Nursing English Nexus

Edited by Jeffrey Huffman

The Journal of the Japan Association for Nursing English Teaching

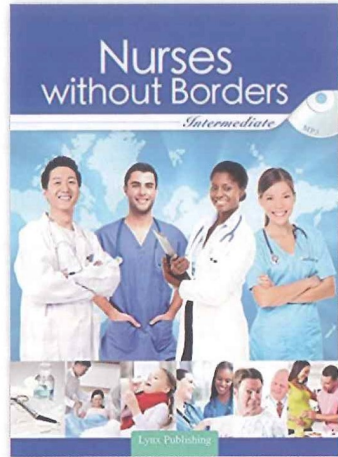JANET
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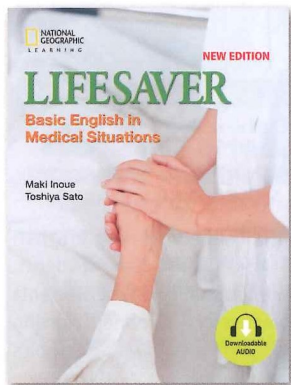【レベル】 beginning to intermediate

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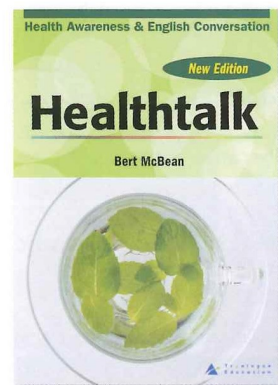
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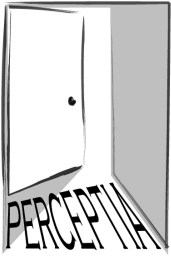
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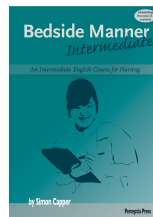
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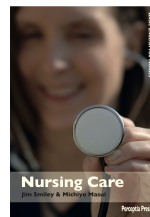
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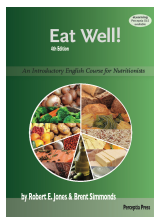
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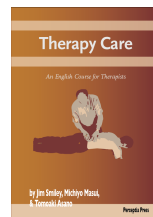
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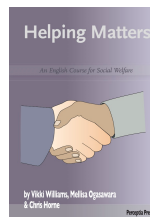
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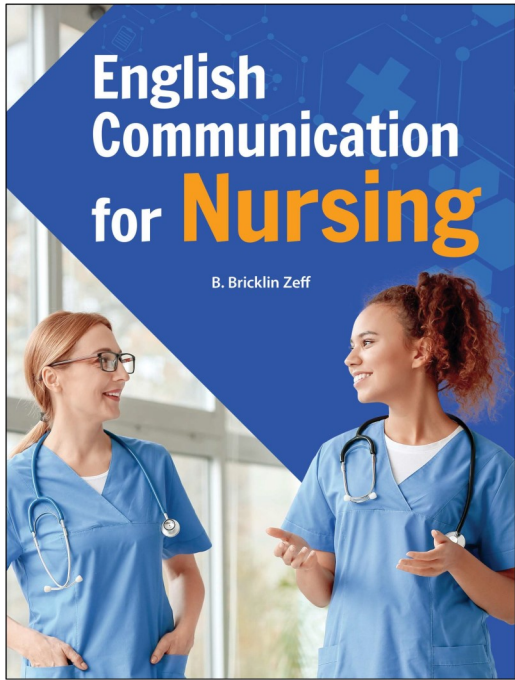
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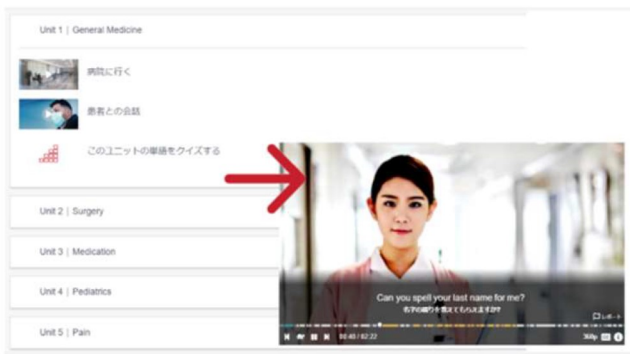
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From the Editor
Jeffrey Huffman

I trust this letter finds most if not all of you breathing a sigh of relief as the unbearably hot summer fades quickly into fall. On behalf of the contributors, reviewers, and everyone involved in the editorial process, I am happy to present the October 2024 issue of Nursing English Nexus, the official journal of the Japan Association for Nursing English Teaching (JANET).

This issue opens with a research article by Izumi Dryden of Mie Prefectural College of Nursing, Takako Ueda of the same college, and Laurence M. Dryden of Aichi Shukutoku University. The article focuses on how a pedagogical approach designed for teaching Japanese language, the Social Networking Approach, can be applied to nursing English education in Japan. Specifically, the author describes how she uses the *Doraemon's Japanese Everywhere* textbook to develop nursing students' empathy and self-efficacy in a nursing English course.

Our second research article is by Adam Crosby of Kobe City College of Nursing. This article starts with an exploration of how silence is viewed in Japanese culture and particularly in pedagogical contexts. This exploration finds that silence is often highly valued and even demanded in Japanese classrooms. The author then presents the results of a questionnaire revealing the perspectives of nursing students regarding active participation in English communication classes, and the article concludes with strategies nursing English teachers can use to get their students communicating more actively while respecting their cultural background.

Rounding out the issue is a description of a nursing role-play activity used to improve listening and speaking skills in a nursing English course by Su-Jen Lai of Chang Gung University in Taiwan, with student feedback presented as well.

All of these articles provide descriptions of activities, materials, and approaches that nursing English teachers can adapt for use in their own educational contexts as syllabus deadlines loom in the coming months. They also include, to varying degrees, discussion of the pedagogical and theoretical underpinnings of the suggested approaches. I hope readers find these suggestions both thought-provoking and useful.

We hope that you will consider contributing to our spring issue, whether it is a research article or practical teaching tips, or any of the other submission categories below. The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2025, and the submission guidelines are available at our website via the link at the bottom of this page.

