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Interactive Online and In-person TESOL Part 1: Homework

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David John WOOD

1. Abstract

This series of studies is about combining major modes of TESOL. We compare teaching native speakers of Japanese spoken English remotely with teaching them in person in the wake of enforced online classes. This first instalment places particular emphasis on one way online and in-person teaching modes might best inform each other, namely, homework. The lines between home and class have been radically redrawn in this COVID-19 era. Even before the watershed caused by the biggest pandemic for a century from 2020, Burgess (2015) and Simonson (2012) noted that successful interactive learning experiences which work in one learning environment might be adaptable to another. This is because the respective teaching strategies of both can promote positive interaction, student engagement, and active learning (Graham 2019, page 156). In the subsequent studies in this series, we will explore various other important aspects arising from the revelations caused by the world-wide increase in online teaching. This will be contextualized by referring to the decades of lesser online use. While homework may seem an unlikely place to begin, it is one of the most important, whether online or in-person, and also one of the aspects of TESOL most overlooked and taken for granted. Homework is as important as classwork, but sadly under-researched. Would-be speakers of English could gain greatly if its potential were addressed more meaningfully than has been the case to date. Homework is the flip side of the teaching coin, so in many ways, it is dependent on effective teaching in regular class time, but the corollary is also true. Homework necessitates a clear rationale and exposition, and an evaluation of the very way that we teach.

2. Introduction

Online and in-person TESOL offer greater interactive potential than either had had on its own before COVID-19 began. One innovative aim for teachers should be to explore the best of both worlds to integrate, combine and prioritize the relative merits. With a single, specific aspect in mind in this study, we propose that: "One feature of on-line teaching with significance for in-person teaching development is the former's power to create a better homework ethos." Methods that were ineffectively or never employed before on-line teaching became a new norm for many may now promise superior potential for customization to in-person modes of use.

As for in-person teaching, it is hard if not impossible to simulate or replace the physical

proximity most fundamental to human communication, or to avoid the risk of negative intensification bias (Zorn, 2021). Online teaching has unique benefits that help the most competent students improve. Yet alone, it is insufficient to achieve the same dynamic as in-person teaching. Some of its facets may still hold unrealized promise for live classrooms. One such area, for example, is homework, as the online mode can lend itself by nature and definition to greater scope in this area in particular. However, many on-line courses themselves resemble glorified homework rather than any spontaneous interaction. Obviously, on-line students literally study from home in many if not most cases, so the lines between the traditional and the actual are less clear. That having been said, the most notable factor of homework in TESOL, especially since COVID-19 compelled online alternatives, seems to be the underwhelming interest in improving it. The low occurrence of original or meaningful homework-related studies in online TESOL education points to a need for more active research.

Homework, as most teachers and students know it today, has a checkered history. At least one of the individuals credited with homework's creation (Nevilis, supposedly early in the twentieth century) is ruled out as his chronology doesn't add up. A likelier candidate, dating from a century before that, was the philosopher, Fichte (Lee, 2019). The rationale for his "invention" was to strengthen state control. It spread through Europe, and reached America before mid-century, as well as many other countries and continents. Yet homework need not be oppressively authoritarian.

Though both proponents and opponents fervently argue about it, most if not all institutions in Japan adamantly enforce it for its face validity more than as a valid educational concept, even from pre-school, as parents vie for children's success. Up to high school, it is synonymous with entrance-exam cramming. It is also an item in student assessments of teachers in tertiary education, making it a double-edged sword. Its legitimacy is less integral than quantitative. Objective worth seems less important than the time spent on doing it, as students are only asked how long they spend on homework.

Yet homework is not only part of a teacher's professional duty, but essential to optimal linguistic development if used positively. The lack of related language-learning research raises concerns. Studies in other disciplines have potentially interesting findings.

In the area of undergraduate sciences, Magalhaes' study (2020) found: "It is unanimous among participants and authors of this sample of studies that online homework engages students to perform the tasks" (2020). That study and the rare few like it, however, still beg the question: "In specific detail, <u>what</u> constitutes meaningful homework in a TESOL context, and what are some of the best options?" That is the question this study seeks to answer.

