

【論文】

## Exploring the Challenges of Team Teaching: Perspectives from Pre-service Teachers and an International Student

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ティーム・ティーチングにおける課題探究  
—教職課程在籍の学生と留学生の視点から—

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**Abstract** : This study explores participation in collaborative teaching practices through the perspectives of university students and one of the authors, an international student from Brazil. The research employed an autoethnographic approach where the international student was an author of the paper as well as a participant. The present study included administering a questionnaire to the university students in Eigo A course, one of the elective courses for the third-year students to capture their experiences, and an interview with the international student. The findings reinforce the importance of fostering mutual understanding through collaborative interactions. The analysis also revealed key components of team teaching, including strategic elements between the teachers such as building rapport, negotiating, making small talk, and paraphrasing. These insights highlight areas of potential interest in various teacher certificate courses, and show options for enhancing the confidence and preparedness of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the study identified issues raised by the students concerning role delineation in team teaching practices. In conclusion, this paper sheds light on the essential components of team teaching and their potential applicability to teacher certificate courses. It offers valuable insights into addressing the challenges faced by pre-service teachers, as perceived by Bunkyo University students and one of the authors.

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Japanese Teachers of English (hereafter, JTEs) have been engaged in team teaching with Assistant Language Teachers (hereafter, ALTs) for over four decades in Japan. The demand for ALTs has seen a steady rise, especially since the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter, MEXT) introduced the English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization in 2014. The plan outlined the process for fully integrating English into the elementary school curriculum by 2020. In response to globalization, the new curriculum emphasizes the development of communication skills and encourages students to take on a more active role in the learning rather than a grammar-focused and teacher-centered model.

In these reforms, there is substantial emphasis on the expectations placed upon JTEs and ALTs. However, there remains a lack of practical pre- or in-service training sessions for JTEs and ALTs (Hougham et al., 2017). This deficiency not only impacts the quality of English classes but also hinders the implementation of more effective team-teaching practices.

To address these challenges, researchers have proposed comprehensive measures aimed at enhancing team teaching. One effective approach involves organizing training sessions and workshops for both JTEs and ALTs (Hougham et al., 2017). These sessions equip teachers with valuable team-teaching strategies and collaborative skills. Another measure suggested by Ohtani (2010) is providing clear role definitions for JTEs and ALTs as these can foster collaboration and exploration of individual strengths. Raising awareness of sociocultural and socioeducational differences can contribute to a respectful and inclusive teaching environment (Tsuido et al., 2012). Furthermore, providing sufficient time for JTEs and ALTs to communicate with each other and participate in joint training sessions can facilitate ongoing improvement (Kano et al., 2016). Establishing these

foundations is fundamental for creating a conducive team-teaching environment that enriches the learning experience for everyone involved.

In response to these considerations, the first author of this paper, Watanabe, incorporated team teaching into Eigo A. International students proficient in English, be it native or non-native speakers, are invited to participate as an ALT whereas the Japanese pre-service teachers take on the role of JTEs. This collaborative learning approach seeks not only to enhance students' cooperative teaching skills and improve English communication skills but also to facilitate cultural exchange.

In 2022, the second author, da Silva, one of the international students, was invited to help out with team teaching practice sessions. Da Silva was an ESL teacher in Brazil, and was asked to take part in the lessons as an ALT, and during these interactions, the Eigo A students and da Silva shared the challenges they encountered and their subsequent thoughts on the experience.

This paper aims to analyze the benefits and challenges identified through student responses to a questionnaire and an interview conducted with the international student. The study intends to offer insights into enhancing Eigo A and other teacher certificate courses to better prepare Japanese students for team teaching with ALTs. To achieve this objective, the study seeks to find how Eigo A students and the international student find their engagement in team teaching, and how Eigo A course can prepare the students to teach and interact with ALTs.

In the following sections, the paper explores the historical background of ALTs in Japan, tracks the evolution of their roles over time, and assesses the overall issues between JTEs and ALTs through a comprehensive literature review. The subsequent sections detail the present study, followed by a discussion of the findings and concluding remarks.