Call for papers: We welcome anyone with an interest in any aspect of nursing English education to submit an article – in English or Japanese – in one of the following formats:

- Research articles (up to 5000 words)
- Reports (up to 2000 words)
- Introduction of current research projects (up to 1500 words)
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- Interviews with nursing educators/researchers (up to 1500 words)
- Reviews of nursing English materials and / or technologies (up to 1500 words)
- Short, practical teaching tips (up to 1000 words)

Submissions must be received by January 15 for the April issue and July 15 for the October issue. Information about the submission process and a style guide can be found at <https://www.janetorg.com/nexus>.

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The Social Networking Approach in Nursing English Pedagogy: Support for Students in Their Identity Transition Process

Izumi Dryden[1] (idumi.doraiden@mcn.ac.jp), Takako Ueda[1], & Laurence M. Dryden[2]

Mie Prefectural College of Nursing[1], Aichi Shukutoku University[2]

Abstract: This paper considers ways that English education can support the identity transition process of nursing students and addresses some relevant challenges faced by students and faculty in nursing English education. The present study first explores the potential of Tohsaku's Social Networking Approach (SNA) to enhance nursing English education. Next, it investigates ways in which SNA methods can help nursing students develop empathy through English learning. Finally, it considers how nursing students can develop their identity as future professional nurses through English learning—focusing on the development of nursing self-efficacy, empathy, and sympathy.

Keywords: Nursing Identity, Social Networking Approach (SNA), Empathy, Self-Efficacy, Nursing English Education

About the Authors: Izumi Dryden is an associate professor at Mie Prefectural College of Nursing. She teaches liberal arts courses in English reading, literature and medicine, and communication. Her research interests include the Social Networking Approach and the publications and correspondence of Florence Nightingale.

Takako Ueda is a full-time lecturer in charge of nursing pedagogy at Mie Prefectural College of Nursing. Her research interests include the professional role transitions of nurses, focusing currently on role transition from nursing student to novice nurse.

Laurence Dryden is an English instructor at Aichi Shukutoku University in Nagoya, where he teaches courses in academic writing and American Studies. His research interests include multicultural language identities and imitative behaviour in language learning.

High school students who want to become nurses enroll in university nursing programs but sometimes question their choice of career during their studies. By the second or third year, many students grapple with their nursing identity and motivations. They often seek guidance from faculty to explore their reasons for choosing nursing and reflect on their pre-university perceptions of the profession. These issues also arise and may be addressed in nursing English classes.

English teachers can play a role in supporting nursing students through their transition to a nursing identity. Traditional forms of language learning, e.g., studying medical terms in English, can help if these terms reinforce the motivations of students for becoming nurses. However, memorizing terms that are not used daily can be challenging and may not directly address nursing identity issues. A crucial question that governs curricular choices comes down to whether students should learn about English or learn to use English.

Japanese nursing students typically receive their education in Japanese and have limited exposure to English. They rarely interact with English-speaking patients during their nursing practice, making it hard to assess their English skills in real-life settings. Consequently, there is a need for specialized English learning methods that integrate nursing education with broader social contexts.

The present study explores how nursing English teachers can help their students develop empathy and a nursing identity through activities informed by the innovative Social Networking Approach (SNA), a foreign language pedagogical theory that aims to put students in situations beyond the limits of conventional classrooms. Adapted to nursing English courses, SNA

methods can help students enrich their capacities for empathy and self-efficacy through active engagement in nursing scenarios, both imagined and real.

How Can the Social Networking Approach Improve Nursing English Education?

The SNA, developed by Yasuhiko Tohsaku at the University of California, San Diego, is a progressive theory in foreign language teaching. SNA fosters curiosity about cultural exchange by building connections between classroom learning and the broader community. With its emphasis on practical foreign language use in real-world contexts, SNA can support nursing English education when learning to use English helps nursing students transition into their professional roles.

Tohsaku created SNA from his personal experience of struggling to use English in the United States despite extensive prior rote learning of English in Japan. SNA encourages using English as a tool for social interaction rather than for grammatical analysis. In such ways, Tohsaku aligns with educational reformers like John Dewey (1997/1938), who advocated project-based learning, and Paolo Freire (2018/1970), who promoted literacy for empowerment.

In nursing English courses, Japanese learners commonly lose motivation and retention when instruction focuses on generic vocabulary; a shift in focus to career-specific language may help improve student interest. For more significant improvements, however, a foreign language learning method like SNA, adapted in nursing English courses, can take students further by integrating practical, context-specific language use with engaging activities that together enhance student motivation and retention.

SNA is based on learning guidelines (学習の目安 *gakushu no meyasu*) developed by Tohsaku and his colleagues in Tohsaku et al. (2021a). SNA aims to help foreign language students achieve the dual goals of connecting with others and understanding themselves better. Adaptations of SNA in nursing English can help nursing students develop a professional identity by giving them opportunities to learn to empathize with other people in diverse contexts. As explained in Tohsaku et al. (2021a),

> In the SNA, the educational philosophy of foreign language learning is to "discover others, discover oneself and realize connections between them." In other words, by learning a foreign language and culture, we can connect with other people of that language and culture. Knowing others makes it possible for us to know more about ourselves and establish our identity by comparing ourselves with others. (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 7)

In this spirit, SNA can be adapted to nursing English courses in ways that help students establish their nursing identities and make progress in becoming effective and confident professionals who know how to use English—and express empathy in English or Japanese—in relevant healthcare situations.

How Can Nursing Students Acquire Empathy in English Classes through SNA Methods?

Empathy is a virtue too often in short supply. Nevertheless, as Tohsaku et al. (2021a) observes, "according to an OECD study, the most important ability in 2030 will be empathy" (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 7). [Note: OECD stands for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and is discussed later in the present study.] The nursing students at our college, like many in other nursing programs, often describe their dreams of becoming a nurse who is *close to patients* (寄り添う *yorisou*). When asked to explain, students typically say that being close to patients means being able to empathize with their patients' feelings. Expressing empathy, of course involves

both verbal and non-verbal communication. In nursing and other health care situations, precise language surely matters, but sometimes words alone do not suffice in making vital connections between people. The ability to read a patient's moods and respond appropriately is a crucial skill in managing many health care situations.