3. What's for Homework?

Homework contents, methods and aims vary widely according to subject, teacher and institutional practice (if not prejudice). However, for many courses, a textbook page number is all, with rote-style content, delegated to remote writers. Even at university faculty development level, discussions of syllabi description often devolve to "Class: Page X; Homework: Page Z (for a test)". Teachers in Japan have published countless text books under their own authority. They may "co-author" or add Japanese notes to a foreign writer's work for gain, or to add to their résumé, no matter how irrelevant or unhelpful the result is for students. Self-promotion from the practice seems ulterior. Text-based homework is often used for assigning tests with unfounded validity, making a viciously systematic loop of: ►► **text** ►► **homework** ►► **test** ►► **repeat** ►►

Learning English is by definition learning to speak. That is what the **S** in TE**S**OL is for, **Speakers** to **Speak**, not readers to read, nor grammarians to "grammatize". Yet university English departments offer too few courses promoting speaking and fewer spoken homework tasks (e.g., Provenzano, below). The writer's university averages 2 course credits a year of conversation classes, a fraction of the total 120+ required to graduate, nearly all in Japanese.

The English courses there exist are text-bound, defaulting to literacy, with scant attainment as language is rooted in speech. No proficient speakers able to communicate internationally result. Most, unable to afford extra study abroad or online, stand scant chance of success. In the context of the courses of spoken communication (or whatever titles are assigned) the most common form of study, including homework, is text-book bound (over 90% of instructors, Wood, 2012). This bases the foundations of study in sand as texts' fixed written formats are the opposite of spontaneous interaction, of which most textbook-based classes are devoid. Departmental communication deters English. Hiring even limited contract beginner teachers depends on Japanese as much as English.

Even in studies where "homework" warrants a mention (often just once) insufficient specifics or concern for validity are offered. An example is the solitary mention in the U.K.'s 2018 special 100+ page study of online learning (this present study, a tenth the length, mentions it 90+ times): "Artificial Intelligence in Education allows content to be tailored to reflect learner strengths and areas of weakness, which was felt to be particularly valuable for providing <u>bespoke homework assignments</u> which give learners falling behind an opportunity to catch up" (page 77). In verbose syntax, and with no details defining what "bespoke" homework assignments are (like their aims, timing and so on) this and other similar references seem little more than name-dropping for the sake of appearance.

The trend is deep-seated. While perceiving online homework as potentially advantageous, Stephens (2020) stops short at the mere mention of the word, without considering what the concept of meaningful homework might even entail: "It can be especially convenient in monitoring

the amount and quality of homework that students complete" (page 171). Those few studies that treat homework in any detail are almost entirely confined to other disciplines, and even then, the objective value of such homework is assumed without proper analysis. Thus Dillard-Eggars (2008) offers an exciting observation in the area of accounting homework ("results indicate on-line homework increases student performance and that students believe that using on-line homework is an effective method of study") without saying what, why or how.

It seems enough to merely "assign homework" without actually asking what its shape, form or purpose might be, or what any of the unknown possible alternatives might have to offer instead. Similar examples of unsubstantiated mentions abound (in the field of chemistry, for example, Richards-Babb, 2011) but convincing discussion of exactly what homework is and why it is even given are elusive, if not simply non-existent. So, what is for homework?

A search of 100 studies from the last 10 years threw up zero mentions of homework, as though the very concept either didn't exist, or was of no relevance in education. Even with multiple mentions (actually just 3, Lamb, 2019) the import is no more than a single or no mention: "collaborative activities using their mobile phones can motivate learners to do homework" (page 3) "language learning beyond the classroom could be initiated or structured by teachers (e.g., as homework)" and "some technologies had become 'normalized', in (the) sense of becoming a routine part of their lives, e.g., typing your homework" both on page 5 in a 25-page study. The conclusion seems to be that homework is either considered unmentionable, or at best left to its own devices. This overarching attitude in education is uninspiring. Homework is non-descript or, when actively enforced by schools, more often than not used as a disciplinary extension of authority for rote-learning and testing.

There are few exceptions, and even fewer keeping pace with COVID-19. Provenzano's study (2011, referred to above) with a comparatively high number of mentions about homework (19 or 1 per page) is a rarity, but still needs updating. The ideas proposed may be too difficult or impractical for students in this pandemic era: "After teaching students how to notate their own observations of the strengths and weaknesses of their in-class conversations with peers, students (had) similar conversations outside of class (to) reflect upon language use, strategy use, and overall performance. That explicit reflection was then submitted as homework" (page 221). Most students work all hours part-time to make ends meet.

