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## Optimizing the future of language teaching with technology in Japan

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### Abstract

Pandemic-era teaching has taken many forms: online, face-to-face, hybrid, and hyflex, among others. In this article, I make four predictions for the future of language teaching with technology in Japan and provide my recommendations for optimizing this future.

First, I predict that online instruction will quickly fall back to pre-pandemic levels without interventions to prevent this. One area ripe for change is in virtual international experiences, such as online study abroad. Second, most institutions will adopt bring-your-own-device policies. Teachers will need more tech literacy to take full advantage of these devices. Third, institutions will recognize a growing variety of learning differences among students and rely on teachers to accommodate them. To support all learners, universal design will become standard. Fourth, although most instruction will return to the physical classroom, teachers will need to be constantly prepared to shift instruction online again. Emergency remote teaching will be inadequate.

To prepare to meet these challenges and optimize the outcomes, teachers need quality professional development. Although current offerings from our institutions are inadequate, CALL experts can help to fill some of the unmet needs. I encourage CALL experts to push for the future of technology in education that they would like to see.

パンデミック時代の教育は、オンライン、対面、ハイブリッド、ハイフレックスなど、さまざまな形態で行われてきた。本文では、日本におけるテクノロジーを使った語学教育(CALL)の未来について私の4つの予測を述べ、その未来に備えるような提案も紹介する。

第一に、オンライン教育は、関係者の介入がなければ、パンデミック前と同じようになくなってしまふようになると思う。その中でも、オンライン留学のようなバーチャル体験は、変化の兆しが見える分野である。第二に、ほとんどの教育機関がデバイスの持ち込み(BYOD)に関するポリシーを採用すると思われる。デバイスを最大限に活用するために、教師はより高い技術リテラシーを身につける必要がある。第三に、教育機関は、生徒の学習上の差異がますます多様化していることを認識し、それらに対応できるように教師に依存するようになる。すべての学習者をサポートするために、ユニバーサルデザインが標準になる。第四に、ほとんどの授業は物理的な教室に戻るが、教師は常に授業を再びオンラインに移行できるように準備しておく必要がある。「緊急遠隔授業」は、不十分である。

このような課題に対応し、成果をより良くするために、教師は質の高い専門的能力を身につける必要がある。現在、私たちの教育機関が提供しているものは不十分だが、CALLの専門家は満たされていないニーズのいくつかを満たすことができるのであろう。CALLの専門家は、自分が望んでいる教育におけるテクノロジーの在り方を後押しすることをお勧めする。

**Keywords: professional development, faculty development, emergency remote teaching, universal design, BYOD, study abroad**

## Introduction

When I was invited to give a keynote at JALTCALL 2021, it prompted me to reflect on my relationship to the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL; see also Lavolette, 2021). My MA and PhD were CALL focused, and immediately after defending my PhD dissertation, I became the director of a language center at a small private college in the US. An important part of my role was providing professional development (PD) to language faculty, especially regarding technology. By giving frequent workshops and one-on-one trainings at my own institution and elsewhere, I gained a general understanding of what faculty members were likely to be able (or unable) to do with technology and how I could help them.

However, when I moved to Japan to accept a job as a professor, suddenly, I was no longer holding workshops. I had much less insight into what my colleagues were doing and what their skills were. I began to think that my skills and interests were only of use to myself, not to others. Without any evidence, I came to the premature conclusion that we were in an era of ubiquitous technology, and that its use in language teaching was a given.

The sudden shift to emergency remote teaching (ERT) showed me that technology was, in fact, not a given for many teachers. I was shocked to discover that some of my colleagues did not know how to use our learning management system, Moodle, despite it having been available at my institution since 2005 (T. Robb, personal communication, May 24, 2021). I do not place all blame on faculty members themselves for this situation. Undoubtedly, many factors discouraged them from learning to use Moodle and other technology tools, such as a lack of urgency and a lack of training for part-time faculty and faculty members, especially those who are not comfortable working in Japanese.