The importance of expressing empathy in nursing is a recurring theme in several studies that share SNA's emphasis on connecting with others. One scholar of nursing education, Marie E. Pokorny, cites Joyce Travelbee's Human-to-Human Relationship Theory from Interpersonal Aspects of Nursing (1966, 1971), which involves developing empathy through stages of human relationships (Pokorny, 2014, pp. 50–51). Travelbee claims that effective nursing is accomplished through human-to-human relationships that tend to follow a particular order:

1) the original encounter and progression through stages of emerging identities,
2) developing feelings of <u>empathy</u> and, later,
3) sympathy, until
4) the nurse and the patient attained rapport in the final stage. (Cited in Pokorny, 2014, p. 50; underlining ours)

For Travelbee, empathy emerges after establishing clear role identities and culminates in feelings of sympathy between nurse and patient.

Another scholar of nursing education, Carla Mueller, cites a similar study on the importance of empathy in nursing. According to Mueller (2016),

Delve, Mintz, and Stewart (1990) developed a service-learning model based on theories of moral decision making and values clarification. Their model includes five phases of development: exploration, clarification, realization, activation, and internalization. It illustrates that service learning is developmental, providing students with an opportunity to move from charity to justice as they become

more <u>empathetic</u>. Delve et al. (1990) believe that without that <u>empathy</u>, the student will not come to recognize the members of the patient population as valued individuals in the larger society and as sources for new learning. (Mueller, 2016, p. 527; underlining ours)

Taken together, the service-learning model of Delve et al. (1990) mentioned in Mueller (2016) and Travelbee's Human-to-Human Relationship Theory cited by Pokorny (2014) both highlight empathy as an essential feature of effective nursing. Such studies show that acquiring empathy is an important goal for nursing students to work toward as they pursue their professional training and form a nursing identity.

SNA provides teachers of nursing English with an array of activities for helping students develop empathy as a personal trait that enriches their professional lives. Moreover, by using SNA methods to help nursing students develop empathy skills, nursing English teachers typically gain some professional growth of their own. In SNA, "educators are also expected to keep up with the times, create new learning goals, and teach how to achieve them (OECD 2017, 2018)" (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 7). As part of such professional growth, teachers of nursing English who do not have specialization in nursing might consider some collaborative efforts with their colleagues who teach nursing courses. In our experience, nursing English teachers who work on projects with their fellow nursing educators can create learning activities that foster empathy and support nursing identity development. Such collaboration, while desirable, is hardly obligatory, and nursing English teachers can and usually do pursue SNA-style activities entirely on their own.

One foreign language instructor whose work is inspired by SNA, Asami Tsuda, teaches in ways that can be adapted to support empathy training in nursing English, specifically by using SNA methods to enhance language and identity

awareness. Tsuda's Task Sheet #4: Language and Identity asks students to address issues of identity and empathy in videos pre-selected by the teacher, showing interviews and similar interpersonal exchanges, as noted in Tohsaku et al., (2021a):

> Homework:
>
> Go to the link below, and answer the following questions before coming to class.
>
> *Title of the website and (URL)*
>
> 1. What is the purpose of this website? Think about the name of this site:
>
> 2. Read the overview of each interview and choose two interviews you would like to watch in class . . .
>
> In-class activity:
>
> Pair up with someone who chose the same interview. Watch it together and think about the following questions.
>
> 3. What kind of experience does this person have? What is the message of the interview?
>
> 4. Is there anything that gave you a strong impression, or any point you sympathized with? Why?
>
> . . .
>
> 7. Think about why this person shared his/her personal stories on this website. Can you share a personal story like them? (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 63)

This activity can be adapted to both nursing English and regular nursing classes. When viewing nursing-related videos, students will learn some nursing content in English. Moreover, Tsuda's activity gets students to engage in discussion about the content and think about what they have seen, bringing in personal experiences that can lead to empathy. Such activities—which involve analyzing interviews and reflecting on them through personal impressions—can be used in nursing English classes. Videos depicting situations between nurses and patients encourage nursing students to think in ways that help them develop empathy in patient interactions.

Tsuda offers other activities which have the potential for supporting empathy training in the nursing English classroom. Tsuda's *Task Sheet #5: What is 'empathy'? Why is it important?* explores the differences between sympathy and empathy. Tsuda asserts that empathy is not simply an emotion but a skill that can be cultivated (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 64). To explain empathy, Tsuda notes the importance of connecting with interviewees: "'Identity' is a sensitive topic—students need to think about not only the language used in the interview, but also how to 'connect' with the people they are interviewing, to make them feel comfortable sharing their personal stories" (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 63). Tsuda further clarifies matters by observing: "One way to consider the difference between sympathy and empathy is that while sympathy is an emotion, empathy is a skill. However, empathy is not completely detached from emotion" (Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 64). This distinction recalls Travelbee's Human-to-Human Relationship Theory, which holds that sympathy grows out of empathy, as noted earlier in Pokorny (2014).

In support of video-based activities like Tsuda's that ask students to explore their own affective responses to human interactions, nursing education scholar Brent W. Thompson advocates the use of videos specifically in nursing education. Thompson (2016) notes the effectiveness of video in representing scenes of emotional drama, notably in patient care situations that can help nursing students develop empathy:

> Showing movies and videos has long been part of nursing education but the introduction of streaming videos simplifies their use. Videos can convey psychomotor skills, emotional situations, and patient care situations better than any other media (Edmonds, 2013). Streaming videos help engage students and encourage critical thinking (June,

Yaacob, & Kheng, 2014). Videos are particularly useful for addressing learning objectives in the affective domain (May et al., 2013). <u>A video of a patient relating an experience with a disease can help students learn empathy for others.</u> (Thompson, 2016, pp. 871-872; underlining ours)

Videos in the classroom have many uses across a range of subject matters and pedagogical purposes. In nursing English courses, well-selected videos can represent models of empathy itself but can also inspire empathy in the hearts of the viewers themselves and provide them with much to reflect on.