4. Homework in General

More than for mere memorization, homework has untapped potential for learning. Yet so much of it is for subjective internal testing. Using it to increase students' chances in external tests is more justified as students' futures may depend on success there. In Japan, for students of English, the latter can lead to higher class placements, scholarships and even to better career

opportunities. Employment activities (once only for seniors) now take up more time than ever (even in the form of lessons) from their first year. This takes time away from a constrained spoken English program.

The significance of testing is attested to by the huge numbers of students and even company workers repeatedly taking TOEIC to achieve scores that lead to hiring and promotions. Smart homework has more than one effect, so both language proficiency and other important skills may be developed simultaneously. Yet many important skills are rarely part of teacher training or development.

Too little research examines crucial issues surrounding homework for Japanese university students, especially in the context of those studying English as their major. The majority of all students also study English as a minor or as a required course to graduate. TESOL is an optional minor for English department staff, second to cultural and literary studies in translation or just Japanese.

We need to look further afield, to other countries, majors, age groups and so on. There are a few post-graduate dissertations worth referring to, not only for specifics, but also for those principles that may apply elsewhere. Two are referenced here. Spilde (2018) details the issues of anxiety, homework type and motivation. Although it is adequately researched, the overall approach is ultimately restricted by the author's assumption that the best route to acquisition depends on accuracy rather than fluency. Though righty stressing the need for a "comfort zone" that awareness is compromised by the emphasis on grammatical correctness above conversational speed (in balance with sufficient but not excessive accuracy) to ensure enough meaning to communicate smoothly.

Minke (2017) also treated types and advantages. She recognized the importance of validating homework's individuality over its exam-orientation more successfully. Key to her grasp is the understanding that: "Real-life assignment strategies are intended to help students make a connection between the classroom material being taught and real-life activities outside of school. These real-life assignments are extension assignments (that) promote abstract and critical thinking skills at a higher level for students which increases student achievement" (page 26). While Minke's examples may sometimes fall short, they can still point us in the right direction. Homework that is both experience-based and relevant to students' needs, interests and concerns is likely the most motivating and, with good feedback and guidance, also the most likely to improve communicative and linguistic proficiency: "(To design) quality homework tasks to fit the needs of each individual student, each homework assignment needs to allow students an opportunity to share information about themselves or their lives, and allow them to create products or presentations that tap emotions or feelings about the subject area" (Minke, page 37).

Each situation needs customizing to fulfil these kinds of criteria and thus realize homework's

full promise and potential. In the next sections we present the rationale, execution and student evaluations of the particular approach used as one example, with the caveat that, each educator is responsible for designing and developing the specifics of his or her own course. While this is a fundamental task, as responsible educators we cannot simply default to imposed standards, especially as they have proven themselves ineffective. Instead, we must develop and us our own materials and methods.

5. Homework in Context

5.1 Main methods for Q&A sequences for classes of 30+

* 3 students work as interview groups weekly for 90 minutes
* Other students ask different lead questions every time.
* After a lead question, spontaneous questions follow.
* 30 short exchanges become self-contained conversations.
* Questioning is reversible as students asked ask others too.

Participants can ask for repetition and the instructor only intervenes when they can't repair communication breakdowns independently. This develops students' logical and comprehensible streams of communication by actively listening to each other not teacher talk.

5.2 Regular homework plan

* Students listen to class audio recordings of interactions.
* The next class begins with a recording review.
* Students recall different items that from the recording.
* Groups are asked similar questions in a final test interview.
* Increasing difficulty assesses communicative proficiency.
* Improvement in fluency (syllables a second) is measured.
* The original and test-time recordings are compared.

Spoken ability development was perceived via the complexity, relevance and speed of exchanges over a 3-month course of 15 weekly 90-minute lessons. Fluency speed and complexity were regularly found to increase. This was also true when the imposed advent of on-line teaching saw the method evolve to include a homework requiring students to recall 10 or more points from the various exchanges, with each point being a combined account of the three students' answers in a summarized reported speech format. (See examples in **6. Uncorrected Samples** below). Recordings weren't provided in the online format, so the pace was adjusted to ensure all students caught what was being said. As online classes returned to in-person, then back to online, then in-person again, at the direction of the administration in line with an unstable situation, a compromise resulted rationalizing all the homework into the on-line format, regardless of whether the class

itself was online or not. It was a case of natural selection, as it were, because the homework style developed during online classes was found to be more adaptable to in-person modes than the other way round, signaling greater flexibility. The context above is needed to clarify the homework aims. The reports ensure successful listening and reinforce English memory. As much as it is for many other students studying English around the globe, if not even more so, reporting speech is very challenging for Japanese students. Students usually default to the general styles that they know, bulleting items in simple sentence form with the subject repeated. Accuracy issues included number, tense, agreement, conjunctions and negation.

