HOW BELIEFS OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PROFESSORS IN JAPAN INFLUENCE THEIR PEDAGOGY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES RELATED TO THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This research study examines teaching beliefs of English-language professors in Japan, how professors make sense of their beliefs, and how the beliefs influence their pedagogical strategies related to using technology and teaching with technology. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design was used. Six English-language professors employed full-time in universities in Tokyo and Kanagawa participated in this study. Social Cognitive Theory was used as the theoretical framework. Each instructor’s beliefs interacted in a complex manner within the higher education system in Japan, which impacted instructors’ actual teaching practices related to the use of technology. This study demonstrated that instructors’ beliefs about teaching are intrinsically related to their incorporation of technology as well as to the frequency of their use of technology. It revealed a complicated relationship between what teachers think and what they do in class in relation to technology-mediated tasks.

Findings of this study suggest that English Language Teaching (ELT) instructors at the university level in Japan are navigating through a complex cultural, Confucian-influenced, structural educational system. Computer-mediated instruction includes Computer-assisted language learning (CALL), information and communications technology (ICT), social networking service (SNS), e-learning, and m-learning. This study suggests technology integration into the English language curriculum will require a greater collaborative effort by stakeholders in recognizing instructors’ beliefs as vital to technology acceptance.

Keywords: English Language Teaching (ELT), English as Foreign Language (EFL), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), beliefs, motivation, Confucian structure, self-efficacy, computer-mediated instruction, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), information and communications technology (ICT), social networking service (SNS), e-learning, m-learning
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Chapter One: Research Problem

The integration of technology in instruction has been a subject of discussion among educators for more than 30 years (Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, & Young, 2000; Al-Hashash, 2007; Chapelle, 2010; Francoisí, 2016; Lai & Li, 2011; Levy, 1996, 2009; Lowther, Strahl, Inan, & Ross, 2012). Instructors primarily use technology to replicate traditional learning environments (Donnelly, McGarr, & O’Reilly, 2011; Goodman, 2010; Gorsuch, 1998; Huang, 2007; Kinmonth, 2005; Marginson, 2011; McVeigh, 2002; Mok, 2007; Ouyang, 2003; Whitsed & Volet, 2011); in addition, the lack of adequate instructor preparation restricts the level of technology-enhanced instruction in language classrooms (Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002; Kessler, 2006; McNeil, 2013; Oxford & Jung, 2007).

Regarding the Japanese context, the adoption and use of learning technologies have largely not been as effective as intended (Franciosí, 2016). In 2001, the government began providing funding and guidelines for infrastructure and for promoting instructors’ Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skill acquisition and ability to integrate technology and pedagogy. However, training and faculty development were neglected in the actual implementation. As a result, the infrastructure provided was widely under-utilized, and pedagogy remained largely unchanged from conventional instructor-centered approaches (Aoki, 2005; Aoki, 2010; Bachnik, 2003; Latchem et al., 2008; Sakamoto, 2002; Uchida, 2004).

In addition, there is what is commonly referred to as the Confucian-influenced tradition in Japan, whereby emphasis is placed on high-stakes testing, particularly for college entrance examinations (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996). It is common for high school juniors and seniors to spend large amounts of time in “juken” (college test-prep programs).
The Confucian tradition of education is a system that has a strong focus on examinations to identify people of high ability for success. Thus, in the Japanese education culture, an exam-based filtering system has developed that creates intense competition for admittance to universities (Arimoto, 2009; Chang et al., 2009; Marginson, 2011; Mori, 2002; Oshio, Sano, & Suetomi, 2010; Oshio, Sano, Ueno, & Mino, 2010; Willis, Yamamura, & Rappleye, 2008; Tan, 2013; Tsuruta, 2003; Yoshino, 2012). The Confucian tradition focuses more on the students’ adaptive, rather than creative or critical thinking prior to entering the university. The universities operate in the Confucian tradition, which does not advance progressive English language teaching frameworks in the higher education setting in Japan (Amano & Poole, 2005; Cheung, Rudowicz, Yue, & Kwan, 2003; Ishida, 2003; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Saeki, Fan, & Van Dusen, 2001; Shin, 2012). Consequently, teaching of English, a subject that appears on all college entrance examinations, employs the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or a variation of it, “translation reading,” called yakudoku in Japan (Gorsuch, 1998). In yakudoku, classes are taught primarily in Japanese. They are heavily teacher-centered and focus on translation techniques of complex English passages resembling those appearing on college entrance examinations (Gorsuch, 1998).

Thus, the grammar training method, or GTM, is maintained in the Japanese system primarily because of its convenience and applicability to the students’ main motivation for studying English, which is to pass entrance examinations with English sections involving reading and translation of dense, authentic academic texts (McVeigh, 2002; Stewart, 2009). With this backdrop, instructors at the university level are faced with students who have been taught in English-language classrooms designed for test taking rather than for meaning-focused, social communication. Because Japan continues to rank low in international
English tests (Educational Testing Service, 2013), Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released guidelines explicitly calling for development of communication ability in English through social interaction and increased funding for English-only courses (subjects taught using English only) at the university level (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, 2011). At the secondary education level, many teachers have reacted negatively to the guidelines because they believe they have no time to focus on communication in light of the importance of university entrance examinations; and they believe that these skills should be acquired only at the university level.

Although there is no direct correlation between constructivist ideas (i.e., student-centered) and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching, student-centered methods are associated with more intensive use of ICT in the classroom (Petko, 2012). On one hand, university English language instructors in Japan may be inclined to view computer use as interfering with the target language input and interaction that is essential in language learning. On the other hand, computer technology is known to assist students to engage in beneficial negotiation of meaning both online and with other classmates so that effective computer integration into instruction can contribute to improved learning (Burnett, 2000; De la Fuente, 2003; Glasgow, 2012; Kushimoto, 2009; Lee, 2002; McKinley, 2013; Stewart, 2009; Tsujimoto, 2016; Yamada & Hristoskova, 2011).

English language instructors in Japan have been trying to reconcile the Confucian tradition influence and international trends in language training (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Aspinall, 2006; Hashimoto, 2009; Kubota, 2011; Kushimoto, 2009; Prensky, 2001; Sakui & Cowie, 2008; Sakuragi, 2008; Tsuruta, 2013; Whitsed & Volet, 2013). Therefore, it was
important to explore the actual experiences of university instructors and their educational involvement, which play an important role in the way they perceive and use various pedagogical strategies in their classrooms within a Japanese university educational structure. The purpose of this study was to discover 1) the influence of the beliefs of university English-language instructors in Japan on their pedagogical strategies, and 2) how they make sense of their beliefs and the impact of their views on the practice of using technology in English-language instruction. The relatively recent influx of technology into the classroom has allowed for a pool of knowledge to be gathered relating the use of various technologies and teaching techniques (Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur, & Sendurur, 2012).

**Statement of the Problem**

The rapid advancement of computer technology in Japan has gained attention and popularity, and computers have increasingly become an integral part of life in Japanese society. In this information age, technology also found its way into education, where the hope is that it will improve learning outcomes in Japanese educational institutions. The Standards for Foreign Language Learning include the use of technology as one of the seven essential elements that define the curricular weave:

- language systems
- cultural knowledge
- communication strategies
- critical thinking skills
- learning strategies
- other subject areas
- technology
These elements underscore the importance of integrating technology use in ELT classrooms to enhance students’ English Language Learning (ELL) experiences (MEXT: Report on the Future Improvement of English Education, 2014). It is important to note that most colleges and universities in Japan today are equipped with computer laboratories that are designed specifically for English language learning purposes. The debate is no longer about whether there is value in using technology in the classroom, but rather it is on how computer technology can best be used in language teaching (Zhao, 2005). Some studies have demonstrated the advantages of using computer technology in the EFL classroom. The use of multimedia in the classroom, for example, facilitates language acquisition through promotion of the input-to-intake process (Lai & Zhao, 2005).

This research study acknowledges the need to focus on instructor beliefs in development of their choices. The professional development training for instructors in pedagogical change may not necessarily mean using new teaching practices, because some instructors may not see the need to change (Ertmer et al., 2012). However, the extent to which instructors are able to improve their teaching practices depends on the instructors’ willingness to develop and execute different pedagogical strategies (Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008).

Thus, the overall purpose of this research study was to explore how English language instructors’ beliefs affect teaching and how those beliefs may be impacting their technology use in the classrooms regarding computer-mediated instruction. The findings from this research contribute to the knowledge base in English-language education in Japan, educational technology in higher education, the Confucian educational system, instructor cognition, and the importance of ongoing professional development and preparation.
Research Question

The over-arching research question in this study was:

**How do teaching beliefs of English language professors in Japan influence their pedagogy and teaching practices related to the use of technology for computer-mediated instruction?**

The above over-arching question included the following:

- What are the teaching beliefs held by university instructors who teach English-language courses in Japan?
- How do university English language instructors in Japan make sense of their beliefs as they develop or adopt pedagogical strategies and design teaching practices?
- How are these instructors influenced in their decisions about integrating technology in their practices and their courses?

**Significance of the Research Problem**

The fundamental research question addressed the issue of teacher beliefs and instruction as they relate to using technology for the purpose of learning and not merely as a teaching tool. This study followed a tradition of research in the field of computer-mediated instruction. For instance, teachers are considered to be gatekeepers (Cuban, 2001); and knowing that their beliefs are important to their decision-making processes, it is vital that university-based English language programs be aware of and build on instructors’ thinking on technology in order to better assist them in integrating technology into their curricula and classrooms. Understanding instructors’ beliefs is essential when considering issues related to pedagogy (Allen, 2008). An analysis of instructors’ epistemic beliefs about teaching practice provides insight into understanding instructor cognition and improving instructors in
their development as educators. It is, thus, an important dimension to examine if instructors are to make successful use of technology.

**Definitions and Terminology**

For the purposes of this study, teaching of English as a foreign language and English content courses were the major topics of concern.

- Computer-mediated instruction was defined as any computer technology used for the purposes of language learning and teaching.
- Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) focuses on habit formation through rote memorization, rigid drills, and grammar exercises with little emphasis placed on meaning.
- Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is providing language learners with an opportunity for authentic, two-way communication.
- Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the pedagogical approach that emphasizes language as a medium of communication rather than a set of grammatical rules and words to memorize.
- Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) refers to teaching subjects such as science, history and geography to students through a foreign language.
- English language teaching (ELT) is the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English, English as a foreign language (EFL) refers to learning English where it is not the dominant language, as opposed to English as a second language (ESL) taught where English is the dominant language.
- E-learning refers to learning conducted via electronic media.
- M-learning refers to learning across multiple contexts, through social and content
interactions, using personal electronic devices.

The review of literature that follows is an exploration of the relevant literature related to these concepts.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following literature review is organized thematically and provides a review of five strands of literature:

1) The theory and application of CALL and CMC are reviewed, and English as a foreign language (EFL) and second language acquisition (SLA) theory are described.

2) Literature is reviewed on the relationship between instructor beliefs and their teaching practices.

3) A review of literature on instructor beliefs and instructors’ curriculum strategies is provided, including (a) instructors’ pedagogical beliefs, (b) instructors’ self-efficacy beliefs, and the impact of these on technology use.

4) This section includes literature on relationships between language instructors’ beliefs and their technology use and points to limitations of existing studies.

5) Finally, the chapter focuses on self-efficacy as it pertains to the instructors’ willingness to adopt varying strategies in the classroom.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) was developed based on the idea that computer technologies can facilitate interactions between a human and a computer, as well as those between humans through computers (Chapelle, 2009). Defined as “communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers” (Herring, 1999, p. 1), computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become an important strand of research in CALL. It has been further divided into synchronous CMC, such as text-based (chat) and audio- or video-based chat (conferencing), and asynchronous CMC, such as emails and discussion boards, depending on whether communications happen in real time or not. Although the introduction of multimodality
has opened more possibilities of CMC applications in English language teaching and learning, synchronous text-based computer-mediated communication (SCMC) arguably holds high potential for ELT (Levy & Stockwell, 2006).

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has progressed due to the advent of technology that has made it possible for CALL to meet the needs of foreign and second language learners in different contexts (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). The invention of new technologies motivated researchers and practitioners to explore the significance of CALL in English as a foreign language learning (EFL) and Second-language acquisition (SLA). The technologies used in CALL have not only altered pedagogy and its environment, but also the paradigms of EFL and SLA.

The application of CALL has undergone a succession of theories of foreign and second language acquisition: from behavioristic CALL to communicative CALL to integrative CALL (Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Yang & Chen, 2007). Earlier CALL was based on Behavior-Learning Theory, focusing on a drill-and-practice learning model in which the computer was regarded as a tutor delivering teaching materials to students, such as vocabulary drills and brief grammar explanations (Kern, 2006; Taylor, 1980). During that period, people regarded the computer as a supplement to classroom instruction and learning. The rationale for the use of computers during that time included repeatedly presenting the same material to students, which was seen as a major benefit for their learning; the computer, unlike an instructor, could implement drills repeatedly and give feedback immediately. In addition, the computer could allow students to learn at their own pace (Hubbard, 2008; Plass & Jones, 2005; Warschauer, 2002). That rationale is still applied to today’s numerous drill programs such as vocabulary and grammar exercises. However, by the 1980s, researchers had come to criticize this approach at both the theoretical and the pedagogical
level (Ahmad, Greville, Rogers, & Sussex, 1985; Higgins & Johns, 1984; Lam, 2000).

By the 1990s, integrative CALL emerged and focused on the use of multimedia, computers, and the internet for language learning in authentic social contexts (Healey, 1999). Learners participated in task-based or content-based learning activities to integrate and use speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. “Much of the theory underlying integrative CALL is derived from Vygotskyan sociocultural model of language learning” (Fotos & Browne, 2004, p. 6) in which interaction plays a central role in the creation of meaning. Integrating learning activities that represent holistic person-to-person interactions include email, multiple-user-domain object oriented environments (MOOs), role-playing games, and simulation games. Learner autonomy is a substantial goal in the integrative view of CALL (Egbert, Paulus, & Nakamichi, 2002; Healey, 1999). In recent years, language-learning software and CD-ROMs have gradually been replaced by web-based activities.

The development of CALL has undergone three successive stages over the years: tutor, stimulus, and interaction. However, CALL is now in the stage of open CALL instead of communicative CALL. In this stage, the computer is used for genuine communication. Normalization and integrated CALL have been the end goal for CALL. Teaching of CALL is not visible and embedded in daily practice and, unlike pens and books that have been thoroughly adopted in the classroom, computers are not integrated into the curriculum of all classes, even though classrooms are equipped with them (Bax, 2003; Chapelle, 2004; Egbert, 2005; Kern, 2006; Kramsch, 2000).

In recent years in second language acquisition (SLA) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, language instructors have argued for the value of using technology in language teaching. They found that enhancing the use and knowledge of CALL is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of instruction (Peters, 2006; Warschauer
& Healey, 1998). However, the most critical problem with the use of technology in language teaching is the lack of proper preparation and training of language instructors (Kessler, 2006).

Some studies on language instructors’ training with CALL include:

- electronic communication; for example, email, discussion boards, and file sharing
- use of the internet; for example, computer-mediated communication, course management system (Fotos & Browne, 2004)
- advanced skills; for instance, video teleconferencing and weblogs (Son, 2002).

The focus on instructors’ professional development primarily relates to enhancing or improving teachers’ skills in learning new technology. However, it is unreasonable and unnecessary to cover all technologies and skills in a training program for instructors (Bauer, 2006; Levy, 1996; Motteram, 2014; Polly, Mims, Shepherd & Inan, 2010; Potter & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2012; Slaouti & Motteram, 2006). A language instructor who is in command of all technologies might not be able to effectively incorporate them into instruction if he or she does not understand how to integrate them into teaching and learning. However, the most cited reason for lack of implementation of new technology is lack of professional development (Ertmer et al., 2012).

Kessler (2006) offered four recommendations: “involve a specialist, involve all stakeholders, provide incentives, and keep use relevant” (pp.34–35). A CALL specialist should be involved as a resource for language teacher preparation. In addition, an introduction of substantial principles and applications of CALL should be included at some levels of teacher preparation. Stakeholders, including program administrators and staff, should be involved in the CALL activities of language programs. Consequently, a CALL trainer should always keep project-based learning or collaborative teamwork in mind in training to benefit both pre-service and in-service instructors (Kessler, 2010).
The instructors who are less confident with technology feel threatened by CALL, despite some recognizing it as an effective means of instruction. The threat that CALL presents may manifest itself in terms of a computer that teaches students directly (eliminating the need for instructors), a student who is more adept with technology than the teacher, or a sense that technology moves too rapidly. As a consequence, instructors share a general lack of awareness of the potential of CALL, but they are interested in the potential once they are exposed to the field. CALL instructors who are confident using technology in their personal lives tend to recognize the potential for CALL, but they often overlook very simple or obvious solutions or contexts in which extant technology may enhance language learning. High confidence in technology may not equal its use. Even those with extensive technology skills may not easily transfer these skills to CALL contexts (Kessler, 2010).

**Instructor Beliefs and Their Teaching Practices**

Generally, the practice of teaching is seen as synonymous with instructors’ choices and decision processes (Woods, 1995); instructors are considered active agents who decide what should happen in their classrooms. The growing body of research in education identifies the important role that instructors’ thinking plays in the way they teach. “Beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives” (Pajares, 1992, p.307). Instructors’ choices and decision processes are deeply rooted in their beliefs and, thus, support this claim (Allen, 2008; Borg, 2003; Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1990, 1992; Met, 2006; Munby, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Peacock, 2001; Richards, 1994; Williams, 1997; Woods, 1995).

Defining the term “belief” is a very complex endeavor, as it is often difficult to find a consensus regarding the meaning of the concept. From a general perspective, every instructor holds his/her own beliefs regarding what, how, and why he/she teaches.
The task is complicated by the fact that the term has been defined in many ways in the literature (Abelson, 1979; Green, 1971; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). “Defining beliefs is at best a game of player’s choice” (Pajares, 1992, p. 309), and various synonyms for beliefs are used, such as attitudes, values, ideologies, personal philosophies, images, and perceptions, all of which are beliefs.

When it comes to defining beliefs, differentiating the notion of beliefs from the notion of knowledge is often a source of confusion. Pinpointing the “messy construct” of beliefs and knowledge, Pajares (1992) urged that the meaning of “beliefs” be defined apart from “knowledge” since, he argued, it “would not be possible for researchers to come to grips with teachers’ beliefs” without such an effort (p. 308).

With this in mind, and to ensure clarity, this literature review draws on the philosophical distinction between the notion of belief and knowledge proposed by Green (1971): Beliefs are personally (subjectively) held as true by individuals, but they do not have a truth condition in them. Knowledge, on the other hand, does warrant a truth condition. “Knowledge is thought to depend on a “truth condition” or warrant that compels its acceptance as true by community” (Richardson, 2003, p. 3). Propositional knowledge requires epistemic standing that requires some evidence to support the claim. However, beliefs, do not require a truth condition (Richardson, 2003).

In addition to the distinction between knowledge and beliefs, it is important to note that beliefs are episodic in nature and formed early in life (Abelson, 1979; Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Because beliefs are personal, many researchers claim that instructors are resistant to change by persuasion, even when presented with reasons or facts (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968; Williams, 1997).

The affective and evaluative nature of beliefs is also an important aspect that
distinguishes the notion of beliefs from the concept of knowledge. The affective and evaluative features of beliefs act as filters (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992) that determine what is acceptable or unacceptable, favorable or unfavorable, positive or negative, whenever instructors are confronted with new information. Such an affective/evaluative filter shapes, distorts, and screens instructors’ thinking and information processing (Fenstermacher, 1978; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Williams, 1997). For example, a group of instructors may receive the same information about specific software (knowledge), yet individual perspectives and actual usage of it may differ greatly due to the uniqueness of personal beliefs each instructor holds. Instructors may differ in their decision to use or not use the software per their level of appreciation (i.e., personal likes/dislikes, personal value judgments).