Tsuda's SNA activities (cited in Tohsaku et al., 2021a) are supported by streaming video advocated by Thompson (2016) and can be adapted in nursing English classes. Such activities encompass an understanding of the order in which human relationships commonly evolve, in ways previously described by Travelbee's Human-to-Human Relationship Theory (cited in Pokorny, 2014): Such relationships, especially in helping situations like nursing, typically start from emerging identities, then develop into feelings of empathy, and finally attain a condition based on sympathy. In nursing English courses, seeing and reflecting on models of nurses interacting with patients can help nursing students manage their human-to-human relationships—i.e., patient-to-nurse or nurse-to-patient. Foreign language activities like Tsuda's that follow SNA principles can help nursing students understand and apply the concepts of empathy and sympathy as they prepare to become nursing professionals.

Empirical Studies Related to Nurses' Motivation to Learn English

Empathy training in nursing education helps fulfill a fundamental need nursing students—the development of a solid professional identity. Graham McCaffrey asks, "What is nursing?" and concedes that the answer has evolved over time (McCaffrey, 2020, p. 37). McCaffrey (2020) traces the word "nurse" to its ancient roots and explains that modern nursing, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, arose from the need for trained professionals to keep pace with medical advances and serve a rapidly growing public (pp. 37–39). In this regard, Florence Nightingale's contributions—establishing nursing as a vocation to service based on moral and scientific principles—significantly shaped the modern concept of nursing. McCaffrey (2020) further discusses the ongoing debate about nursing identity and status, noting that nurses have historically sought to enhance their professional standing through claims of caring and compassion (pp. 40–42). If nursing is seen as a humanist practice, it relies on language, images, and objects to express human values (p. 47).

In the nursing English classroom, vocabulary development is not an end in itself but should serve larger purposes—e.g., stimulating intellectual growth and enriching life experiences. These aims, in line with SNA principles, are presented in a pioneering work on vocabulary learning by Dale et al. (1971), and can be applied to nursing education, where mastering nursing vocabulary is an important aspect of developing a nursing identity. As Dale et al. (1971) contends,

That a student's vocabulary level is a good index of his mental ability has been a generally accepted fact. . . . Students need to realize that vocabulary is an index of the nature and quality of their lives. It reflects what they have studied, where they have been, the subtleties and refinements of their mind. A good mind means a good vocabulary and a good vocabulary means a good mind. (p. 9)

These reflections on the importance of vocabulary learning are certainly relevant to nursing English education. What nursing students learn through English vocabulary contributes to the formation of

their nursing identity. To help nursing students acquire self-efficacy through nursing vocabulary, English teachers face choices in selecting suitable learning materials. Dale et al. (1971) suggests possible directions that are also consistent with SNA principles:

> It is necessary to see vocabulary development as conceptual development. …Vocabulary development means more than adding new words to your repertoire of experience. It means putting your concepts in better order or into additional orders or arrangements. To change your vocabulary is to change your life. (p. 10)

In effect, Japanese students in nursing English courses learn and master nursing language as instrumental ways to develop a nursing identity. Simply memorizing nursing English vocabulary removed from real contexts, however, is likely to result in students forgetting the words soon after encountering them. Instead, students should learn to use vocabulary in real-life situations that stimulate their growth in self-efficacy—and, not inconsequentially, increase their vocabulary retention.

To bridge the gap between vocabulary learning and nursing identity, we use a textbook based on the SNA, featuring familiar anime characters to engage Japanese students. The textbook is *Doraemon's Japanese Anywhere* (ドラえもんのどこでも日本語 *Doraemon no Dokodemo Nihongo*), (Tohsaku et al., 2021b). It helps Japanese students view their language and culture from a non-Japanese perspective, thus supporting their professional development and enhancing their language learning experience in unconventional ways. In our presentation at the 6th JANET Conference in June 2024, we showed images from Tohsaku et al. (2021b) and sample student work on worksheets related to the textbook. In such ways, we argued that using this textbook in nursing English courses takes advantage of the familiarity that Japanese students already have with Doraemon and the other characters in the Doraemon animation series. Along with their entertainment value, Doraemon characters turn out to be quite effective at reducing the aversion that many Japanese students have toward learning English. Significantly, in the manga stories in Tohsaku et al. (2021b), the original Doraemon characters created by Fujiko F. Fujio encounter a new supplemental character named Tom, an overseas visitor who views Japanese life, customs, and culture (including situations in hospitals and clinics) from his own non-Japanese perspectives.

This textbook serves SNA principles in several ways. It helps our Japanese nursing students see their own language and culture from the viewpoint of a non-Japanese person—which helps students acquire empathy for people different from themselves. The textbook also encourages nursing students to develop their own ideas about what needs to be done to make themselves helpful for their imagined future patients, both Japanese and non-Japanese people. Moreover, the textbook plays a role in connecting language learning and lived experience, which is a basic principle of SNA. Since there are hardly any Japanese nursing students who do not know Doraemon, this textbook gives the nursing students a sense of familiarity through the visualizations of Japanese manga, overlapping the world of Doraemon and the characters in the textbook with situations and experiences in the lives of the students themselves.

The educational pragmatism of John Dewey (1997/1938) underscores the importance of hands-on learning for effective education (Dale et al. 1971, p. 38; Tohsaku et al., 2021a, p. 1). A pragmatic approach, which undergirds SNA, is relevant to nursing English education, by virtue of the fact that SNA emphasizes the importance of incorporating practical experience to connect language learning with real-world applications.

Gordon and English (2018) offer perspectives on Dewey's pragmatic approach to education, highlighting the need to integrate empathy with imagination in education, noting that empathy involves understanding other people's experiences, which is a critical skill for nursing students (Gordon & English, 2018, p. 3). One conclusion to draw is that effective nursing English should be contextually framed, focusing on patient care rather than general medical English.

