

Foreword

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching Yokohama Chapter continues its tradition of holding My Share events in June and December every year. In these workshops, presenters explain and demonstrate practical ideas for language teaching. This Special Issue consists of one paper from December 2023 and three from June 2024, each expanding on the ideas shared in the presentations, giving a theoretical basis, and further practical advice.

We begin this Special Issue with guidance on how to make our lessons more engaging and productive through the use of various board games. Nicole Ballard gives us a detailed breakdown of factors to take into account in order to use games effectively, and suggests many specific examples of games that have worked well for her, and how to adapt them to the purposes of the class and the needs of our students. Margalit Faden shares with us her approach to developing critical thinking skills and persuasive communication through the use of debates in class. She gives advice on preparation and running of debates, and ways to ensure that critical thinking really is being developed. With Sustainable Development Goals increasingly present in our second language syllabuses, many people will find Ken Ikeda's contribution especially useful. He shares an approach to proposal-writing based on James Clear's *Atomic Habits*, and inspired by one of Ken's own former students. Finally, for this issue, and coming from the December 2023 event, Tomoko Kojima details her genre-driven approach to second language writing. She guides us through methods that can be adapted to a wide range of levels and topics, giving clear procedures and examples, so it will be easy for you to take the ideas into your own classrooms.

Many thanks to the authors for sharing their ideas through this Special Issue, and for their time, and that of additional reviewers, in the open peer review process. I would also like to thank the other presenters who contributed to My Share events; and of course, to the Yokohama JALT team for their incredible skills and never-ending enthusiasm. All these people make an important contribution to language teaching and learning across the region and beyond.

To participate in Yokohama JALT events, or learn about the Chapter, visit <http://yojalt.org>.

Sincerely,
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Choosing Board Games for the ESL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Gamification is the practice of adding game elements into learning, but games, specifically board games, themselves can also have a place in the classroom. Many games already contain various language learning objectives within their rules, requiring communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and other skills. Others can be adapted to fit the necessities of the classroom. Using pre-made games takes the onus of creating games off the teacher and allows them to focus on other tasks. There are five main considerations when choosing a game; language level, relevance, accessibility and adaptability, engagement, and educational value.

INTRODUCTION

In many countries in Asia, including Japan, second-languages are taught using a very traditional approach that emphasizes testing. This method relies heavily on memorization and output of very specific words and phrases without a necessity to truly understand or be able to use what is being learned productively. While getting good grades may be enough motivation for some students, most students will need an outside motivating factor and outside learning to achieve any level of proficiency in a second-language. The “gamification” of learning has gained popularity in recent decades as a way to motivate students and lower the barriers to learning. Students who do not excel at rote memorization or standardized tests may often find a gamified lesson less stressful and easier to interact with.

BACKGROUND

Gamification has been used to insert game elements into traditionally more “boring” elements of classroom learning such as vocabulary drilling, but this requires the teachers to create games based on the precise vocabulary or topic for that lesson. Yet, there are tens of thousands of board and card games that are already in existence, and more being published each year. Using these pre-existing games in the classroom allows teachers to use their time in ways other than thinking of new games. However, there are many factors to consider when choosing board games for the classroom.

Board games and gamification of learning have been widely recognized as effective tools in the classroom for years. Specifically in the field of language-learning, use of games has been

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praised for its ability to motivate and engage students and provide meaningful opportunities for communication practice (Fung & Min, 2016; Ur, 2013). Games give students an opportunity to use language spontaneously and creatively as well as to use skills such as negotiating meaning, asking and answering questions, and expressing opinions (Nunan, 2005; Ur, 2013). There is no question that games can play a useful role in the language classroom. The questions are how to use them and which games to utilize.

CONSIDERATIONS

When choosing games for the classroom there are a variety of considerations such as language level, relevancy to the curriculum, accessibility and adaptability, engagement and educational value.

Language Level

Language level is the most obvious consideration as games that are too difficult for the students are more likely to demotivate or frustrate them but if the language is too easy they are unlikely to get any language benefit. *Galapa Go* (Fourcade & Mars, 2011) is one game that works in a very low level language classroom with adaptation. Instead of flipping cards to view, a reader can read out the hints with “is” and either “is not” or “isn’t” as a way to practice listening. A student can then take over as the reader to add speaking practice. For a higher level class, this game would likely be far too easy to be entertaining, but a game such as *Duplik* (Jacobson & Kohout, 2005), where one player needs to describe a picture for others to draw, would be more challenging.

Relevance

Targeting specific vocabulary is difficult with pre-made games, but depending on the level and topic there may be games that do utilize the specific themes of the class. This is especially possible with classes focused on either very general or very specific English. There are an abundance of conversational or ice-breaker type games such as *Sussed* which has a player read a question and three possible answers such as “What am I best at?” and the options are A. Winning things B. Avoiding things C. Being in the right place at the right time (Sussed, 2011). The other students guess which answer the person will choose.

Games such as *Taboo* (Hersch, 1989) and *Scattergories: Categories* (Vandenbrouke, 2010) focus more on vocabulary. *Taboo* requires students to think of new ways to describe items while *Scattergories: Categories* has them thinking of words within a category starting with certain letters. Some games such as *Guess Who* (Coster & Coster, 1979), which focuses on descriptions of people, are more specific. There are also many games that deal with specific themes in science, technology, or medicine that can be utilized, such as *Healing Blade: Defenders of Soma* (Patton, 2016) which uses anthropomorphized versions of diseases and medications.