**Pedagogical Development and Higher Education**

Improvements in education depend on adopting innovative or different teaching practices, ranging from small-scale changes in classroom activities to implementation of a new curriculum or a completely different pedagogical approach (Guskey, 1988). Professional development of higher-education instructors must be in line with 21st century needs (Davidson & Stone, 2009; Striano, 2009). Modern educational institutions should offer a real-world-based curriculum; and today’s institutions should demonstrate innovative teaching and learning methods, integration of technology, and instruction in modern skills. To succeed in achieving these attributes, instructors should not be content with the teaching practices that may work best in any given moment, but consistently develop their pedagogy (Davidson & Stone, 2009).

In the field of higher education, instructors’ implementation of pedagogical strategies is under-researched because higher-education institutions have undervalued the instructional training of their faculty members, and higher-education institutions can
make their own decisions regarding faculty members’ expertise (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylanne, & Nevgi, 2007). Consequently, teaching-related professional development has been lacking in higher-education institutions (Cowan, George, & Pinheiro-Torres, 2004).

Teacher beliefs pertain to instructors’ educational attitudes about school, teaching, learning, and students (Pajares, 1992). Researchers arrive at a context-specific definition of instructor beliefs, or educational beliefs, about the reasons for instructors’ performance. In line with Pajares’ (1992) recommendation, instructor beliefs in this study will refer to instructors’ educational beliefs about what factors influence them to adopt or not adopt different pedagogical strategies such as computer-mediated instruction. More specifically, instructor beliefs in computer-mediated instructional development in this study refer to the interpretation the instructors attach to the positive and negative reasons they use to consider when adopting or developing different teaching practices.

Assuming that the university provides administrative support for the implementation of different pedagogical strategies and conducts teaching-related professional development, does that mean all instructors will implement these new strategies? Perkins (1985) called the assumption that instructors will automatically use available resources “the fingertip effect.” In his study of the use of information-processing technology in education, Perkins (1985) challenged the fingertip effect, claiming that individuals must see an opportunity to use a resource, recognize the need to use it, and most importantly, find it important to use it.

Notably, the same concept can be applied to pedagogical development. Only when instructors have the willingness to adopt different pedagogical strategies can a new teaching practice be enacted in a classroom (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997). Shavelson and Stern (1981) conducted a thorough review of instructors’ pedagogical thoughts,
judgments, and decisions and established that instructors’ teaching behaviors were inextricably connected to their intentions. Instructors’ perceptions of teaching and their cognitive processes about teaching influence their teaching approaches and actual practices (Fullan, 2001a, 2001b; Postareff, Lindblom-Ylanne, & Nevgi, 2007; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999). Even the most effective pedagogy may not be implemented in a classroom if instructors do not believe in its efficacy (Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009).

Numerous studies on instructional innovation or pedagogical change have supported the importance of studying instructors’ motivational beliefs in developing or adopting different teaching strategies (Abrami, Poulsen, & Chambers, 2004; Breen, 1991; Breen et al., 2001; Borg, 2003; Ertmer, 2005; Foley, 2011; Hu, 2002; Karaman, Okten, & Tochon, 2012; Lee et al., 2011; Savignon, 2007; Surry & Land, 2000; Wozney, Venkatesh, & Abrami, 2006).

Other studies underscored the important role that instructors’ beliefs play when it comes to instructors’ decision-making to use technology in their pedagogical practices (Dexter, Anderson, & Becker, 1999; Lam, 2000; MacArthur & Malouf, 1991). Lam (2000) argued that most research has failed to consider “instructors’ own beliefs and experiences as factors influencing technology use in the classroom” (Lam, 2000, p. 391). MacArthur and Malouf (1991) emphasized the important role that teachers’ beliefs play for successful integration of technology in education:

Any educational innovation is filtered through teachers as they modify instructional activities to fit their beliefs and the instructional and management routines in their classrooms (p. 45).

Even though instructors have cultural and contextual constraints within the environment in which they teach, they remain ultimately autonomous in the pedagogical decisions
they make regarding technology use: “although culture and context create norms of
teaching practice . . . teachers can choose, within these limits, the approach that works for
them. This autonomy provides teachers with choices to adopt, adapt, or reject an
instructional reform” (p. 224, as cited in Ertmer, 1999, p. 48). Faculty members’
personal convictions that using technologies would be beneficial to their students’
learning is a belief that strongly impacts their decision to use technology in their
classrooms (Lam, 2000).

**Instructors’ Pedagogical Beliefs and Technology Use**

While some research in the field has helped clarify the relationship between
instructors’ beliefs and their actual practice, the body of literature surrounding the
relationship between instructors’ beliefs and instructors’ actual use of technology remains
inconclusive. While many research studies support the claim that instructors’
pedagogical beliefs inform the way instructors use technology in the classroom (Bai &
Ertmer, 2008; Becker, 2000a, 2000b; Dwyer, Ringstaff, & Sandholtz, 1991; Gallini &
Barron, 2002; Garthwait & Weller, 2005; Henry & Clements, 1999; Johnson & Howell,
2005; Levin & Wadamay, 2006; Marcinkiewicz, 1994; Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001;
Ravitz & Becker, 2000; Teo, 2009; Vannatta & Fordham, 2004), some reveal the
presence of inconsistencies between instructor beliefs and their actual instructional
practice with technology (Chen, 2008; Ertmer, Gopalakrishnan & Ross, 2001; Judson,
2006; Liu, 2011).

Instructors whose pedagogical beliefs aligned with a constructivist teaching
methodology were said to be more likely to incorporate or be open to incorporating
technology in their classroom. On the other hand, instructors whose pedagogical beliefs
aligned with a focus on teacher-centered, behaviorist paradigm methodology were less
likely to use technology in their teaching practices (Lucas & Wright, 2009). There also
appears to be a relationship between teacher educators’ beliefs and the actual use of technology in instruction; whereas teacher educators with non-learner-centered beliefs use technologies in a traditional fashion, those with learner-centered beliefs use technology more constructively (Bai & Ertmer, 2008).

Beliefs of Instructors and Instructional Practices with Technology

This strand of the review of literature includes the relationship between instructors’ beliefs (i.e., pedagogical beliefs and self-efficacy beliefs) and their technology use, the impact of a technology-rich environment on instructor beliefs, and instructors’ belief transformation regarding technology use (Glazer, Hannafin, & Song, 2005; Zhao & Frank, 2003).

Learning in a community of practice ensures ongoing, onsite and timely support where instructors share ideas and model best practices (Glazer, Hannafin, & Song, 2005). Several institutions began one-on-one technology mentoring programs where either instructor leaders mentored peer instructors (Glazer, Hannafin, & Song, 2005) or graduate students mentored faculty (Thompson, Schmidt, & Davis, 2003). Chuang and Thompson (2006) reviewed such technology mentoring programs and concluded that this type of learning provided opportunities for creating visions for technology integration, individualizing technology support, breaking down hierarchical structure, establishing open dialogue and collaborative relationships, providing mutual benefits for stakeholders, and establishing learning communities. However, educational institutions that do not have well-established technology mentoring programs can still benefit from a climate that is conducive to communication and collaboration among instructors, enabling peer support. A strong collegial environment, where instructors share ideas, model best practices, ask difficult questions, and support one another where and when it is most needed is an essential component in technology integration (Glazer, Hannafin, & Song,
2005). Timely and contextualized assistance from colleagues can also help eliminate technical glitches that might disrupt the learning during a class period (Zhao & Frank, 2003).

Receiving help from colleagues enables instructors to integrate technology into their teaching practices. Instructors who received help from colleagues are more likely to use computers with their students (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Also, the predictive factors influencing faculty members’ technology adoption revealed that collegial interaction was one of the three variables that together predicted the stage of technology adoption by college faculty—the other two being knowledge of data analysis tools and self-directed informational sources (Sahin & Thompson, 2007).

Notably, self-efficacy beliefs, one’s beliefs about being capable of achieving specific goals, are also considered an important factor impacting the ways instructors use technology in the classroom (Albion, 2001; Albion & Ertmer, 2002; Teo, 2009). Albion (2001) argued that self-efficacy beliefs play an important role in the way instructors use technology in the classrooms and claimed that they can be an indicator of instructors’ successful use of technology, or otherwise, in education. Moreover, self-efficacy plays a crucial role when it comes to motivating instructors to be innovative in their teaching practices (Bandura, 1977; McKinney, Sexton, & Meyerson, 1999).

Instructors’ self-efficacy beliefs vary per subject matter (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The field of EFL instructors’ pedagogical beliefs is important, as these instructors take on more responsibilities than merely imparting academic knowledge (Dornyei & Ushoda, 2011). They are expected to help their students identify with the foreign-language, sociocultural and community understanding (Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004). Moreover, EFL instructors are also confronted with subject-specific difficulties, such as choosing the medium of instruction and balancing the four
skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking (Chambers, 1999).

As for the impact of a web-authoring system on instructors’ pedagogical beliefs and instructional/learning approaches, web-authoring tools change teaching practices for those who believe in a mixed instructor and student directed teaching pedagogical approach; in contrast, instructors who have a more teacher-centered pedagogical style report that web-authoring tools do not alter their teaching practices (Gallini & Barron, 2002). However, many instructors who agree that web-authoring tools alter their teaching approach still consider web-authoring tools to be optional for their instruction; they use this technology “as an add-on to an already extant course structure originally not mediated with technologies” (Gallini & Barron, 2002, p.148).

In recent years, web-based learning management systems (LMS) or course management systems (CMS) have had a profound impact on the use of information technology (IT) and have been rapidly adopted by numerous universities throughout the world (McGill & Klobas, 2009; Schoonenboom, 2014). LMSs have also become important tools in post-secondary English-language education. An LMS allows instructors to share instructional resources, create tests, post announcements, and communicate with students online. Their primary use is course management—support to span multiple class sessions across an entire course with common goals, adding tools for evaluation, feedback and discussion (Shih, 2011). LMSs are designed to support faculty across a range of different subject areas, teaching philosophies, and instructional methods (Black et al., 2007).

One of the key objectives in modern day technologically-enhanced university classrooms is to involve students more actively in the learning process (Stantchev, Colomo-Palacios, Soto-Acosta, & Misra, 2014). LMS offers educators a tool for connecting users to various communities, participating in discussions, sending and
receiving documents, and working on assignments (Toland, White, Mills, & Bollinger, 2014).

Correspondingly, there are several benefits provided by blended learning spaces by combining online and face-to-face classroom activities. LMSs helped to improve student learning and increased faculty productivity (Hanson & Robson, 2003). The utilization of LMSs has provided educators with an opportunity to enhance the learning process and management of classes (Stantchev et al., 2014). In EFL classes, instructors and students have utilized LMSs for a variety of purposes including tracking progress, writing blogs, giving and taking quizzes, and using synchronous chat (Yu, Sun, & Chang, 2010). LMSs provide EFL educators with a way to organize online content, giving students access to learning resources at any time or place. This situation could lead to greater autonomy, which was shown to make learners more responsible for their own learning and provide them with the ability to critically reflect on their learning needs and outcomes (Snodin, 2013).

There is a relationship in the utilization of LMS / CMS in the management and distribution of eLearning and instructor-led courses to instructors’ beliefs. Several factors contribute to the decision of an instructor to use CMS in their courses, and the barriers that exist which make the use difficult. The factors that influenced faculty use of CMS/LMS were past success with other technologies, desire for flexibility, and perceived need for online instruction (Osika, Johnson, & Buteau, 2009). Although more and more language-teaching practitioners have incorporated LMSs into courses, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding how these systems are perceived by English language instructors. Although most universities have integrated LMS, there appear to be barriers to e-teaching and e-learning (Assareh & Hosseini, 2011; Biasutti, 2011).

For the last 25 years, researchers have utilized the Technology Acceptance Model
TAM was created to describe predictors of acceptance regarding a wide range of IT across diverse populations. TAM contains the following five elements: (a) perceived usefulness, (b) perceived ease of use, (c) attitudes toward use, (d) behavioral intention, and (e) actual use (Jones, McCarthy, & Halawi, 2010, p.43). Of these five elements, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes towards use are viewed as predictors of behavioral intention and actual use. Of the three predictors, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are essential elements of the model. The main idea of this model is that if individuals are more accepting of a new system, it is more likely that they will use the system (Jones, McCarthy, & Halawi, 2010).

Thus, researchers have pursued technology acceptance models capable of delivering higher prediction successes (Legris, Ingham, & Collerette, 2003; Plouffe, Hulland, & Vandenbosch, 2001). Likewise, examination of other literature on technology acceptance indicates that social variables and motivational elements would improve predictive capabilities (Pijpers, 2001; Vallerand, 1997). Coupled with research on the TAM led to a modification that incorporated both human and social variables called the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model that posits the degree to which an individual believes that using the information system will help in enhancing job performance. The theory holds that there are four key constructs: 1) performance expectancy, 2) effort expectancy, 3) social influence, and 4) facilitating conditions (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). Although the UTAUT model of determining technology acceptance has been used successfully in information systems domains, its application in the higher educational environment is limited (Moran et al., 2010).

While e-Learning experiences are used to support individual acquisitions with various
types of computer technologies (Clark & Moyer, 2008; Horton, 2006), mobile scholarship is another specific type of learning model using mobile technology (Yuen & Yen, 2008). In mobile scholarship, many features of e-learning are embraced, such as multimedia contents and communications with other students (Horton, 2006); but it is unique in terms of flexibility of time and location (Peters, 2007). The characteristics of mobile devices are: (a) portability: mobile devices can be taken to different locations; (b) instant connectivity: mobile devices can be used to access a variety of information anytime and anywhere; and (c) context sensitivity: mobile devices can be used to find and gather real or simulated data (Cheon, Lee, Crooks, & Song, 2012). E-learning was transformed by the internet and now it is being redefined by the power of mobile wireless technologies (Ally, McGreal, Schafer, Tin, & Cheung, 2007). Many educators believe that mobile technologies can provide a way to engage and motivate students (Franklin & Peng, 2008).

There is a complex relationship between what instructors think and what they do in class in relation to technology-mediated tasks (Chamorro & Rey, 2013). In relation to what instructors believe, there is a consensus on the impact of technology in the process of teaching and learning a language. This awareness comes from the experiences instructors have had as basic users of technology rather than from the conscious learning strategies, concepts, and development opportunities to integrate technology in a meaningful way (Chamorro & Rey, 2013).

Comparatively, external supporting factors such as encouragement from the university and peer pressure could be either positive or negative, depending on the experiences individual instructors accrue throughout their history of using computers in their classes. University instructors have visions of themselves as language instructors, and their beliefs about language teaching are foremost in their reflections on the use of computers. They have an overriding concern for promoting interaction in the classroom.
The beliefs of the instructors have an impact on the way they use computer technology and on their attitudes towards innovation in curricula. This suggests that the instructors’ beliefs about interaction affect their use of computers significantly more than their technological expertise and imply that for computers to be used more widely, teacher preparation needs to take into consideration instructors’ beliefs and approaches to language teaching (Kim & Rissel, 2008).

Early experiences of instructors tend to color later experiences even if subsequent, contradictory information is manipulated to fit with earlier interpretations. Beliefs serve both cognitive and affective/social functions (Hart, Allensworth, Lauen, & Gladden, 2002). Consequently, people might accept a certain idea independent of its coherence with relevant knowledge, or perhaps even change a belief, despite reducing conceptual coherence, because it enables the achievement of affective or social goals. Personal theories and beliefs are rarely sufficiently revised and thus over time become deeply personal, profoundly engrained, and resistant to change (Hart et al., 2002).

Based on the nature of beliefs, both inexperienced and experienced instructors are likely to respond to new instructional situations by depending on previous beliefs and experiences (Galakjani, 2012; Prestridge, 2012; Turel & Johnson, 2012). New information about technology will also be filtered through existing belief systems. Therefore, instructors are likely to think about technology in the same way they think about other teaching methods, tools, or reform initiatives, depending on their classification of technology into one of these categories. Whereas some instructors may think of technology as just another tool they can use to facilitate student learning, others may think of it in terms of innovation. Early perceptions and classifications result in differing beliefs regarding if, when, and how to use a tool (Allen et al., 2006; Dunn & Rakes, 2010; Galakjani, 2012; Koh & Frick, 2009; Lai-Mei & Ismail, 2013).
If technology is treated as an instructional innovation, beliefs will play a significant role in adoption and implementation. Based on the relationship between instructors’ beliefs and their implementation of reform initiatives, instructors use technology in ways that are consistent with their personal beliefs about curriculum and instructional practice (Petko, 2012). If technology is presented as a tool for enacting student-centered curricula, teachers with teacher-centered beliefs are less likely to use tools as advocated. Rather, they are more likely to use them to support the kinds of traditional activities with which they are comfortable. The more widely a new practice diverges from existing practice, the less likely it is to be implemented successfully (Dexter, Anderson, & Becker, 1999). Given this, it would be prudent to introduce technology as a tool to do that which is already valued. Then, once the tool is valued, the emphasis can switch to its potential for doing additional or new tasks, including those that are supported by broader, or different, beliefs (Ertmer, 2005).

Equally, there “can be no institutional vision of technology use that exists separately from beliefs about learners, beliefs about what characterizes meaningful learning, and beliefs about the role of instructors within the vision” (Woods, 1995, p. 202). Because instructors’ beliefs are related to their practices, instructors’ technology use is naturally affected by their pedagogical beliefs. For instructors to use technology, they need to believe the following things:

1. Technology can help them achieve higher-level goals effectively.
2. No other goals will be disturbed by the technology use.
3. They have the ability and resources to use technology (Woods, 1995).

Instructors may be unwilling to adopt technology if the promoted usage is inconsistent with their existing beliefs or practices (Zhao, Pugh, Sheldon & Byers, 2002). Although various factors may affect instructors’ technology integration, instructors’
beliefs serve as a filter to decide priorities of factors. Certain factors can be regarded as closer to core beliefs. The types of applications and to what degree technology will be integrated into a classroom both depend on the teacher’s perceptions. Technology is generally used in ways that meet teachers’ instant needs, conform to their cost-benefit concerns, and support current practices (Zhao et al., 2002).

Technology usage requires instructors to change their pedagogical beliefs and teaching approaches (Hokanson & Hooper, 2000; Hooper & Rieber, 1999; Marcinkiewicz, 1994), and these changes may be against their higher-order goals or may be too demanding to undertake, so instructors may resist innovations (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Instructor’s beliefs need to be consistent with the theoretical foundations of practice. Conducting a practice without a congruent theory may result in unsatisfactory implementation or even no implementation at all (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Incompatibility between instructors’ pedagogical beliefs and their technology usage can lead to unsuccessful results (Dexter, Anderson, & Becker, 1999). Integrating technology with instruction adds additional workload to already-stressed instructors (Ocak, 2011). It also requires instructors to cope with novelty and uncertainty. For instructors, discarding their current routines and practices and changing their beliefs may put them into a sensitive situation (Pajares, 1992). Although teacher beliefs are recognized as a crucial factor in technology integration, various contextual factors may cause the inconsistency between expressed pedagogical beliefs and practices implemented with technology (Fang, 1996; Sadeghi, Rahmany, & Doosti, 2014).

There are several factors that encourage instructors to use technology in the classroom. These factors include computer self-efficacy, personal technology use, positive teacher beliefs and attitudes towards technology, and access to professional development in the technology area. All of these are important in motivating instructors
to use technology. However, using technology in the classroom by itself is not effective unless the instructor has a theory with which to model the instruction (Fouts, 2000).

Technology in the teaching methods class is important, especially if consideration is given to the impact that computers and the internet have on the current generation of students entering the education system. The current generation differs from previous generations in terms of certain specific characteristics. The current generation of students tends to gravitate toward group activity, and they are fascinated by new technologies (Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Oblinger, 2003). The use of technology to promote higher-order learning can only occur when instructors are trained to include new technologies and blend them intelligently into their curricula. Incorporating learning about technology integration in the teaching methods courses, as well as placement of teacher candidates with technologically-proficient mentors, can develop technology use skill during the teaching practicum (Brown & Warschauer, 2006).