The SNA aims to connect human capabilities for global communication and problem-solving (Tohsaku, 2013). Humanistic education like SNA fosters connections across knowledge domains (Tohsaku, 2013, p. 116; Miller & Spellmeyer, 2006, p. xix). Moreover, SNA aligns itself with organizations dedicated to global communication, notably the OECD, which offers a *learning compass* to help progressive-minded educators and their students find their bearings:

> The OECD Learning Compass 2030 is an evolving learning framework that sets out an aspirational vision for the future of education....The metaphor of a learning compass was adopted to emphasize the need for students to learn to navigate by themselves through unfamiliar contexts, and find their direction in a meaningful and responsible way, instead of simply receiving fixed instructions or directions from their teachers. (OECD, n.d.)

In the spirit of SNA, the OECD Learning Compass 2030 encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and explore for themselves the realms of unknown territory. Much like the OECD, SNA methodology views language learning as a means of bringing together people in different communities—allowing them to connect and communicate their honest thoughts and feelings. There are rich frontiers of learning to explore beyond conventional textbooks and the confines of the classroom, and nursing English students have much to gain from both the OECD Learning

Compass 2030 and SNA as they enter uncharted waters in their education and in their future professional lives.

Conclusion

When nursing students understand that becoming a nurse involves expressing identity, empathy, and sympathy, their idealistic ambitions of caring for patients can become realistic goals—with an end result, over time, of increasing their self-efficacy. Activities based on the SNA help students explore their potential across diverse disciplines. To give one example, an advanced SNA activity involves students enacting scenes from literature, film, or manga in ways that can enhance the motivation of students to learn English. By role-playing different characters, students practice the skills of understanding and navigating the diverse emotions and situations that are crucial for developing empathy. Through such imaginative play, students develop the emotional resources they will need as future nurses dealing with the changing feelings and conditions of their patients.

Empathy is central to the humanities, the creative disciplines that foster understanding of other people's experiences, hopes, and fears in ways that connect people with widely different outlooks. From SNA perspectives, language courses, including nursing English, should incorporate the humanities—literature (including manga), music, drama, and film. Learning though such media, students can acquire empathy for their interlocutors and, consequently, learn to engage in more effective interpersonal communication. Such an expanded view of teaching and learning redefines language learning beyond desk-bound test-taking skills. A curriculum for empathy training moves language learners, including nursing English students, away from learning about English and centers them instead on learning to use English as a tool for communicating with other people for real

purposes. As Miller and Spellmeyer (2006) suggest, the humanities should be viewed not just as a knowledge area but as the human dimension of all knowledge (p. ix). Similarly, language pedagogy, including nursing English education, should engage students in activities supported by SNA and OECD, which are connective methods with the ties that bind people together. Language learning should focus on practical applications rather than isolated skills—and thereby make communication real in the classroom and in life for many language learners, including Japanese students in nursing English courses.

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Japanese Nursing Students' Participation in EFL Classes: Assessment and Teaching Suggestions

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Abstract: This article explores the prevalent culture of silence among Japanese nursing students in English classroom settings, emphasizing the importance of understanding the cultural and pedagogical influences that shape their communication behaviors. It delineates the contrast between Western and Japanese classroom ideals, emphasizing the traditional Japanese educational emphasis on obedience and quietness as distinct from the Western focus on critical thinking and individual expression. Based on the results of an in-class questionnaire, this paper offers nuanced strategies that will help native-English-speaking (NES) teachers encourage Japanese nursing students to participate more actively. These culturally sensitive strategies aim to bridge the gap between NES teachers' expectations and the cultural tendencies of Japanese students, fostering an environment where students feel comfortable participating in English language classrooms.

Keywords: Japanese university students, participation, silence

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The interpretation and use of silence vary significantly across cultures. In Japan, silence is generally viewed positively and is linked to harmony, rather than signifying an unwillingness to communicate. It plays an important role in Japanese communication practices, where it can even serve as a form of expression. This cultural emphasis on silence extends to classroom settings, where silence can serve multiple purposes. While some NES teachers might mistakenly perceive this quietness as passivity or reluctance to speak, it is essential to consider the cultural and educational contexts that shape these communication dynamics in the classroom.

Silence in Japanese Culture

The way silence is used depends to a large extent on culture (Ishii & Bruneau, 1994). Some cultures view silence positively while others view it negatively (Su, Wood, & Tribe, 2023). Silence in a Japanese context does not necessarily mean an unwillingness to speak; rather, it is regarded positively and is associated with harmony. The use of silence in Japan plays a role in communication (Akiyama, 2017), and silence in Japan is even used as a means of communication (King, 2013).

The Japanese have long been characterized as placing importance on silence by incorporating it into their communication practices. Silence is part of Japanese communication, and the importance of silence in the Japanese culture is noted by Ruch:

> If given a choice, the Japanese would prefer not to use words. A Japanese proverb says, "not to say is better than to say." To the Japanese, non-verbal communication is often more important than verbal communication. For them, the verbal message accompanies the nonverbal cues instead of the other way around, as in other cultures. (1984, p. 65)

The emphasis on silence is evident through the numerous idioms and proverbs in the Japanese language that revolve around the concept of silence. An analysis of 504 Japanese

idioms and proverbs related to speaking and silence found that only one-quarter of them contained positive connotations towards speaking out (Katayama, 1982).

The Japanese try to achieve the appropriate balance of speaking and silence depending on the cultural expectations of a given situation. According to Kim et al. (2016), this does not mean that, overall, they are quiet and nontalkative—they are talkative, but not in the same situations and social settings as Western people. One should not assume that the Japanese do not want to talk because they are silent.

Silence in Japanese Classrooms

Silence is noticeable in classroom contexts in Japan. There is empirical evidence (Kato, 2001; King, 2013) indicating that a culture of silence prevails among Japanese students. King's (2013) research findings shed light on the silence of Japanese university students in conversational activities, indicating that they dedicated a mere 0.3% of a 90-minute class to dialogue. This pervasive silence was observed by King to be evident across nine universities throughout Japan. Because of this silence, Japanese students are often stereotyped as being passive or reluctant to speak English (Karas & Uchihara, 2021). While many native-English-speaking (NES) teachers may directly attribute Japanese students' silence to an unwillingness to speak, it would be wrong to apply this viewpoint to a classroom context without factoring in pedagogical and cultural understandings of silence within the classroom context of Japan.