## Literature review

### Historical background of ALTs in Japan

According to MEXT (1994), the origin of contemporary team teaching in Japan can be traced back to 1977 when the Japanese government initiated the Monbusho English Fellows Program, involving young Americans who assisted at prefectural boards of education and the British English Teachers Scheme in the following year, which also included team teaching at junior and senior high schools. The JET Programme emerged from these two programs in 1987 (MEXT, 1994).

As the program was motivated less by pedagogical considerations than by concessions to address a trade deficit with the United States (McConnell, 2000), few opportunities were taken to adequately prepare for the arrival of the ALTs, including in its early stages, inadequate research to establish its effectiveness as an educational innovation (Martin, 2010). Over the past 40 years, a clear need became evident for JTEs and ALTs to receive pedagogical guidance and adequate preparation for how to collaborate effectively in the classroom.

### Evolution of the roles of ALTs over time

Over time, the roles and expectations of ALTs expanded. They are now expected to take on a more interactive and communicative teaching approach, and engage students in real-life conversational practice. They are also asked to play a key role in creating a dynamic and immersive English learning environment in the classroom. Moreover, ALTs became increasingly involved in planning and actively team teaching with JTEs, and they are encouraged to collaborate closely with the JTEs to design engaging and effective lessons incorporating both Japanese and English elements (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The Role of Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) in Team Teaching as Generally Conceived by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT, 2011)**

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<b>Before Class</b>	<p>Based on the instructional plan and lesson plans created by the JTE (teacher in charge), ALTs engage in meetings to discuss the lesson and assist in creating teaching materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the objectives and content of the class.</li><li>• Grasping the teaching procedure, roles in teaching, and teaching materials.</li><li>• Assisting in the creation of teaching materials.</li></ul>
<b>During Class</b>	<p>Under the guidance of the teacher in charge, ALTs assist in conducting the class.</p> <p>(Examples of ALT roles)</p> <p>Assisting in teaching language activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Giving explanation, advice, and feedback.</li><li>• Providing language models.</li><li>• Checking and providing guidance on pronunciation, expression, grammar, etc.</li><li>• Talking with students.</li><li>• Providing information about their native language and culture, etc.</li></ul>
<b>After Class</b>	<p>Along with the JTE, ALTs evaluate their own work and discuss improvement methods.</p> <p>* Assistance as mentioned above also includes instances where ALTs and the JTE cooperate in sharing roles based on the instructional plan and lesson plans created by the latter. In such cases, it should be noted that, according to the School Education Law, the JTE is responsible for leading the entire class.</p>

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The fixed roles of JTEs and ALTs have been extensively explored in various studies, including Sonoda's (2020) survey, which investigated the perceptions of JTEs and ALTs regarding their respective roles. Sonoda's (2020) analysis (2020) revealed a distinct presence of fixed roles, for instance JTEs teaching grammar and assisting with translation, while ALTs focused on teaching about culture and demonstrating pronunciation. At the same time, the findings demonstrated a direct relationship between increased interaction of the ALTs with the JTEs and a corresponding rise in the ALTs' engagement in other responsibilities.

The subject of debate encompasses not only the role but also the interaction among all the involved parties: the JTE, the ALT, and the students. Tajino and Tajino (2000) advocate for decentralizing classrooms and propose the term "team learning" rather than "team teaching". They suggest "team learning" as it emphasizes fostering students' ability to learn autonomously, moving away from a teacher-centered approach and promoting inclusive learning for all. They also proposed various roles JTEs and ALTs can play in the classroom.

Marchesseau (2015) summarizes Tajino and Tajino's (2015) proposal on different possible interaction patterns by providing some examples: Pattern A illustrates a conventional arrangement where the teacher assumes a central authoritative role and imparts knowledge to the students. In contrast, in Pattern B, the emphasis lies on active student participation, with interaction flowing from the students towards the ALT, fostering collaborative efforts between the JTE and the students. In Pattern C, cooperative engagement is entailed between the ALT and students. In Pattern D, the class is divided into two groups, with one group participating in activities with the ALT, while the other half engages with the JTE. Lastly, Pattern E necessitates the involvement of all participants collectively working towards a shared goal that encompasses communication with individuals external to the class.