Accessibility and Adaptability

The number of students in the class, range of levels, and ability to self-regulate are all factors that need to be considered. Young learners may need to all be playing a game led by the

teacher in order to keep them on task, while older learners in large groups may be able to be broken up into smaller groups that operate independently. Games that use symbols as reminders for rules may be more accessible to students who struggle with reading while still allowing them to play for conversation practice. *Codenames* where the original version uses words, also has a version that uses pictures as well as XXL font or picture versions (Codenames, n.d.). Not all games will fit the class out of the box, so the ability to adapt a game to a classroom situation is also important. As mentioned previously, the *Galapa Go* games is not a communication game out of the box, but can be adapted with the addition of a reader. Other games such as *Call-it* (Hannah, 2010) require minimal reading, but pictures can be added to the cards to make the game more accessible. In this game four shapes (sun, moon, star and earth) are each assigned a category from the deck. These could be basic vocabulary groups like vegetables and animals, or more advanced groups like tools or musical instruments. Each player takes a card face down and flips the cards at the same time then has to say a word from the category matching the picture on their card. The fastest for each category gets all the cards with that picture for that round and the winning word can no longer be used in subsequent rounds. Other games may be meant to be played individually but can be adapted to work well in groups. *Guess Who* is one that can be adapted to a team game with team members discussing questions and taking turns asking the other team questions as opposed to the standard two-player setup.

Engagement

Simply put, will the students think the game is fun? It is impossible to know what all students will think of a game, but teachers with a feel for their classes' interests may be able to better choose games that will engage the students. It is also helpful to observe the students playing a chosen game in order to see what works and what does not in order to influence future choices for that class. *Dixit* (Roubira, 2008) is one game that has been enjoyed by all of my classes where most other games have certain class types they work with. It contains various fantastical picture cards and each turn an active player describes a card in their hand, then all other players choose a card from their hands that could also possibly be described that way. The cards are shuffled together and the non-active players have to guess which card was the active player's original description about. It tends to be a fairly quiet but engrossing game which is also good if too much noise could be an issue. Some students may enjoy less competitive games like *Duplik* or *Sussed* in which a player is either right or wrong on their own with no impact from other players, or team games like *Guess Who* played in teams with less personal responsibility and more discussion. Other students may prefer faster paced games such as *Bananagrams* or *Taboo*.

Educational Value

Most games have some kind of skill utilized in order to play, such as critical thinking, problem-solving or negotiating meaning. As each class will have its own strengths and weaknesses, it is beneficial to consider what non-language skills the students can improve with any given game. *Cat & Chocolate: Business is Business* is a problem-solving storytelling game that has players use 1-3 items from their hand to get out of various situations involving working at a company (Kawakami, 2010). It is a bilingual game with cards in both English and Japanese, so for Japanese students, at least, understanding what the cards say is not part of the language practice so much as the actual story-telling they need to do. *Guess Who*, *Dixit* and *Codenames* utilize critical thinking by making students think of the best questions to ask or best hint to give.

Call-it and *Scattergories* use recall and creativity since answers cannot be duplicated.

PRACTICALITIES

It is recommended to play a game at least a couple of times before attempting to introduce it to a class even if it seems simple. At the very least, a good understanding of the rules will be helpful when explaining them to students. It is also possible that students will develop their own way of playing which may be even more effective. Of course, it is also possible that students in less motivated classes will attempt to play in a way that does not require any language usage. It is difficult to tell which games will work for a specific class without playing them with that class. It may be tempting to join a group to play a game during the class as well, and if the entire class is playing one game this can be helpful for keeping them on track, though it is often helpful for the teacher to give themselves some manner of handicap. When I play *Scattergories* with my students, for example, I often think of words in Japanese while they are thinking of words in English. However, if there are multiple groups in a class, it may be better for the teacher to sit out the first games to observe how the groups interact with the games and explain any parts they are confused about. After the first round of games is finished, the students will often ask the previous group members if they have questions about the game play which can free up the teacher to join in a game if desired.

CONCLUSION

While there are a variety of considerations, many board games can be a boon to the classroom, allowing students to improve vocabulary, listening and speaking skills, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills in a low-stress environment. However, finding the right game for each class requires some consideration. The language level is often the easiest to discern after looking at a game, but the relevance, accessibility and adaptability, level of engagement and educational value can take a bit more thought.

Games like *Guess Who*, *Call-It* and *Galapa Go* require little to no reading skills but can be used for communication practice and are thus appropriate for lower level classrooms. Other games like *Taboo*, *Scattergories: Categories*, or *Sussed* focus more on vocabulary or conversational level reading making them more intermediate. *Duplik* and *Cat & Chocolate Business is Business* involves more complex language with description or story-telling skills which fit in better with advanced classes. However, many games are enjoyable by multi-level classes or can be adapted to work with various class levels such as *Codenames*, *Bananagrams* or *Dixit*.

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A Debate-Centered Approach to Developing Students' Persuasive Communication and Critical Thinking Skills

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a debate-focused approach for undergraduate EFL students. Participants examine issues from multiple viewpoints while identifying and developing arguments to support positions and counterarguments to respond to opposing views. Through this process, students become familiar with the complexities of various issues while improving critical thinking and communication skills. This method fosters language proficiency and analytical thinking, preparing students for effective participation in reasoned discussions and arguments.

