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"Kotoba Rollers" walkthrough: Board games, TBLT, and player progression in a university EFL classroom

James York*

Tokyo Denki University, College of Science and Engineering

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a detailed walkthrough of a pedagogical intervention that utilizes board games as part of a TBLT approach to language teaching in a compulsory university classroom context. The context, teacher and participants are introduced before a thorough explanation of the intervention. Theoretical underpinnings and teacher decisions are introduced including how the model relates to broad literature on education, particularly Squire's (2011) conceptualization of learners and player progression. Subsequently, a "playtest" of the model is presented with a focus on teacher mediation and students' progression. Student work appears in the form of presentation slides, survey data, photos of the accompanying workbook (made specifically for this context), and final project products. The model, materials, and teacher mediation promoted students to become self-directed learners, successfully carrying out gameplay and analysis activities which led to language and 21st Century skills development. Successful (and not so successful) examples of student progression from learner to content creator are provided. Finally, a critical analysis of the model is presented, and it is proposed that the model could be developed to focus on specific skills or help learners engage in English-speaking communities outside the classroom.

KEY POINTS

Background: Dissatisfaction with a lack of student engagement in a university EFL context inspired an exploration into GBLT.

Aim: The aim of *Kotoba Rollers* is to build a curriculum around gameplay that supports language and 21st Century skills development.

Methods: A TBLT framework was modified for this game-based pedagogical intervention featuring extensive pre- and post-play activities. Teacher mediation, a workbook and the use of students' mobile devices were considered at each stage.

Results: Results suggest that the model, coupled with teacher mediation, successfully promoted student engagement and language and literacy development.

Conclusion: Kotoba Rollers is a proof of concept on how to teach with games. The current instantiation could benefit from targeting specific skills more deeply, and it is hoped that readers adapt the model for their contexts.

TWEET

In this LLP walkthrough, James introduces his Kotoba Rollers class, and elucidates how teaching model, support materials and teacher mediation help learners progress from board game newbies to proficient content creators and language users.

#kotobarollers #GBLTeachers

* Corresponding author. *Email address: jamesyorkjp@gmail.com (Dr. James York)*

1. Background

1.1 Who are you?

My name is James York and I have been an EFL teacher in Japan for the past 14 years. I spent the first four years teaching young learners at a public elementary school. During this time I completed an MA with the University of Leicester where I specialized in the application of a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach to young learner contexts focusing on how focus-on-form activities could be developed and used in classrooms without the use of metalinguistic terms (e.g., noun, adjective, or past tense). For the last nine years I have been situated at a private science and technology university based just outside of Tokyo. I have a PhD in education where my dissertation was concerned with task-creation in virtual worlds and how modality (i.e. face-to-face and virtual world-based communication) may affect learners' output complexity, accuracy and fluency.

I identify as a gamer and have played video games since I was a child. My father introduced me to gaming as he was active as a game developer for the Atari ST such as *Pothole Pete* (Atlantis Software Limited, 1988). More recently, I have started to play board games with a particular interest in social deduction and party games. I also have a background in acting and enjoy creating simple LARPs with my children (see Figure 1).