Taking into account the aforementioned changes, it is evident that the

expectations for ALT roles have evolved beyond teaching to embrace a student-centered approach, emphasizing learning over mere instruction. In addition, achieving this student-centered approach depends on the collaboration between the JTE and the ALT.

### **Communication challenges between JTEs and ALTs**

Recent studies on the JTE-ALT relationship and classroom dynamics have examined various issues that arise when JTEs and ALTs work together in the classroom. Ohtani (2010) mentions the importance of communication for successful team teaching, and emphasizes the necessity for clear and defined roles to prevent confusion and duplication of effort. Furthermore, Tsuido et al. (2012) discussed how cultural differences can present communication challenges for JTEs and ALTs, implying a lack of cross-cultural training could inhibit collaboration.

For effective communication, establishing rapport is crucial for fostering strong professional relationships. The concept of rapport has attracted the interest of researchers in linguistic and management disciplines, notably those by Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002, 2005) and Holmes (2000). They argue the importance of relational dynamics through the concept of rapport and the comprehensive examination of harmonious interpersonal interactions.

Charles (2008) asserts that small talk, as a facet of English-mediated interactions among cross-cultural peers, holds significance in cultivating international communication skills. It is through ordinary interaction that interpersonal relations are built, and these prove essential in a collaborative working environment. Intercultural communication competence is essential in this case because JTEs and ALTs hold differing cultural understandings and expectations about the minutiae of ordinary social conduct. It bears mentioning that there is a discrepancy when it comes to the importance of small talk. In Western cultures, small talk is seen as a way to build rapport and familiarity while

in contrast, in Japanese professional circles, sharing personal information in a workplace setting is typically approached differently. This is also discussed in “Introduction to Team Teaching with Elementary School English ALTs: 'Rules' and 'Tips' for Collaborative Education”, a book written by Oka et al (2022), highlighting the cultural nuances that challenge rapport development between JTEs and ALTs.

To summarize, overall, recent research has drawn attention to the importance for JTEs and ALTs of effective communication and collaboration, clear and consistent roles, and adequate training and support to maximize the benefits of team teaching and improve student learning outcomes.

## **Present study**

### **Theoretical framework**

This study employed autoethnography, a methodology which “involves using the researcher’s own life experiences as data for theoretical analysis” (Crawley, 2012, p. 146) and is also informed by the principle of collaborative research, which aims at producing scholarship where the voices, ideas, and views of various parties are represented (Christianakis, 2010). Through the lenses of a participant and a researcher, autoethnography delves into multiple consciousnesses of self and sheds light on the personal story of the author and its meaning in the larger cultural context (Creswell, 2013). In this study, one of the authors, da Silva, was also a participant while the other author, Watanabe, was in charge of teaching Eigo A. Our study also undertook collaborative research, which is described by Freeman (2004) as research that “suggests a lack of formal hierarchy among the players, a sense of mutual openness to the ideas and proposals of others, and an element of shared purpose” (p.122). Approaching the study through the principle of collaborative research was crucial, as we, Watanabe, a teacher at the university and da Silva, a student, engaged in the study as co-researchers.

## Context

Eigo A was used as the course where team teaching is practiced. This elective course is designed for third-year students aiming to enhance integrative communication skills and cognitive abilities. Offered twice a week during the spring semester, Eigo A includes sub-courses relevant to students' future careers. Specifically tailored for those aspiring to become English language teachers, the course focuses on teaching various classroom English phrases and provides opportunities for hands-on practice through demonstration lessons.

In the academic year of 2022, da Silva received an invitation to join Eigo A to play the role of an ALT for one of the demonstration lessons scheduled in the course. In this semester, the number of the students enrolled in the course was 23 and the majority of the students in the course wished to be English language teachers in pre-tertiary educational institutions. The demonstration lessons were scheduled from July 5th, July 12th, July 19th, to July 25th and he participated in the lessons as a guest on those dates.

The participants in the study were these third-year students who enrolled in Eigo A. As the new Course of Study (MEXT, 2017), which implementation started in 2020, underlines the use of English in the English language lessons, the students seem to feel a compelling need to brush up on their classroom English especially when team teaching with an ALT.