This lack of training highlighted to me the importance of PD that can reach all teachers, not just the full-time, tenured, Japanese speakers. I saw the need to reach out to part-time and contract faculty and those less comfortable with Japanese. This led to me creating a help group on Teams, where other participants and I answer questions via text and video chat. We have even held a fully online mini conference.

In a small way, I was able to help people who were struggling to teach in a very stressful situation that they were not adequately prepared for, and this gave me a renewed sense of purpose as a CALL professional. Of course, I am far from the only faculty member taking on the challenge of supporting our fellow teachers (see, e.g., Isaacson, 2020; Skeates et al., 2020; Verla Uchida, 2020).

While supporting other teachers takes time and effort, it has also been greatly rewarding

for me. That is, my work no longer feels so solitary because of my connection with other faculty members. I also see that my technology skills are useful not only in my research and teaching my own students but are also needed to help other faculty members, which indirectly helps their students. Supporting other teachers gives me a renewed sense of purpose in my work that has been a silver lining of the pandemic.

So, with this renewed purpose and sense of my identity as a CALL professional, I make some predictions about the future of the field, with a focus on the influence of the pandemic. Below, I begin with a look at a prediction for the field made nearly 35 years ago. Then, I make and justify predictions in four areas: online instruction, bring-your-own-device, universal design for learning, and disaster preparedness. Finally, I provide my perspective on how CALL professionals can influence developments in these areas and what their role might be in helping other teachers prepare, that is, their role in professional development.

## **Predictions**

Nearly 35 years ago, in the opening keynote address at the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium Conference, Ray Clifford (the former provost of the Defense Language Institute in the US) said, "...while computers will not replace teachers, teachers who use computers will eventually replace teachers who don't" (Clifford, 1987, p. 13). In other words, Clifford was trying to assure teachers that technology was not their enemy.

As a response to this prediction, in his talk at the 2021 Georgetown University Roundtable, Bryan Smith summed up the current situation as follows: "Language teachers are not being replaced by teachers who use technology, but we are gradually (or not so gradually) becoming those very teachers" (Smith, 2021). That is, due to emergency remote teaching, many language teachers have been thrust into using technology, without any regard to their preferences. The pandemic has greatly accelerated a process by which teachers were already increasing their technology literacy.

What will these newly technology-literate teachers do, through their own volition or otherwise, when they return to brick-and-mortar classrooms? I make some specific predictions for what will happen in Japan. I also share the aggregated predictions of 56 JALTCALL 2021 attendees, who responded to a short questionnaire survey before or during my talk. Note that this is a convenience sample, undifferentiated by teaching context or any other factor, and the questions were not piloted. However, the results provide some insight into whether JALTCALL attendees agreed with my predictions.

### **Online instruction**

The questionnaire survey began with perhaps the most obvious question about the future of language teaching in Japan: "What will happen with online teaching and learning?" Three options were available (in addition to "I have no idea" and "other"): "quickly return to pre-pandemic levels" (14.5%), "keep some limited teaching/learning online" (58.2%), and "keep a lot of teaching/learning online" (23.6%). The results showed that a large majority of attendees (81.8%) believed that at least a limited amount of online teaching and learning would remain online.

My own predictions are somewhat more nuanced than the multiple-choice options allowed. First, without intervention, online instruction will quickly fall back to pre-pandemic levels. On the other hand, with intervention, some online instruction can be maintained, and in the area of international experiences, online instruction can even be expanded.

### *Online instruction will fall back to pre-pandemic levels*

Without an effort by teachers and students, I predict that online instruction will quickly fall back to pre-pandemic levels. This prediction is aimed at higher education, given that primary and secondary schools have generally maintained face-to-face instruction throughout the pandemic, with the exception of a short period in March 2020 (Zenkoku no shōuchukō, 2020). Below, I elaborate on four reasons for this prediction: lack of demand from students, conservative authorities, confusion of emergency remote teaching for online learning, and a failure to consider differing course types.