5.3 Homework aims

* acquire confident use of high-frequency vocabulary
* avoid unclear Japanese phrasing influence
* make phrasing internationally comprehensible
* summarize and connect the answers of the three speakers
* compare to emphasize main points of communication

Reading and writing are not the primary skills aimed for in conversation, but offer benefits in the reporting phase. They help students collect their thoughts and share linguistic and other kinds of knowledge as all the homework reports are corrected, with major mistakes explained then shared to foster co-operative learning.

5.4 Additional homework aims

* understand important errors in spoken production
* remediate basic errors and misunderstanding
* reinforce newly experienced patterns and vocabulary
* extend linguistic experiences from class interviews

This approach was effective for long-term English memory.

6. Uncorrected Samples of English Communication Homework

6.1 Student A, May 2021 *Somebody asked* ***did you have a favorite coffee shop****. They said they liked Starbucks coffee. Somebody asked* ***what was your favorite Starbucks drinks****. Two people said they liked White mocha, but one liked it with soy milk and* ***other*** *liked it with Caramel sauce. Somebody asked* ***did you do part time job****.* ***One people*** *said no, but she* ***help*** *her father's job. And another said yes. They said they used SNS for long time in a day.* ***Somebody*** *asked* ***did you have driving license****. One* ***people*** *said no, but she was studying now. And* ***another*** *said yes,* ***they took it about one year ago****.* ***One people*** *said* ***she*** *had three* ***mix*** *dogs. Two people said they like to live alone.* ***One people*** *said* ***she*** *didn't like any animals. 2 people said they took about two hours to go to school*

from their house. ***One people*** *said* ***she*** *liked chocolate cake* ***which her made****.* ***Another*** *said* ***they*** *liked cheesecake.*

Analysis1: 158words; sentences=17: 11words each=simple sentences; 1conjunction per 40words; 11/17sentences **problematic**=35%accuracy

6.2 Student A, June 2021 *One person said her favorite movie is Disney as she likes the stories and music. One person* ***said she go swimming*** *and another person* ***said she have*** *part time job* ***this*** *week-end. All of them said they want to be teachers, but one person said she* ***want*** *to teach junior high school students, and another said* ***they*** *want to* ***do*** *for kids. All of them said they want to live in Japan in future, as two of them like to stay in Japan* ***for*** *safety and* ***comfortable*** *and* ***one person*** *has things* ***they*** *want to do. All of them said they didn't drink coffee* ***this*** *morning, as 2 of them like to drink tea. Two people may be indoor people, because* ***one like*** *listening to music in her free times,* ***another like*** *folding paper. One person said she has a dog.* ***It has*** *coffee color, so* ***the*** *name is Mocha. Two of them said they study French or Chinese beside English, because they want to visit* ***French*** *or China. Two of them said they have never gone snowboarding, but they have gone skiing.* ***Two of them need study heard*** *this year, because they want to a pass test to be a teacher or* ***take high score*** *for TOEIC.*

Analysis2: 208words; sentences=11; 19words each (complex sentences); 1conjunction per 16words; 6/11sentences **problematic**=45%accuracy

6.3 Student A, July 2021 *One person said her favorite class was Business English and an other said her favorite class was Intercultural Communication. It was because* ***these classes could talk a lot, so they liked****. 2 people said they want to be junior high school teachers. One of them said she liked children and another said she wanted to teach children. One person said she would meet her local friends who live in Kumamoto during summer vacation and she wanted to go shopping with them. One person said she liked to play basketball.* ***She have*** *played it since she was a junior high school student. Two people said they preferred to message* ***to touch other person****, because they* ***could returned*** *anytime they wanted to do. All of them said they haven't wished since elementary school at star festival.* ***When they were****, one of them wished for her health, another wished to get married in the future and last one wished to be rich in the future. Two of them said they came to this university because they wanted to get English teaching license to be teachers in the future. One person said she wanted to go back to her hometown in Kumamoto in summer vacation and she wanted to go driving with her family with her driving. One person said she wanted to buy a small yellow bag for fashion now. Two of them said they liked Seven Eleven's rice ball, because there was a lot of kinds and they are delicious*

Analysis3: 247words; sentences=14: 17words each (complex sentences); 1conjunction per 19words; 4/14sentences **problematic**=71% accuracy