### **Author positioning**

As the study employed an autoethnography approach, the backgrounds of the authors are briefly introduced. Watanabe is one of the teachers at the department of English Language and Literature. She has taught Eigo A for several years and has invited international students to play the role of an ALT in the demonstration lessons conducted in Eigo A in the past. In Watanabe's past experiences of

having students enrolled in the teacher certificate program to team teach with international students as ALTs, she observed the benefits for both parties: for the students enrolled in the course, team teaching offered opportunities to interact with an international student with different linguistic and cultural background; for the international students, utilizing their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, team teaching offered an alternative avenue to be a member of the university community.

In 2022, da Silva arrived in Japan and enrolled in the Special Japanese Language Course (留学生別科) offered by Bunkyo University. This course is designed for international students aspiring to pursue higher education at Japanese universities or graduate schools. Administered by the Foreign Student Department, the program aims to provide international students with proficiency in the Japanese language and other essential skills. Before joining this course, da Silva worked as an English language teacher in Brazil for approximately 13 years, teaching English as a foreign language at multiple language schools. Therefore, in support of the selected approach, Watanabe felt that it would be of benefit to include da Silva's insights and interpretations not only as a participant but as a co-researcher in the analysis to explore team teaching from different perspectives.

### **Research questions**

This study explores the following research questions:

1. How do the pre-service teachers feel about Eigo A classes in which they can practice team teaching with an ALT (an international student) and how do these attitudes impact their effectiveness in the classroom?
2. How does an international student feel about the involvement in Eigo A as an ALT?
3. How can Eigo A classes prepare the students to navigate potential cultural and linguistic differences with ALTs?

## **Procedures**

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, prior to the team teaching demonstrations, Watanabe and da Silva demonstrated several types of team teaching activities that can be conducted between a JTE and an ALT. Then, the students were given an instruction of the team teaching demonstrations with da Silva. The demonstrations were 10 minutes long and the students were encouraged to focus on ensuring collaborative involvement of the ALT, that is, not just asking the ALT to read the passages from the textbook and lead pronunciation practices. The evaluation criteria were: voice clarity and animation, eye contact, use of classroom English, student involvement, coordination with an ALT, and three improvement goals set by each individual student. In preparation for team teaching, the students were given the following guidelines:

1. Focus on one grammar point which has been allocated among the students,
2. make a lesson plan in English,
3. contact the ALT via email to schedule a meeting, and
4. explain and discuss the teaching plan at the meeting while making an effort to use English in the discussion.

The students were asked to coordinate with the ALT, but they had to play the main role in the demonstration. Each student contacted da Silva and they met both face-to-face and online to discuss the lesson plans. The total amount of time da Silva spent outside the lessons with all the students was approximately 5 hours and 45 minutes. With each student, he spent approximately 15 minutes.

Team teaching demonstrations in the lessons were video recorded, and after viewing their own demonstration, each student completed a self-evaluation sheet (see Appendix 1). In the first week of August, they were asked to respond to an open-ended questionnaire on Google Forms (see Appendix 2) about their team teaching experience. The questions were stated in English, but the students had the choice to respond in Japanese or in English.

In the same month, in order to explore his perspectives as a participant, da Silva was interviewed by Watanabe about his experience of being an ALT. The interview was conducted in English for about 30 minutes, and was recorded and was subsequently transcribed for analysis. The survey responses were used as a basis for prompts and reflections within the interview.

### Data Analysis

As we employed autoethnography and conducted collaborative research, da Silva, as well as being the participant in the study, engaged in the data analysis with Watanabe. The first stage of data analysis occurred ahead of the interview, with the authors collating the survey responses for each question and using these as the basis for discussion in the interview. A more formal analysis was conducted with reference to the survey and interview transcripts. In this stage, a thematic analysis (Mackey & Gass, 2012) was conducted, in which themes were identified through survey and interview comments that related to the research questions. These were identified inductively through cycles of examining and re-examining the data and drawing connections between comments made. The authors' own reflections were refined through this iterative process and incorporated into the analysis.

### Findings and Discussion

The number of respondents to the questionnaire was 18 out of 23 students. Most students responded in Japanese, which was translated to English by Watanabe. Table 2 presents the themes that emerged from the analysis, with illustrative quotations. Responses that referred to different themes were counted separately.