Japanese students use silence to maintain harmony by not interrupting and disturbing the class (Banks, 2016). Harumi (2010) investigated the features and culture-specific uses of silence in Japanese classrooms in a study comprising 197 Japanese university students in a first-year EFL course. Her findings show that silence serves a variety of purposes that cannot all be attributed to

a lack of topical understanding or English proficiency. She claims that because speaking and silence impact each other, it is vital to see silence as a significant social factor. Her research finds that several factors, including each individual's distinctive style and way of communication, might account for learner silence linguistically, psychologically, and socially. Although these three components may be seen as causes of silence in the classroom, they appear to be linked with Japanese collectivism, which is frequently at the root of students' silence (Harumi, 2010).

The reluctance to stand out in front of classmates is seen as a factor contributing to the silence of Japanese students. Okada (2017) found that when Japanese students are asked to perform activities that require self-expression, they first weigh how they would be seen by their classmates and the instructor before speaking out. In Japanese society, including the classroom, the group outweighs the individual; the group's opinion and actions are given more value than the individual's opinion and actions (Harumi, 2010). Japanese students are very aware of their classmates, as noted by Maher and King (2022): "If their classmates do not speak, they may feel expected to remain silent too or feel reluctant to act differently" (p. 217).

Japanese and Western cultures have different ways of taking turns. According to Harumi (2010), compared to English, the Japanese style of communication exhibits less spontaneous interruption and turn-taking. Similarly, Ellwood and Nakane (2009) discovered that Japanese university students' capacity to speak in class during discussions was constrained by their inability to take turns. Hammond (2007) notes that Japanese discourse normally expects both participants to respect turn-taking, whereas Western-style discourse entails a back-and-forth interchange of speech with interruptions. The Japanese communication style allows for longer acceptable periods of quietness, pausing, and

silence (Nakane, 2007). NES listeners may interrupt without waiting even when the speaker has not completed speaking, and according to Kumagai (1994), this behavior is "extremely rude and aggressive in the Japanese context" (p. 23). Moreover, Furo (2001) examined how American and Japanese group discussions differed in their discourse styles, with a particular emphasis on turn-taking. She discovered that while taking turns by interrupting was common and accepted among Westerners, it was less common among Japanese people.

Another factor that affects silence in Japanese classrooms is the attitude toward making mistakes. Japanese students have a strong tendency to remain silent in class out of fear of embarrassment from making mistakes in front of other students (Kawamura et al., 2006). Students have been taught that English has a correct form; a sentence should be constructed perfectly before being uttered because in Japanese classrooms, only grammatically correct English is seen as acceptable (Tanaka & Nechita, 2020). This often causes silence as the student may be trying to construct a perfectly formulated sentence in their head before outputting it (Richmond & Vannieu, 2019). In particular, students who lack confidence in their English ability are reluctant to speak out as the embarrassment of making mistakes in front of classmates may overshadow the desire to speak out (Richmond & Vannieu, 2019). Burden (2002) reported that 75% of a sample of 1,057 middle school, high school, and college students claimed to feel a sense of embarrassment speaking English in front of their classmates.

Different Teaching Styles

There are clear differences between the teaching styles of NES teachers and native-Japanese-speaking (NJS) teachers in universities. In university classes taught by NJS teachers, the classes tend to be teacher-centered just like in secondary school (Schneider & Mecba, 2018). A teacher-centered style of teaching is very different from the student-centered classroom environments that require active participation used by many NES teachers in university language classes. NES instructors typically promote dialogue, evaluate verbal involvement as a sign of participation, and look at silence as non-participation or a lack of interest (Sasaki & Ortlieb, 2017). As a result, student silence tends to conflict with the expectations of NES teachers.

Teacher-centered instruction is still the norm in Japan, with little opportunity for student input unless specifically requested (Cutrone, 2009; Mitchell, 2017). In contrast, university English classes in Japan taught by NES teachers frequently incorporate Western-style activities and pedagogy (Cutrone, 2009) that are more student-centered (Nguyen et al., 2006; Park, 2002). Japanese university students being taught by NES teachers face a teaching style that may be very different from what they are accustomed to. NES teachers frequently adopt strategies in their classrooms that many students did not experience in secondary school: critical thinking, group work, opinion-giving, role-playing, questions directed to the entire class, and other activities that require active participation (Bosio, 2015). According to Amar (2021), active participation is relatively new in Japan and many students are inexperienced at it.

In addition to the different teaching styles, perceptions of ideal classroom behavior differ between Japan and Western countries. Western education is centered around critical thinking and expressing oneself. For example, in the United States, students are exposed from an early age to expressing their opinions, debating, and discussing (Hammond, 2007). Western teachers ask their students what they think and why, and there are even students who challenge the teacher (Kawabata & Barling, 2020). Good students are thought to be the ones who actively participate and speak out. By the time Western

students reach university, they are fully accustomed to such behavior in the classroom. However, students are taught very differently in Japan, where rote learning and memorization are mainstream in educational settings (Gorsuch, 1998; Kawabata & Barling, 2020). In Japan, good students are thought to be those who display traditional Japanese cultural traits: being obedient, quiet, and good at tests (Nozaki, 1993). Students rarely challenge the teacher, and by the time they reach university, they are fully accustomed to such behavior in the classroom.

Method

This study had two aims. The first was to gain insights into how Japanese university nursing students participate in English communication classes taught by NES teachers. The second was to provide suggestions based on the findings to help NES teachers create classroom environments that encourage nursing students to participate more in English communication classes.

To understand how Japanese university nursing students participate in English communication classes, a simple questionnaire (see Appendix 1), administered in both Japanese and English, consisting of four yes/no questions was given to two first-year classes with a total of 98 nursing students at a university in Japan. It was explained to the students that the questionnaire was for research purposes, anonymous, and completely voluntary. Two random students from each class were asked to distribute the questionnaires after the teacher had left the room. After the questionnaire was completed, the questionnaires were put in a box that was left at the front of the classroom, which was collected by the teacher at the end of the day. Of the 98 students present on the day of the questionnaire, 96 students responded to the questionnaire (response rate: 98%). The questionnaire was designed to be simple and easy to answer, with the specific aim of obtaining a high response rate

from the participants.