INTRODUCTION

Debate activities offer English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners a valuable opportunity to enhance their critical thinking and communication skills. Research indicates a connection between these skills, which can be enhanced through debate activities. Scott (2008) found that undergraduate students in a U.S. university reported improved critical thinking skills after participating in class debates. Ramezani et al. (2016) identified a strong positive correlation between critical thinking and English-speaking ability among undergraduate English majors in Iran. Additionally, Wahyuni et al. (2019) observed that debate activities positively impacted the critical speaking skills of undergraduate English majors in Indonesia. These findings collectively suggest a close relationship between critical thinking and communication skills, with debate activities contributing significantly to their development.

While several studies have explored formal in-class debate formats and methods among EFL learners (Daniswara & Cahyono, 2023; Iman, 2017; Nirwana & Kurniawat, 2018; Sako, 2022), these debates often require extensive preparation time, which limits the frequency of debates per semester (Rear, 2010). This article proposes that informal but frequent in-class debates might offer a simpler, low-stakes approach to enhancing EFL learners' critical thinking and communication skills. The purpose of this article is to outline a series of these debates, which have been designed to develop persuasive communication and critical thinking skills among undergraduate EFL learners. By facilitating debates regularly throughout the semester, instructors can provide students with more frequent opportunities to practice and refine these skills.

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TEACHING CONTEXT AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

As an Associate Professor in the Department of Global Studies at Tokai University in Japan, I teach undergraduate EFL students who are primarily from Japan and other countries in Asia. The majority of these students have studied English for at least six years, but their speaking abilities and confidence levels vary widely. Many students struggle with expressing complex ideas in English, particularly when discussing controversial topics or presenting arguments.

My professional background as an attorney influences my approach to teaching debate. The legal training I received emphasized the importance of constructing logical arguments based on precedent, anticipating counterarguments, and presenting ideas persuasively. These skills, which are fundamental to legal practice, are equally valuable in academic and professional settings beyond law.

In adapting these skills for EFL learners, I have found that debate activities provide a useful framework for students to develop their English-language skills while simultaneously honing their critical thinking abilities. The educational context in which most of these students learn traditionally emphasizes rote learning and consensus-building over argumentative discourse, which makes this approach particularly valuable. By introducing students to debate, instructors improve students' language skills and expose them to different modes of thinking and communication that can be beneficial in an increasingly globalized world.

DEBATES

The debates referred to in this article focus on contemporary social issues in the United States. These issues have been connected to topics I introduce in a course titled *American Studies*, which I teach primarily to undergraduate EFL students majoring in Global Studies. The implementation of the debates necessitates preparation by both instructors and students, and the complexity of the debates can be calibrated to accommodate time constraints, class demographics, and the participants' language levels.

Debate Preparation

Classroom debates involve preparation steps to support student learning and participation. The process begins with introducing students to the debate format (Appendix A) at least one week before the first debate. Each debate topic (Appendix B) is assigned a minimum of one week prior to the relevant debate. For homework, students research the topic to prepare arguments supporting their assigned opinion and anticipate arguments from the opposing side. During their preparations, students are invited to assume the role of a U.S. citizen or resident facing these issues.

It is recommended that debates be conducted in nearly every or every other class depending upon the content and pace of the course. As such, depending on the class size, it might be necessary to assign seats to facilitate smooth and regular transitions to debate activities. An example of a classroom seat assignment for a debate can be seen in Appendix C. It is recommended that students be assigned to seats where they can easily collaborate with their team member(s) and interact with the students on the opposing team.

Debate Facilitation

The table in Appendix A shows the in-class debate structure. The activity starts with team preparation, during which students within each team collaborate to refine the arguments they formulated to support their assigned opinion. In Round 1, Team 1 and Team 2 present their main arguments. Subsequently, teams brainstorm counterarguments. In Round 2, each team presents its counterarguments. The instructor serves as the timekeeper to give equal time to each team for arguments and counterarguments.

The debate concludes with two discussion phases. First, opposing teams within each group evaluate the debate outcome and identify the most compelling argument. Second, groups share their assessments with the class while the instructor documents the most effective arguments on the whiteboard and facilitates a discussion on their historical and contemporary manifestations. This simple format promotes critical thinking and contextual analysis of debate topics.

Development of Critical Thinking and Communication Skills Via Debate

By participating in the above-described debate format, students are encouraged to cultivate their critical thinking and persuasive communication skills. When preparing for the debates, students develop these skills during the research phase by learning to assess the credibility and relevance of historical and contemporary sources. In turn, they hone the ability to sift the information they have gathered into coherent arguments supporting their assigned opinion. In addition, when anticipating counterarguments, students learn to identify and assess the potential weaknesses of their assigned opinions. As they prepare their arguments, students refine their ability to target their audience by considering how to explain complex historical and political concepts in clear and accessible language while structuring information and arguments in a way that the opposing side will find compelling. In addition, by finding ways to connect abstract concepts to recent real-world examples, students improve their ability to make arguments more relatable and persuasive to their target audience.

Building student confidence through regular debate practice and the selection of engaging and concrete debate topics enhances the development of critical thinking and communication skills. I have observed that the more often students participate in debates throughout the semester, the more comfortable they become with the debate process. Thus, the facilitation of frequent debates throughout the semester seems to be one key to building student confidence. In addition, I have found that engagement with concrete, relevant subjects that resonate with students' interests and major (in this case, Global Studies) motivates them to prepare for and participate in the debates. Thus, the thoughtful employment of debate topics seems to be a second key to building students' confidence. Through the combination of frequent debate practice and the use of interesting topics, I have seen students overcome initial difficulties and develop the confidence needed to present and discuss complex subjects during in-class debates.