**Table 2. Themes Generated from the Questionnaire**

Questions	Collated responses	Number of responses
1. Please write down what you have learned/found from the interaction with Ricardo san outside of the lessons.	Planning a lesson: e.g. how to enhance interests and learning of students, preparation is necessary before negotiation.	8
	Speaking in English: e.g. I can make myself understood, importance of speaking without worrying about making mistakes.	6
	Teaching a lesson: e.g. importance of coordination.	2
	Others: e.g. different culture, writing email, importance of eye contact.	7
2. Please write down what you learned/found from doing teamteaching with Ricardo san during the lesson.	Importance of planning.	3
	Difficulty of making the best of teaching with an ALT.	2
	Importance of incorporating cultural aspects.	2
	Importance of cooperation with an ALT.	2
	Others: e.g. using gestures, importance of coordinating the tone of voice, importance of spontaneity, difficult to divide roles, etc.	9
3. Please write down how you felt about using English with Ricardo san.	With the help of Ricardo, I was able to communicate.	6
	Felt that I need to study English more.	5
	Positive aspects of team-teaching: e.g. enjoyable, enhances students' interests.	3
	Happy to know that I was able to make myself understood.	2
	Opportunities for using English.	1
4. Do you feel that team-teaching has led to an increase in self-confidence in teaching in English? If so, please elaborate.	Yes.	14
	In use of English.	9
	Not teaching by oneself.	4
	Enjoyable.	3
	Intercultural understanding.	3
No.	4	
5. Please write down any suggestions for improvement of team-teaching with an international student.	Having more time for planning.	4
	Having more time to talk with an international student.	2
	Others: e.g. incorporate topics relevant to the ALT, scheduling.	11

In response to the research questions, we will examine how pre-service teachers perceive their experience in Eigo A classes, where they engage in team teaching with an ALT (an international student), and explore the impact of these attitudes on classroom effectiveness (RQ 1). Additionally, we will investigate the perspectives of the international student serving as an ALT in Eigo A classes (RQ 2). Finally, we will present suggestions regarding focusing on preparing students to navigate potential cultural and linguistic differences with ALTs (RQ 3), which might be relevant to team teaching with ALTs in pre-tertiary institutions in Japan as well as improving the Eigo A course.

### **Communication with an ALT**

Based on the responses from the students, we could say that they found that communication with the ALT is co-constructed, that is, meaning is conveyed through cooperation and contribution between two interlocutors (Johnson, 2009), and that this often led to rapport-building. The most common responses for Question 3, “Please write down how you felt about using English with Ricardo san,” can be summarized as students finding that they were able to better communicate in English with the support of da Silva. Student 8 expressed “There were times when I could not make myself understood, but there were also times he was able to understand what I was saying even when I was just saying some words” (自分の知っている英語で伝わらない説明が事前打ち合わせの時にあったが、単語を羅列してもくみ取ってくれた). The statement by Student 5 stated “In spite of my incomplete expressions, I am grateful as he was trying to understand what I meant to say” (不十分な表現であったにも関わらず、意図を汲み取ってくれようとしてくれたことに感謝です). These statements show da Silva’s willingness to understand students’ incomplete utterances. This point is aptly illustrated by Student 2 who stated, “I learned that even though I cannot speak ‘perfect’ English, if the interlocutor has willingness to understand, I can

make myself understood”(英語が上手に完ぺきに話せなくても理解しようとする気持ちがあれば通じるところを学んだ) (Question 2). All of the statements highlight the importance of the interlocutor's attitude of willingness to understand rather than the speakers' accuracy in their utterances.

In addition, others referred to da Silva's support through modifying his speech for the students to understand. For example, Student 6 stated "There were times when I did not understand some expressions, but when he noticed that I did not understand, he would paraphrase the expressions and I was able to understand what he was trying to say." Student 3's statement points out another dimension, that is, they found speaking in English to be enjoyable. "When I could not communicate well, as Ricardo rephrased and explained what he was trying to say, I learned that without feeling intimidated by users of English, it is enjoyable to speak in English" (ヒカルドさんが私がうまく英語で伝えられない時でも簡単な英語に言い直して説明しなおして下さったり、英語話者を恐れずに英語を使うことが楽しいと思えた). In his interview, da Silva also referred to switching the language into Japanese as a way to make the students feel comfortable.

