

Thursday 4 June

3:20pm - 4:00pm

Room: Block Y, Room Y408

Presentation Title: Autonomy and modeling: Using expert texts for engagement and reflection

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Theme:	Learner and teacher experiences
Presentation Type:	Paper presentation

Abstract

To what extent is the use of model texts in writing classes commensurable with learner autonomy? This paper addresses the question by comparing a teacher's personal experience of learning from "expert" writers with that of students engaging in a similar activity in a Japanese university classroom.

I begin with my own experience on an induction course prior to joining an online writing business writing company. The most impressive activity during this process was comparing my own text with that of an "expert" writer, which encouraged me to engage actively with and reflect critically on various writing and teaching practices. Subsequently, I have started using expert examples (both teacher- and peer-written) in a similar way as a regular practice in my academic writing courses.

Despite the substantial theoretical support given to learning from experts, the use of model texts may appear antithetical to learner autonomy. Drawing on students' responses to a questionnaire and comments in a post-course group interview, I discuss the use of expert texts in the context of developing learner autonomy, and raise new questions about the reification of practice and learning, learning communities, and critical engagement and reflection.

Biodata

Alison Stewart has been teaching English in Japan for twelve years. She has a PhD in Applied Linguistics and is currently researching identity and EFL curriculum reform at Japanese universities. She is co-editor of the JALT Learner Development SIG newsletter.