Through engagement with the debate topics listed in Appendix B, students not only deepen their understanding of the U.S. political system but also develop a range of critical thinking and persuasive communication skills. They learn to analyze complex issues, evaluate evidence, construct logical arguments, anticipate counterarguments, and present their ideas in a

compelling manner. The debate format provides a dynamic, interactive environment for students to practice these skills, preparing them for effective communication in a wide array of contexts.

CONCLUSION

The repetition of the above debate format, with various topics, offers students multiple opportunities to enhance their research, persuasive communication, and critical thinking skills throughout the semester. This skill development enables students to engage more deeply with complex issues. Additionally, students improve their English language proficiency through content research, preparation, and oral presentation. These acquired skills and broadened perspectives will benefit students in their future academic pursuits and beyond graduation.

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Appendix A

Debate Format

Activity	Details	Time
Preparation	Team Preparation	5 minutes
Round 1	Team 1* Arguments	3 minutes
	Team 2** Arguments	3 minutes
Preparation	Team Counterargument Brainstorming Session	5 minutes
Round 2	Team 1 Counterarguments	3 minutes
	Team 2 Counterarguments	3 minutes
Group Discussion	Which team “won”? What was the best argument?	5 minutes
Class Discussion	Which team “won” from each group? What was the best argument within each group?	10 minutes

*Team 1 supports Opinion 1.

**Team 2 supports Opinion 2.

Appendix B

Debate Topics

Topic: U.S. Electoral System (Electoral College)

- Issue: Should the United States abolish (stop using) the Electoral College?

Topic: Guns (Second Amendment)

- Issue: Should the Second Amendment be repealed (removed) from the U.S. Constitution?

Topic: Justice

- Issue: Should Supreme Court justices have term limits?

Topic: Economy

- Issue: Should the U.S. government regulate businesses more?

Topic: Education

- Issue: Should the school voucher system be expanded?

Topic: Immigration

- Issue: Should the U.S. government spend more money on controlling the border between Mexico and the United States?

Topic: Environment

- Should the federal government allow oil and gas drilling near national parks?

Appendix C

Classroom Seat Assignment

CLASSROOM FRONT

1	1	2	2	3	3	Opinion 1
1	1	2	2	3	3	Opinion 2
4	4	5	5	6	6	Opinion 1
4	4	5	5	6	6	Opinion 2
7	7	8	8	9	9	Opinion 1
7	7	8	8	9	9	Opinion 2

Note: Each student is assigned an opinion and a group. The groups are represented by boxes. For example, Groups 1, 2, and 3 are located in the first two rows of the classroom.

Creating SDG-Themed Proposals Using James Clear's Atomic Habits

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ABSTRACT

I present an approach for students to create proposals based on a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal by presenting them as personal habits. Originally, I had students use Monroe's five-step motivated sequence, then moved to adopt James Clear's atomic habits which consists of four steps (cue, craving, response, reward). This proposal idea came from an undergraduate thesis. I give details on how students should fill out proposal worksheets suitable for presentations. Through this way, students can perceive Sustainable Development Goals as personal goals. This paper closes with considerations of this instructional approach.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT

This current paper's concern is on how to enable students to become actively aware of and implement into their own lives one or more of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are mandated by the United Nations (UN) since 2015 which are to be realized by the year 2030 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). Sustainable development is defined as "development that improves living conditions in the present without compromising resources of future generations" (Latin America and Caribbean Movement for Children, p. 8). Goals range from tackling poverty, to eliminating insufficiency, to improving the environment. Developed and developing nations are tasked to implement strategies to realize these goals. The SDGs are mainly projected for governments and businesses. However, without students seeing themselves having a personal stake with these SDGs, their interest can be ephemeral.

My instructional context is in an academic English skills course in a private women's university in central Tokyo. The students' English levels in this department are between levels A2 to B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In this course, students learn how to use various Google applications (Gmail, Google Documents and Google Slides). I inform students that this academic English course is *learning with* (italics mine) English. English is a tool for learning, with the emphasis on what they learn by themselves, and for themselves.

My pedagogical approach has been influenced by the European University Association (EUA) 2019 paper on active learning, which reframes learning as "student ownership and

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activation" (p. 3). Aspects of active learning are "curiosity-driven" and "problem-based" (p. 3), which I regard as essential to inspire students to learn for themselves. Moreover, the EUA document states that instructors are facilitators and co-create by learning with their students (p. 5). My prior training as a university librarian to equip students to be autonomous users of services has influenced me to develop this course predicated on self-directed learning. I construct the course to be primarily self-directed learning with ample interaction with their classmates.

This SDG-based course is divided into three five-week stages, bookended with two major projects. I usher students into the first project through an interactive online quiz (Blight et al., 2020). in which they re-arrange by themselves seven goal categories ("equality / countries working together / saving the planet / work and economic growth / peace and justice / health and education / end poverty and hunger") in order of importance. Their respective results show students SDGs which are relevant to their interests. I then have students match with others who have similar category rankings. They form small groups based on their shared SDGs, then create their platforms with a group name, motto, logo, and agenda. These SDG platforms become the basis of their learning core. In the next five weeks, students debate and discuss SDG-related issues and problems. For the final five weeks, students engage in a second project to prepare their proposals as calls for action based on an SDG of their choice, which is the concern of this paper.