So sometimes I felt they were really anxious and nervous, so I would answer in Japanese. So that was helpful, I think, as well, because I noticed they were nervous. And I showed them that I have problems as well in speaking Japanese.

When the students were extremely nervous, da Silva used Japanese to show that he had challenges in his use of Japanese as a way to make them feel comfortable and to create rapport. These statements reveal that da Silva not only tried to understand students' utterances, but modified his utterances to facilitate the communication.

### **Roles of the JTE and the ALT**

Some students found understanding and playing roles of the JTE and the ALT to be challenging. There were various responses in terms of their perception of the roles of the JTE and the ALT. Da Silva tended to take on a more supportive role, allowing the students to take the lead because he was concerned that being too active might have hindered the students' confidence and opportunities for practice. He emphasized this point in the interview, "As the objective of the course was to build up their confidence to teach English, I tried as much as possible to keep their ideas while planning the lessons with them." He described the students' role and this role in team teaching, "I think this was the students' moment and I think I wasn't really the star. I think they were the stars of the lessons." When the students confronted some difficulty, he would intervene but at the same time, try to leave them to come up with a solution, "there was like an awkward moment, so only at this moment I would try to intervene and show them some different techniques."

On the other hand, some students expressed a desire for da Silva to have a more active role in the lessons and to fully utilize his potential. Student 4, for example, stated, "In addition to playing the main part, I found it extremely difficult to utilize the ALT's potential"(自分が主体となることに加え、ALTの先生を活かしきる授業をするというのはとても難しいと感じた) (Question 2). Student 6 also expressed,

In order to utilize the ALT fully, I really felt that I have to design a lesson for that purpose. What I did was to add a part for Ricardo in the lesson which I had devised, I could not utilize his potential fully.

(ALTをフルで活用するためには、そのためにレッスンを構築していかないといけないのだと強く感じました。私は自分が考えたレッスンの中にヒカルドさんがやる部分を追加するという後付けの方式をとったため、ヒカルドさんをうまく活用しきれていなかったです) (Question 2).

Additionally, one student, Student 18, had difficulties in distinguishing the respective roles, who expressed “I found it difficult to divide roles” (Question 2). These comments echo findings from Sonoda (2020) and other researchers who have previously identified the recurring issue of defining the roles of the JTE and the ALT. It can be inferred that it is essential for students to understand how to handle these roles and what they are entitled to do.

To respond to the third research question, “How can Eigo A classes prepare the students to navigate potential cultural and linguistic differences with ALTs?”, we would like to pose some suggestions which are relevant not only to Eigo A, but to team teaching with ALTs in pre-tertiary institutions in Japan.

### **Building rapport through small talk**

As described in the section of “Communication with the ALT,” students felt comfortable in their use of English with da Silva as they found that he was willing to understand what they were trying to express. From the ALT’s perspective, one of the ways to create the feeling of comfort or rapport can be initiating the negotiation with some small talk before starting a discussion on the lesson plan. During the interview, da Silva expressed his belief that engaging in small talk can help reduce nervousness and foster a friendly environment before starting the planning phase:

So during the lesson plans, I always tried to come up with a [*sic*] small talk first. So I would ask them how their weekend was and what did they do [*sic*] and things like that. So I always tried to build this friendly environment before to plan [*sic*] the lessons with them.

Making small talk seemed to have made the students comfortable talking with da Silva. Student 2’s response, for example, resonates with da Silva’s statement, “Making small talk such as where we live helped me to get to know him which facilitated communication in planning the lesson” (住んでいる地域の話など

少し雑談をして彼がどのような人かを知り、授業を進める際のコミュニケーションをとるときに役立てた) (Question 1). In response to Question 5, where students were asked to write down suggestions for improvement of team teaching with an international student, some students pointed out the importance of communicating with an ALT. Student 12 stated, “I think if we have more communication with an international student such as taking the lesson together, the quality of team teaching will improve” (普通に授業を一緒に受けたりして、留学生とコミュニケーションをとることによってチームティーチングの質があがるとおもいました).