Personally, I have not seen demand for online learning from students. For the most part, they seem to be eager to return to the classroom. This contrasts with the situation in the US, which might otherwise be a useful indicator of Japan's future, given that the US has, as I write this, a much higher vaccination rate than Japan. Many US colleagues that Bryan Smith (2021) interviewed predicted that hybrid courses (i.e., those taught in person on certain days and asynchronously online on other days) will become the norm there because of student demand.

In contrast to the situation in the US, students in Japan may not demand continued online instruction. Few Japanese university students are nontraditional students; according to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2019), nearly 98% of new university students were 18, 19, or 20 years old in 2019. This means that there are few students who have responsibilities such as full-time jobs and families, who therefore need more flexibility in their studies.

The second reason for my prediction is that the decision makers involved are conservative institutions. By their very nature, MEXT and universities resist change and will force a return to the "old normal" as quickly as possible. MEXT demonstrated that resistance to change clearly in fall 2020, when it named and shamed universities that had more than 50% of courses online (Ito, 2020). Universities demonstrated their own resistance to change when they moved back to face-to-face teaching, even if faculty, staff, and students did not feel safe, to comply with MEXT's demands.

The third reason for my prediction is a fundamental misunderstanding of online learning in society at large, including among teachers and administrators. That is, many people conflate the use of Zoom (or other video conferencing systems) with emergency remote teaching (ERT), which they further confuse with online learning (Gacs, Goertler, & Spasova, 2020). In contrast to ERT, online learning requires extensive planning and course development, which simply was not possible at the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, not all teachers have improved their online teaching since then, which may fuel the misconceptions.

The fourth reason for this prediction is that institutions may be making decisions that apply to classes broadly, rather than considering different class types and the students enrolled (see below). For these four reasons, I predict that without any intervention, online

instruction will quickly fall back to pre-pandemic levels. However, maintaining some on-line instruction may be possible with stakeholder intervention.

*Some online instruction can be sustained*

I argued above that MEXT and universities will be forces pushing for a return to face-to-face instruction. However, students and faculty could apply pressure toward change.

Although I have not seen student demand for continued online learning, it has direct benefits for them. Online communication is a daily occurrence, and incorporating it into learning is not only convenient, but also useful preparation for students' future careers. In addition, certain categories of students benefit from more flexible class schedules and modes of attendance. For example, third- and fourth-year university students who are on the job market need to attend interviews, and students in professional programs, such as education and nursing, need to participate in off-campus practicums. Universities may be so eager to help students find jobs that students need only argue that online courses support them in their job hunting. If students indeed appreciate these advantages of online learning, they could make their voices heard and effect change.

Faculty and CALL experts could further argue for the effectiveness of keeping certain types of classes online. First, I consider the size and format of the class. As an example, in the spring 2021 semester, I was teaching a lecture for 230 students, a seminar for 2 students, and several content-based classes with enrollments of 20 to 35 students. The way each type of course works online is very different. In the case of the large lecture, an asynchronous format that uses short videos with interspersed quizzes has worked even better for me than lecturing in the classroom. A disadvantage to this teaching format is the lack of interaction, but interaction is difficult to facilitate in such a large class even when it is held face-to-face. Advantages to this format are that I never have to tell students to be quiet so that everyone can hear, and students can review the lectures as many times as they like, at whatever playback speed they like. At the other end of the spectrum, very small seminars can be taught in nearly the same way regardless of online or offline mode by using video conferencing tools such as Zoom, so the flexibility of online courses may be a useful recruiting tool. My experience with medium-size classes is that many factors impact their success, which makes it more difficult to generalize about their suitability for online learning.