MAKING PROPOSALS THROUGH MONROE'S MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

Previously I had students prepare proposals based on Monroe's motivated sequence, which aims to "encourage people to take action and prime your audience to make immediate change" (The Grand Valley State University Speech Lab, 2019). This sequence has five steps as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Steps in Monroe's motivated sequence

Steps	Notes
1 Attention	Interest the audience to listen
2 Need	Tell the problem, who is impacted, why it is a problem, degree of severity, how it may affect listeners
3 Satisfaction	Present a solution, how it can be accomplished, factors to consider
4 Visualization	Tell benefits and tackle possible objections so that listeners can visualize it

Monroe's motivated sequence is a proven effective persuasive presentation method which is used in promotion advertising. However, I have found students are frustrated with the third step in Monroe's method to provide a satisfactory step-by-step plan. They have had trouble envisaging the steps leading to a satisfactory accomplishment.

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPETUS: AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

While I struggled on how to help students understand and implement Monroe's motivated sequence, I read an undergraduate thesis written by Riho Osaki (2020). Osaki was interested in why people who expressed environmentally-friendly values were reluctant to change their personal actions to improve the environment. To overcome this gap between their values and actions, she investigated to what extent people would be more motivated to incorporate an environmentally-friendly action into their daily lives if they could envision it as a habit. She proposed that habits could be formed using James Clear's *Atomic Habits* (n.d.) which consists of four steps: cue, craving, response, and reward, each connected with salient human needs:

1. "Cue" makes the habit obvious.
2. "Craving" makes the habit attractive.
3. "Response" makes the habit easy to do.
4. "Reward" makes the habit satisfying.

Osaki proposed that everyone bring their own bottle. She stated that the cue would be to "pour your favorite drink in your own bottle"; the craving, as to "drink it whenever you want"; the response to be to "use an application to search for places that permitted free refills; and the "reward" to keep a record of refills to see how much money was saved from buying drinks (Osaki, 2020, p. 13).

As I read this thesis, I saw her idea as a way to helping students develop concrete proposal descriptions that they could understand for themselves. I have incorporated this habit-formation approach while adapting Monroe's motivated sequence, which I explain in the next section.

MAKING PROPOSALS USING JAMES CLEAR'S ATOMIC HABITS

For this project, students create proposals for a call of action which is to make a habit connected with an SDG that is within their shared groups. They can present theirs individually or in pairs from their shared SDG groups, which allows less confident students to work together.

I give students an explanation sheet about making proposals using Clear's four-step habit formation and a worksheet structured as an outline (Table 2). I show them the "[Atomic Habits](#)" video by Successful By Design (2021), which is narrated by a non-native English speaker who describes the four steps of keeping an exercise routine.

The outline parallels the format of their eventual presentation. Students make their personal copies of the worksheet and share it with me and their partner. Table 2 shows the stages of the worksheet:

Table 2

Sequence for development of proposals

Stage	Notes
1 Students tell their position as individual representatives of their shared SDG group.	
2 State their proposal as a one-sentence practical solution to a problem connected to an SDG. This solution should suggest making a habit.	Show the grammar formula for the proposal: “We / I” + persuasive verb + “that” + an action (a habit).
3 Tell the problem, with supporting background sources.	Point out specific details in the sources to make clear how they connect to the problem, the SDG(s) and the proposal.
4 Give a detailed explanation of the proposal, using James Clear’s four-step plan (showing the “Atomic Habits” video , from 3:31) with these steps: cue, craving, response, reward.	<p>Cue: Compare the old habit with the new habit, i.e., “habit stacking” (Successful By Design, 2021, 4:05)</p> <p>Craving: Do “temptation bundling” (Successful By Design, 2021, 4:47) by which someone can only get to enjoy doing something after doing the habit.</p> <p>Response: Remove barriers and set goals low enough that prevent the habit from forming (Successful By Design, 2021, 5:32).</p> <p>Reward: Put in reinforcements (Successful By Design, 2021, 6:35).</p>
5 Tell the benefits (the good points) of the proposal or habit.	
6 Tell possible objections, problems or disadvantages with the proposal.	
7 Defend the proposal against objections.	
8 Conclude the presentation by repeating the proposal and adding final appeals.	

I view James Clear's four-step atomic habit formation to flesh out the third step of satisfaction within Monroe's motivated sequence.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

I recommend that students themselves become acquainted with SDGs from the start, through the Guardian interactive quiz (Blight et al. 2020) that I have suggested, instead of the instructor teaching the SDGs. They then can become familiar with those goals that match their interest. Students have told me they feel they are the active ones learning rather than being led and fed by the instructor.

Students have informed me that by making their proposals into personal habits, they can view the SDGs as something relevant and personal to themselves. One student proposed in order to reduce food waste, her cue would be to check expiration dates; the craving to take photos of meals eaten and share them on social media so as to motivate her to form her habit; the response to make simple meals; and reward to buy things with the money saved on food. For students, SDGs are no longer lofty claims imposed on by organizations and educators, but concrete goals actualized by their own impetus and creation.

For instructors who might worry about students using AI tools to write their proposals, I have students be aware of positioning concerns (Swales and Feak 2012 p. 42) , which includes awareness of audience, purpose, organization, style, flow and presentation by the student as writer and presenter. Currently, I am exploring ways for students to develop their own positionality statements, which consist of stating their beliefs about what they understand and know about the world, and their assumptions about how they interact with others in their circumstances (Holmes, 2020, pp.1-2).

CONCLUSION

This paper explains the instructional situation in which I help students become familiar with the SDGs and construct proposals based on these goals. I moved from having students use Monroe's five-step motivated sequence to James Clear's atomic habits which came from reading an undergraduate thesis. I explained how students fill out a proposal worksheet that is suitable for a presentation and end up perceiving SDGs as personal goals. I closed with considerations related to my instruction.