Results and Discussion

The results from Question 1 show that 89 of 96 students (93%) do not raise their hands to ask questions to the teacher when the teacher is teaching. This result is expected based on literature that has noted that from secondary school, Japanese students expect to remain silent while the teacher is teaching.

The results from Question 2 show that 90 of the 96 students (94%) do not raise their hands to answer questions posed to the class. Similar to Question 1, the reason for this may be the result of the education environment that the students have been accustomed to since secondary school. Maftoon and Ziafar (2013) found that Japanese students, upon entering university, likely expect their role to be similar to that of secondary school, where students generally do not ask or answer questions unless individually nominated by the teacher.

The responses to Question 3 indicate that 81 of the 96 students (84%) hesitate to speak English in front of other students. The hesitance of Japanese students to speak in front of classmates (see Cutrone, 2009; Goharimehr, 2017; Sasaki & Ortlieb, 2017; Yashima, 2002;) has been well-researched and discussed, and the findings from this study are consistent with previous research.

The responses to Question 4 (Figure 4) show that 94 of the 96 students (98%) prefer speaking English in small groups. This result indicates that the size of the group may be a factor affecting student output. The results from Question 4 align with the findings of Riasati and Rahimi (2018), who found that speaking in large groups has the unwanted effect of lowering oral output as students may suffer from insecurity.

To sum up, the findings show that the majority of students who took part in this study hesitate to ask or answer questions in class. In addition, the majority of the students indicated a hesitation to

speak English in front of classmates and a preference to speak English in small groups. While these findings may not be representative of all Japanese university students in English language classes, teaching strategies based on these findings to encourage student participation in English language classes taught by NES teachers are presented in the next section.

Suggestions for NES teachers

There are a number of strategies and approaches teachers can use to encourage students to speak out, including the following: making the classroom exciting (Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele & Dewaele, 2020); shadowing the speaker (Talandis & Stout, 2014); using praise and positive feedback (Rode, Hayashi, & Momose, 2023); and making students aware of the importance that English plays in intercultural communication (Maftoon & Ziafar, 2013);

However, merely reminding Japanese students about the importance of active engagement in Western-style English conversations or using strategies and approaches to encourage them to speak up may not be sufficient. Many Japanese students already understand the differences between their communication styles and Western-style English conversations, as supported by various studies (see Harumi, 2010; Sasaki & Ortlieb, 2017).

It is important to remember that silence among Japanese students in class does not always imply an unwillingness or incapacity to participate. According to Sasaki and Ortlieb (2017), although cultural background, personal characteristics, and prior rote-style schooling in Japan may influence their quiet classroom conduct, other factors in the classroom may also contribute to the silence of Japanese students.

Harumi (2010) notes that using activities Japanese students are culturally and pedagogically comfortable with may help create environments that allow them to be comfortable learning English. According to Harumi (2010), Japanese students are more likely to participate in English classes when the teacher is seen to be empathetic regarding their silence. NES teachers can do this by starting with activities that first focus on accuracy, drills, and repetition, using this as a base to gradually scaffold to more communication-based exercises. For example, the teacher can model a dialogue with the entire class so that all the students are participating equally. Then, the teacher can create small groups where the students model the same dialogue with each other. Finally, the activity can be done as an open discussion without a dialogue.

The avoidance of questions to the entire class may be helpful. Japanese students expect the teacher to ask them questions directly, and if not, they will not raise their hands to answer (Amar, 2021). Setting a designated time aside near the end of the class specifically for asking questions may be helpful in encouraging the students to ask questions. During this time, students can come to the front individually, in pairs, or in small groups to ask the teacher questions directly without having to ask in front of the class. This makes asking questions a less stressful task.

Another strategy that may be successful in encouraging Japanese students to speak more is avoiding large group activities. Large group activities put Japanese students in the spotlight, which tends to make them feel uncomfortable. First having the students discuss or collaborate in small groups of three or four, then transitioning to pairs, and finally to individual speaking activities over the course of a semester is a good way to slowly accustom the students to student-centered activities.

If group-work activities are done in Japanese classrooms, encouraging the students to work together toward a clear goal or product may help them interact and participate. In Japanese classrooms, solutions to problems are highly appreciated when they are achieved through

group consensus rather than individual efforts (Anderson, 2018). Therefore, setting up activities, such as task-based learning, where all the students work together to reach a consensus and then present their ideas as a group ensures that all the students in each group can participate in a way that is culturally comfortable.

Finally, changing the seating arrangements so that the students are not facing the teacher or board may also help in fostering student output. Arranging the tables into small groups where the students are facing each other encourages them to participate as the focus shifts from the teacher to the group. It also creates a much more relaxed classroom environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while it may be challenging to adapt to the pedagogical and cultural differences of Japanese students, including nursing students, it is certainly possible to be aware of these differences. NES teachers can then use this knowledge to create learning environments that best suit Japanese nursing students in English language classrooms. Japanese students' inclination toward silence is not indicative of a reluctance to participate or incompetence but rather a strategic choice to foster positive connections with both classmates and teachers. Therefore, the knowledge of why Japanese university students choose silence may help NES teachers create learning environments and activities that the students are comfortable with.

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Appendix 1: Student Questionnaire

Questionnaire

    1:   I raise my hand to ask questions when the teacher is teaching.   Y   N

    2:   I raise my hand to answer questions asked by the teacher to the class.   Y   N

    3:   I hesitate to speak English in front of other students.   Y   N

    4:   I prefer speaking English in smaller groups than larger groups   Y   N

All responses are anonymous, voluntary, and private, and will not be used for anything other than statistical analysis for research purposes. Please circle Yes or No.