Personal experience is certainly valuable, but upper administrators may respond better to data. As evidence, we can cite, for example, student grades and course evaluations. If you had time to do your own related research during the pandemic, I applaud you and urge you to share the results with administrators. If you did not have time to conduct your own research, another strategy is to cite the research that supports our course development. For example, when I was creating my asynchronous lecture course videos, I referred to the work of Guo, Kim, and Rubin (2014), who studied engagement based on 6.9 million video watching sessions across four STEM courses on edX, a provider of massively open online courses (MOOCs). They operationalized engagement as the time spent watching the videos and whether each student attempted to answer multiple-choice questions immediately after watching. Based on their findings, they made some practical recommendations for creating engaging videos. I followed some of these recommendations in

making my own videos: videos should be short (less than six minutes), slideshow videos are more engaging if the teacher's face also appears at times, an informal setting for the video has a more personal feel that makes it more engaging, and instructors who speak enthusiastically are more engaging (p. 42).

The types of students enrolled in classes should be another factor in determining whether it should be taught online. First-year students, who do not know each other and are experiencing university life for the first time, are different from third- and fourth-year students, who may already know each other, are very familiar with university life, and may have experience learning online. It bears repeating that these students appreciate the flexibility of online classes when they are on the job market.

Based on these arguments, students and faculty may be able to keep some courses online. I urge universities to allow lecture classes and small seminars to be held online at the discretion of the instructor, especially for third- and fourth-year students. Other class types might also be suitable for online instruction if appropriate resources are devoted to their development. Student training for online learning should also be strongly considered, especially for those without prior online learning experience.

While getting universities to consider keeping regular courses online may be a struggle, providing international experiences online may be an easier sell.

#### *Online instruction will increase for international experiences*

I predict that virtual international experiences will be increasingly available to students in Japan. These experiences may take many forms, including online courses and immersive experiences in lieu of traditional study abroad, support around traditional study abroad (preparation, during, and after returning), virtual internships, and virtual language exchange and telecollaboration.

I have several reasons to believe that these opportunities will increase. First, teachers and administrators are now familiar with online instruction. Even if they have some misconceptions about the nature of online learning, they know that it is possible and can provide a route to providing international experiences to students in Japan. Related to this, students and parents have also seen that online learning is possible and may begin demanding options beyond traditional study abroad because of concerns over cost, safety, flexibility, and on-time graduation. In addition, while MEXT exerts control over what counts for course credit in Japanese institutions, they have less input into non-credit opportunities and exchanges arranged as part of for-credit courses.

International experiences have not paused during the pandemic. At least seven presentations at the JALT PANSIG conference in May 2021 and at least four presentations at JALTCALL in June 2021 reported on virtual international experiences. To cite just one example, at the Study Abroad SIG Forum at the PANSIG conference, Wistner et al. (2021) reported on their participation in a collaborative online international learning (COIL) project. One of their conclusions was that professional development is needed for effective exchanges. I return to this important point below.

To summarize my predictions, online instruction at Japanese universities will make a quick return to pre-pandemic levels unless faculty and students to keep certain types of

courses online. On the other hand, online instruction has the potential to expand in the area of international experiences.

### **Bring your own device**

The next question that I posed to JALTCALL attendees was, “What do you think will happen with bring your own device (BYOD)?” The responses (excluding “I have no idea” and “other”) were “over 80% BYOD” (45.5%), “40 to 80% BYOD” (30.9%), “Under 40% BYOD” (12.7%).

After asking their opinions, I revealed to attendees is that BYOD was already the policy at nearly 40% of universities (37.9% planned to be BYOD in 2018; AXIES, 2016) and nearly a quarter of high schools (23.5% in 2020; Obunsha, 2020). While more recent data is not available for universities, the rate of adoption has likely continued to increase since 2016. In addition, nearly all primary and junior high school students will have their own tablet or laptop computer, provided by the school, by the end of the 2021 school year (Zenshōchūgakusei, 2021). This provides the first reason that I believe that most institutions will adopt BYOD policies. That is, students in primary education will be accustomed to using technology in the classroom, which will apply pressure to high schools and universities to provide students with devices or require them to bring their own.

A second reason for this prediction is that even at universities that have not BYOD policies, students have been required to use their own devices to participate in remote learning. Any faculty member who taught online has dealt with students’ own devices on an emergency basis. At the same time that faculty were proving that online instruction is possible, students were proving that BYOD is possible. Institutions are likely to seize this opportunity to reduce costs related to providing computer access on campuses.