An instructor’s personal computer use outside the institution is the most important indicator of their technology use in the classroom. When instructors have positive beliefs and attitudes toward computers, technology will be effectively implemented into the classroom. Some of these positive beliefs and attitudes include the expectation that they will be able to implement the technology successfully and that implementing technology into the classroom may prove to be valuable (Wozney, Venkatesh, & Abrami, 2006). However, technology ought to be a tool for learning content, rather than making technology the content itself, and instructors would be better served to rethink the uses of technology. Further, modeling an orientation toward embracing the new and being careful in or critically reviewing its impact on the teaching and learning could be productive (Alvine, 2000; Ocak, 2011).

The culture of autonomy has come under pressure, giving way to a culture of
collaboration. Three levels of knowledge sharing involve tangible resources (websites, lab equipment), plans and objectives (lesson plans, worksheet templates), and prototypes (online reports, project summaries, and photos) within a collaborative model. These facilitate the functional use of technology in education, and are in direct contrast to the isolation typical of traditional instructors, who managed their own resources and rarely shared their pedagogical practices (Carroll, Rosson, Dunlap, & Isenhour, 2005).

Regarding instructors’ personal factors, it was found that instructors’ attitudes to and understanding of technology use affect their technology use in instruction (Chen, 2011; Cuban, 2001; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Judson, 2006; Liu & Liu, 2013; Park, Son, & Kim, 2012; Sharma & Barrett, 2007; Webster & Son, 2015; Zhao & Cziko, 2001). For example, if instructors perceive technology as a threat to their traditional teacher-centered methodology through which they have received years of training, they may resist the use of technology (Liu & Huo, 2007). Similarly, if instructors adopt an instrumentalist view of change, they will not resist the use of technology, but will use technology mostly for instructional preparation and communication (Cuban, 2001).

Instructors’ technology use is related to their expectancy of success and to the perceived value of the technology. Instructors who believe that they have the skills to implement computers successfully and who value the outcomes associated with integration are more likely to be at the high end of the technology user spectrum (Wozney, Venkatesh, & Abrami, 2006).

Contextual factors such as instructors’ professional development in technology integration were also found to affect their technology use. Notably, inadequate instructor training was often cited as the most serious obstacle to helping instructors learn how to use technology in their instruction (Bauer & Kenton, 2005; Mitchem, Wells, & Wells, 2003; Yang, 2008).
Effective professional development for instructors must be sustained, content-focused, and collaborative to effect change in teacher practices in ways that ultimately improve student learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Li & Protacio, 2010; Shi & Bichelmeyer, 2007). A focus on a specific content area or a pedagogical strategy would enable instructors to take this new knowledge from professional development and integrate it with their classroom practices. Therefore, professional development of instructors in technology cannot just focus on technology applications; it ought to connect with a specific curriculum and subject area and pay specific attention to the pedagogical practices associated with the subject area. Since the effectiveness of technology integration is more rooted in pedagogical and design principles, rather than in the technology itself (Chen, 2011; Dudeney & Hockly, 2007; Gorder, 2008; Koçoğlu, 2009; Parks, Huot, Hamers, & Lemonnier, 2003), instructors’ professional development needs to focus on not only how to use a hardware or software, but also on how it is used in alignment with more effective pedagogy, content, and context.

There appears to be a high level of correlation between computer attributes and computer attitudes. Instructors’ cultural perceptions of the value of technology have been systematically documented as a predictor of their use of computers in the classroom (Berner, 2003; Huang, 2003). Computer competence is the strongest predictor of attitudes towards computer use (Howland & Wedman, 2004; Isleem, 2003).

Inadequate technology support for hardware/software stability can be considered another contextual reason. Several factors that inhibited the instructors’ technology integration in the high access, technology-rich environment included insufficient hardware/software stability and technical support, the lack of effective training, lack of involvement in planning for technology integration, and lack of material support, which
discouraged them from using computers. To understand how technology is used by instructors, it may be necessary to examine their beliefs and attitudes and the varied external factors that may influence their technology uses and classroom practices (Shi & Bichelmeyer, 2007). Although technology is a resource that can be useful in supporting a variety of approaches and methods, it is a most effective tool when used to scaffold students’ entry into a new community of discourse and expand rather than limit their language use (Warschauer, 2002). The use of technology in teaching language has increased dramatically. However, the cultural and the social norms of a country are important to the acceptance of technology among its people (Liu, 2009; Mohammadi, Ghorbani, & Hamidi, 2011).

Similarly, the perceived attributes of an innovation are one important explanation of the rate of adoption of an innovation (Rogers, 2003). The success of educational innovations depends greatly on equipping instructors with the competencies required to allow them to function (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007; Pelgrum, 2001). The instructors’ competence with computer technology is the principal determinant of effective classroom use by students (Knezek & Christensen, 2002). The use of computers in education depends on how instructors integrate technologically-mediated learning methods in everyday teaching activities. The question of instructors’ attitudes towards computers is vital to any successful use of computers in education (Yuen & Ma, 2002; Yushau, 2006).

For this reason, many researchers have over time utilized the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT) to clarify the adoption of innovations such as information technology (Fraze, Fraze, Baker, & Kieth, 2002). The innovation-decision process is an information-seeking and information-processing activity in which an individual obtains information to decrease uncertainty about the innovation. Correspondingly, Rogers’ (2003) Innovation Decision Process Theory (RIDPT) maintains that an innovation’s
diffusion is a process that occurs over time through five stages:

1. The knowledge stage of the innovation via several communication channels.

2. The persuasion stage, in which people are persuaded of the values of the innovation.

3. The decision stage, for making decisions to adopt the innovation.

4. The implementation stage, where the innovation ought to be implemented.

5. The confirmation stage, in which the decisions made are reconfirmed or abandoned (Rogers, 2003).

In addition to the Diffusion of Innovation Theory which seeks to explain how, why, and what rate new ideas and technology spread (Rogers, 2003), four of the most prevalent frameworks used to study the process of diffusion of innovations include:

1. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model, which is a theory for studying the process of implementing educational change by instructors and persons acting in change-facilitating roles (Hall & Hord, 1987).

2. The Theory of Reasoned Action, which posits that behavioral intentions are a function of beliefs about the likelihood that performing a behavior will lead to a specific outcome (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

3. The Theory of Planned Behavior, which links beliefs and behavior; it posits that attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, together shape an individual’s behavioral intentions and behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

4. Social-Cognitive Theory, which involves a correlation between the perceived self-efficacy of a person and behavioral change. Self-efficacy is the extent to which an individual believes that they can master a skill (Bandura, 1977).

When any of these models is applied to instructor decision-making, a host of concerns come to light. The concerns are related to instructors’ internal beliefs about personal and
professional goals and aims, external factors in and out of the classroom (including administrative and educational dictums), and the practical processes by which these disparate factors are resolved on a day to day basis (Webster & Son, 2015).

**Theoretical Framework**

The literature reviewed up to this point has established the importance of instructors’ beliefs in affecting their pedagogical decisions and classroom practices. However, the possible discrepancies between instructors’ beliefs and practices and whether there is a causal relationship, indicate that beliefs may not be the most reliable indicator of classroom practices.

The current study is based on Social-Cognitive Theory’s (SCT) assumption that there may be an alignment between instructors’ confidence in their ability to carry out a certain teaching practice, and their beliefs in the efficacy of the practice. The review also elucidates that instructors’ beliefs are subject to change.

Namely, SCT suggests that self-efficacy beliefs determine behavioral intensity (Bandura, 2012). Although research has shown creative self-efficacy to be related to idea generation (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009; Tierney & Farmer, 2002, 2011), innovative behavior may require more than creative self-efficacy alone, as it involves idea dissemination and implementation, in addition to idea generation. Creativity adds more value when the individuals who generate new ideas can also persuade others of the utility of those ideas and convince others to implement them (Sternberg, 2001). Moreover, SCT also considers how a collectivistic orientation may affect the relationship between self-efficacy and agentic behavior. Personal agency operates with the broader network of socio-structural influences. Individuals with enhanced self-efficacy beliefs may increase their performance to serve broader collective goals if they believe that those collective goals are personally important (Bandura, 2001).
Correspondingly, SCT maintains that an agentic individual makes things happen through his or her actions (Bandura, 1997, 2006). Agentic behavior is thus preceded by intentionality and forethought. Equally important, because SCT addresses the cognitive beliefs underlying agentic behavior, it offers a particularly suitable theoretical lens through which to examine innovative behavior, which also involves an intentional change to the external environment (Bandura, 1977, 1997, 2001). Innovative behavior involves the intentional creation, introduction, and application of new ideas, highlighting the fit between SCT and innovative behavior research (Janssen, 2004).

SCT posits that self-efficacy is the key to determining whether an individual can successfully shape their reality in the way they want to. Self-efficacy comprises beliefs regarding one’s capacities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura, 1995). It represents an individual’s perceived competence, and conviction that he or she can execute the action required to reach a goal, and an optimistic assessment of one’s likelihood of success (Hughes, Galbraith, & White, 2011).

The theoretical premise in this study is the SCT’s framework through the lens of self-efficacy. SCT puts forward as its basis of argument that individuals can choose and pursue courses of actions; this is described as human agency. This agency works through a process called “triadic reciprocal causation”: an individual’s past and current behavior, cognitive factors (such as willingness to change), and the environment all exert causal effects on each other. The interrelationships among these three influences then affect how individuals perceive their capabilities to achieve objectives (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Henson, 2001).

Self-efficacy beliefs may assist instructors in attaching meanings to their related abilities, or lack of abilities, and their opinions and evaluations of their past, present and
future abilities. Utilizing self-efficacy beliefs allows the research questions to encompass both the formation of English-language university instructors’ pedagogical beliefs and the way these beliefs change over time. Instructors’ implementation of technology into their curriculum and how quickly they change their practices may largely depend upon instructors’ beliefs. Overall, SCT recognizes the pivotal role of human agency, that instructors constantly make judgments about internal attributes (confidence, capabilities) and external factors (students, university policy). When deciding whether a teaching practice will bring about an expected outcome in implementation of teaching strategies, it is based upon their teaching beliefs. Therefore, grounded in the agentic perspective, SCT is particularly suitable to this research topic as it suggests that individuals hold beliefs about their ability to make things happen through their own actions (Bandura, 1977, 1995, 2001, 2006).

However, it is important to be cautious in suggesting a causal relationship between instructors’ beliefs and their actual teaching practices. An instructor’s pedagogical belief was only formed after, not before, the implementation of a successful teaching practice (Guskey, 1984). Hence, instructors’ efficacy beliefs could be a reason for or a result of adopting effective teaching techniques (Ross, 1994). Several efficacy researchers elaborated that one common indicator of success was progress in student outcomes (Bishop, Berryman, Wearmouth, Peter, & Clapham, 2012; Fullan & Heargraves, 1996; Guskey, 2002; Harootunian & Yargar, 1981). Some researchers on higher-education instructors’ beliefs maintained that teachers’ beliefs could deviate from their teaching behavior (Brown & Bakhtar, 1988; Pratt, 1992; Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, & Mayes 2005; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992).
Chapter Three: Research Design

This study used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodological approach. Through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, the IPA approach allowed the researcher to identify the meanings that the interviewed English-language university instructors in Japan attach to their personal beliefs when adopting different pedagogical strategies, innovation, and computer-mediation.

The over-arching research question in this study was:

How do teaching beliefs of English language professors in Japan influence their pedagogy and teaching practices related to the use of technology for computer-mediated instruction?

The above over-arching question included the following:

• What are the teaching beliefs held by university instructors who teach English-language courses in Japan?

• How do university English language instructors in Japan make sense of their beliefs as they develop or adopt pedagogical strategies and design teaching practices?

• How are these instructors influenced in their decisions about integrating technology in their practices and their courses?

Methodology

Among the existing research studies that have been conducted on faculty members’ beliefs about teaching, learning and technology use, survey has been the most widely-utilized method to explore instructors’ beliefs regarding their use of technology (Bai & Ertmer, 2004; Becker, 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Chen, 2008; Gallini & Barron, 2001; Judson, 2006; Liu, 2011; Lowther & Sullivan, 1994, Marcinkiewicz, 1994; Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001; Park & Son, 2009; Teo, 2009; Vannatta & Fordham, 2004; Wang &
While the use of survey instruments has been a popular method to measure faculty beliefs, considering classroom technology use, critics argue that survey tools that are positivistic in nature seldom capture the individual teachers’ unique perspectives, as they rely on measurements that are remote from teachers’ actual lives. No matter how exact measurement may be, it can never give us an experience of life, for life cannot be weighted and measured on a physical scale (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Such a mode of inquiry, other critics have pointed out, is not representative and ends up ignoring instructors’ opinions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The positivistic view of research is not appropriate to explore the realm of education where faculty members’ everyday lives are unique, highly unpredictable, and deeply situated within and where instructors’ pedagogical beliefs are filled with ill-structured uncertainty and ambiguity (Kagan, 1992). Rather, the interpretative/qualitative mode of inquiry plays an important role in the realm of education:

In positivist forms of research, education or schooling is considered the object, phenomenon, or delivery system to be studied. Knowledge gained through scientific and experimental research is objective, and measurable. In interpretive research, education is considered to be a process and school is a lived experience. Understanding the meaning of the process or experience constitutes the knowledge to be gained from an inductive, hypothesis-or-theory-generating (rather than deductive or testing) mode of inquiry. (Borg, 2003, p. 4)

It is “teachers’ professional actions” that we are ultimately interested in, “not what or how they think in isolation of what they do” (Borg, p. 105). Instructors’ beliefs “must be inferred from what instructors say, intend, and do” (Pajares, 1992, p. 314). For
this reason, “teachers’ verbal expressions, predispositions to action, and teaching behaviors all must be included in assessment of beliefs. Not to do so calls into question the validity of the findings and value of the study” (Pajares, p. 327). When it comes to investigating instructors’ beliefs, the inclusion of these elements in the research framework represents a “fundamental prerequisite that educational researchers have seldom followed” (Pajares, 1992, p. 314).

Accordingly, conducting observations may also allow research to directly access faculty members’ instructional environments. Instructors’ stated beliefs are not always an exact reflection of their actual practices, and instructors’ actual teaching contexts play an important role in creating such inconsistencies. The importance of contextual factors that affect human behaviors and context are generally not separable or distinguishable (Chen, 2008; Ertmer, Gopalakrishnan, & Ross, 2001; Judson, 2006; Liu, 2011; Yin, 2009).

Under those circumstances, this interpretivist approach was useful in determining how instructors’ beliefs influence decision-making and in the formation of self-efficacy. A qualitative research study was conducted in a context-specific setting, in which the participants experienced their version of same phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005). A qualitative research design was considered most suitable to address this study’s open-ended research question. The lived experiences of a group of English language instructors who deliver English language undergraduate courses in several universities in Japan were examined.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as the research methodology for this study. This represented an appropriate and desirable research framework to investigate post-secondary English language faculty members’ beliefs, teaching, learning and technology use. It allowed the researcher to draw data from
multiple sources of evidence, including both interviews and observations. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2013) indicated that phenomenological inquiry is from the outset an interpretative process. An important part of IPA is that the process of analysis is iterative:

… we may move back and forth through a range of different ways of thinking about the data, rather than completing each step, one after the other. As one moves, back and forth through this process, it may help to think of one’s relationship to the data as shifting according to the hermeneutic circle, too. The idea is that our entry into the meaning of a text can be made at a number of different levels, all of which relate to one another, and many of which will offer different perspectives on the part-whole coherence of the text. (Smith et al., 2013, p. 28)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology shows how individuals make sense of their personal and social world (Smith et al., 2013). Developed in the mid-1990s by Jonathan Smith, a professor of Psychology at the University of London, IPA has its philosophical underpinnings in phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. The phenomenological assumption of IPA stems from Edmond Husserl’s (1859–1938) philosophical foundation. Experience was theorized as consisting of individuals’ making meanings in their life-world (Ashworth, 2003). As a result, only through the individuals’ personal and subjective accounts can IPA researchers arrive at the lived experiences of their research participants.

Symbolic interactionism, another philosophical foundation of IPA, puts forward that the analysis should be able to be used to interpret the meaning-making and sense-making process of the individual participants in the study (Smith, 1996). This reveals the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition of IPA, with key theorists including Martin
Heidegger (1889–1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002). In hermeneutics, the importance of knowing through interpretation has informed the development of IPA, with Smith et al. (2013) employing a double hermeneutic, or two-way interpretation. The double hermeneutic starts with the research participants interpreting their lived experiences; in turn, the researcher analyzes the participants’ interpretations (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

With its roots in phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, the IPA approach was appropriate for the current study. IPA is aligned with the interpretivist research paradigm (Ponterotto, 2005), which aims to explain the subjective account of individual consciousness. Nominalist ontology and anti-positivist epistemology are affirmed in IPA (Burrell, 1979). Nominalist ontology assumes that multiple and equally valid social realities exist and that such realities are relative to an individual’s subjective cognition (Burrell, 1979; Ponterotto, 2005). The understanding of these realities, according to the anti-positivist epistemology (Burrell, 1979), derives from interaction between researcher and participants. Therefore, IPA’s double hermeneutic best reflects the philosophy that the interpretations of both the researcher and the participants are essential.

In effect, IPA is also a useful research tool to explore novel topics (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005; Smith & Osborn, 2003) and understand a process over time (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). IPA suited the current study because the teaching efficacy of higher-education EFL faculty is under-researched, including the process by which teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs influenced their teaching choices. The research topic is best examined as a process over time because it is not just one or two incidents or specific lessons that have shaped instructors’ self-efficacy beliefs.

The IPA approach, however, has its shortcomings. The sample size poses limitations in terms of generalizability. The current study sought to overcome these
limitations. A small sample size, with six participants in this study, allowed the researcher to privilege each participant’s individual account of experiences and then to make comparisons across cases (Smith & Osborn, 2003). That is to say, a large sample size could become a hindrance to a rich and in-depth descriptive and interpretative account of each participant (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011). To lessen the potential threats of research interference and biases, the role and prior experiences of the researcher were addressed in terms of the phenomenon under investigation and the potential impact on the data analysis (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). The rapport that was built with the participants allowed them to share their experiences in detail, and the researcher was then in a good position to understand their lived experiences.

Site and Participants

The research site varied because the English language instructors who were interviewed were teaching at multiple universities in Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures of Japan. The researcher’s adjunct teaching position at several universities provided access to university English-language instructors, faculty members on the professional track with research and teaching duties, and those on the teaching track principally engaged in teaching. Faculty members experience similar conditions when teaching required academic English courses to undergraduate university students. However, there were differences in certain factors, such as their teaching background, educational qualifications, and career prospects in their respective universities.

IPA focuses on offering a detailed descriptive and interpretative account of individual experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2013, p. 52). In the academic year 2015 to 2016, six university English language teachers in Tokyo and Kanagawa prefecture of Japan were invited to take part in the interviews. Purposive and criterion
sampling were used to select a homogenous population of participants. To be aligned with the principle of phenomenological studies, where research participants share their experiences of the same phenomenon and meet certain criteria (Miles, 1994), the participants were full-time English professors at several universities in the Tokyo and Kanagawa area who deliver at least one required English language course to undergraduates. Age range, gender, highest educational qualification, and accumulated teaching experience were collected as demographic data; however, these were not part of the sampling criteria.

After obtaining permission from Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), an email invitation was sent to each potential participant’s university email account, and each participant was invited to take part on a voluntary basis. The email invitation included the research purpose, research questions, data collection procedures, and the amount of time needed from each participant. The participants were assured of their anonymity as part of the research process and informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point prior to data analysis.

Data Collection

Semi-structured, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the six participants in this study. These interviews were followed by 30–45-minute member-checking interviews conducted after the data analysis process. Each interview took place in the participants’ own office at the university or in a private conference room of their choice so as to offer a secured environment. Each semi-structured interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Written consent was obtained prior to each interview. Before the interview, each participant completed a form containing his/her demographic information (age, gender, highest educational qualifications, and total number of teaching
years, before and after joining their respective university).