アンケート

    1： 授業中、手を挙げて先生に質問する。   はい   いいえ

    2： 先生の質問に答えるために手を挙げる。   はい   いいえ

    3： クラスの前で英語を話すのをためらう。   はい   いいえ

    4： 大人数よりも少人数で英語を話したい   はい いいえ

すべての回答は匿名、任意、非公開であり、研究目的のための統計分析以外に使用されることはありません。「はい」「いいえ」に〇をつけてください。

Role-Play as an Effective Classroom Activity in a Nursing English Course

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English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been gaining importance in EFL contexts worldwide. ESP courses are designed to equip learners with specialized content knowledge and language skills tailored to specific contexts, thereby meeting their future career needs (see, for example, Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, for the pioneering work on ESP). English for Nursing Purposes (ENP), a branch of ESP, is dedicated to equipping learners with the language skills needed for nursing contexts—both in clinical settings and nursing education—by focusing on how nurses use English differently from doctors and other healthcare professionals (Bosher, 2013; Ching et al., 2020; Havery, 2024; Huang & Yu, 2023). Given that very few studies have explored the use of role-play as a teaching tool in ESP/ENP courses globally (e.g., Septiwi, 2019; Sulovska, 2023), this paper aims to provide practical teaching tips for integrating role-play as an effective classroom activity in a Nursing English course at a university in Taiwan.

The Nursing English Course

The Nursing English course that is the context for the activity described here is a mandatory component of the curriculum in the School of Nursing at a university in Taiwan. It is specifically designed for third-year EFL undergraduate students to improve their listening and speaking skills within the nursing context. These students possess some degree of professional knowledge in nursing and healthcare, and their English proficiency levels range from intermediate to upper-intermediate. The course spans sixteen weeks, with two additional weeks allocated for flexible classes, and each week includes two hours of instruction.

For instructional purposes, I use the commercially published textbook, Cambridge English for Nursing (intermediate plus level), which covers various topics, including patient admissions, respiratory problems, wound care, diabetes care, and more (Allum & McGarr, 2008). Each topic is paired with specific communication objectives, such as taking a patient's medical history, employing active listening strategies, and giving instructions effectively. Supplemental materials, adapted from various nursing-related books (e.g., Cheng, 2019; Putlack, 2017) and video clips (e.g., TED Talks), are also integrated into the curriculum. Classroom activities include listening practice, group discussions, dialogue exercises, role-play, and group oral reports.

Procedures for the Role-Play Activity

A role-play activity in the Nursing English course is an educational exercise in which students simulate real-life nursing scenarios. The primary goal is to develop students' language skills in context, enhance their communication abilities, and boost their confidence in using English in professional settings. Below is a brief outline of how the activity works:

1. Group Formation: Students are divided into small groups of 3-4 members to prepare for a 10-minute nurse-patient role-play dialogue.

2. Topic Selection: Each group selects a topic from the following options:

    (1) Patient Admissions: Taking patients' medical/surgical history, asking about health conditions, and gathering personal information.

    (2) Medical Check-ups: Taking blood samples, obtaining urine and stool samples, and explaining pathology tests.

    (3) Respiratory Problems: Educating patients about asthma management, and giving instructions on using a peak flow meter or nebulizer.

    (4) Wound Care: Discussing wound care management, addressing pain concerns, and changing patients' dressings.

    (5) Diabetes Care: Discussing diabetes management and offering advice on lifestyle changes.

    (6) Pre-operative/Post-operative Care: Explaining possible medication effects, answering patients' questions, conducting pre-operative checks, and instructing patients on changing positions.

3. Communication Skills: In preparing for the 10-minute role-play dialogue, students are encouraged to incorporate the following communication skills:

    (1) Using active listening strategies
    (2) Giving instructions effectively
    (3) Offering advice sensitively
    (4) Making empathetic responses
    (5) Asking for clarification
    (6) Conducting pre-operative checks and post-operative handovers

4. Rehearsal: Before performing the role-play in class, students should rehearse their nurse-patient dialogue multiple times, ensuring they maintain eye contact with their teammates.

5. Presentation: During the role-play, students are expected to present their dialogue confidently and spontaneously.

Student Feedback

At the end of the semester, 23 nursing students enrolled in the Nursing English course during the spring 2024 academic year completed questionnaires about their learning preferences, particularly focusing on classroom activities that emphasize oral communication. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 reveals that most nursing students favored role-play and dialogue exercises over group discussions and oral reports. One questionnaire respondent wrote in English: "*I like role-play because I could apply clinical conversation in our role-play. It's a special experience for me.*" Another noted: "*I liked the role-play activity as it allowed me to practically apply what I've learned in class. This practice made me more confident in communicating with foreign patients and their families in the future. I found it very useful!*" (author's translation from Chinese). These responses suggest that engaging in role-play scenarios between nurses and patients in various nursing-related situations provided valuable insights and practical experience. The findings here support Cheng's (2011) work, which highlights the importance of linking input materials with classroom activities when designing ENP courses, as well as the work of Ching et al. (2020), which emphasizes the significance of teaching language tasks and communication skills specific to the nursing context.

In contrast to role-play and dialogue exercises,

Classroom Activities (oral communication)	How much do you like each of them? (N = 23)		
	Like	Neutral	Dislike
Group discussions	15	5	3
Dialogue exercises	21	2	0
Role-play	21	2	0
Group oral report	18	5	0

In contrast to role-play and dialogue exercises, only 15 students preferred group discussions. Throughout the course, I observed that many students frequently used Chinese when discussing with their teammates, as they found it challenging to express their ideas in English within a short timeframe. This observation is consistent with Yang and Su's (2003) findings, which identify poor pronunciation and communication skills as significant challenges for Taiwanese students.

Implications and Conclusions

Overall, the nursing students greatly benefited from the role-play activity. It provided them with valuable opportunities to apply what they had learned in class to workplace settings. Through the processes of preparing, rehearsing, and presenting nurse-patient dialogues, these students were able to develop communication skills, enhance their English-speaking abilities, and boost their confidence. Based on student feedback, incorporating role-play into ENP courses is recommended as an effective way to prepare nursing students for their future careers. This activity allows them to apply classroom learning to real-world workplace scenarios.

In conclusion, this paper offers practical teaching tips for integrating role-play as an effective classroom activity in Nursing English courses. Considering that English teaching is socially embedded in ESP instructional contexts (Cheng, 2011), these tips can be utilized and adapted by English teachers in ENP courses within EFL contexts in Taiwan, Japan, or other Asian countries.

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