I believe that formally implemented BYOD will bring significant advantages for the use of technology in language classes. Of course, it will also present challenges because students are generally allowed to choose from a variety of acceptable devices, rather than being required to purchase a device of an exact make and model. In addition, institutions may not check that students have purchased an acceptable device, so in any given classroom, a student might have devices as different as an iPad or a Windows laptop with the accompanying variations in available software. Teachers will need more tech literacy to take advantage of these devices without excluding any students. One way that this tech literacy can be gained is through professional development provided by teachers’ institutions.

### **Universal design for learning**

The third question that presentation attendees answered was, “What do you think will happen with universal design for learning in Japan?” Excluding “other” responses, the responses were “used more” (26.8%), “same” (25%), “used less” (1.8%), and “What is universal design?” (39.3%).

I predict that universal design for learning (UDL) will become standard practice in schools and universities. However, the audience questionnaire results support my suspicion that UDL is far from universally known to educators. I hope making the prediction itself raises awareness of UDL and how it can benefit students, thus making the prediction self-fulfilling.

Before I explain my other reasons for making this prediction, UDL itself needs to be explained. CAST (2021) defined UDL as “a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.” In other words, UDL provides a system to support all learners, regardless of learning differences.

The CAST website (<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>) provides helpful information on the three UDL guidelines of engagement, representation, and action and expression. In short, providing learners with multiple options is essential. For example, in the area of engagement, learners differ in the ways in which they are motivated to learn. Providing options for novelty or routine, solo or group work, helps to support all learners. Representation refers to the ways that information is presented to learners, with consideration needed for presenting information in ways that accommodate sensory and learning differences. Finally, learners differ in the ways that they can take action and express what they know, so options (e.g., writing, speaking, recording a video) should be provided.

The connection between UDL and technology is clear: Technology can make it easier to offer educational resources that follow UDL guidelines. As Morra and Reynolds (2010) wrote, “Using UDL principles, technology-enhanced course design is an effective way to create flexible learning environments for learners” (p. 49).

I predict that UDL will become standard practice for three reasons. First, our institutions are recognizing a growing variety of learning differences among students. At elementary and junior high schools in Japan, the number of students who were recognized as having certain learning differences, including ADHD and autism, more than doubled from 2007 to 2017, despite the fact that the total number of students enrolled decreased during the same period (Miyasaka & Yoshizawa, 2019). Rather than indicating that the percentage of students with learning differences increased, this should be interpreted as an increase in diagnosis and recognition. Higher education showed a similar trend from 2007 to 2017, with the number of recognized disabilities among students increasing nearly six-fold (Japan Student Services Organization, 2021).

The second reason for predicting that UDL will be widely used, particularly in higher education, is that universities are competing for a shrinking population of potential students. Japan’s population of 18-year-olds has been steadily falling from a high of over 2 million in the early 1990s and is projected to fall to around 1 million by 2025 (Yonezawa, 2020). Being able to support all learners via UDL will be required for universities to attract students.

A third reason for this prediction is that the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of accessible technology. During remote learning, technology is the only communication link between teachers and students, which brings into stark relief the importance of accessibility for all students.

Further supporting my prediction is the proliferation of recent scholarship out of Japan on this topic, although UDL is not always mentioned by name. I counted three presentations at the annual JALT conference (November 2020), two at the Living on the Edge conference (May 2021), and two at the PANSIG conference (May 2021). A call for chapters for a volume about barrier-free learning went out in May 2021, and universal design is the theme for the 2021 Japan Association for Language Education Technology conference.

For my own part, I need a greater understanding of UDL so that I can more effectively



support learners. The results of the audience survey revealed that I am not the only one. Professional development is needed in this area, too.

### **Disaster preparedness**

The final question that I asked the audience to respond to was, “What do you think will happen with disaster preparedness in Japan?” The options were “Our institutions will demand that teachers be ready for online instruction at any time” (48.2%), “Institutions will not prepare to move online” (30.4%), and “I have no idea” (16.1%), in addition to “other” (5.4%).