The interview began with a protocol containing several icebreaker questions and a series of open-ended questions. The responsive interviewing model (Rubin, 2012) was followed, wherein the interviews consisted of a natural exchange between the researcher and the participants. The interview questions were supplemented or modified, depending on the input of the participants during the interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The interviews were conducted in English, as all participants had native English-language ability.

The interviews were recorded on a portable digital recorder, with back-up recording on a mobile device and iPad. All interviews were transcribed verbatim at the semantic level, including false starts, pauses, laughs, and other features that allow the voice of the participants to be fully heard (Reid et al., 2005; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in all written and digital files, except for the signed agreement to participate in the study, to ensure confidentiality. All files were stored at the researcher’s residence in a password-protected personal computer and audio recorder. The transcript and analysis of each interview was emailed to the individual participant for member checking. Other than during member checking, only the researcher had access to the transcripts and the audio recordings to ensure confidentiality. Data analysis was completed by the researcher.

**Data Analysis**

As recommended by Smith et al. (2013), the data analysis process was designed in an iterative and inductive cycle. The process was designed to be iterative to allow non-linear developments of thought and the creative assessment of such thoughts. The process was inductive because it began with broad research questions so that unexpected themes could emerge during analysis (Reid et al., 2005). The six-step data analysis
process recommended by Smith et al. (2013) to interpret each set of interviews of the first case—in a detailed, complex and engaging way, before continuing to the next case. The six-step data analysis process used was as follows:

**Step 1: Reading and re-reading.** Reading and re-reading the first participant’s case allowed the researcher to become immersed in the original data and make sure that the participant remained a focus of the analysis. Each participant’s interview was re-lived through repeated readings of the transcript (see Step 5).

**Step 2: Initial noting.** This step was a free textual analysis of the case with no rules or requirements. A three-column chart was developed, with the original transcript in the center. The left column contained the “initial comments” and the right column was for any “emergent themes.” The richer sections of the interviews sanctioned more interpretation, and the commentary was descriptive, linguistic and conceptual (Smith et al., 2013, p. 84).

**Step 3: Developing emergent themes.** This step in the process involved the right column “emergent themes” of the case (Smith et al., 2013, p. 92). This was a process of describing and interpreting the participant’s original words along with the researcher’s analysis. The notes “captured and reflect an understanding” (Smith et al., 2013, p. 92) of the participant’s account.

**Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes.** This step involved the development of a “charting, or mapping, of how the researcher thinks the themes fit together” (Smith et al., 2013, p. 96). The emergent themes from Step 3 were organized sequentially in a new Word document on the computer. Links were then made among the themes. The connections were re-evaluated and some themes were clustered while some were abandoned, which resulted in a table of consistent, orderly, clustered themes. The clusters were named to identify the superordinate themes. Below each superordinate
theme were the specified themes from Step 3. Each of the themes was marked with the page and line numbers in the original transcript with some key words from the participants. During this whole process, the researcher kept an open mind so as to be true to the interpretative analysis, which required going back to the previous stages and re-evaluating the importance of themes. The themes that were in opposition to each other were evaluated on their worthiness to be refined into a clustered theme. Some themes that displayed weak support in the emerging pattern were set aside.

**Step 5: Moving to the next case.** This step involved repeating the process from Step 1 to Step 4 for each participant’s case, thus doing justice to each participant’s individuality. This process was not influenced by the revelations made in previous cases, which allowed new themes to emerge unhindered.

**Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.** This step involved looking for patterns across the cases and looking for convergences. This meant developing a final table of superordinate themes by examining patterns across all the cases. The table comprised the superordinate themes that showed advanced concepts, revealing higher-order qualities shared by the participants. Equally important to the process were the distinctive idiosyncrasies of each participant. The clustered themes with occurrences from original data from each transcript were listed under each superordinate theme. The richness of the original data was important in the identification of the superordinate themes, as was the frequency measure, which underscored the themes and assisted in showing other noted themes.

After completion of the six steps, the table in Step 6 was developed into a descriptive account through accurate word-by-word extracts from the transcripts. All the participants were invited to review their interview transcripts, as well as the researcher’s interpretations as part of the member checking part of the process. Necessary
adjustments and changes were made to the transcripts and the narration after the feedback provided by the participants.

**Validity**

The four criteria used to assess the validity of qualitative research included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The use of credibility ensured an accurate description of the subjectively-created lived experience of individuals who shared the common phenomenon in this study (Krefting, 1991). One potential threat to this study’s credibility was that some participants might offer preferred social responses to achieve social desirability (Miles, 1994) because sharing negative teaching experiences might make them feel incompetent as an instructor. To encourage frank sharing, the participants’ anonymity and the confidentiality of their interview data were guaranteed in the informed consent process. Probes and iterative questioning were used in the interviews to avoid preferred social responses (Shenton, 2004).

Another possible threat to credibility was the fact that the researcher knew the participants, which could impose preconceived ideas on the interpretation. This was mitigated by the researcher’s clarification of bias at the onset of the study and bracketing in both the interviews and analysis. Reflexivity was assured by the researcher, who kept a reflective field journal of observations: feelings, ideas, questions, and problems during the process.

Transferability in qualitative research is concerned with whether the research results can be applied from one group or setting to another. In this study, the limitations of the small sample size (six participants) were addressed. A clear assumption was made that this IPA study would be descriptive and interpretative in nature. Common themes extracted were representative only of this research population. However, to help the
understanding of readers, demographic data of each participant were detailed (Guba, 1981; Seidman, 2006), and a thick description was produced to account for each participant’s lived experiences (Guba, 1981). Member checking was applied to check whether the data were typical or atypical of participants in this study (Krefting, 1991). Readers were also provided selected verbatim quotations from each interview (Smith et al., 2013).

Dependability can be an issue in a qualitative study due to the changing nature of the phenomena being investigated (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). However, the researcher explained IPA’s idiographic nature and indicated that the research findings would not constitute a single definitive report but rather a credible one (Smith et al., 2013). Dependability was further ensured through the provision of supporting interpretations with appropriate verbatim extracts from the full interview transcripts in the doctoral thesis. Various perspectives were explored, even if only one phenomenon was discussed, to present a detailed and multifaceted account of that phenomenon (Reid et al., 2005). A code-record procedure was used, whereby the researcher waited at least 2 weeks after the first coding activity before re-coding the same data and checking for consistency (Krefting, 1991).

Acknowledging that researchers’ biases are inevitable, Patton (2002) suggested that researchers focus on confirmability in a qualitative study to ensure objectivity. The researcher clarified predispositions in conducting this study from the outset, such as the choice of IPA, the interpretivist paradigm, and a detailed methodological description. Ongoing reflective analysis was conducted using a field journal to achieve corroboration of the results.

Within hermeneutical phenomenology, interpreting the descriptions of individuals’ experiences is critical to understanding the phenomena. It was necessary for
the researcher to acknowledge preconceptions and explain how those influenced the interpretations made in this study (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

**Protection of Human Subjects**

The researcher was certified through the National Institute of Health’s (NIH) online training entitled “Protecting Human Research Subjects,” which was offered by the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB). To ensure the participants’ voluntary participation, an informed consent form was developed, by modifying the IRB consent template for social or behavioral studies. Application to the IRB and a review of the research proposal was conducted to ensure that the study followed the required procedures in accordance with the federal guidelines.

To ensure the protection of human subjects in this study, the three principles identified in the Belmont Report of 1979 were used, namely, respect for persons, beneficence and justice. Potential participants were invited via email, which contained detailed information about the research purpose, the procedure, and the potential risks and benefits involved. Participants accepted or declined the invitation via email or text message. During the study, the participants could ask any question regarding the research and its procedure. They indicated their preferred time for the one-on-one interviews. Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time, without any financial cost or consequences. Their consent was obtained to be audio-recorded during the interviews.

To adhere to the Belmont principle of beneficence, the researcher acknowledged the contributions made by the participants in advancing the literature on teachers’ beliefs for pedagogical strategies and development. The participants’ professional development could benefit as they reflect on their teaching experiences in relationship to the research findings. In the event that any participant experienced negative feelings, the researcher
was prepared to stop the interview under such circumstances to safeguard the wellbeing of the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Each participant was given the right to request removal of any aspect of their transcript that they may have perceived as damaging to their wellbeing and/or career.

All participants were guaranteed that the data would only be used for purposes of the study and in professional meetings and that pseudonyms would be used regarding the data. The participants could access their transcripts two weeks after the interview for member checking. They were given seven days to verify the accuracy of the transcripts, during which they could also retract any uncomfortable statement that they felt should not be revealed.

To ensure fair procedure and outcome in the selection of research participants, the selection was based only on the instructors’ relevant experience in connection with the research problem. It should be noted that the researcher was not in a position of authority relative to any potential participants and treated all participants in a professional manner.

**Conclusion**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used as the methodology for this study, which examined the lived experiences of English-language faculty members who work as English language instructors in Japan.

The following chapter contains the findings that resulted from interviews with participants in the study. Findings were analyzed in accordance with IPA guidelines and procedures.
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to understand how English-language instructors working in Japanese universities describe their teaching beliefs as influencing factors in their teaching and use of technology in their courses.

In this chapter the findings that resulted from the interview transcripts and from analysis of the interviews are presented.

Participants

The table below provides demographic information about the six participants in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Garret</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Josh</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Rachel</th>
<th>Sean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA / Japan</td>
<td>USA / Japan</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Late 40s</td>
<td>Mid 50s</td>
<td>Late 20s</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years teaching English</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Identifying Demographic Information

Themes

Three superordinate themes and seven sub-themes emerged from the interviews and the analysis of the transcripts. The superordinate and corresponding sub-themes are:

1) Influence of primary beliefs informs instructors’ pedagogical choices
   a) EFL instructors stressed the influence that their academic background and work experience had on their teaching beliefs and pedagogy and how that affected their
practice

b) Instructors maintained that they viewed their perceptions of their teaching abilities through peer reviews and student feedback system
c) Instructors highlighted their autonomy in the curricular decision-making to be of great importance in putting innovation into practice

2) Instructors identified students as their motivational drivers for instructional strategy
   a) Instructors’ affirmed student satisfaction as a motivation for their implementation of change
   b) Instructors showed understanding and empathy for Japanese university students

3) Instructors articulated that the influence of instructor beliefs on the use of computer-mediated instruction in teaching/learning is substantial
   a) Instructors emphasized that e-learning systems in Japanese universities have changed the student learning habits and made the student assessment process more convenient
   b) Instructors highlighted that digital tools in teaching and learning are creating a paradigm of fast knowledge
Table 2 provides the recurrence of each theme across the six participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate Themes</th>
<th>Garret</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Josh</th>
<th>Kathy</th>
<th>Rachel</th>
<th>Sean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nesting Themes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Influence of primary beliefs</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>informs instructors’ pedagogical choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 EFL instructors stressed the influence</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>that their academic background and work</td>
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<td>experience had on their teaching beliefs and</td>
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<td>pedagogy and how that affected their practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Instructors maintained they viewed their</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>perceptions of their teaching abilities</td>
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<td>through peer reviews and student feedback</td>
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<td>system</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Instructors highlighted their autonomy</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>in the curricular decision-making to be of</td>
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<td>great importance in putting innovation into</td>
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<td>practice</td>
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</table>
2) Instructors identified students as their motivational drivers for instructional strategy  

2.1 Instructors affirmed student satisfaction as a motivation for their implementation of change  

2.2 Instructors showed understanding and empathy for Japanese university students  

3) Instructors articulated that the influence of instructor beliefs on the use of computer-mediated instruction in teaching/learning is substantial  

3.1 Instructors underscored e-learning systems in Japanese universities have changed the student learning habits and provide them with convenience in the student assessment process  

3.2 Instructors highlighted that digital tools in teaching and learning are creating a paradigm of fast knowledge  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>YES</th>
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</table>

**Table 2. Superordinate Themes**
The Emergence of Themes

The remainder of this chapter will explore the superordinate themes and their respective sub-themes, with summaries and descriptions of the participants’ perceptions and their understandings. The findings are supported by quotations from the interview transcripts. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings, which were developed in accordance with an IPA idiographic research frame.

The Influence of Primary Beliefs Informs Instructors’ Pedagogical Choices

This first superordinate theme captures the educational and personal experiences of the participants that pertain to the development of participants’ teaching and their pedagogical choices. These experiences guided the participants throughout their teaching profession. Although no primary interview questions were related to their career choice, all participants brought up their career choice. Each spent about 20 minutes describing their prior experiences and direction into the field of teaching a foreign language. Although the ways in which the participants viewed their educational experiences differed, the convergence was sufficient to reveal two sub-themes: tools from pedagogical and working experience, and perceptions of teaching abilities.

EFL instructors stressed the influence that their academic background and work experience had on their teaching beliefs and pedagogy and how that affected their practice. In this first sub-theme, when the participants were asked about the role of pedagogical development in ELT and how prepared they were as EFL teachers after their pre-service teacher program, all participants acknowledged that they had some level of experience at the language school level before their graduate teacher training programs. Garret acquired his Ph.D. in 2014, while Sean, Josh, John, Rachel, and Kathy acquired their doctoral degrees several years ago. All the participants had some form of teaching experience at language schools prior to their university positions. The six participants
concurred that the language schools where they worked gave them a solid foundation in communicative English teaching before their formal pursuit of teaching as a profession. Garret provided rich descriptions regarding the strong foundation he gained from his work at a Japanese conversation school and an apprenticeship program. He acknowledged “I still use some of the techniques learned at the Ekaiwa [Japanese conversation schools] in my classes today. The teaching methods included the face-to-face classroom lesson and emphasis on maximizing student speaking time.” After attaining graduate degrees, all the participants concurred that they had higher confidence in practicing their profession with theoretical as well as practical training. Garret noted “certainly after my Master’s program things changed a lot. The whole idea about assessments, learning outcomes, and learning performance indicators, and so on.” He had learned the professional tools to understand the teaching and learning process.

The participants evaluated their teaching know-how and ability because of their training and prior work experience. Kathy, Josh, and John described profound changes that occurred during their education training programs. All three revealed that in their program, they developed a strong theoretical foundation, realized their shortcomings, and found a purpose in their profession. Josh admitted that even before getting his Master’s in Education he was “doing things without actually thinking about the result; and after, I started looking at different pedagogical strategies, using more effectively the tools available to me at the university.” As he was describing this transformation, his body language changed, and he appeared to be more contemplative in demeanor. Josh defined pedagogical development as an “evolving process” and a matter of “trial and error.” He pointed out that before his Master’s in teaching, his experience on observation had been more “punitive” or “potentially damaging,” but in the Master’s program he learned “about the culture of observation and sharing ideas and openly discussing teaching.” Adding “I saw how valuable observing
experienced teachers was and it was nice to see other teachers doing the things that I do and feeling validated.”

Rachel said that as a literature major, she initially had little interest in teaching EFL, but she realized that there were more opportunities in teaching EFL at the university level. Years later, she came to appreciate the teaching styles of her professors in her graduate program that were “so instructional in her teaching academic writing courses in Japan.” She noted that conducting classes with short reading assignments and letting students summarize them and give presentations on them was one of the many aspects of the instructors’ teaching she emulated.

John emphasized that he was well prepared, but he had already been teaching for 15 years when he started his Master’s program. It gave him a vocabulary for talking about teaching that he had not had before; it introduced him to research and the literature of teaching. He pointed out:

Before, I was just making it up as I went along. However, through the educational program I could know why things went well and why some things didn’t go well, and could focus in and work on those things.

It gave him a professional vocabulary, which he said he had initially been lacking. This experience heightened his sense of purpose in teaching and added to his teaching experience, as well.

Kathy admitted that when she first started as an adjunct instructor at a university, she did not have a clear idea of the theoretical basis of the curriculum. She said that only after graduate school did she obtain the strong theoretical knowledge that now “informs her practice.” While graduate school was, of course, where she learned the theoretical foundation, it was her secondary school that provided the first role models. Kathy indicated that her teaching practice stems from early experiences.
[I] had many great teachers and some bad ones. In my teaching career, perhaps, the bad teachers are often the ones I remember the most. The classes were boring, did not have any activities, no group work, no projects, and the teacher appeared to me uninterested in the subject.

Kathy acknowledged that teaching is a “constantly evolving process” and from time to time, one “benefits from good examples of teaching as much as the bad ones, generating new pedagogies and trying out different teaching strategies.” She made a connection between educational background and teaching ability by emphasizing that her instructional ability can be attributed to her Ph.D. and up until then, “it was all trial and error.”

Garret discussed the educational influences on his teaching by referencing his “Ph.D. advisor who developed a lot of lessons; activities that we would use in class while I was a teaching assistant there; dealt with digital technology and all of the freshmen classes used Moodle.” He indicated that rhetoric classes used Moodle as for forums for responding. Several of the rhetorical composition classes used online forums and blogs, and he now incorporates such media into his teaching. “It’s probably carry over from that. So, as student instructors, we used the textbooks that had an emphasis on visual and digital rhetoric, which continue to guide me.” This statement was an indicator of the role and influence of his instructors on the participant’s teaching beliefs concerning technology utilization in the class.

**Instructors’ maintained they viewed their perceptions of their teaching abilities through peer reviews and student feedback system.** The second sub-theme focused on the link between all the participants’ awareness of their teaching abilities after graduate education programs and their desire to have the skills to do more in their pedagogical development. As university instructors, they all followed the rationale that teaching performances relied on their practical classroom instruction leading up to instruction in the university system, the total number of years that they had been teaching, and their educational preparation. The
participants reflected extensively on their pedagogical development and attributed it to several factors, such as their own early teachers, their colleagues, educational philosophers, and books. John mused that “the more I learned about teaching, the more experimental I would get.” All six participants credited not only their graduate training but also their early education with a formative role in their development. John talked about his early teachers as far back as high school and described the 10-minute timed writing exercises that he still uses in his classes because he thought it was effective:

Almost immediately I came up with this quick-write idea, posting a question and giving them a target word count. It’s a common practice in EFL to do that to see how their output increases in a given amount of time.

He further noted that “even back in elementary school, we were doing a lot of project-based assignments” and that had clearly an impact on him. He explained:

When you do something that culminates in something at the end, and I do a lot of project-based things, a lot of group work where there is a product at the end that students should fit together with the other projects in the classroom.

The point he raised about teaching and learning revealed that John was conscious of the influence of teaching experiences on his pedagogical decisions as an instructor. His remarks also implied that learning experiences are as important as education in development of pedagogical approaches. Despite having a shorter teaching experience than other participants, such as Kathy, Rachel, John, Sean and Josh, Garret appeared to demonstrate a higher level of confidence when he evaluated his teaching practices:

[I] have patience for waiting for answers. I was taught not to talk over the students. It’s better if there’s silence than me talking. I don’t accept short brief answers, and I think part of the role of the teacher is to help the student learn to express their ideas and how to think through and speak their thoughts.
Garret maintained that it was difficult for students to get ideas onto paper in writing, and it was the same thing with speaking. Students needed someone who was encouraging them, drawing them out, getting more details or responding to what they said. In that way, he developed their critical thinking by getting them speaking more.

Garret had developed a sense of his teaching through feedback from peers and students. He pointed out that his lessons were appreciated because he focuses on critical thinking. He said that “students in Japan for a variety of reasons, one being the Confucian system which encourages harmony, are weak in critical thinking.” They know the answer to “what, but not how, and certainly not why, and that is a challenge” he likes to address. Describing the lessons as standardized material, he makes the lessons more interesting by adding personal touches. Through course evaluations and personal comments, he knew the needs of the students were being met. His narration often switched from third-person reference to the first-person pronoun, showing emphasis and pride in the way the lessons were conducted. Similarly, Garret discussed his limitations regarding teaching ability. He admitted, “I don’t think of teaching as technical exercise; and that’s the problem with the lessons I teach, which are provided to me, and I don’t write them.” He maintained that “there are other instructors far better in that than I am in teaching as skill lessons, for me the big thing is not to think of the teaching that I do as a set of competencies.”

