



Research Office Newsletter

Dialogue

Tenured Senior Lecturer,
Center for Language Education

OHARA Tetsushi



Tenured Senior Lecturer,
Center for Language Education

ISHIMURA Fumie

My name is OHARA Tetsushi. I currently teach Japanese as a Tenured Senior Lecturer at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) Center for Language Education (CLE). My colleague, Tenured Senior Lecturer ISHIMURA Fumie, and I are honored to have our dialogue featured in this latest issue of the Research Office Newsletter. Our dialogue mainly focuses on our co-written paper published in the Studies in Self-Access Learning (SiSAL) Journal. This paper, entitled "[Emergency Remote Support at the Self-Access Learning Center: Successes and Limitations](#)", explores how the Self-Access Learning Center (SALC) at APU has supported students during the COVID-19 pandemic. It may be accessed via the QR Code to the right.



ISHIMURA: So Mr. Ohara, if my memory serves me right, you have been a SALC coordinator for Japanese language since 2016, and were involved in establishing the SALC's mission. Is that correct?

OHARA: Yes, that's correct. The SALC aims to help students become autonomous language learners and confident language users who envision their own goals and continue to grow as lifelong learners. For this purpose, students are offered various forms of support to cultivate their language ability, learner autonomy and multi-cultural understanding.

ISHIMURA: One concrete example of support offered by the SALC is individual support sessions with Peer Advisors (PAs), who are also APU Students. These sessions are incredibly popular amongst our students. English language learners may also opt for consultation sessions with faculty members known as Language Advisors (LAs).

OHARA: Let's not forget that in addition to the individual support sessions, PAs also plan academic and cultural events.

ISHIMURA: That's right! While the SALC offers academic support for students taking language classes, it also aims to promote social learning, which enhances communication skills through facilitating informal interactions and fostering of new friendships.

OHARA: To elaborate on Ms. Ishimura's point, social learning spaces (SL spaces) created by the SALC over the past few years have provided opportunities for students to freely enjoy conversations, movies, games, etc. with other students and PAs. Students often utilize these SL spaces in between classes to chat and meet up with friends. Through such interactions at said SL spaces, students are constantly learning and improving their language skills.



ISHIMURA: Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the SALC's physical facilities have not been available for use since the AY2020 Spring Semester, and an alternative SALC support system had to be considered. After discussions with the English Language SALC coordinators and administrative staff at the Academic Office, an online support system was established.

OHARA: We named this online support system the "Emergency Remote Support" (ERS), and assessed its successes and limitations in our co-written paper.

ISHIMURA: Yes. In our paper, we defined ERS as a temporary shift of the SALC support system online during emergency situations (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) to support students learning languages. Individual support sessions and consultations with PAs and LAs respectively were conducted via Zoom rather than in person. According to our research, this online system not only provided a platform for students to learn and practice the language they are studying, but also served to relieve anxiety and stress experienced by students as a result of not being able to meet up with people.

OHARA: There is no doubt that the ERS has been of much help and support for students throughout the pandemic. It was a challenge for the Academic Office to prepare for it, but it would have been a shame to completely remove all forms of SALC support during the pandemic. Having said that, as stated in our paper, the ERS is not without its limitations. For starters, it has been difficult facilitating social learning through the ERS.

ISHIMURA: True. We were not able to create an equivalent online SL space for students to have conversations and meet up with their friends and PAs in between classes during the AY2020 Spring Semester. For the purposes of our research paper, we conducted surveys and interviews with PAs regarding the SALC's online support system and found that students and PAs alike enjoy in-person use of the SALC and experience loneliness when they are not able to use the SALC as a medium to meet up with their friends.

OHARA: On one hand, it was lovely to receive affirmation that the SALC has managed to successfully create these SL spaces and that students and PAs are so fond of these spaces. On the other hand, given the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our research has shown that there is a pressing need for us to consider how these spaces may be created online as well.

ISHIMURA: Agreed. With our research findings, we began discussions with the English Language SALC coordinators and Academic Office about the possibility of creating an online "SL Space" for the AY2020 Fall Semester, and decided to launch the SALC Online Lounge.

OHARA: Unlike other SALC events, reservations are not required for the SALC Online Lounge. This online lounge simply provides students with an open and casual platform to gather, communicate and connect. The English and Japanese PAs are working together to make further advancements to this project. While there are students who frequently participate in the SALC Online Lounge, there have also been times when the number of participants was incredibly low. In times like that, the difficulty of creating and running online SL spaces becomes much more apparent.

ISHIMURA: I know what you mean. Besides, for obvious reasons, the SALC Online Lounge just feels different from an in-person SALC environment. Things that we have taken for granted in the past are now becoming more difficult to accomplish. For instance, students used to drop by the SALC if they happened to see their friends there. Unfortunately, that simply cannot happen when classes are held completely online. As such, we all need to examine what we can do for the future given the current circumstances.

OHARA: Yes. Instead of simply converting in-person interactions and activities online, we must attempt to come up with more creative and interesting methods for interaction while taking the current situation into consideration. Going forward, I also hope that the SALC will provide students with greater opportunities to reflect on language learning and language usage in a more multi-faceted manner.

ISHIMURA: That's right. People often associate language learning with understanding grammar and memorizing vocabulary in language classes. However, when learning a language, it is important to use the knowledge taught in class in everyday communication, construct relationships between one's way of thinking, values and interpersonal relationships, and learn how to learn, while bearing in mind that the relationship between the aforementioned elements are complex. The SALC is of course, one way to meet people and learn, but it is also possible to learn from friends, classmates, faculty members, administrative staff, people in the community, etc.