Nearly half of the audience agreed with my fourth prediction: Although most instruction will return to the physical classroom, we will need to be constantly prepared to shift instruction online again. This will apply not only during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic but is also necessary preparation for future public health or natural disasters that prevent face-to-face instruction.

There are many reasons that I make this prediction. Certainly, our institutions, students and their parents, and other stakeholders would like to avoid future interruptions to schooling. Given that Japan suffers from earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, and typhoons, in addition to public health threats, our institutions may take the COVID-19 pandemic as a warning to be prepared. We have proven during the current crisis that rapidly transitioning between face-to-face and online teaching modes is possible, and our institutions may insist that we be prepared to do it again.

Although teachers in Japan have shown that emergency remote teaching is possible, universities were frustratingly underprepared before the pandemic. Online learning is not new, but you would not know that from looking at the situation in the spring of 2020. Perhaps many teachers in Japan believed that they did not need to develop online teaching skills or even learn to use basic technology, such as learning management systems. Beyond that, their institutions may have done little to promote technology use or help teachers develop skills. This meant that in 2020, teachers were forced to re-invent online learning under enormous time pressure. In other words, they did emergency remote teaching.

Emergency remote teaching is not something we should repeat. Instead, we should be prepared to provide online learning (Gacs, Goertler, & Spasova, 2020) as needed. This requires us to plan for rapid transitioning between face-to-face and online teaching modes. Our course development must reflect this reality. However, if we allow our institutions to dictate how teaching will be done, they may choose the option that is most flexible for students and most unsustainable for teachers: hyflex.

Hyflex is a course model in which teachers teach in a face-to-face classroom to physically present students, while simultaneously teaching online students who are attending synchronously. In addition, teachers provide equivalent asynchronous instruction to students who do not attend during the class time. Students are free to choose among the three modes of participation on any given day (Beatty, 2019).

In this course model, teachers are in essence teaching three courses simultaneously. We will burn out if required to teach that way, so I believe that we need to push for the most effective learning solutions that are also sustainable for teachers. Clearly, emergency

remote teaching is longer adequate, and teachers need to provide high-quality online learning experiences. However, we need research showing the pros and cons for both learners and teachers of each approach, including hyflex, other hybrid models, and synchronous and asynchronous online models.

### **Summary of predictions**

I made a series of predictions about the future of technology in language teaching in Japan. First, without some intervention, I predict that online instruction will quickly return to pre-pandemic levels. However, a strong argument can be made for keeping some instruction online, such as large lectures and classes for students on the job market. In addition, international experiences have the potential to expand the use of online instruction.

I further predict that bring-your-own-device and universal design for learning will become norms at all levels of instruction. Finally, I predict that our institutions will expect us to be prepared to switch to online instruction at any time, in case of various disasters.

How can we optimize this future? My answer is higher quality, more inclusive professional development on specific topics of relevance to teachers.

### **Conclusion: Focus on professional development**

Professional development (PD; also known as faculty development, or FD) refers to “opportunities intended to aid faculty members in their professional growth as a teacher (or a researcher, or both)” (Lavolette & Koyama, 2021). There are many forms of PD (c.f., Ijiri & Lavolette, 2021), but I concentrate here on institutional PD, that is, PD provided by the institutions we work for. For example, institutions can provide workshops, webinars, lists of resources, and communities of practice for their faculty members.

This focus on institutional PD is for two reasons. First, all undergraduate institutions in Japan have been required to provide PD since 2008 (Kano, 2015; Konno, 2016; Suzuki, 2013). This means that faculty members are required to attend PD sessions, so we should ensure that these sessions are useful. Second, institutions are best positioned to provide PD that takes the context into account. Context is an important element of the TPACK model (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), which emphasizes that the overlapping types of knowledge that teachers need (technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge) are embedded in their contexts. Thus, PD that teaches this knowledge also needs to be specific to the context, and faculty members working at the same institution understand their shared context. For example, faculty members at a given institution know what technology tools they have access to and what the limitations are in using them.