6.4 Table of sample development

Sample/ Month	Words/ Sentences	Sentence Length	Successful Sentences	Accuracy Rate
6.1/May	158/17	9.3	6/17	35%
6.2/June	208/11	18.9	5/11	45%
6.3/July	247/14	17.6	10/14	71%

6.5 Some conclusions

Sample1: unused to using long sentences, significant accuracy problems

Sample2: increased fluency, longer sentences hampered by proficiency

Sample3: greater fluency through increased control of longer sentences

6.6 Summary of aims

* reinforce language learned in class
* learn to summarize/collate information in reported form
* maintain learning until end-of-semester spoken interviews
* use reports for review reference
* promote balanced language production
* stress fluency and accuracy equally

The progression through the three samples above indicated language proficiency skills were simultaneously improving. While the results presented are limited to one student chosen at random, other students displayed similar improvements in their final spoken interviews. This indicates that the use of homework to reflect on and develop accurate expression may be significant, and its positive effect on various aspects of proficiency warrants attention.

7. Main spoken classes' student feedback comments

7.1 English Communication=Year 3 Conversation (**Section 5**)

My ability to answer questions in English improved.

I gained confidence in speaking.

Learning how to report the answers for homework was good study.

The teacher helped us explain ourselves in English to each other.

I enjoyed communicating with everyone and learning better pronunciation

& I improved my understanding of grammar.

I really enjoyed learning about everyone in English.
This created a friendly atmosphere.
I learnt a lot about grammar, especially about how to use verb tenses better.
I'm glad that I could know more about my classmates.
I was so happy to be able to communicate in English.
I'm not good at communicating in English, but I managed to thanks to this class.

In the data accompanying the comments above, about 80% (18 of 23 respondents, and 76% of all 30 students in the class) noted communication skill success (confirmed by similar responses in all the other classes taught by this teacher – see the comments from other classes that focus on spoken communication in **7.2** to **7.4**) followed by basic and specialist skills, then teamwork success. Significantly, ***homework*** was also favorably commented on.

Almost 100% stated that the course enabled participation, with good feedback, and achieved good comprehensibility with appropriate content and overall satisfaction, and recommended the class to future takers of the course. A significant number of comments were received (all positive and above the school's average comment rate). Several of these stressed how their English communication had improved. (See the underlined comments.)

7.2 Seminar=Year 4 Spoken Communication

I enjoyed this seminar. I could learn how to communicate in English.
I'm looking forward to talking with teacher & other members again!
I was able to understand my classmates' opinions & improve my conversation skills.
The teacher taught us in an easy-to-understand way.
I'm looking forward to the next semester.

Of the school's 100 seminars, many receive only a single or no response. To give students every chance, they could also make spoken spontaneous reactions in the last class. Every student stressed spoken communication. To illustrate, here is one example:

7.3 One Seminar Student's Spoken Comments

What I enjoyed the most was we had activities so we talked most about our hobbies, so this seminar is good for students who want to study English especially for speaking, so please join and I'm looking forward to you joining this seminar.

7.4 Core Oral English=Year 1 Spoken Communication

Communicating our own situation helped overcome resistance to English.
It was good to have the chance to speak in English more than I had before.
I could learn both basic grammatical use and conversational English.

I enjoyed using and learning English actively.
My listening and speaking ability both developed a lot.
I enjoyed games in and communicating and thinking together in pairs
I enjoyed communicating in English.
We could communicate with the teacher and learn to listen to English,
as well as learning good grammar and pronunciation.
My confidence in speaking English using good pronunciation increased.

8. Discussion

Fundamentals have sometimes been missed during the surge in research into online TESOL. Esami (2010) insisted that: "The teacher might never really know, for example, if students are asleep, talking among themselves, or even in the room" (page 188). Confirming attention is possible, no matter how large the class. Simply asking students to show if they have understood points or questions by using *emoji* after each is a quick and easy example. Using this technique, responses are easy for a teacher to confirm.

Many researchers appear limited to the 'either/or' mindset, as if one or other of the two modes must be eradicated, when they can be mutually beneficial. Singh (2012) echoed by Nobre (2018) is typical of this standard combative approach, with titles featuring "online vs. offline" as though the two modes should never interact or 'infect' each other. Similarly, many others see starting to teach online as a one-way street which, once taken, means no return. Thus Redmond (2011) implies online teaching is a final destination rather than a co-operative partner with in-person education.