He further noted:

I think of producing a good civic, a good member of society who is involved, actively engaged critically, and importantly has something to say. The student is responsive in an active, not passive way, to engage intellectually with something and then say something about it. That’s the kind of student I’m working to produce. But the pre-prepared lesson plans do not provide this opportunity, so Garret works by adding personal touches to them, to cater to the students’ needs. This exchange with Garret revealed
how much importance he placed on autonomy and the lengths to which he goes to try to tailor those lesson plans to his students’ satisfaction.

Rachel was of the view that her improvement in teaching is “the result of feedback from students and colleagues alike.” She maintained that she sees herself “as a student of teaching” and therefore does not feel defensive when others make constructive comments about her work. Student feedback is very valuable in her opinion because they are the “receivers of her practice” and acknowledges their input to be vital. She also indicated that the “impact of Confucianism” on English-language education is overstated and what is considered to be a lack of critical thinking may be a result of the idea “that all opinions require support.”

All participants were of the view that innovation in pedagogical strategies is not a flaw and it would be a mistake to think of this generation as the same as previous ones. Josh discussed the need to be more “aware of the digital natives and not shy away from adopting different strategies, which is sometimes a necessity because of the changing environment.” He added that he is “not a big supporter of technology but does try to keep up with the times.” Kathy expressed uncertainty regarding her teaching abilities. She acknowledged that the strengths she possesses depended on good preparation, listening ability, the availability to assist as many students as possible, and being flexible. Giving clear guidelines to the students and being able to answer their questions thoroughly was where her preparation came in handy.

In conclusion, the participants’ educational, teaching experiences and their understanding of students gave them confidence in their teaching. They also brought up some weaknesses on their part, and they were willing to share them.

**Instructors highlighted their autonomy in the curricular decision-making to be of great importance in putting innovation into practice.** In this sub-theme, the
participants expressed their satisfaction with the amount of autonomy granted to them; however, there was a discrepancy regarding the level of adherence to the course schedules. Garret was satisfied overall but felt that following the strict course curriculum and using the materials set by their program interfered with his gaining autonomy in his teaching. He said, “I do not think of my job as a technical exercise. Actually, this is a problem at the program that I am at now because I don’t get to write the lesson plans.” He claimed that he was given lesson plans every day by the course coordinator and he did not design the curriculum at all. He was not pleased, as he mentioned: “they’re very deductive instead of inductive and at times, they don’t engage with the students’ ideas or challenge them to express their thoughts as much.” Garret would have preferred more of an inductive exchange with students. He expressed a little dissatisfaction with this kind of lesson plan. He admitted,

[I]t is more about the technical things, some things are important, like presentation skills, and knowing how to do the presentation well, or the format of an essay. But, I see myself as a coach and, help them generate a thoughtful response to a given issue.

Garret had the lesson plan handed to him by the coordinator of the program and felt that he would have liked “a bit more input in the designing process.” Striving to innovate, and instituting his teaching practices without violating the department’s program, Garret considered this constraint a barrier to his creativity. Even then, he admitted that he tried to personalize the lesson plan “without changing its core objectives.” One of the participants found it difficult to use the materials set by the program coordinators, while the other three appeared to be satisfied. All the participants, however, were satisfied by the clear goals and delivery of the course material before the start of the course. At the beginning of the interviews, when the participants were asked about the pedagogical development, everyone talked about the programs in which he or she were teaching. After, they talked about their instructional practices for their university students.
Sean described his program syllabus outline as being very useful for the instructor to create the lesson plan accordingly. To Sean, the provided course outline and materials were “helpful and well-designed by professionals who had a good understanding of our students.” Additionally, he noted that he is given “free rein” in his courses in the department. He added that an enormous amount of material preparation is involved in his courses. Throughout his career, he has seldom been asked to modify his curriculum, but he recalled “at another university in Tokyo, where I worked, the program was rigidly structured. That program had numerous personnel issues and a very high turnover of instructors.”

As Sean continued presenting his concept of independence and creativity, he emphasized his passion for creating enriching lessons. He remarked, “If I had ended up in a program where you are supposed to be on chapter two on week two and chapter three on week three, I couldn’t have done that. I would’ve hated that.”

Kathy stressed that “autonomy does not only mean freedom to choose the curriculum and redesign it or tweak it; it also means being treated as a relevant stakeholder. That means being given a voice in the management and decision-making process.” She continued, “that is not happening fast enough. It would be more productive if instructors are taken into confidence and provided with the overall goals of the program, sort of given the bigger picture.” In her discussion about autonomy, she expressed that autonomy includes better facilities and training opportunities. She expressed a strong belief in “providing faculty development opportunities to not only full-time faculty, which are usual, but adjunct faculty” both to this end as well as for “empowerment and better coordination and integration of the program objectives.”

When Josh was asked about the departmental guidelines on curriculum, he said: “when I worked in senmon-gakkou [2-year college], this was the dream of getting a unified curriculum.” He believed the program directors tried to have a coordinated curriculum as
“the students in the reading class were reading about the topic they were writing in the writing class. Teachers were never so happy about it because it was perceived as taking away their independence in choosing the material.” It appeared that a standardized course schedule is the result of the administrative decision and is not particularly popular with instructors. He pointed out that autonomy is greatly desired to allow teachers to modify teaching practices because instructors feel the need to be independent to be creative. Even though some like the idea of a uniform curriculum that everyone could agree on, it seems more of an organizational goal than a teaching one.

Rachel shared Garret’s appreciation for autonomy, musing “when the curriculum is well-designed, I have no objection to it if I were given the freedom to choose the textbooks and change the lesson topic schedule as it fits my students’ learning ability.” She felt this to be a reasonable expectation. However, she had noticed that whenever anyone had tried to alter the schedule or requested a change in study material, it was not well-received by the department organizing committee. She emphasized that this “really doesn’t go well with the instructors.”

To summarize, as evidenced by their evaluations of their instructional abilities, the participants tried to adjust their teaching and learn from the feedback provided to them. The participants showed that teaching is evolutionary in nature, and learning is a big part of it. Their role models played an important part in their choice of career as well as the type of instructor they have become. Also, they learned lessons from successful and unsuccessful examples of teaching from their early schooling. The participants had a clear idea about the usefulness of feedback from colleagues and credited them for their evolution into instructors who are trying to put the interests of students at the forefront and creating for them a safe, motivational, and free atmosphere. They have adjusted their methods and material to fit the class and acknowledged that sometimes it is hard to follow the curriculum to the letter.
because it is not appropriate for certain classes.

The participants admitted to mistaken beliefs about teaching practices that they had to overcome through talking to peers and closely examining feedback from colleagues and students. In addition to colleagues, they credited books, education philosophers, and renowned professors as their influencers. Furthermore, the participants felt that their autonomy is vital as it connects with their ability to educate their students and adjust per the changing dynamics in their classrooms. When given lesson plans, even if they were well-designed, the participants tried to tailor them to the class they were teaching. It was clear that the autonomy was connected to the freedom to design a curriculum that best addresses the needs and expectations of the students.

**Instructors Identified Students as Their Motivational Drivers for Instructional Strategy**

This theme emerged out of the forces that drove the participants, or their motivating influencers. Certain factors that stood out were students as the motivating influences and the internal and external elements in what drove the participants. Responding to questions about their motivation, participants reflected deeply on the factors that motivated them. These responses provided information about their teaching beliefs. One primary driver identified was student satisfaction, and another was either internal (intrinsic) or external (extrinsic) forces affecting their decision-making. They were asked no direct questions having to do with students; however, the participants kept on bringing student needs and satisfaction into their answers. They also alluded to internal and external forces at work in forming their teaching beliefs. The way in which the participants experienced the student body as an agent that drives them differed from participant to participant; however, what is clear is that two sub-themes emerged: student satisfaction as a motivation agent and characteristics of Japanese university students.

**Instructors affirmed student satisfaction as a motivation for their**
implementation of change. This sub-theme explores how the participants in their individual ways brought to light the different aspects of student satisfaction as part of their motivation. The participants seemed eager to engage in discussion about student satisfaction, and they all appeared to show enthusiasm while mentioning their students’ learning endeavors. The students had similar backgrounds, even though they belonged to different universities. Their university entrance examination results did not qualify them to attend top tier universities in Japan; however, the English competence of these students was not considered by the participants as lower than those students enrolled in any other Japanese university.

The participants agreed that an academic need of their university students to acquire English-language proficiency functions as an indicator serving to reflect on their teaching practices. Although the participants noticed deficiencies in their students, all participants expressed positive feelings toward them. It was in this part of the interviews that the instructors appeared to be most detailed and most engaged. They were enthusiastic, leaned forward, and made more extensive eye contact when the discussion shifted to students. There were more hand gestures and vocal variations from the participants. These observations may suggest the importance of the learning needs of the students in the pedagogical development of instructors, which includes teaching attitudes, innovation, practices used in class, and the evaluation of their own performance after class.

John, discussing the students, said that helping students achieve their goals is a very rewarding experience for him. He described moments while working with students when “they are struggling to get a concept; and then suddenly you say something or do something, and they get it, and it is like a bulb, lights up. Those moments perhaps don’t come very often, but when they occur, it’s very thrilling.” He further pointed out that the learning needs of his students in English take precedence over his concerns about his research, which demands a sizable portion of his time. John mentioned the “unique challenges the Japanese
university students face.” He explained that at the Japanese high school level, students have very limited or no task-based English lessons, as they are mostly given grammar translation reading lessons from teachers. “So,” he said, “we must introduce and retrain them not only in critical thinking, but task-based language focusing on all four skills.” He revealed his frustration at the university students’ lack of preparation from their lecture style, Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio-Lingual Method, and translation reading that hindered communicative language teaching (CLT). He emphasized Japanese students’ lack of critical thinking preparation at the high school level, which poses a hindrance to their creativity in English Language projects. The students need him to be a source of motivation; and consequently, he needed to innovate and develop effective pedagogy.

Among the six participants, Kathy spent the most time during the interview in discussing what “keeps students interested in the lesson during the whole 90-minute class.” She expressed dissatisfaction with the class time and size of the classes by noting that it is difficult to keep young people interested in 90-minute classes. She added that paying attention for that long is not an easy task even for an adult. “So, we need to keep it interesting by providing a variety of tasks to be accomplished within that time. Lecturing briefly, then moving on to reading, writing, discussion group activities.” Another challenge she noted was the large size of classes. “Having such a large class is not conducive to learning a language. Not more than 20 students would be ideal for me.”

Her description revealed that she thinks student satisfaction can be achieved through a more personal, better student-instructor ratio, and possibly through decreasing the length of classes. She pointed out that in her class it is important that students be relaxed enough to do the tasks that are required, which “is done through paying attention not only to their academic success but also catering to their emotional wellbeing.” When Sean was asked about teaching as a fulfilling occupation, he immediately talked about his university students, past,
and present. He assists his current and even past students in their career choices. The students come to him to get advice on study abroad, career choices and sometimes choosing a graduate school. Even though he is under no university obligation to help these students, he loves doing it. Sean has a strong passion for exceeding expectations of his duties. He talked about not only being an English-language professional but as someone who sees himself in the role of a mentor to his students, past, and present.

Sean was interested in teaching his students to think deeply. Moreover, their knowledge had to be more than just knowing how to write a good paper; they had to internalize it. It was very much life learning, not just getting a higher TOEFL score. Helping students for those kinds of short-term, numerical goals was not rewarding for him. He described their positive feedback as a very rewarding aspect of his job and one that drove him to find new ways to enhance their learning experience. This exchange showed the nature of the commitment that Sean has for his students. He gets ideas from his present and former students through formal and informal ways in improving his teaching to innovate and develop his curriculum, and admitted that “these guys are the driving force for my innovation or strategies in the classroom, I do it for them.” His formal and informal interaction with students reveals his satisfaction as he tries to create their satisfaction.

When asked about her students, Rachel said she tries to “remember their names and talks to them long after the class is finished” to help them understand and to be able to establish a connection with them. She admitted that her students have busy schedules and that the English language is not a priority for them in some cases. To keep them engaged, she asks them questions when she notices their attention drifting. She is cognizant of their club activities, part-time jobs, and other courses they take. This information allows her to discern that her students are people whose well-being, both physical and mental, needs her focus.

In a similar fashion to John; Kathy, Rachel, and Sean, Josh and Garret identified
student needs and how to improve their students’ English-language ability in this global environment. They viewed that information gained from checked assignments is not sufficient to gauge the level of understanding of academic English courses the students are taking and a number of challenges they are facing. Josh, discussing his reading and writing students, revealed that “sometimes casual talks with the students are valuable in assessing their challenges.” Garret pointed out while discussing presentation and communication classes, that “social networking sites or friendly conversation are a good way to get to the bottom of what obstacles are there for students.” About his classes, Josh noted that he changes his lesson plans per “particular class needs.” He explained:

At the end of the first semester, I gave them a survey to rate the things we did in class and what they would like to see done the following semester. Many of them were not satisfied with the Project English curriculum [project-based learning]; it was too difficult for them to do. They wanted more discussion and opportunity to talk in English, based on the online reading. I was under the impression that they were getting that in some other course, but I was wrong. So, I immediately changed the style of the class.

Similarly, Rachel expressed that she notices the body language of her students and knows when to change the pace of the lesson or rearrange the task activities. She sometimes does this by reassuring her students that the goal is nearly achieved, telling them “how well they are doing and the class is almost over or the semester is half done.” These non-academic strategies emphasize her objective to make the students feel special and keep them motivated by “creating short-term goals for them.” Rachel noted that “our students are not that motivated to take any extra step beyond their required coursework. However, English courses are probably the only 90-minute classes at the university; the students don’t doze off.” Josh also said,
The 90-minute class schedule is not particularly conducive for speaking and listening classes, not even for reading and writing ones. The students must pay attention for such a long time, so even if you vary the tasks, it’s still in the foreign language, so they are not taking a break from that.

John pointed out that “the structure of the 90-minute class is unlikely to change anytime soon because there are many administrative, parental and faculty factors or considerations involved in the decision-making.” He concluded, “I think most foreign faculty can’t understand such a length of the class.”

The participants focused on formal and informal methods and strategies of meeting their students’ needs. Both academic and non-academic strategies employed by the participants showed their commitment to the students’ overall success in their courses at the university. They went out of their way, in some cases giving extra time to the students so that a connection could be established, which would make for a better learning outcome.

Instructors showed understanding and empathy for Japanese university students. This sub-theme brought out something that the participants did not directly discuss but presented in other ways: the societal aspects of cooperative decision-making that take longer than individual decision-making. In Japanese education, the emphasis is placed on testing from the secondary level. Japanese instructors and administrators trained in the traditionalist paradigm find it difficult to understand the freedom of a curriculum that does not have explicit instruction geared towards success in an examination. Japanese university students are a product of their formal and informal culture. The processes of experiences shape the learning behavior and characteristics of Japanese university students. The participants were keen on discussing their students in their universities and generally in Japan. They consider the whole experience of student success as they utilize pedagogical strategies to maximize learning goals. Josh showed concern and had empathy for his
students, as is indicated by these comments:

My students already have low self-esteem issues because they were not able to get into the top tier universities in Japan. I feel my job is to make them comfortable and build up their confidence. So, part of that is to give assignments that they can do. I see in several instances; students are given projects that are just too difficult, and that creates a negative feeling towards English. They need to feel successful, so I try to give as much individual feedback as possible. They were trained in a Confucian system of secondary school climate in which testing was the measure of success, so they take making mistakes and failing hard.

As Josh emphasized, given the “emphasis on [the] high-stakes testing” environment the students are used to, it is challenging to get the students to relax and feel comfortable in doing tasks that do not have a clear result. This level of empathy towards his students showed the deep commitment the participant has for them and, in turn, the pride he feels in their achievements.

His account was echoed by Kathy, who said her students already have “the feeling of being failures because they were not able to get into the elite universities.” She tries to reassure them that they can accomplish a great deal at their present university and be successful:

Japanese students are put in these high-stress environments at an early age, and it is all about success and failure. Also, failure comes from not passing tests or getting low scores. So, it is my job to reassure them that they can be successful from now on, provided they can have a positive outlook. The testing school culture that they grew up in creates winners and losers, and it is hard for the young minds to get out of it once they start university. A simple fact is that not everyone can get into the elite universities.
Kathy’s empathy for her students’ feelings about their self-worth is a reminder of the different roles that she plays in her students’ lives. Her reactions to feelings displayed, overtly and covertly, by her students, prepares her to compensate their low self-worth by encouraging them “to achieve their short-term academic targets.” She maintains that this provides them with more confidence each time they achieve a positive outcome.

When John was asked about his Japanese university students’ characteristics, he immediately used the two words “shy, polite,” and described them as unwilling to offer their opinion even when called on to do so. Having worked in Japan for many years, he said he understood their character much better than native English instructors new to Japan perhaps did. He explained, “what is lacking in the Confucian secondary school system is any focus on critical thinking. These are necessary skills in a global job market that is changing fast and I try to keep that in mind while planning their lessons.”

Participants believed Japanese university students had not had the “training to express opinions and show their individuality, as the culture encourages cooperative behavior and conformity.” Added to that, students do not have language skills to express those views in a “culture that frowns upon mistakes and failures.” John, while expressing his admiration for Japanese students, noted that his students are working part-time jobs, maybe 30 hours a week, have club activities, and yet they show up for class. Their attitudes sometimes show a lack of motivation, and “instructors know they need a reason to learn English. They cannot learn if they have no reason to learn.” He tried to provide that in his courses by making lessons relevant to their lives, to generate interest, and change things if the lesson was not working. He said, “many times the students’ attention is not there, so I need to stop and think, why it is so?” He further noted, “it was hard for students because Japan is not an easy country to use English, and first- or second-year students seldom think regarding globalization or future job market.”
In her response to the Japanese university students’ characteristics, Rachel pointed out that, at her university, she would like “to see more opportunities for them to use English.” Even though she has observed a gradual movement towards learning English, it is not enough. She acknowledged that after Tokyo was awarded the 2020 Olympics, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology—Japan (MEXT) proposed goals to increase English-language education. However, her students do not seem to be aware of the changes from the top because society still expects them to work in Japanese companies, the same way their parents did, not knowing any language other than Japanese. Globalization of the English curriculum may be restricted to certain universities or certain programs in some universities. She said the result is a lack of opportunities provided by the university and low motivation or interest in English program. She noted, “I try to do as much as I can to engage my students and provide interesting topics, but this has to be done at a much wider scale.”

The participants consistently pointed out that the mindset of Japanese university students is molded through their years of schooling in a Confucian tradition that emphasizes the culture of test taking in English, not meaning-focused, social communication or critical thinking project oriented work. Therefore, as the participants pointed out, the English-language instructor must tackle these challenges on several fronts. They were mindful of the fact that learning attitudes and characteristics of higher education for Japanese students is different because of their age, maturity, attention span, learning preferences, and online socialization behavior. According to the participants, this knowledge made the instructors able to develop teaching strategies to meet their needs. The learning attitudes and characteristics of their students because of their knowledge and understanding of contextual information influenced the participants’ motivation. The participants considered both the academic and the non-academic needs of their students to be equally relevant. From the participants’ views, it can be said that adoption of certain pedagogical strategies comes not
only from within academics but also from outside.

To conclude, the participants perceived their students as one of the primary motivation forces that drive their work. Their outlook on the curriculum was based on how it will meet the students’ learning needs. Throughout the interviews, their students were repeatedly brought up by the participants, even though they were not asked a question directly related to students. The instructors made clear that learning occurs not only in the classroom and curricular content, but also through the way interaction takes places outside the classroom. They relayed a sense of accomplishment when their students understood a concept or put forth an argument that reflected critical thinking. Regardless of the variety of courses the participants have been teaching English in Japan, they worked to keep their curriculum dynamic and their lessons meaningful and interesting.