Here, I concentrate on institutional PD for language teaching to meet the challenges related to my predictions for the future of technology in language teaching. This PD must be inclusive of part-time teachers (e.g., Skeates et al., 2020) and non-Japanese-speaking teachers. It must be high quality, designed to meet the needs of teachers, and fit the teaching context. CALL experts are well positioned to provide PD that meets these criteria.

However, the PD currently offered by our institutions is inadequate, at least in higher education. Unfortunately, I don't have data about elementary, junior high, or high schools in Japan, but the results of my recent co-authored research (Lavolette & Koyama, 2021)

shed light on the situation at universities. With Dennis Koyama, I conducted a survey that targeted language teachers in higher education in Japan. This bilingual (English and Japanese) questionnaire survey was sent out via social media and email lists of professional organizations, such as the Japan Association for Language Teachers. Complete responses were received from 38 participants at institutions around the country. About 74% of respondents were L1 English speakers, and all participants were English teachers.

A few of the questions shed light on the effectiveness of institutional PD. First, 27 participants provided text-entry responses to the question, “Based on PD/FD sessions you have attended, what changes have you made to your teaching?” Only around 40% of respondents indicated that they made changes based on sessions in the previous year. Note that participants may have attended many PD sessions during that time, yet 60% made no changes to their teaching. This indicates that institutional PD sessions are not very effective.

Continuing with the analysis of the responses to the question above, of the 40% of participants that made changes, L1 Japanese speakers (about a quarter of participants) made up more than one-third of responses. This implies that L1-English faculty members find PD less effective. If PD sessions are available in Japanese only, this may explain the discrepancy. Of course, L1-English speakers who work at Japanese institutions should work to improve their Japanese language proficiency and take advantage of resources offered in Japanese. However, the institutions that hire these faculty members also have a responsibility to support them, including by offering PD in English.

Next, we asked, “Does your workplace survey teachers for topics of interest for PD/FD sessions?” The possible responses were “Yes” (39%), “No” (32%), and “I don’t know” (29%). Given that less than 40% of respondents said “yes,” most institutions are probably determining topics in a top-down fashion. They are more likely to meet teachers’ needs if they ask what those needs are.

Some free-form responses from participants shed light on how to improve institutional PD. First, institutions should reach out to part-time teachers. As one participant said,

Usually if I’ve made the effort to go to any [PD sessions] I’m the only part time teacher present and what is discussed isn’t relevant to me or my teaching. Also some schools hold them at times that I’m teaching at other universities.

If the goal is to improve teaching, universities should make good-faith efforts to include part-time teachers by asking about their needs.

Next, PD sessions are a type of education, so they should follow educational best practices. Active learning was specifically mentioned by two participants. For example, one participant said,

There never are any pre-study questions provided – at times not much of an abstract outlining the topic or scope of coverage. There is rarely time for any questions ... making them the complete opposite of the ‘active learning’ practices we ‘should’ be following in our own teaching. And rarely or more so never is there any follow up after the session.

Finally, we asked participants on which topics they would be most likely to attend PD

sessions. Out of 21 topics, “technology for language learning” was the most highly rated, with 84% of participants saying that they would be very likely or likely to attend. In other words, language teachers are in need of CALL expertise.

The general topic of “technology for language learning” provides an opening to drill down to more specific topics. When asking language faculty members what topics they want to learn about, it may be easier for them to respond if we provide some options, rather than only asking an open-ended question. My suggestions fall into categories based on my predictions for the future of language teaching in Japan.

- Online instruction
  - Best practices in online course design
  - Designing and facilitating effective virtual international experiences
- BYOD: How to support students using the devices specified by the institution
- Universal design: How to support all learners, with a focus on learning differences
- Disaster preparedness: Building courses for flexibly transitioning between face-to-face and online modes

In conclusion, CALL practitioners and researchers have a significant role to play in optimizing the future that I am predicting. Part of that role is to provide higher quality, more inclusive professional development that responds to teacher needs.

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