Da Silva stated that making small talk was also helpful for him to feel more relaxed:

And to be honest, when I start a conversation with someone, I like feeling comfortable as well. So this was not only for them, but also for me to feel more comfortable to open myself up. Yes. And I think that helped a lot. So it was a good way, a warm-up to start planning the lessons.

Da Silva’s statement also supports the idea that communication between the ALT and the students is co-constructed. They create meaning through cooperation and understanding.

### **Refraining from correcting students’ English**

Additionally, rapport building can be facilitated through refraining from correcting students’ English in their initial encounters and giving priority to understanding the message that is being conveyed. Da Silva emphasized this point in the interview:

Maybe the first thing that we have in mind when we talk to someone in a different language is getting worried to make [*sic*] mistakes. And during the lesson plans, first I just concentrated and let them convey their ideas, what they really wanted to do in their lessons. So I didn't try to correct them all the

time or stopping [*sic*] their way of thinking so [*sic*] to convey their ideas so I was worried about the message, so that made a really friendly environment.

The students' responses contain comments that offer evidence of the positive impact of building rapport and prioritizing communication over the accuracy of the language, especially during initial interactions, as relationships begin to develop. Student 7 expressed what he/she learned in communicating in English, "What I learned is speaking without being afraid of making mistakes. When we listen to other people, if we look at the other person's eyes, we can convey the message that 'we are listening to you'" (文法ミスを恐れなくて話すことが大切だということ。相手の話を聞くと、目を見たほうが「あなたの話を聞いている」ということが伝わるということ) (Question 1). In addition, some students learned the importance of willingness to communicate for successful communication to take place. Student 3 stated "I was confronted with the reality that my speaking ability was not very adequate. At the same time, if I am willing to communicate, I can make myself understood" (自分は英語を話す能力がないという現実を突きつけられた。でも、分からないなりに伝えようとする姿勢があれば意外とコミュニケーションが取れることを学んだ) (Question 1).

Others felt the joy of being able to make themselves understood without being able to speak 'perfect' English. Student 3 expressed such feeling:

When we were making plans, I felt joy as I was able to make myself understood with limited English. This led me to feel that I would like to talk to people from other countries in English. I learned even though we cannot speak perfect English, we can make ourselves understood if we want to. (計画と一緒に立てるときに自分の伝えたいことをつたない英語でも理解してもらえて、喜びを感じた。ますます日本外の人と英語で話してみたいという意欲がわいた) (Question 1).

It is noteworthy to point out that some students used the expression 'perfect English' in their responses, which shows their propensity to focus on the

importance of accuracy in speaking English. Da Silva's attitude to focus on the meaning conveyed by students rather than on pointing out their errors, seems to have led the students to feel comfortable, and to increase motivation and confidence speaking in English.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this paper reinforce that team teaching can yield positive outcomes for both the JTE and ALT. In contrast, the recurring issue of defining clear roles, as highlighted in previous research, also emerged in this paper, prompting us to consider how we can better prepare students for this dynamic environment. It is crucial to acquaint students with the challenges they may face in a real classroom to ensure they enter the teaching experience with more confidence and clarity about their responsibilities, as uncertainty can hinder the effectiveness of team teaching.

Furthermore, it appears that the expectations outlined by MEXT are directed toward both JTEs and ALTs individually, without a specific emphasis on how their interaction should be facilitated; as a result, the practical implementation of these expectations remains underexplored (Hougham et al., 2017). Earlier investigations have pointed out that effective communication between JTEs and ALTs poses a substantial challenge in the context of team teaching. Our analysis of the questionnaire responses accentuates the importance of focusing on equipping pre-service teachers with the skills to communicate more effectively with ALTs, even in the presence of language barriers. Among the substantial findings, responses that emphasize elements of rapport-building (small talk); maintaining eye contact (utilizing body language); fostering genuine curiosity for understanding; and engaging in collaborative planning and negotiation collectively hint at the pivotal role communication plays in more productive team teaching, surpassing the mere division of individual roles.