To devise such pedagogy, the participants talked at length about the cultural aspects of Japanese student character. Some of the less desirable learning attitudes of Japanese students were the lack of willingness to express opinions, shyness, and cooperative mindset that hinders critical thinking and discussion in a language classroom. These students were brought up in a system deeply informed by Confucian values, with the result of a structure that is built to teach to tests and that is focused on preparing secondary school students for university entrance examinations. English is a subject that is in the entrance examinations. Consequently, this test-taking attitude carries over to the university and presents practical obstacles. Particularly, it is not very conducive for constructivist student-centered approaches followed by instructors in language courses.

**Instructors Articulated That the Influence of Instructors’ Beliefs on the Use of Computer-Mediated Instruction in Teaching/Learning is Substantial**

This third superordinate theme represents both the participants’ appreciation for and criticism of computer-mediated instruction in line with their teaching philosophies.
Universities are frequently the incubators for technological innovations but are not necessarily the places for innovative uses of technology for learning. In these circumstances, the internet, combined with a variety of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs, is on its way to restructuring the concept of the language classroom and the roles of the learner and the instructor in foreign language learning and teaching. The participants’ stances on technology in language teaching were explored concerning their learning experience, teaching experience, and their use of technology for instruction. The two sub-themes that emerged were the influence of e-learning systems in teaching in Japanese universities and the use of technology as learning tools.

Instructors underscored that e-learning systems in Japanese universities have changed students’ learning habits and made the student assessment process more convenient. Participants were asked to recollect their experiences with technology that relate to their use of the types of technology for instruction. Online computer systems used in universities were discussed as they pertained to English courses.

Sean stated that the “e-learning system (information technology system) is great as far as information flow is concerned.” However, he added that “many teachers have excessive confidence in computer technology in language learning and they think that CALL should do everything and replace current teaching tools such as dictionaries and even the teacher.” In contrast, one participant was of the view that many universities in Japan are still not adopting technology quickly enough, and those universities that are have not provided professional development on technology integration. Kathy was of the view that the rigidity is built in from the secondary school level to the university in adopting a certain technology. E-learning systems are introduced under these conditions of reluctance. She added, “I was an early adopter of technology. I taught myself HTML, and I built a website for my students to access from home with videos and listening sheets and activities and transcripts of the videos
and everything.” She was dismayed by what she learned, and what she saw in the marketplace as an overemphasis on online learning, and a tendency to move away from the personal connection established by face-to-face communication. John pointed out, [I] think that the technology is increasing faster than our ability to know what to do with it, and I think that’s tempting many people to just throw technology in their classroom without knowing how it can enhance teaching.

John was concerned that the e-learning systems are not utilized well. Rachel observed that in current English-language and English content courses in Japanese universities, unfortunately, instructors appear only to be using technology to support traditional, instructor-directed teaching, to include presenting lectures via electronic slide shows and searching the internet for resources. She noticed the lack of interest among some professors in accepting new ideas and identified this as a challenge with Japanese higher education.

Josh observed that it is quite difficult to use technology in the classroom, that the classrooms are not usually equipped for it, and that the ones that are, make it difficult to connect to an outside network. He said that the university is “concerned with security breach.” They just flat out restrict all access to the internet. You can’t even get a Wi-Fi signal and connect to Gmail or Google or any of the things that are second nature to our teaching now.” Garret expressed that blogging, making voice recordings and sharing those files, and electronic documents to share writing assignments outside of class are used sparingly by instructors. He said of first-year university students, who are coming out of high schools where teachers are not allowed to ask their students’ email addresses, “so you have these state-of-the-art computer labs in these high schools that aren’t connected to anything. They all get a budget for a computer room, and they just put software in the machines.” He added, “I think that it’s just the nature of privacy in this country and no one wants to be the school that gets in trouble for leaking students’ email addresses because that would be
national news.” The participants were talking consistently about conservatism in using the technology that goes all the way up to university. Rachel said that “you can’t even show a YouTube video to supplement what you are talking about in class unless you record it on a device and bring it in and play it from your hard drive. So, there’s a long way to go.” She admitted that there might be some universities in Japan that are better prepared for the digital age in language studies, but there are many that are not. There appear to be difficulties in using computer facilities. There’s a certain level of resistance in adopting change. All the participants were in at least partial agreement that e-learning system adoption in the universities has made it easier to provide information to the students. In many universities, e-learning is widely used for all kinds of purposes from announcing administrative tasks to posting instructors’ updates, surveys, feedback on essays, presentations, and student assignments.

Kathy believed e-learning has created “a system of opportunity and access.” She indicated that e-learning systems have opened teaching and made students more aware of global issues. She emphasized that instructors can deliver their lectures at any time, and the students can receive them, listen to them repeatedly, and store them for study. Administrative tasks have become simpler for instructors, as they can easily post announcements, assign, and check student performance. She gives her students numerous presentations, debate instructions, and writing assignments, which they can access the e-learning system. So far, she suggested, “it has worked well. But, I’m afraid unless faculty development is frequently provided, it will be an underutilized tool.” She maintained that the hierarchical system in Japanese universities prevents new concepts from being entertained and implemented quickly.

Kathy identified that traditional instruction in the English language tends to focus on a narrowly-defined concept of language. However, new literacies ask the students to negotiate
language in context and using multimodal outlets. She contended that language instruction is being defined by changes in technologies that require instructors to be able to depart from the traditional models of teaching and move toward more progressive approaches. Thus, she asserted, technology must be more than a means to support lectures.

John was equally convinced that all the universities where he has worked have been rigorously implementing computer system websites, providing “English translation handouts to instructors so even those with limited Japanese ability can access information and put information for the students without having too many difficulties.” However, as Josh pointed out, “there are institutes which have the e-learning system, but instructors, as well as the students, may not be using it because they were not introduced or encouraged to use that tech early on.” He contended that instructors still face external as well as internal barriers to technology integration. He noted that if the administration promoted technology through professional development, it would be widely adopted by the instructors.

Josh described the e-learning system at his present university as a very effective way to get the information to the students in a timely fashion. However, he seemed to be hesitant in endorsing these relatively new developments. He claimed that contrary to the administrative hype for the promotion of information technology systems in universities, whom he indicated were probably driven by business-related motivations, there is very little real understanding of how this all fits with existing theories of learning and teaching. He claimed that several issues remain to be overcome, including the inconvenience of using computer facilities and technical problems such as slow internet connections. However, he would make more use of online collaborative learning if he had more departmental support: “I would like to understand how digital technologies can be integrated with learning and teaching activities. I don’t have the time to learn, and if I learn it, I don't have the time to incorporate it into my lessons.”
Josh was cautiously partial to the idea of using the new IT systems, and he was keen on using collaborative learning for projects if other instructors were keen on it, too. In discussing the e-learning system at his university, John had an even more cautious approach. He argued that there are many resources for foreign-language instructors and program administrators, from multimedia-rich textbook websites to e-learning systems focusing on administrative needs. He maintained, “when I attend these long meetings, administrators talk of technology as if it were the be all and end all solution to the standard and quality of education. Personally, I can do a lot of my administrative tasks from home. That’s efficient time-management.”

John also voiced his concern that even with “centralized access to materials through an e-learning system, there isn’t that much sharing of resources going on among the faculty.” He pointed out that he put several articles in “Dropbox and posted comments,” but at the staff meeting, no one had even looked at them. He mused that there may be too much of a “sharing culture now, an overflow if I may.”

In another exchange, Garret seemed to have the most receptive attitude towards the relevance of technology. He talked about e-learning in those terms, acknowledging that university departments are given financial support to purchase tablets, but that university-based Wi-Fi connection and curriculum development is not necessarily supported. He suggested that many of the faculty members place the blame on the technology and curriculum restrictions, and his students probably think of course-based technology as yet another assessment box to tick, and the learning management systems have nothing to do with their everyday digital practices. He related, “If we had all classes equipped with computers, as some universities have started doing, then it would be much better in getting access to materials and better ICT knowledge.”

There was an element of critique in Garret’s observation, even as he talked glowingly
about practical new applications such as “Grade Keeper” and programs that make his administrative tasks easier to do. He said there is much value for the faculty on the e-learning systems. He noted “you can do everything without paper. Bill Gates talked about the paperless office several years ago. It is nearly here, but not quite yet.” “From uploading the syllabus, grading, sharing files, and feedback to posting whatever you think will get your students interested … it has a tremendous potential.” However, he emphasized that he was not a technophile and asserted there were certain limitations on engaging students.

Some participants made it clear that they had some reservations when it came to the added value in computer-mediated instruction. Sean discussed the impact that the e-learning system has on his teaching. He maintained that he no longer makes photocopies for the class. He puts material on the e-learning system so students could go there. He noted that many of those students put it onto their tablets, and he shares a list of note-taking apps. He added that students “took notes on their iPads on the poem they were working on, printed it out or took notes there, or did both.” He acknowledged, “they have the tablet so it can link, if they don’t know a word, they just press to highlight and it gives them the word they don’t know.” He further indicated that he “conducted a flipped classroom and would put his lectures online, video lectures 20–30 minutes, just the background of the topic.” He emphasized that a flipped classroom was better because students can re-listen, and it frees up a sizable amount of classroom time for more discussion. He pointed out, “so, in the large lecture classes, I have 20 or 30-minute lectures, they can just listen to that at home, and that gives me 30 minutes to set up an information exchange, or mini presentation type of activity so technology essentially expands the classroom.”

Sean is appreciative of the efficiency that comes from technology, but he was not convinced CALL could solve all the issues. He noted, “technophiles are in love with technology and don’t see it as a tool. They see it as a result.” He argued that they were
seeing it as the centerpiece in some way and so with that attitude, it seemed the computer-mediated technology becomes “another distance, another mediating factor.” He was convinced “it was in between everything, so, that kind of approach, I am not in favor of.”

Sean emphasized that technology is useful as a teaching tool and should not create another barrier between teacher and the student, as he believed CALL sometimes does. However, he was keen on using blogging for discussion purposes. In his response, he showed a high level of enthusiasm when discussing the teaching element of using the e-learning system at his university. In the same way, Garret recalled his teacher education program in which he had used e-learning systems and Moodle. In his present teaching schedule, he had one class in which he spent several weeks on blogs, talking about digital rhetoric and about what it means to be in the electronic world. Referring to Moodle, he discussed peer review: “I would have them upload their essays to the website and have students comment on somebody else’s comment electronically.” But he added that with forming posts, writing and responding was an efficient method to have the students engage in ideas that they might not get in a classroom discussion. He said there was a deeper engagement because they could think about the response and read it carefully and then respond to it.

Garret touched on a variety of issues. While he was describing his teaching assistant days and learning to use technology in the classroom, he showed admiration for his Ph.D. advisor who developed those lessons. He also acknowledged that he uses many things in his teaching that he learned in his training program. In his response, he discussed his use of various e-learning forums for discussion purposes, and he focused on the need for student engagement as his goal.

John appeared to be not particularly keen about computer-mediated instruction. He noted that Japan is a technological society and technical know-how is at a high level, but that
this is not the case in the universities. Since he had worked in several universities in Japan, he could say that computers should not come in the way of communication. He contended that students sometimes might have the technical skills; but if instructors focus on that only, students are not going to learn the communicative English skills. He expanded on this thus:

I’ll give you an example. Several years ago, when I was teaching a freshman English Speaking and Presentation class, students had to give a PowerPoint presentation. They would dedicate themselves to developing their tech-centered PowerPoint skills. When the time came to present, students gave incredibly elaborate PowerPoint presentations. They incorporated music, web clips and transitions, but the quality of the English in the presentations would often be of a low level. They had devoted all their time to developing their PowerPoint skills and the interface of the software is all Japanese, so they were not using English. So, you got good PowerPoint, but they didn’t develop their English skills.

This above-mentioned PowerPoint case demonstrated the concern that John has for the needs of his students to focus on the English-language acquisition. He stated that when teaching writing, he would want to have a computer room because he wants to give the students work time toward the end of every lesson where they can start working on assignments. For communication classes, however, it would be just the opposite: he does not want them sitting in front of a computer in communication class at all. Another thing that concerns him about technology is that some teachers depend on technology too much and the students end up focusing on developing technology skills when they should be focusing on developing English skills. He added:

When we use computer rooms there’s not an option to change to an English interface. Everything is in Japanese and proficiency with technology has no relationship whatsoever to proficiency in English. So very often the lowest level of English
students are the best tech students.

This is a concern that was shared by all the participants: that as an instruction tool, the technology could get in the way of communicative student engagement. Rachel also noted that she still prefers “paper to digital.” She shared her ideas by saying that e-learning has provided some level of efficiency but she “still prefers to do things manually.” Rachel elaborated:

I am a paper, blackboard, chalk person. At the end of the day, I check papers by hand, try to understand the student handwriting, that’s what I like. It gives me a better understanding of their work and gives me a chance to provide feedback personally. She admitted doing the administrative tasks through the e-learning network, adding that if they had more faculty professional development on technology, it would become easier to use and maybe, many of the faculty members would be using more of the e-learning system tools, at least for some tasks. Because she liked to check writing papers by hand, Rachel argued in favor of limiting the number of students in writing and communicative English classes and limiting the students to 20 per class. She could then pay closer attention to each student individually.

Instructors’ highlighted that digital tools in teaching and learning are creating a paradigm of fast knowledge. In this sub-theme, the participants shed light on engaging with digital technologies as one possible means for instructors and students to enhance foreign language learning. John provided some information regarding e-learning at his present university. He remarked that students had to attend one 90-minute lesson where they were introduced to the software. Only a small percentage of the students used it after the demonstration, and an even smaller percentage used it consistently. All universities had some type of orientation and computer center workshop. Japanese first-year students received orientation training on an e-learning system prior to starting the semester. They
were good at getting the hang of it, but not good at using it as much as the university would like them to. The participants agreed with the idea that it is commonly used but had varying experiences with the digital age.

Rachel described it in this way:

Students were asked to answer the questionnaire by iPhone at the end of the term. That went well, however, in my writing course the last term, and I gave my students five minutes to answer the questions. All of them took out their iPhones and operated them. However, it turned out that only one-third of them had responded to the questions! I was shocked.

She declared “what were other students doing?” She revealed that the rate of students' answers went down to one-third compared to the paper-based questionnaire. She was sure that the computer-mediated lessons were convenient and effective for highly-motivated students, but she underscored that low-motivated students were not as keen on technology and required more attention to getting them to use it. If teachers relied too much on technology, some students enjoyed using new technology more, instead of learning English. She explained that the balance between technology and face-to-face communication was critical, but also difficult.

Garret was quite sure that Skype classes at his previous university were providing students with greater opportunity to interact with native English speakers, but he was not sure that the level of engagement was equal to face-to-face communication. He insisted that video chat services such as Skype provide a live conversation with native or near-native English-language instructors or tutors. The university program that he used to work in started synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) via Skype. The Academic Reading and Writing 90-minute course was divided into two parts. A component was introduced that dealt with 45 minutes of academic English Listening and Speaking conducted
by Philippine English-language instructors via Skype. The other half would be studying reading and writing with the university instructor on site. The two sections of the class would switch after 45 minutes. The students were required to do exercises from media-rich textbooks, reading exercises, and TOEFL preparations through a contracted online website. Moodle classroom forums were already in place to facilitate communication within and between instructors and students. He noted that when students came back to the Reading and Writing section for the remainder of the 90-minute class, they looked motivated. Garret was not certain of student satisfaction with these modules. He noted, “my issue has always been, are they happy because the Skype component gave greater opportunity to speak and discuss or they are just glad to be not in the same classroom for the whole 90-minutes?” As other participants said, Garret emphasized that “in Japan, the class period is 90 minutes. I think it is too long for these students to be able to concentrate.” Josh also raised concern about the 90-minute class period in the context of learning as challenging. This concern raised by the participants offered their attitude about using various forms of technology in order to make the courses interesting and interactive because their goal was to create critical thinking ability in their students while developing their English.

Garret noted that several universities are adopting various types of synchronous computer-mediated communications (SCMC) in their foreign language departments. He explained that there was a course for first-year and second-year students in his program where students went online and they studied a lot of vocabulary and listening. Instructors put material up online, and they were using online resources. He observed that computers were more interactive now, but it was still kind of passive learning compared to what is done in a classroom with an instructor and interaction among students.

Josh suggested that Microsoft is making a bundle of their Skype education program because many private companies use it for English-language delivery and universities try to
outsource in the hope of decreasing the student-to-instructor ratio. It is an attempt to lower cost by not hiring an additional instructor. He asserted:

“I don’t mean to say there’s anything wrong with it. There is a tendency to get overexcited about it and to imagine that this is entirely the way teaching is going to go. Something special that’s going to improve teaching as another tool.”

Josh was interested in how technology has helped with vocabulary. He reasoned that corpus studies in vocabulary and technology use is interesting, not necessarily as an FL instructor but just as a literature major. He enjoyed Dr. Paul Nation’s classes, not only for what he had to say about teaching but just for the explanation of the way vocabulary worked and the number of words that were needed to understand the meaning. He observed that he used the concepts introduced by Dr. Nation: “I’ve taught my students what he taught me about the first two thousand words being paramount for coverage of text.”

Josh reiterated that he was using a book about teaching the academic word list. “I use it through a program that’s online that highlights which of the words originate from the two thousand words, and which come from the academic word list.” He stressed that these words are less common and it gives students some idea of what vocabulary they should be learning. His students are required to do online research for the assignments, and they are asked to find reading materials online and bring them into class so they could all share something. Thus, it made it easier for the students to acquire information online compared to physically going to the library. Ideally, he observed, “they might go online to academic journals, but they can’t read that, so they tend to go to sites that have general information.” He confirmed that the university classes were of much longer duration in Japan and students spend 90 minutes in class doing online research, which worked out well by dividing up the time for the required task. They used their smartphones, iPads, and other devices in class. It gave them more of variety to engage in learning. He wanted them to be interacting with him or the classmates,
so he used many group projects in class. He revealed, “I don’t want the technology to be another form of barrier to English-language communication through negotiation and development of critical thinking.” Josh strives to enhance students’ learning experiences, even when he is not “100% behind using digital technology” for learning.

Kathy provided some insight from her experience in conducting her academic English Skype classes and noted that it is a good way to “adjust the class size by lowering the teacher-student ratio.” She mentioned it was economical because university programs could hire four Skype instructors for the cost of one classroom instructor. However, their program also paired those Skype classes with an in-class instructor, so it was a hybrid setup. The outcome was too early to assess, but clearly, the teacher-student ratio was low. The students got a lot of speaking time and could ask questions and interacted with their group members. There were 4-5 students to one Skype instructor. The assignments, presentations, discussions, quizzes, tests and other assessments were all done online for that section of the reading and writing course.

The hybrid class setup showed that Kathy had tried to implement the Skype program to increase student contact hours with instructors to enhance their English-language ability by contracting a company that outsourced English online lessons. This endeavor reflected on her teaching practices and the way Kathy strived to arrive at optimal outcomes for her students. However, she remained skeptical about integrating digital technologies in the classroom completely, as she reasoned that the literacy component of the Skype class taught by an instructor was an essential part of the Skype class curriculum.

For one thing, this approach was also apparent in Sean’s response, even though he appears to be partially in favor of using technology. He admitted students could access some massive amount of information, and they could access it quickly, and they work with technology. That allowed them to see things in ways they could not see otherwise. He
started to use different techniques, such as mind mapping, where students could map out a short story. He said, “but in another sense, it’s something more because students are able to use the mind mapping functions to look at stories in different ways and see connections that they wouldn’t see.” They all worked on the same map together and yet, that was not the end-product; it was a step in producing the understanding of the story. Sean thought all his classes were using technology in all sorts of different ways.

Sean confirmed that his students look at both a written form of a story and a technologically-produced form of a story and determine the difference between images and writing. He indicated that technology makes information flow. It makes it accessible and fluid, although he knows many teachers who “don’t want students to hop on the internet and, especially, look for information on Wikipedia.” Sean pointed out that technology is a way to get students to “get basic information and put them in touch with the possibilities that they don’t know about.”