In preparation of this article, I revisited Monroe's motivated sequence and the student thesis and rewatched the Atomic Habits video. Teaching this proposal project through Clear's four-step habit formation approach has provided dividends for learning: not only for the students, but also for me. I have found that I can still work to improve this course into a more rewarding self-learning experience and help students become even more familiar with SDGs that attract their attention. I hope that through making proposals, students create habits that cause these SDGs to be more personally meaningful for them.

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Teaching Academic Writing Across Proficiency Levels: A Genre-Driven Approach

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ABSTRACT

The writing process often proves stressful for EFL students. Although English is taught over ten years of schooling, Japanese English education is often criticized for not meeting global standards. It is critical that students start their writing activities early. One approach that can enhance students' writing and yet mitigate stress is the *Kakikae approach*. This approach is a rewriting process that aims to integrate the genre perspective. While adaptable for students at various proficiency levels, this paper focuses on strategies tailored explicitly for junior high school students.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in English is one of the most challenging tasks in second language learning (Hyland, 2004). It is a multifaceted activity requiring grammar, vocabulary, structure, format, conventions, and content knowledge. In the past few years in Japan, there has been a stronger move towards giving more writing instructions, and more schools teach a paragraph or five-paragraph essay writing in junior and senior high schools. Until recently, writing activity in junior and senior high schools was very limited, and, in many cases, it was a literal translation activity rather than a creative one. Factors that have been barriers to teaching English writing were found for the teachers and the students. Teachers had to deal with the big class size, overloaded work, and their own English capabilities. On the contrary, learning writing was considered too early for junior high school students since they needed to acquire many other things, such as memorizing vocabulary and learning grammar, before they started doing writing activities. Many teachers considered that teaching writing before having enough knowledge of English would only stress students and discourage them.

On the other hand, one of the issues Japanese academia faces is the decrease in the number of internationally published papers by Japanese researchers (MEXT, 2022). Academics have become an Anglophone world, and the use of English in research papers has been increasing as the world becomes more globalized (Swales, 2004). In Japan, academic writing instruction often starts in college. Usually, students are asked to write five-paragraph essays, aiming for TOEFL-type writing. Since most students focus on paragraph writings in high school

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and for the entrance exam, many students struggle with writing a full introductory paragraph. Some struggle with the concept of deductive reasoning. Often, the next chance students need to write in English, if ever, would be their research paper.

Therefore, it can be argued that Japanese students lack writing experience. One of the most critical issues facing English teachers in Japan has been how to better teach the ability to write cohesive texts (Ataka & Matsuzawa, 2016) and writing tasks geared towards academic writing should start at an early age. Thus, spending more time on writing activities may be imperative for Japanese junior high schools.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the *Kakikae approach*, a rewriting process which aims to integrate the genre perspective. This approach intends to mitigate students' stress as well as teacher's workload, enhance the writing experience, and build student's confidence in writing. Although the *Kakikae approach* can be used for students of any ability level, this paper focuses on strategies specifically designed for junior high school students.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Writing Instructions in Japanese Junior High Schools

Writing instruction usually starts in junior high school in Japan. Table 1 shows the writing tasks from New Crown English Series 1, 2 and 3 (Negishi et al., 2021), a typical English textbook for junior high schools authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).⁶ As shown in the table, there are four to five writing tasks a year covering various genres. However, there is only one essay-writing task throughout the three years. It is interesting to note here that one of the purposes of the MEXT authorized textbooks is to maintain the educational level of Japanese students (MEXT, 2021).

Table 1
Writing Tasks in New Crown English Series 1-3

Year	Content
1	Application Form (for an English Camp) Email (introducing school events) Diary Manifest
2	Essay (a country you want to visit) Report (something popular) Thank-you letter Poster

⁶Most schools in Japan use textbooks that are authorized by MEXT. Using them is mandatory for elementary schools, and conforming to the guidance of a MEXT textbook is strongly recommended for junior and senior high schools. The copyright for such textbooks is owned by MEXT, but the texts themselves are made by a group of teachers and the private sector. They are renewed every four years. Japan has had this system since 1947, and the main purposes are to maintain the educational standard, guarantee equal educational opportunities, maintain appropriate educational content, and ensure the neutrality of education (MEXT, 2021).

	Message (a Japanese expression you want to share)
	Message (a book you want to share)
3	Card (promote yourself to a volunteering position)
	Invitation
	Poem

Genre Approach

Genre is a way of categorizing different styles of writing. There are certain patterns of expression that are commonly used in specific styles (Flowerdew, 2015; Hyland, 2004; Swales, 1990). Swales (1990) described writing as communicative events with mutual communicative intentions. Writers in different communities have different word choices, and thus different genres (p.58).

Swales (2004) developed the Create a Research Space model for research papers as well as various stages and rhetorical moves that carried within them (p. 226). By rhetorical moves, he referred to the text or segments of a text in rhetorical patterns in each community (Biber, 2007). Applying these rhetorical moves, especially in the introduction of research papers, has been effective in teaching writing (Swales, 2004).

According to Hyland (2004, p. 54), genres are unique to certain communities and cultures, but students may not be aware of this. He also notes that teachers must teach beyond grammar, vocabulary, and structure, to also include how language is used in specific communities. Hyland (p.54) notes that the main principles of the genre approach are that writing is a social activity and that learning to write is need-oriented, requires explicit outcomes and expectations, and involves learning to use language.