Schools think that online courses offer lower overheads, while staff are concerned with teaching inconvenience. Caught between these preoccupations, online students' confusion just grows. Burgess (2014) asserted discussion could keep learners active, and enhance interaction, students reporting online courses offered more flexibility, access, and convenience. We must see their viewpoints.

The teaching paradigm has shifted in 2020, but in-person and online teaching must be allowed to inform each other. We can identify the most salient factors of both to prepare for a variety of possible future scenarios: online; in-person; and, of course, both. Sagara states (2008): "When asked what they liked the most about online workbooks, participants responded they enjoyed multiple attempts, receiving individualized immediate feedback, being able to work at their own pace, and consolidating class content" (page 219). By blending classroom instruction with online homework, advantages of the one can increase the benefits of the other.

The online "homework" initiative in this study could replace or supplement conventional homework. 90% of the conversation class and 100% of the seminar students (nearly 50 students in

all) said they did up to one hour's homework every week. Of the 4 other courses taught (totaling over 150 students: English 1; Film Communication; Reading and Writing; and, Core Oral English) 90% said they did up to 2 hours. These percentages are not only well above the average for all the hundreds of courses taught, but significant as a textbook is used in only English 1, and that is because it was enforced by the administration, not elected for use by this teacher. The results above indicate students on average spent an equal amount of time on both "classwork" and homework. Moreover, they reported that they enjoyed and benefitted from it.

At the same time, like the question "What is homework?" simplistic evaluation only stresses numbers and amounts without ever considering actual meaning or effect. Is an online U-turn even possible? Probably not, but we may not progress if we don't try to utilize excellent components to combine and improve both.

9. Conclusion

Homework's importance risks being forgotten in a new era when online education blurs home and school studies. Even before 2020, homework was seldom a subject attracting serious enough consideration, despite its possible benefits. In teaching English (or the over-diluted version of it that exists in most Japanese contexts) the matter is compounded further as speaking is at best a minor subject with little chance of success. Teaching spontaneous communication has never been a priority because textbooks, grammar and first language teaching are the *de facto* default.

If we look beyond such obstacles for a more rational solution to kick-starting communication, we may find some potential benefits in homework. While teachers (or the forces behind them) vary too much to unify, we need a set of underlying principles and practices to make valid choices. The method presented above is one of many possibilities individual teachers must make for themselves, but it employs elements of theories and practices of teaching spoken English researched by this writer since starting in TESOL in the 1970s. The above include in particular: the direct method or natural approach (e.g., Krause, 1916, but dating back at least two centuries) versus grammar translation still used in Japan; communicative language teaching (e.g., Habermas, Hymes, Savignon, etc., 1970 and 1972); first language interference (Richards, 1973); Dogme (Thornbury, 2000); and situational analysis (e.g., Richards, 2001) and so on. In the current context of increased online classes, even the above need recalibrating or rethinking to be of any real help.

We have attempted to show that there are novel and untried methods deserving attention by presenting in detail the aims, methods and outcomes of connecting online and in-person modes of teaching spoken communication, and then applying initiatives in homework established during the periods of enforced online teaching. Whatever the origins, misuses or mistakes made concerning homework have been, it offers positive potential as its possibilities have increased with the onset

of widely enforced online teaching around the globe. While its promise is still not adequately researched at present, even before a pandemic forced so many teachers to go online and consider homework options, some like Minke (2017) saw beyond the norm to individual students in homework "to share information about themselves or their lives."

To illustrate this line of homework, we presented detailed examples and analyses of the products of online homework that suggested a humanistic approach could motivate significant improvement in linguistic proficiency. This was further validated by the use of various kinds of feedback that indicated major advantages to interfacing online and in-person homework, many students acknowledging their own communicative development.

In an ever-changing environment, the future priorities of TESOL in Japan may not be possible to pin down, but many potential areas demanding this kind of cross-over study have presented themselves. In subsequent studies, these could include such themes as: increasing motivation for students to respond using techniques from both online and in-person modes of teaching; the communicative development of grammar, and so on. The search of open resources for both such future topics as well as for the present one of homework can be difficult. Although an online world promises to connect, no doubt many relevant and significant studies of homework and other topics remain beyond reach or unwritten. Perhaps the greatest challenge in TESOL, as well as so many other areas of communication, is to increase access and the exchange of non-commercially oriented research for students' success, instead of monetizing information that needs sharing.

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