All the participants indicated that they were facilitators who mentored, supported, and encouraged learners to be self-regulated. They established a learner-centered context that encouraged learners to engage in learning activities, accomplish learning tasks, and achieve learning goals. Josh talked about the nature of online feedback. He highlighted that he gives his students corrective feedback online, keeping form and content separate, which is a crucial part of process writing. Sometimes he uses a combination of feedback, with online interaction being the first stage. Later, “during subsequent drafts of the essays, after peer feedback, his online written feedback, therefore, the final draft is much improved.” His students are still learning the skill of collaboration, thinking about how to take turns, how to share ideas, how to compromise and listen to other ideas. Therefore, Josh said that collaboration with others is a way to learn.

Technology is a great tool to develop and encourage collaboration. Josh stressed that
coming up with new ideas together with student peer review is a good way to improve their writing skills. He acknowledged that “students use the technology and what they do with it often surprises him, as well.” His students are in SCMC Skype tutorial classes with study abroad students. He reasoned that “it gives the Japanese students a chance to meet students from the U.S. and have a conversation and get feedback on their papers as well.” In general, Josh appreciated the role of some aspects of technology that have affected English-language learning and the positives of it in a 90-minute class period. In his classes, he does not mind their use of digital technology. He agreed with other participants that the structure of 90-minute classes is a problem and “the students just can’t pay attention.” Josh remarked, “they should be on task, but it is hard for them to stay on task, and it’s hard to structure a class well with or without technology to keep them on task for that long.” Digital technology assists in getting the students back in focus after a short break.

Sean was critical of using technology for reading tasks:

I dislike the way students read using technology. It is not as deep or as meaningful as when they read on paper. There are several studies done on the haptic of reading. Just how that paper feels in your hand, what effect that has on you and what kind of situation are you reading in. I talk about that with my students who are doing research.

Sean emphasized that when they use online resources, he “wants students to watch the videos and see lectures” but he also wants them to “take the story, the book, the essay, the poem, and to have control over when they engage and disengage with technology.” Rachel contended that when people read on a screen, they read it in an F model, where “they read the top, they read down the side and read one across the middle, and that’s just how the eye works on the screen or tends to.” She asserted “that’s not reading in a deeper sense.” Therefore, she explains to the students and makes it clear to them that they need to be careful how they read
and there are different kinds of reading.

She noted:

Sometimes they need to read for information, at times to remind themselves of something, occasionally to find something, and at other times they need to be “lost inside the material and be inside the story.

She indicated that technology sometimes gives students the false belief that they can use technology without doing any serious reading and that “the message is given to them all around.” She further noted that many existing language programs only cover specific areas of language learning, such as reading or grammar, without addressing the full scope of language-learning skills. Rachel noted that because there is so little shared knowledge in the field of courseware development, faculty who produce multimedia materials usually start the development process from scratch, building all necessary coding, scripting, digitizing and editing audio-visual materials on their own. She said that changing a course, especially to integrate technology, involves shifts to unfamiliar materials, the creation of new types of assignments, and the invention of new ways of assessing student learning.

Kathy maintained that the availability of technologies such as the internet does not automatically translate into enhanced experiences, particularly when instructor training fails to incorporate new technologies into the language curriculum. She observed, “a teaching method that does not work will continue to not work with or without a computer.”

Sean indicated that technology enables students to collaborate, and ideally technology allows the classroom to be open for feedback through various technology media. He added:

The good side of technology is that it connects. It doubles input and especially for Japanese students who live far away from the library, as much as I drag them to the library, give them a tour de force to go and find books, it’s just hard to get them in the library. If you get them looking for materials online, they’ll do that and so I think
overall, it gives them meaningful input.

Sean’s suggestions were aimed at the students’ overreliance on technology but also acknowledged the digital age. The participants were all eager to discuss the prevalence of translation apps and websites, which have audio and camera function for translation that is very widely used in mobile devices.

Rachel indicated:

Translation software is a bit of a nuisance in my writing courses. I think some people believe in that, and in my large classes, I have around 90–130 students in the classroom. In those classes, somebody uses one of those translations for their final take-home essay every term, and it’s just obvious what that is. It’s plagiarism. It should be categorized as something like plagiarism so when students plagiarize, it is easy to detect. They go from student English to *New York Times* English, and it is evident which is which and the same thing applies to these programs.

Sean contended that translation software is a hindrance to student learning because students rely on it too extensively, thinking it would do the job for them. Rachel shared Sean’s reservation about digital learning:

It is sometimes not conducive for a communicative classroom because the students rely too much on texting. While it may be useful for their sentence construction in English—if only that were true, because they text in Japanese and some of them may use translation—but it is not a good way to learn writing in English. Plus, I am not sure how that is conducive for a communicative English curriculum.

Garret stressed that recent advancement in technology poses a dilemma for educators in connection with the use of digital tools in learning. He emphasized:

In university classes, which I teach, letting the students use smart technology is not a problem. But, I think there is a downtime between when you focus on something else,
and then you redirect your focus to the original thing. I think multitasking is not a good system. People can multitask, but it brings the degree of efficiency, the quality of everything that you are working on down. The amount you can learn decreases and students might miss important concepts. You want students to be engaged, and it hinders that.

Garret welcomed the use of digital technology in his classes “as long as it does not interfere with communication and student engagement.” He indicated that some instructors do not allow it as a matter of discipline and this would probably be resolved as devices’ design and function advances. Again, there was this deep concern present in his answers to see the students achieve critical thinking awareness and the ability to be a productive member of society.

Similarly, Sean seemed aware of the role of technology as he talked about it:

My use of online video files from the YouTube website helps the students visualize the reading. I put video clips several times in the semester as a source of input and generate active discussions in class. Also, they are required to do research on a given topic, and they are using Wikipedia as a starting point for their research topic. It is good surface information and gets them started. Then, I make them check out the online library journals and searches which have citable sources. They can do all of this on their iPads or iPhones or whatever smart technological device they possess. It’s efficient and generates a well-informed discussion. I don’t want to restrict their creativity in any way.

Sean examines his students’ interests and tries to generate new interest in a meaningful way. He is not a strong proponent of technology but tries to use it as a learning tool. As the participants veered towards social media and communication, they all had interesting ideas. Sean stated that “the number of social networking system (SNS) users have increased a lot
and we are seeing the impact of that on our students.” As he noted, “most students expect to use a digital device, to carry out an internet search when they write a paper or look for an appropriate website to practice a language skill. Moreover, we, too, use these same online opportunities to create and carry out our lessons.” He further added that we would be seeing more of its influence in coming years:

The rise of Facebook and Twitter have contributed to an increase in interest in language learning. Even though a lot of the posts are in Japanese, there has been progress in other things, for example, like curiosity about others, because whenever you press ‘like’ on a post, you start receiving more posts from that person or a newsgroup and translation feature helps them understand. In the program that I teach, for example, the tutoring program set up by study abroad students from the U.S., is set up in a Facebook page with schedule and event calendar. It has helped the students’ writing skills and given them the opportunity to meet up with English speaking peers.

Josh believed mobile-learning in conjunction with SNS is something educators should look at. He observed that in all his years of teaching, the changes that were taking place now within university and prior to university were amazing, because for the first time the impact of social media is being seen, not only on learning but also as a tool that is connecting young people around the world. He underscored that students prefer to get their assignments on mobile devices, tweet responses to their group projects, and make Facebook pages about their interests or projects, adding that these attitudes are changing the way we communicate with our students in and outside the classroom.

The participants shared their ideas about SNS but had varying opinions. John expressed his dismay at two forms of social media as not conducive to learning. He thought that it was not a dialogue when students are posting a photo or writing a sentence that will delete itself automatically and thought it did not do anything for social communication. John
claimed that some people say Twitter is an effective tool because students are encouraged to get to the point with limited characters. He rejected that by saying “maybe blogging is a much more useful tool and you could do that on Facebook or other blog apps.” He pointed out that Japanese users of Facebook, who used Facebook before it expanded and became popular in Japan, would likely carry on using English or Japanese with translation and expose their typically non-English-using Japanese friends to English on Facebook.

This exchange showed the level of digital use by the participants, especially, SNS and how the participants thought of using it as motivation and learning tool. Rachel pointed out the change in SNS in Japan during the major tsunami of 2011. She claimed that on March 11, 2011, when the earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, people experienced firsthand the advantages of using SNS to contact family and friends around the globe. She finds some merit to the usefulness of social media, “maybe a substantial portion of English collaborative project-based student work can be better coordinated with these things by sharing documents and linking videos or recordings.” Rachel admitted that because social media gave the students a chance to cooperate, it is an excellent teaching tool. Through social networks, EFL students could improve their literacy and receive a degree of motivation or stimuli from different backgrounds. They were encouraged, even if all they were doing was using the auto-translate function. Rachel saw it as helping to widen their cultural diversity. In most Japanese social contexts, few students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in English-language contexts. She suggested that surely this was an inexpensive way for Japanese English-language students to access an English-speaking community.

In her discussion about mobile learning in higher education, Kathy indicated that while her university provided free apps, their contents are primarily non-instructional, for example, news, event calendars, and maps. She said that for mobile-learning to succeed in higher education, it is necessary to understand the factors university students consider
important in the adoption of m-learning.

The participants’ knowledge and recognition of SNS and the impact of the mobile technology demonstrated that some of the richest learning environments might not be at all pedagogical in purpose. Social networks may be useful in foreign language learning, although it is not their target function; and it is the instructor’s choice to select those tools that are the most appropriate for implementing their pedagogical approach and to help develop those skills that best fit their teaching philosophy.

In summary, this reflection on communication in the new media age by all the participants shows both their reluctance and their willingness to engage in this new phenomenon. The participants discussed at length the aspects of e-learning that they utilize, and their reservations, as well as their dependence on it now.

The participants further discussed non-administrative e-learning systems’ usefulness, such as feedback on various student assignments, both written and oral; posting class assignments, reading assignments, and class daily summaries; putting up attachments, links, and video clips; and arranging discussion forums. They also talked about several CALL technologies that are applied to develop the four language skills speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Many CMC applications are used to transmit audio or video through audio and video conferencing or voiced bulletin boards. In addition, the participants used emails, which may be used as authentic tools in transferring information in English to enhance communicative skills. Digitized video and audio, TV, and radio programs available online provided an infinite source of authentic materials for Japanese university students. Participants said that apart from word processors, English writing in CALL might be enhanced via email, student-designed websites, PowerPoint presentations, weblogs, and wikis.

The participants had conflicting viewpoints on the usefulness of mobile devices in
education but acknowledged that their students preferred using mobile devices for assignments. They acknowledged that computers have changed from being a tool supporting individual learning to a machine that allows engagement in an authentic discourse with other users, facilitating interpersonal communication. They discussed social media as a tool that is gradually being used more and more and has great potential concerning application to teaching.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the findings from six semi-structured interviews with English-language professors in four different Japanese universities in the Tokyo and Kanagawa prefectures of Japan. The six participants shared their experiences of developing lesson plans and materials to cater to the English-language challenges of their Japanese university students, specifically reading, writing, communication, listening and ability to express opinions in discussion and debate. The participants described their expectations concerning the Japanese university students, taking note of the students’ previous schooling in a Confucian tradition, geared towards passing examinations and studying English only as a subject to study for the university entrance examination. It became evident that the participants would tailor their lessons to suit the class if the structured lessons did not match their teaching philosophy. These instructors made a point of expressing their autonomy as a significant element in motivation to implement the innovative curriculum with the goal to meet student expectations and satisfaction.

Finally, the participants were willing to use the university’s e-learning system as a tool to further advance their pedagogical agenda. None of them felt that it was a perfect system; however, all of them were of the view that administrative tasks have become simpler, and save precious time that could be used in other aspects of lesson planning. The next chapter will analyze the participants’ responses by going over the superordinate themes.
Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Findings

This research was guided by the following over-arching question:

**How do teaching beliefs of English language professors in Japan influence their pedagogy and teaching practices related to the use of technology for computer-mediated instruction?**

The above over-arching question included the following:

- What are the teaching beliefs held by university instructors who teach English-language courses in Japan?
- How do university English language instructors in Japan make sense of their beliefs as they develop or adopt pedagogical strategies and design teaching practices?
- How are these instructors influenced in their decisions about integrating technology in their practices and their courses?

Three superordinate themes emerged from analysis of the transcripts: 1) Influence of primary beliefs informs instructors’ pedagogical choices; 2) Instructors identified students as their motivational drivers for instructional strategy; and 3) Instructors articulated that the influence of instructor beliefs on the use of computer-mediated instruction in teaching/learning is substantial.

This chapter discusses each theme with a focus on how it connects to the various theories and extant literature, the significance and limitations of the findings, and the implications for the educational community.

**The Influence of Primary Beliefs Informs Instructors’ Pedagogical Choices**

The participants in this study provided their perceptions about their instructional capabilities, which informed their desires for pedagogical development in their overall teaching. All participants described important influences from their early educators and
attributed their teaching philosophy and styles to those influences. Their approaches and beliefs regarding foreign-language teaching grew out of those personal experiences. The participants emphasized their belief in creating critical thinking abilities in their students.

Three basic ways of understanding beliefs in studies to date were identified: (1) in normative studies, beliefs as opinions or generally inaccurate myths regarding ELT and learning; (2) in metacognitive studies, beliefs as metacognitive idiosyncratic knowledge or representations characterized by some personal commitment; and (3) in contextual studies, beliefs as ideas that are interrelated with contexts and experiences of participants. This third view is related to the present perspective in that both regard beliefs as a social and dynamic phenomenon (Barcelos, 2007). In a Vygotskian approach, beliefs are social in origin, but not merely social in a general sense. From this perspective, beliefs are socially historical, social in origin, but also dynamically and personally transformed in the process of internalization (De Guerrero, 2007; Donato, 2000; Riley, 2009). The participants in this study described beliefs as evolving processes. They also believed their personal stories had formed their initial beliefs.

The participants indicated that even though some core beliefs are stable, others are more changeable. Alanen (2003) stated that “beliefs are a very specific type of meditational means, or rather mediation-means-in-the-making” (p.65). In a sociocultural view of beliefs as meditational means, beliefs are both stable and changing. In this sense, beliefs as conceptual tools with psychological status are permeable, i.e., historically stable because of their social meaning but susceptible to change because of their contextual nature. Permeability allows for understanding beliefs as situated social ideas emergent in concrete activities (Kozulin, 1998). From a pedagogical point of view, when beliefs are productively constructed as meaning-based categories articulated through language and transformed by participants when engaged in sense-making activity, change
in beliefs is oriented. Beliefs as personal and meaningful conceptualizations are teachable but not through direct explanations and basic transmission. They are dynamic in a dialectical sense: changing and contradictory, orienting the significance of activity’ when applied in concrete contexts but not determining outcomes in a causal fashion. The contradictory relationship, and sometimes lack of correspondence, between our ideas and our actions, is not a problem in a dialectical sociocultural view of human thinking through language (Negueruela-Azarola, 2011).

As some of the participants noted, their earlier teaching ideas had very much to do with how they were taught but also not taught. Beliefs vary in strength and kind; the ease with which an instructor can change his/her beliefs is related to the strength of the beliefs under scrutiny. Stronger beliefs are those that are more central to an individual’s identity (Sandholtz, 2011), quite possibly because they were established during earlier experiences (Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, & Loef, 1989; Thomas, 2014). The more closely a given belief is functionally connected, or in communication with other beliefs, the more implications and consequences it has for other beliefs and, therefore, the more central the belief (Mellati & Khademi, 2015; Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer, 1992).

Some beliefs about the nature of teaching are formed over many years of experience as a student and are resistant to change because they have been supported by strong authority and broad consensus (Albion & Ertmer, 2002; Dwyer, Ringstaff, and Sandholtz, 1991). If this is true, then core beliefs about teaching will affect how new information about teaching is processed, including ideas related to teaching with technology (King, 2002).

The participants in this study were not certain about their teaching abilities. However, they were quite candid about the limitations and drawbacks in their teaching because they felt less prone to influence from either administrators or students and they admitted that it
is “not necessarily a good thing.”

Belief revision was described as highly subject to motivational influence and epistemological values. Even if presented with sound conflicting evidence, instructors would not be willing to change their affect-based beliefs but would be relatively willing to change their knowledge-based beliefs. The affect-based beliefs, by means of their lack of coherence with the conceptual framework, might be immune to threats posed by conflicting information. Any new information is likely to be changed, and if it is correctly comprehended, it will have little effect (Hart, Allensworth, Lauen, & Gladden, 2002). Similarly, this research also showed that participants were willing to adjust and adapt their knowledge-based beliefs. In like manner, it is possible that affect-based beliefs, because they are more intimately connected to our personal identities, reside in a more central position in the belief systems of the individuals, while knowledge-based beliefs, because they are less personal, exist somewhere on the periphery (Dwyer et al., 1991).

The centerpiece of the participants’ narrative is that beliefs do change. Although beliefs are not readily changed, this does not mean that they never change. One participant maintained that “beliefs change, not through argument or reason, but rather through a conversion process.” Another participant in this study discussed the “mistaken beliefs” and how those beliefs are reconciled or completely changed. The participants attributed the change to several factors, such as the influence of colleagues, feedback from instructional supervisors and students’ evaluations, class observations of other instructors, and results from past practice. For beliefs to change, individuals must be dissatisfied with their existing beliefs. This is most likely to happen when either existing beliefs are challenged, or new beliefs cannot be assimilated into existing conceptions (Albion & Ertmer, 2002). If a teacher education or professional development program is
to be successful at promoting belief change among instructors, it must require them to make their pre-existing personal beliefs explicit; it must challenge the adequacy of those beliefs; and it must give novices extended opportunities to examine, elaborate, and integrate new information into their existing belief systems (King, 2002). The participants’ narrative indicated that their graduate education shaped their teaching, often citing such professors as Dr. Rod Ellis and Dr. Paul Nation as their guiding sources in language education. In addition, the participants perceived their own abilities through the eyes of their peers, students, evaluations, feedbacks and own philosophy. Consequently, with nuance, they all pivoted towards the idea that attitude has been shaped by the influence of myriad actors, foremost among them being their personal role models, influence of peers and education philosophies: whether it was pragmatism of John Dewey, the critical analysis of Paulo Freire, or the progressivism of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner, they concurred that there need to be core beliefs to develop innovative pedagogy.

**Instructors Identified Students as Their Motivational Drivers for Instructional Strategy**

The instructors in this study were motivated to develop instructional strategies in response to their Japanese higher-education students’ characteristics, learning challenges, and their autonomy. The narratives of the participants’ responses showed a clear goal of student satisfaction through a variety of methods, such as adapting content, adjusting to the students’ interests, and tailoring the content carefully to interact in class, as well as purposeful encounters outside the class. This finding was reinforced by the participants’ narrative of arresting and lucid descriptions during the length of the interviewing process. This research finding reconfirmed the primary accepted conclusion in most studies on motivation for instructors, which is that the intrinsic rewarding factors are related to student success as witnessed by the instructor (Dornyei, 1994; Matsumoto, 2011; Scott et al., 2003; Tschannen-
Moran et al., 1998; Yunus et al., 2011; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). The participants in this study showed an overwhelming interest in student satisfaction with the course and their satisfaction upon witnessing the student understanding, such as a concept, conclusion to reading, or writing of an essay. Yunus et al. (2011), for instance, suggested that instructors learn about students’ individual needs since students come from various circumstances.

Equally important, the participants recognized having suppositions regarding and comprehension of their students’ characteristics and personalities. The instructors in this study showed that when making pedagogical decisions, they took into consideration the fact that the students were entering from a Confucian tradition (Shin, 2012) that would be a hindrance in English-language courses that are not taught merely to score points on an exam. The participants noted that Japanese students often are not able to write or discuss critically, citing traditions of collectivism and hierarchical traditions that inherently discourage students from developing a distinct identity or voice. Students are discouraged from writing and speaking explicitly because it goes against the wa (harmony) (Sakui & Cowie, 2008; Sakuragi, 2008). One participant, however, noted that the importance of critical thinking is stressed differently in Japan where social practices focus on collective concordance and compliance. It is a different way of learning (opposite to the Western approach of the tutor as facilitator), reflecting Confucian tradition in which students follow their tutor’s example in perfecting themselves. It was added that, traditionally, it has been important in Japan for the student to show an ability to listen and read without criticizing or evaluating, as opposed to reinforcing opposition, to find harmony in a comparison of opposing viewpoints (Tsjimoto, 2016).