CONTENT

The Kakikae Activity

Kakikae activity refers to the act of rewriting based on a model essay. In this activity, Japanese is not given, and it is not a translation activity. The students rewrite the model essay on a given theme, so the activity is to rewrite in a similar but different context. This act of rewriting makes this activity genre-based because it involves social activity, is needs-oriented, and involves language learning. Furthermore, the outcome and expectations are explicitly explained.

Before the writing task, students are given time to discuss the content of the model essay. They are then given a title of an essay to rewrite. They are allowed to look at handouts, textbooks, or dictionaries as needed. This prevents students from copying other students' works and instead encourages working independently. This is the time to use their creativity and develop their writing skills. Any questions can be asked during the prewriting time when discussions are conducted.

Features of the Kakikae Approach

Three notable features of this approach are that it reduces students' stress, allows creativity, and develops students' confidence in writing. Furthermore, this approach reduces the teacher's load.

Decreases Student's Stress

Students should feel less overwhelmed than creating a whole new essay. They are not pressured to come up with expressions. Even if the student chooses not to use the expression used in the model essay, they will at least be exposed to certain expressions in a certain genre.

Allows Creativity

The activity gives the writers the freedom to create their own sentences. The content can diverge as long as the student can handle it. The more advanced students can be as creative as they wish, and less experienced writers can use the model sentence more as a substitution exercise. The activity provides freedom in terms of creativity.

Develops Confidence

The given framework of this activity should allow students to feel they are in control of their writing, and thus develop confidence. For first-year students in junior high school, writing a page full of sentences is a challenge and is something to be proud of. For more advanced students, acquiring the forms, and the structure, should allow them to write essays of the same genre smoothly with confidence.

Decreases Teacher's Burden

This activity is less time consuming than a simple essay writing, for it gives certain frameworks to students. Thus, marking should be easier because similar patterns would be used in certain contexts.

Model Essay

The model essay can be one paragraph or a five-paragraph essay. The theme should be chosen carefully so that a parallel essay can be imagined easily. For example, a model essay about winning the World Cup Rugby games can be rewritten into winning High School Baseball. A paragraph on *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*⁷ can be rewritten into a paragraph on Doraemon⁸. Appendix A shows an example of some of the three slides for a paragraph Kakikae activity. Appendix B shows an example of a rewrite activity of a short essay.

The difficulty may be to look for a "similar but different" theme to write. Please note that the Kakikae approach may not work if the theme to rewrite is too different from the original that the students cannot use many of the expressions used in the model essay. On the

⁷ *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* is a children's picture book by Beatrix Potter, an English writer and an illustrator. It is about Peter, a mischievous rabbit that lives with his mother and his three sisters (Potter, 1987).

⁸ Doraemon is a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Fujiko F. Fujio. Doraemon, a cat-like robot coming from the future to help a clumsy boy called Nobita to keep out of trouble (Fujio, 2008).

other hand, if the theme is too similar, there may not be much to change and thus have less room for creativity.

The model essay can be made to align the needs of the class. For example, it can focus on grammar, vocabulary or both as needed. A grammar focused Kakikae activity can be a rewrite of present tense essays into other tenses, or a singular subject changed into plural subjects.

PROCEDURE

Step one. Hand the model paper to the students. This is when students can discuss the content in pairs. The teacher can facilitate the discussion as necessary by asking questions such as “What is the message of this model paper?” or “Can you find the subject and the verb in each sentence?”

Step two. The structure, format, conventions, and moves of the essay are explicitly explained. The content, vocabulary and grammar are reviewed. The grammar instruction should be focused on how the use of certain grammar would affect the context rather than inputting the rules of grammar. The essay can be read together, and the pronunciation can also be reviewed.

Step three. The students are given a new title for the rewrite essay. It will be a parallel rewrite with different content but common features. The students can be creative and expand the expressions used in the model essay, but if they are struggling to form sentences, instruct the students to adhere to a direct rewrite, changing the verbs or nouns. Alternatively, the teacher can underline any expressions students should use to avoid confusion.

Step four. Once completed, the students can exchange the papers for a peer review. This is when students have the chance to notice other people’s errors as well as their own. They will also learn new expressions, ideas, and use of language through others.

Step five. When correcting the paper, the teacher can use two different colored pens. Use one color to check the structure, format, conventions, and moves. Use the other to check grammar and vocabulary usage. The focus point of the activity should be made clear before students start the rewrite and should be the focus point of the correction. Do not correct every one of the errors you find. According to Hyland, comments should be mitigated to avoid any over-dominant or authoritative tone, but the teacher’s role should still exist (2003).

DISCUSSION

In this study, the Kakikae approach allowed Japanese second year junior high school students to write a full page paragraph. Writing a substantial amount can be challenging and intimidating for junior high school students, but this was done within the 45-minute class period. Although a questionnaire was not conducted to seek the students’ response, considering that most students were able to finish their task within 45 minutes, the task was not too demanding or discouraging. It is the limitation of this paper, however, that surveys to ask the student responses were not conducted. Further research could investigate and verify students’ responses numerically by means of questionnaires.

CONCLUSION

The Kakikae activity is a simple rewrite activity that exposes students to the structure, format, conventions, and moves of academic writing. It also allows for the review of grammar and vocabulary. Students learn not just the rules of grammar but also how the meaning of the context can be changed. Students can be creative or conform to forms and templates as preferred. It is less overwhelming for the students and the teachers, as the model essay is provided, and the rewrite can be a mere replacement of words or expressions. However, the students need to be critical and creative in aligning with the context. The activity can target novice to advanced students.