OHARA: I am on the same page as Ms. Ishimura. I believe that whether it be through language classes, specialized subjects, the SALC, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs or play, it is paramount for university students to learn proactively and autonomously.

ISHIMURA: Yes! I also hope that our students will not limit their potential and continue to challenge themselves.

OHARA: As faculty members, we should also continue to challenge ourselves!

ISHIMURA: Yes, let's do that!

Special Feature: Journal Articles about APU

In line with the introduction of Tenured Senior Lecturers OHARA and ISHIMURA's co-written article on the SALC, the Research Office would also like to introduce other research inspired by APU's international and multi-cultural environment through journal articles published by APU faculty members. Each article may be accessed via the respective QR code to the right.

"Attitude of College Students Towards Ethical Issues of Artificial Intelligence in an International University in Japan"

Professor [MANTELLO Peter A.](#), Professor [GHOTBI Nader](#)



This paper examines the attitude and moral perception of 228 college students (63 Japanese and 165 non-Japanese) towards Artificial Intelligence (AI) at APU. The students were asked to select a single most significant ethical issue associated with AI in the future from a list of nine ethical issues suggested by the World Economic Forum, and to explain why they believed that their chosen issues were most important. The paper discusses the results in detail and concludes that, while policymakers must consider how to ameliorate the impact of AI on employment, AI engineers need to consider the emotional aspects of AI in research and development as well.



"When National Narratives Clash in Multinational University Classrooms: A Pedagogical Perspective"

Associate Professor [HEO Seunghoon Emilia](#)



"The other in us" by APU alumni Nguyen Huu Phu Gia, designed by Vo Ha Chi.

"What brought us glory brought them pain. What we have forgotten still resonates strongly in them."

APU has students from more than 30 nationalities in a classroom, a Chinese is sitting next to a Japanese, an Indian next to a Pakistani. Students do not always know how to communicate with others when exposed to competing national narratives. This paper explores what students narrate about their acquired conflict knowledge, what happens when their stories clash in university classrooms, and which pedagogical methods could be implemented if they are to become active agents of peace and reconciliation.

"Impact of the Interactive e-Learning Instructions on Effectiveness of a Programming Course"

Associate Professor [DAHLAN Nariman](#)



The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing schools, universities and learning and development professionals to shift rapidly from in-person to online teaching and learning. The ongoing pandemic has no doubt made the provision of effective e-learning contents more important and indispensable. This paper aims to assess the impact of using interactive instructions for e-learning to improve the effectiveness of a programming course at APU. It touches on designing an evaluation sheet, data collection and analysis strategies in regards to said course.

[“Incorporating an External Online Test Into a University Language Program”](#)

Associate Professor [PATTISON Steven C.](#), Tenured Senior Lecturer [ETO Tomoko](#),
Tenured Senior Lecturer [JONES Kent](#), Tenured Senior Lecturer [LARKING Malcolm](#),
Lecturer [JOHNSTON Patrick J](#), Lecturer PHILLIPS Michael



This paper presents a discussion of the adoption of an online test by the English program at APU. The impact and efficacy of the test and related materials are evaluated using four different measures. The paper concludes that while the aspects of washback, agency and efficacy are useful as guiding thematic concepts, further systematic research is needed to continue the project beyond the implementation and evaluation stages of the test reported here.

[“Classroom-Based Training Towards Learner Autonomy”](#)


Tenured Senior Lecturer [ETO Tomoko](#), Lecturer [ITOI Kiyu](#),
Part-time Lecturer SAUNDERS Misato



Various researchers argue that the utilization of language learning strategies (LLS) facilitates autonomous learning. However, learners often do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their LLS utilization in language classrooms since language classes currently give little attention to learner training (LT) on LLS. To address this issue, classroom-based LT was designed and incorporated into an English course at APU. In this course, students were expected to learn and practice target LLS with support from their course teachers. This paper describes the implementation of the LT, its rationale, and the analysis of the survey results. Based on the findings, it concludes by providing practical suggestions for designing an LT incorporated English program.

News

FY2021 Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI): APU's 12 Newly Selected Projects

 The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) has awarded Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) to 12 research projects by APU faculty members beginning this fiscal year. Of the 12 selected projects, one was awarded the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A), one was awarded the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B) and five were awarded Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C). The remaining five projects were awarded the Grants-in-Aid for Early-Career Scientists. APU's selection rate for this round of applications is 48%. The selected projects are of a wide assortment of research fields, including Tourism, Environmental Studies, Education, History, Management, etc. For detailed information on each project, refer to the [APU Official Homepage](#).



APU Official Homepage:
Grants-in-Aid for
Scientific Research
Selected Projects

Asia Pacific Conference 2021: Call for Presenters

The Asia Pacific Conference 2021, themed “*Diversity and Inclusion*”, will be held on 4-5 December 2021. Should you be interested to present your research at the conference, please register [here](#). The application deadline for presenters is 30 June 2021. For more information on the AP Conference, please refer to the [AP Conference Official Homepage](#).



Theme: Diversity and Inclusion

Date: 4-5 December 2021 (Sat-Sun)

Venue: Both onsite (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University) and online

*There is a possibility that the conference will be held online only.

Keynote Speaker: Professor Izumi OHNO, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)



AP Conference Official
Homepage

For inquiries, please email ropa@apu.ac.jp