The participants tried to introduce student autonomy whenever they could but found it to be challenging. The reasons were twofold, as the administrations in two of the participants’ universities were not helpful in giving such autonomy to the instructors since
lessons were in a structured format and lesson plans were not prepared by the participants (instructors). The instructors had to follow the lesson plans to the letter, although they were not keen on that and tried to adjust and tailor as much as they could to their students’ specific needs, based on cultural and social context. The findings supported Hartnett, St George, and Dron’s (2011) and Watt and Richardson’s (2007) writings regarding the scholarship on instructor motivation that had neglected the significance of contextual, cultural, or subject-specific implications. These researchers proposed finding out how instructors reasoned the specific context when deciphering any given motivation, rather than being uninvolved agents who responded to the same motivational factor in the same way in any particular situation.

Consistent with the finding in this study, the Karaman et al. (2012) study implied that language instructors had three different types of mental negotiations regarding the adoption of new pedagogy, with one being with students’ cultural identities. As in this study, the participants’ reference to the “Japanese characteristics” (perceived by the participants as Japanese society’s preference for cooperation, conformity, and responsibility) was a contributing factor for increased group work and project-based learning with them. Two of the participants, who had taught in higher education in China and the U.S., confirmed that they would have adopted different teaching strategies in the other countries. The participants admitted that adopting independent learning is preferable but that they adopted a measured approach that is suitable for achieving the best learning outcomes because of their Japanese students’ learning attitudes and characteristics. Often, as one of the instructors noted, “the teaching approach should be customized to fit the students, regardless of the preferences of the instructor.”

The participants’ inclination for pedagogical development did not as a matter, of course, involve searching for highly-innovative or current teaching approaches. The findings of this study are contrary to the positive association between higher instructor efficacy and
instructors’ willingness to adopt pedagogical innovations found in empirical research (Allinder, 1994; Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Newby et al., 2006; Stein & Wang, 1988). Three of the participants in this study had reservations about pedagogical innovation, not because they displayed lower levels of self-efficacy but because of their determination regarding their students’ learning preferences and needs. This finding affirms the role played by intellective negotiations (Karaman et al., 2012) and human agency (Pajares, 1996; Solberg et al., 1995) in instructors’ pedagogical decisions. Added research would be helpful in comprehending the meanings of instructors’ motivation to maintain certain teaching pedagogy, rather than labeling it a result of inadequate motivation or confidence.

In this study, several participants expressed the need for instructional adjustment or change when they found the lesson plan or material was not motivating or satisfying. To achieve the optimum outcome for their students, all six instructors in this study valued their autonomy, with varying degrees. They also did not disparage the administration of the programs in which they are teaching or the university administrators who set the overall tone. However, it was apparent that their autonomy was tied to their motivation to satisfy students. Two of the participants had mixed feelings about teaching based on standardized schedule and materials. They expressed negativity toward a curriculum that was incompatible or unsupportive of the instructors’ teaching values, and thus in some ways assisted in facilitating the adaptation of their teaching practices. One participant, however, completely rejected the idea of being given instructions to teach to a schedule and made it clear that such would be a demotivating approach for his teaching and stifle creativity as well as inspiration.

The participants also provided their perceptions of Japanese university students’ character, the disposition to an agreement, and aversion to expressing opinions. They also recognized their shortcomings regarding creating the material selection that would be contextually appropriate for their students. The participants articulated their belief that out-
of-class student-instructor communication is as important as in-class communication. They all expressed a social responsibility to help develop the minds of their students as critical thinkers, albeit in an English-language context. In addition, two participants acknowledged their teaching roles as fostering civility in their students as a goal. Participants were energized in their role of overcoming students’ academic challenges, but they also wanted to ensure that students are prepared to enter the Japanese workforce in an increasingly globalized economy. They wanted the students to have a good command of English because it would create more opportunities for them.

**Instructors Articulated That the Influence of Instructor Beliefs on the Use of Computer-Mediated Instruction in Teaching/Learning Is Substantial**

Instructors’ pedagogical lives are the key to discovering the approach towards using or not using technology in the class. Their teaching practices may depend on how they, as individuals, perceive the effectiveness of technology (AbuSeileek, 2012; DelliCarpini, 2012; Hong, 2010; Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007; Mama & Hennessy, 2013; Mueller, Wood, Willoughby, Ross, & Specht, 2008; Nim & Son, 2009; O’Connor, 2007; Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Glazewski, Newby, & Ertmer, 2010; Palak & Walls, 2009; Zhao and Cziko, 2001). This perception gives a central role to influences on instructors’ lives and practices as they develop their strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The complexity of this lies in the fact that issues that instructors consider to be beneficial uses of technology in the English-language classroom may not necessarily reflect a meaningful use of technology or lead to successful integration of technology.

Participants in this study were of the view that learning management systems (LMS) are driving the narrative on computer-mediated instruction, but all shared their reservations about the gains in students’ learning from it. Various topics were brought up by the participants as they talked about their teaching approaches and student engagement. The
participants were supportive of collaborative learning (CSCL) and some of them had used assessment tools. The participants were of the view that the use of digital technology for educational purposes, including second and foreign language learning, is rapidly expanding. All the instructors indicated that there are probably few higher-education institutions in Japan that do not use LMS in which students can register for courses, check their curriculum, download materials, and take quizzes or tests online.

However, the participants’ responses indicated that it is not clear whether digital technology is used to the same degree in assessing outcomes as it is in creating learning and teaching opportunities. As Twyman (2014) suggested, “there have been historical barriers to assessment including difficulties in simultaneously teaching and measuring (p. 104); and it can be very challenging for instructors to carry out the twin roles of teaching and assessing. Two participants in this study were of the view that it is important to see if there are affordances of technology for assessment that can be taken advantage of, particularly since e-learning has the potential for almost instantaneous feedback and adjustment of learning tasks and activities.

In linking technology and assessment, it appears that there are at least two main challenges facing English-language instructors. The first is that instructors need to learn “technology fluency” (Godwin-Jones, 2015, p.11) to use digital tools for assessment in general; and the second challenge is that the use of technology in language learning is leading to a number of new skills and knowledge areas, such as digital collaboration, that need to be assessed. One participant elaborated that technology of various kinds has been in language learning for many years and has gradually changed as the technology itself has evolved. Another participant pointed out that many veteran language instructors will probably have memories of working in language laboratories with rows of students using headphones to listen to and repeat dialogues on tape. More recently, instructors have begun to use virtual
environments to teach students whom they never met face to face. Yet other instructors encourage their students to communicate, collaborate and create digital projects using various kinds of interactive Web 2.0 tools and applications. The examples include a collaborative text making application, a collaborative notice board for brainstorming and sharing, and a blogging and website creation software. Students use laptops, tablets, and especially smartphones (Dogoriti, Pange, & Anderson, 2014; Martin & Ertzberger, 2013; Pegrum, 2014) to access all kinds of language-learning applications from online dictionaries to speech recognition software automated writing feedback.

The participants expressed conflicting thoughts and some reluctance in using social networking systems (SNS) but noted that users continue to increase among Japanese university students. There is a growing body of research concerning the application of SNSs in language teaching as students enhance their use of it (Brenner & Smith, 2013; Hockly, 2011). Numerous studies reveal that social networking technology has the potential to enhance language acquisition and increase students’ motivation and engagement (Hsu, 2013; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Khoshnoud & Karbalaei, 2014). Three participants in this study were of the view that limited text has positive and adverse effects on students’ writing. It is a good practice for trying to get their message across in a concise way and good for project-based learning, but at the same time, it limits their ability to write longer text that would develop their writing skills. The instructors thought that blogging is a good way for writing practice and group interaction.

**Implication for Practice**

This research study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the influence of English-language instructors’ beliefs about pedagogical strategies and their technology use in EFL classrooms. Consequently, it provides information for faculty members and their institutions about the alignment or misalignment between instructors’ pedagogical beliefs,
practice, and technology. The findings of this study are relevant to faculty members, higher-education administrators, curriculum developers, and teaching programs, in that they indicate areas for pedagogical development in the digital age. Several points emerged from this study as put forth by the interviewees.

There was an overwhelming agreement among the participants concerning assisting their Japanese students in identifying and prevailing over their English-language deficiencies, and this was one of the instructors’ motivations to improve their teaching. All the participants showed concern at the Confucian-founded cultural expectation of education delivery based on a testing culture. As three of the participants observed, the present university entrance examination system is not conducive to communicative English preparation. It hampers university students’ chances of succeeding in English language courses. This shortcoming occurs because the teaching of English, a subject that appears on all college entrance examinations, relies on the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or a variation of it, “translation reading,” called yakudoku in Japan (Gorsuch, 1998). In yakudoku, classes are taught primarily in Japanese. They are heavily teacher-centered and focus on translation techniques of complex English passages resembling those appearing on college entrance examinations (Gorsuch, 1998). Thus, the grammar training method, or GTM, is maintained in the Japanese system primarily because of its convenience and applicability to the students’ main motivation for studying English, which is to pass entrance examinations with English sections involving reading and translation of dense, authentic academic texts (McVeigh, 2002; Stewart, 2009). With this backdrop, instructors at the university level are faced with students who have been taught in English-language classrooms designed for test taking rather than for meaning-focused, social communication. Consequently, there needs to be a re-thinking of the university entrance examination system. The university entrance exam English score is the primary criterion for placement of students
into suitable class levels at the university. That said, however, English-language faculty in higher education could be informed of students’ strengths, and weaknesses before the students begin their university studies. Institutions could then devise suitable instructional methods and materials.

In addition to the university level, this approach would have implications at the elementary and secondary levels, as well, where communicative English could be taught with a constructivist approach. This would enhance students’ critical thinking and understanding, which would advantage them in their language acquisition and understanding, as well as when they prepare for and enter the university.

The participants in this study perceived that helping their students overcome language weaknesses was a motivation for their pedagogical development. They pointed out their students’ preferences for informal communication channels and the importance of an amicable instructor-student relationship. An online teaching and learning platform tailored for each English-language course would allow instructors to have personalized communication with every registered student in the course. One or two weeks of the semester where on-site learning or on-campus lessons take place could be set aside for virtual meetings using various online platforms between the course instructor and the students. Through this method, the instructors and the students would not find it an extra burden to participate in the online platform, but regard it as a substitute for the face-to-face class meeting time. Through casual conversations in the online meetings, the instructor would be able to learn about the students’ specific challenges and weaknesses in learning EFL or other English course material and recommend change methods and resources customized for each student. In that case, university instructors could also design corresponding activities or exercises to measure their students’ learning outcomes. For example, EFL students who are weak in speaking tasks could be asked to upload an oral commentary on a news report for
teachers to assess, while students weak in writing tasks could produce a written commentary instead. The students ought to feel much more comfortable with this form of sharing with their instructors their needs in learning EFL than doing so in a physical environment with 20 classmates present. Instructors who seek to satisfy students’ psychological needs are likely to find support in this study’s findings, where all participants remarked that they changed their teaching practices to make their students feel fulfilled.

Analysis of the participants’ views on manageable class sizes showed that the number of students in English-language classes should be limited to fewer than 20 to provide greater interaction with students. Some universities are trying to do this in Skype format, and it would benefit in-person classes as well. In addition, as pointed out by the participants in this study, the 90-minute class duration in Japanese universities should be reexamined, and its effect on teaching and learning studied.

University administrators at the departmental level could contribute toward enhancing faculty members’ motivation by granting their instructors more autonomy in curriculum design and development. One participant in the study acknowledged that he had experimented with his preferred teaching practices and methods within the constraints of the pre-set curriculum. Findings in this study suggest that course coordinators need to allow more flexibility concerning the adoption of assigned teaching materials if instructors follow the same grading rubric criteria and deadlines for assessment. The program coordinators or instructional supervisors could transmit this guideline with panel instructors in an orientation meeting prior to the start of the semester. They would need to set parameters and convey the message that certain adaptations will be allowed to the pre-set curriculum and the development of new instructional strategies. Online forums for each course could be established to facilitate instant communication and exchanges of new or revised teaching strategies among the instructors. The coordinators could also construct and maintain a course
database archiving instructional practices, activities, and materials contributed by instructors so that instructors in the future could benefit from these innovational strategies. Principally, as an incentive, instructors’ participation in the online forums and contributions to the database could be acknowledged as part of their professional development.

Whereas the infrastructure in higher-education institutions was perceived as adequate by participants in this study, information and communication technology (ICT) use was limited. Language instructors’ attitudes related to computer-mediated language-learning resources were positive, and participants were keen on using a foreign-language platform that would improve ICT integration in educational settings; however, they believed that ICT tools are time-consuming and not teacher-friendly.

Participants in the study acknowledged the support for professional development provided through funds to attend professional conferences, but they were dismissive of departmental practices that were meant to facilitate pedagogical development, indicating that the seminars and workshops organized did not meet instructor needs. Higher-education administrators, and particularly those in charge of instructors’ professional development, could pursue ways to collect faculty preferences for formats, topics, and speakers for educational seminars and workshops.

Equally important, the participants were of the view that university-sponsored professional development was insufficient. A recurring theme in the interviews was that professional development was found to be effective when it was long-term or ongoing for the participants; short, infrequent workshops with a little focus on continued support were not viewed as effective. The participants believed time is a challenge but also a requirement for effective development. The use of technology mentors may be necessary to provide adequate in-depth, long-term involvement. By providing this kind of assistance, the university would be sending a message to all faculty that instructors are welcome to refine, retool, or simply
train in learning management software (LMS) utilization at their own convenience, without any pressure or fear of adverse consequences.

While the results of this study have highlighted the lack of opportunities for instructors to critically reflect on their practices, they have also revealed important barriers that are preventing the establishment of collaborative environments, which may be essential to the process. For belief evaluation and pedagogical modifications, instructors could be provided with collaborative opportunities where they can talk to and learn from each other, negotiate what meaningful use of technology may represent, and critically reflect on their experiences.

University professional development programs may need to explore ways to assist instructors to comprehend the use of technology better and facilitate the integration of computer-assisted learning into the curriculum. Thus, they could incorporate technology into their instructional practices.

The importance of the study on EFL instructors’ perceptions of the role of computer technology is twofold. First, the findings provide an understanding of why and how language instructors could integrate computers into their teaching practices. Since it has not been clearly identified how EFL instructors perceive the use of computers in classroom instruction, the findings would lead to the anticipation and understanding of their integration of computer-mediated language learning into classrooms.

Second, the findings may facilitate the development of teacher preparation programs in educational technology. Understanding teachers’ perceptions, needs, or interests regarding computer-mediated instruction will provide valuable input for the design and structure of teacher education programs. Finally, the goal of this study was to explore which factors influence the teacher’s beliefs that could contribute to pedagogical innovation by English language instructors in higher education in Japan as it relates to computer-mediated teaching.
and learning.

**Implications for Research**

This study’s use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the research methodology supports existing literature that calls for a qualitative or interpretivist paradigm to explore instructors’ pedagogical beliefs through their lived experiences. An IPA study where both university instructors and their students are interviewed could also provide a window onto the similarities and differences of their interpretations on implementing an instructional practice. In that way, practice efficacy could be judged by examining the perspectives of the two most important players in the classroom.

As suggested by this research study, the influence of the Confucian tradition in Japanese education and the possible link to technology use could be further explored in-depth. This research introduced the topic, which needs to be thoroughly investigated. Another issue of importance that this research broached upon was the 90-minute class period in the Japanese university and its conduciveness to learning with technology. More research is needed on this essential subject for instructors and students, as well.

The relationship between foreign-language teaching and the context of higher education has not been fully explored in studies on English language instructors’ beliefs. Consequently, this study adds to the current research literature regarding the perspectives of university English language instructors and their pedagogical beliefs in making teaching decisions when addressing higher-education students’ learning needs and satisfaction. On the other hand, the findings are not reflective of the experiences of instructors of other subject areas, such as psychology and business. Further research could compare the motivation and pedagogical beliefs of instructors of major subjects with those of electives or other required subjects, such as Japanese language and other general education classes in universities in Japan.
Similar studies could be conducted with different instructor populations and at various types of educational institutions. All participants in this study addressed time allocation as a concern in an instructor’s pedagogical development. However, the six participants are full-time professors who are being assessed based on their research. It is logical to assume that their interpretation of time and motivational beliefs differ substantially from adjunct faculty members who do not have research and publication commitments but have other time allocation issues resulting from adjunct contracts. In addition, since the six participants in this study are native English speakers, accounts from Japanese English-language instructors, teaching Japanese university students in English-language classrooms could provide important additional insight.

The participants in this study accounted for the specific motivational forces, learning needs, computer-mediated instruction, attitudes and the need to attend to the satisfaction of their students in universities in Tokyo and Kanagawa. Future research could be conducted on comparing the findings of this study to research participants working in different types of universities, such as public universities outside the Kanto region of Japan, their affiliated two-year colleges, and other institutions in other countries.

Furthermore, the higher-education culture has a profound impact on instructors’ beliefs as well as instructional practices. For technology to be successfully implemented as it is conceived within the constructivist paradigm, administrators and instructors must share compatible visions about the role that technology integration represents in EFL education. Therefore, future research is needed to uncover administrators’ beliefs about computer-mediated instruction so that administrators’ and instructors’ attitudes could be compared and potential gaps identified. More research is needed to gauge instructors’ attitudes toward technology integration better and provide university program administrators with what they need to be successful.
Conclusion

The fundamental, over-arching research question in this study was: **How do teaching beliefs of English language professors in Japan influence their pedagogy and teaching practices related to the use of technology for computer-mediated instruction?**

This research sought to understand the lived experiences of English-language instructors, to what extent they make sense of their teaching beliefs, and how those beliefs influence their pedagogical strategies as they impact the practice of using and teaching with technology.

Instructors’ beliefs were formed through their lived experiences. The Japanese students’ learning needs and the participants’ desire to satisfy those needs played a substantial part in their pedagogical development as instructors who sought to create purposeful educational opportunities for their students. The participants could harness motivation through their life experiences and adopt similar practices to develop teaching that they believed would produce outcomes of their choice. However, they also avoided using strategies that they had experienced if those had resulted in negative connotations for them. Participants had some influence exerted from departmental curricular lesson planning. However, the influence exerted was not consequential and the participants were able to adapt the lesson to suit their class, to fulfill expectations, and satisfy student needs. Because of their strong statements concerning lesson planning and independence to achieve those goals, instructor autonomy played a substantial role in their pursuit of pedagogical innovation.

English-language instructors’ use of technology revealed that many factors influence the use of computer technology in their classrooms. There is a complicated relationship between technologies for classroom instruction and the knowledge on how to design effective and coherent lessons. Some participants believed in the meaningful use of technology, and others acknowledged that they did not completely grasp the role of
technology in the English-language curriculum. All the participants were clear on the construction of knowledge as a dynamic process that required the active engagement of the students as the instructor created an effective learning environment. This study indicates personal beliefs are central to instructors’ decision-making processes regarding technology use and integration. In addition, student satisfaction plays a major role in computer-mediated instruction as instructors try to integrate what the students desire in learning and what will motivate them, which in turn motivates the instructors to develop pedagogical strategies.

The findings of this study are important because they contribute additional knowledge to the body of literature on university language instructor’s beliefs that are developed through motivational driving forces. Despite the centrality and importance of instructors’ beliefs, relatively few studies have investigated the instructors’ beliefs that would provide insight into understanding instructor cognition or their implicit beliefs about the ability to teach using technology. Even though the scholarship on positive and negative motivation for instructors is available, the extant literature has not narrowed down on how instructors assign meaning to each when performing the practice of teaching. Accordingly, this research will advance the understanding of how instructors’ self-efficacy beliefs influenced their interpretations of motivational factors. These factors may be essential in finding the technology to promote students’ learning engagement in and outside the classroom.
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