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Appendix A

A Kakikae Paragraph Writing Activity

The following figures are some of the slides from the beginning level Kakikae activities. This activity focuses on writing a paragraph. A paragraph that introduces the Peter Rabbit story is rewritten into a paragraph to introduce the Doraemon story.

Figure 1

Sample slide Introducing the Concept of a Paragraph from the Textbook

パラグラフとは何？

1) パラグラフとは一つのアイディアを、表す文章のかたまりです。

一つのアイディアに一つのパラグラフです。アイディアが変われば、新たな段落で書きます。

2) 日本語の段落は長すぎると段落を変えることがあります、それはパラグラフではありません。

Peter Rabbit is the main character of this book. He lives with his mother and three sisters, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail. Peter is a naughty rabbit. He often gets into trouble.

Note. Translation of the Slide

What is a paragraph?

- 1) A paragraph is made of a group of sentences that has an idea. There should be one paragraph for one idea. If you want to write about a new idea, start a new paragraph.
- 2) In Japanese writing, one would often start a new paragraph when it becomes too long, but this does not usually happen in English writing.

Figure 2

Sample slide Instructing the Kakikae Activity

One Paragraph Writing

New Crown 2 (P. 6-7を参照)

①から④の中から一つ選び、「ドラえもん」もしくはその作者の紹介するパラグラフに書き換えましょう。

Peter Rabbit is the main character of this book. He lives with his mother and three sisters, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail. Peter is a naughty rabbit. He often gets into trouble.

Note. Translation of the slide.

Please refer to pages 6-7 in the New Crown 2 textbook. Choose from ① to ④ as a model and rewrite a paragraph to introduce “Doraemon” or the author of Doraemon. (Other samples include paragraphs introducing authors.)

Figure 3

Sample Slide of a Post-Activity

間違い直し-その1

Doraemon is a character in this
manga. He is a robot from century 22. He
live in Nobita’s room. He often help
Nobita.

Note 1. This post-activity introduces a paragraph modified from a student sample. The class discusses how to refine the paragraph.

Note 2. Translation of the slide.
Error Correction Activity 1

APPENDIX B

A Kakikae Essay Writing Activity

The following figures are some of the sample model essays. Figure 1 shows the model essay for a Kakikae activity to rewrite an essay into a similar but a different theme. The model essay is about the rugby world cup, and the students were to rewrite this essay into high school baseball. The second page shows some of the important grammar points (Figure 2) that they will learn within the term. The sample rewrite essay (Figure 3) is shown to the students upon completion.

Figure 1

Model Essay (page 1)

<p><i>English II Monday (T. Kajima)</i> <i>Keio Futsubu School</i> Class: _____ No.: _____ Name: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To Become the Top Eight Team</p> <p>Rugby is a very popular sport in England, and it is now becoming popular in Japan. The Rugby World Cup is the biggest and the most popular event in rugby. In 2019, the World Cup was held in Japan. The Japanese team performed exceptionally well and was among the best eight teams. This was not easy. However, they were able to win because of their strong teamwork and the enthusiastic cheering from the fans.</p> <p>Firstly, the team motto was "One Team," and I think the players were able to actually be one team by helping and supporting each other during the games. Their teamwork made them strong. However, I think they also had to practice very hard.</p> <p>Another reason for their victory was the huge cheer from the crowd. There were many men and women of all ages at the stadium to cheer them. People throughout Japan cheered for them. The support gave them strength.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Japanese rugby team became one of the best eight teams in the 2019 World Cup Rugby games. They were successful because they were one team and received strong support from their fans. We must also remember that they practiced very hard.</p>

Note. The topic should be something that is easy to come up with a "similar but a different topic." The essay should follow the basic structure of a five-paragraph essay. This exercise should remind the students of the structure of essays, as well as the grammar points they are learning during the semester.

Figure 2

Main Grammar Points (page 2)

主な文法ポイント：

- ① The Rugby World Cup is the biggest and the most popular event in rugby. (p. 86)
 - ② ...the players were able to actually be one team by helping and supporting each other during the games.
 - ③ Their teamwork made them strong. (p. 64)
 - ④ There were many men and women of all ages. (p.50)
 - ⑤ ...they had to practice very hard. (p. 64)
 - ⑥ The support gave them strength. (p. 64)
 - ⑦ We must also remember that they practiced very hard.
- 前置詞 (p. 50)

前置詞に印をつけましょう。

Note 1. The main important grammar points are listed here. The page numbers reflect the textbook pages. It is effective to include the grammar points students are learning within the semester.

Note 2. Translation : Main Grammar Points / Preposition (p. 50)/ circle the prepositions.

Figure 3

Sample Kakikae Activity (the rewritten version)

Becoming Number One

High school baseball, known as Koshien, is quite popular in Japan. There are two main tournaments: one in the spring and another in the summer. This summer, the Keio High School Baseball Team became the champion of Koshien. Becoming a number one was not easy for them. However, I believe that they were able to win because of their strong teamwork and the enthusiastic cheering from their fans.

For one thing, the team motto was "enjoy baseball," and I think the players were able to actually have fun during the games. Being able to enjoy themselves led them to perform well. However, as a base, I think they also practiced very, very hard.

Another reason for their victory was that they had a huge cheer from the crowd. There were an amazing number of students, alumni, teachers, and fans actually at the stadium to cheer for them. Keio has its original cheering style and songs that excited the crowd. This cheering helped them win.

To sum up, the Keio High School Baseball Team became number one in the country. They won because they enjoyed themselves and received strong support from their fans. We must also not forget that they practiced very hard.

(200 words)