While MEXT provides guidelines for the expected roles of JTEs and ALTs, these roles may vary significantly based on individual backgrounds, strengths, and specific school requirements. It would be important to discuss their strengths and the corresponding roles between an ALT and a JTE, for instance, some ALTs may have a strong grasp of grammar or language proficiency, making them well-suited to take on roles that extend beyond traditional expectations. Similarly, some JTEs may excel in teaching cultural aspects or in pronunciation. Therefore, we believe that emphasizing open communication and negotiation among all the participants is of great importance. ALTs and JTEs could also have the opportunity to collaboratively determine roles that align with their unique strengths and classroom needs. As observed in Sonoda's (2020) article, increased interaction between the JTE and ALT can lead to greater participation of the ALT in a variety of roles, which can contribute to a more effective team teaching environment.

The study suggests that the planning phase, characterized by communication with da Silva, garnered the most positive feedback from students. Still, in reality, JTEs often face constraints with limited time available for joint planning and getting to know their colleagues. This underscores the need for further research to explore effective strategies for improving communication within their busy routines. Ideally, it is essential to advocate for better management practices to allocate more time for JTEs to engage in collaborative activities (Kano et al., 2016) and foster meaningful interactions with their team members.

By employing autoethnography, this study examined Eigo A classes involving pre-service teachers, an international student, and researchers. In addition to this, the international student also played dual roles as both an ALT and a researcher. By incorporating the perspectives of all these participants, autoethnography allowed for comparison of data patterns and discrepancies, ensuring inclusivity as well as offering insights into collaborative teaching dynamics and highlighting the importance of diverse perspectives in research. Ultimately, integrating

this approach was instrumental in capturing the complex nature of classroom interactions and understanding the experiences of teachers and students.

In conclusion, team teaching holds promise for enhancing classroom outcomes. However, as this paper suggests, it demands attention to role definition, willingness to communicate, and employing rapport-building and negotiation strategies to maximize its benefits in diverse educational settings.

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## Appendix 1

### Self-evaluation sheet for Demonstration 4

Student No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the items below.
2. Watch the video of your demonstration.
3. Write the evaluation.

\* You can write in English or in Japanese.

\* Modify the space below as necessary.

Voice clarity & Animated voice Voice clarity: My voice is clear and the speech is slow enough. Animated voice: My voice is lively and grasps the attention and the interests of the students.	
Evaluate → 1 2 3 4 5	Write some comments in English or in Japanese.
Eye contact: I tried to look at everyone in the classroom.	
Evaluate → 1 2 3 4 5	Write some comments in English or in Japanese.
Use of classroom English: I used the expressions which I learned in class.	
Evaluate → 1 2 3 4 5	Write some comments in English or in Japanese.
Involving students: The lesson interested the students and also involved the students in learning.	
Evaluate → 1 2 3 4 5	Write some comments in English or in Japanese.
Coordination with an ALT.	
Evaluate → 1 2 3 4 5	Write some comments in English or in Japanese.
For the self-evaluation of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> demonstration, you have written 3 improvement points. Observing the 3 <sup>rd</sup> demonstration, how do you evaluate your improvement?	
Other comments.	

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire about team-teaching

Thank you for engaging in team-teaching with Ricardo san this semester. I hope it was a valuable learning opportunity. I would like to ask you about your feedback of engaging in team-teaching and I would be grateful if you could respond to this questionnaire.

アンケートについて：アンケートにて集計した回答結果及び回答内容を元に論文執筆、学会発表を行う可能性がございますが、データは研究の目的以外には使用されません。アンケートは無記名となります。また本アンケート結果をRicardoさんと共有する予定です。英語で書いても日本語で書いてもミックスしても構いません。

Thank you very much in advance. 渡辺敦子

1. Please write down what you have learned/found from the interaction with Ricardo san outside of the lessons.
2. Please write down what you learned/found from doing team-teaching with Ricardo san during the lesson.
3. Please write down how you felt about using English with Ricardo san.
4. Do you feel that team-teaching has led to increase self-confidence in teaching in English? If so, please elaborate.
5. Please write down any suggestions for improvement of team-teaching with an international student.
6. Please enter any other comments.