learners the demands and challenges they will likely face in university-level English courses. The framework for these discussions was a combination of reflective journaling and descriptive feedback (Rodgers, 2006) and was used to explore cognitive and affective reactions to these collaborative experiences. Findings included high overall satisfaction with the learning experiences but also highlighted some of the challenges (e.g., linguistic, curricular, technical) faced by both learners and teachers on both sides of this transition. Participants will go away with a list of best practices and key considerations for their own secondary-tertiary cooperation endeavors.

Online Tools for Supporting High School - University EFL Collaboration

presented at JALTCALL 2019, Tokyo, Japan

June 2, 2019

Abstract - High School - University Collaboration endeavors have become a major focus of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), as have efforts aimed at increasing communicative competence in English among Japanese youth. With this in mind, the current presentation outlines an action research project in which a small group of high school students in western Japan were provided with a series of telecollaboration sessions that involved English lectures, student presentations, and feedback and debriefing sessions. These content-focused EFL lectures had a business and economics focus, and a combination of reflective

journaling and descriptive feedback (Rodgers, 2006) was used to explore cognitive and affective reactions to these collaborative experiences. Findings included high overall satisfaction with the learning experiences but at the same time highlighted some of the challenges (e.g., linguistic, curricular, technical) this type of collaboration entail. This paper highlights the technical aspects of delivering and recording these interactions as well as analyzing qualitative data collected throughout the project. Readers are presented with a list of tools, best practices and key considerations for their own Secondary-Tertiary Cooperation endeavors.

Engaging High School Students with the SDGs

presented at JALT 2019 (Global Issues in Language Education Forum), Nagoya, Japan

November 2, 2019

*Abstract - This short presentation introduces the what, why and how of a small-scale action research project involving 80 high school students in Western Japan. Sixteen groups of four students self-selected one of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) before their summer break. They then researched the SDG on their own and/or with their teammates during the first part of summer, and then used their findings during a three-day English summer camp. The design and delivery of the various learning activities were part of a larger high school - university collaboration (**kodai renkei**) project. Preliminary findings suggest the power of the SDGs to promote or enhance four types of learner engagement, namely behavioral, cognitive, emotional and agentic.*

Appendix 2 - Survey Questions

(1) What stands out in your memory regarding the SDGs (e.g. researching, preparing, and presentation practice) and last summer's English camp?

(2) Have your attitudes or behaviors changed in any way due to what you learned about the SDGs? If yes, explain in detail. If not, explain why you think there has been no change.