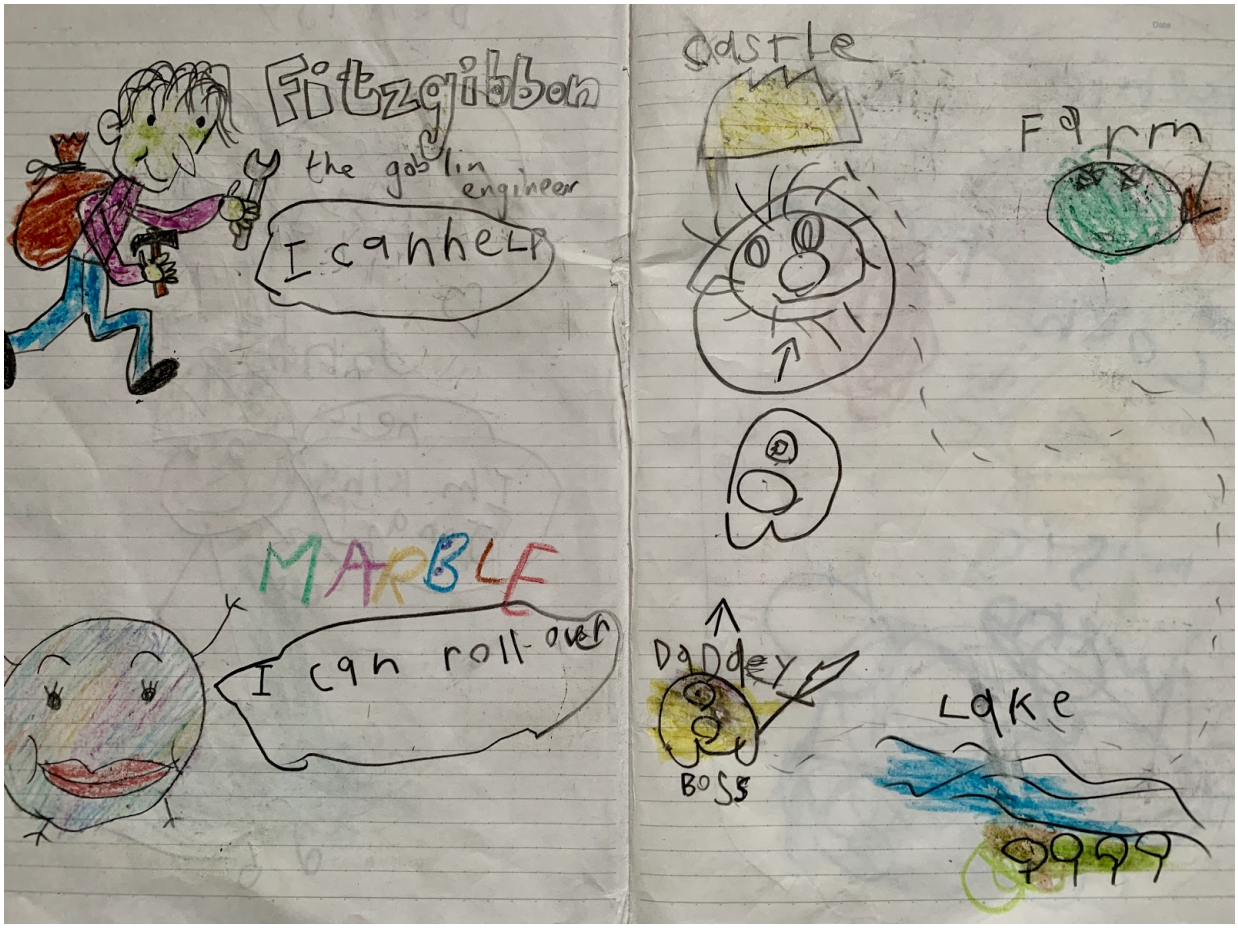


Figure 1 *A sample page from the York family RPG book*

As a language learner, I utilized the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* as a way to become proficient in Japanese by joining a Japanese guild on a US server. This experience was my baptising into the world of game-based language learning (read: not teaching) and subsequent interest in the educational use of games. However, I did not start exploring games and learning as a research focus until 2011, the year that I tried to use *Portal 2* as a possibly innovative domain for language use in my university classes (an endeavour which was, however, unsuccessful but outside of the scope of this paper). I also dabbled in gamification around this time, writing a paper on how XP and "side quests" could be utilized for successful engagement in class activities (York, 2012). However, this paper did not accurately reflect the reality of my classroom. Since

reading the likes of Kohn (1999), Nicholson (2015), and Suits (2005) I realise that I was caught up in the gamification hype cycle at the time and was fooling myself that such a "quick fix" existed for getting students motivated to learn. Since then I have been exploring game-based teaching in a number of projects. The most "successful" to date has been my work using *Minecraft* (Figure 2) as a domain for teaching Japanese to learners throughout the world in a project known as "Kotoba Miners"[1] (York, 2014). Kotoba is a Japanese word which means "word."

Figure 2 *A screenshot of a "Let's Play" session on the* Kotoba Miners *server*

I used *Minecraft* as part of my PhD studies also. I conducted an experiment to compare learners' oral communication when completing online and offline tasks. My PhD research is the origin of the project I introduce here. That is, based on the observations and reflections of having 20 plus students interacting in a virtual world and having to deal with all the technical problems that come with that, I turned my attention away from the CALL lab and towards the "active learning" classroom. By this, I mean that my university has a specific room (very newly built) designated as an "active learning" classroom. I'll also add that I am currently the only teacher in the university that is using this room. It features movable desks, chairs, carpeted floors(!), an extension cable for each workstation, and a whiteboard for each workstation. The context of the current paper can be seen in Figure 3.

[1] For a video of a typical Kotoba Miners online Japanese lesson, please check here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XG-rUIYLd_c

Figure 3 *The Kotoba Rollers classroom context*

1.2 Where did you teach?

Inspired by my work on Kotoba Miners, I coined the pedagogical intervention introduced in this paper as "Kotoba Rollers." The term "*Rollers"* was used as it is a typical action of board gaming. Henceforth it shall be abbreviated as KR. It was implemented at Tokyo Denki University, a private university based in Tokyo, Japan. The specific, intact classes presented in this paper were taught by me, and comprised of first-year computer science, electrical and mechanical engineering students (Table 1). The ratio of males and females at the university is heavily skewed towards males, who comprise approximately 90% of my student body. The class is compulsory for all first-year students and contact time is once a week for a 100-minute lesson over the 14-week semester. Based on my observations, student motivation towards these classes is generally low, much like a compulsory high-school class. Passing the class is a requirement for their graduation. At the start of the intervention, written, informed consent to collect data was gained from all participants. Additionally, consent to use photographs of students' work and activity participation was also gained from those students that appear in this paper. In this case, consent was given verbally after presenting this paper showing how the photographs were being used.

Results of a pre-intervention questionnaire revealed that of 150 respondents, 65% of them were interested in gaming as a hobby outside of class (Table 2), this response was the largest recorded. Subsequently, although the reasons for their choice were not explored in any detailed manner, an item related to media use in English classes revealed that participants were most interested in using games as a learning tool (Table 3). This data, therefore, provides one justification for exploring games as a teaching tool in this context.

Table 1 *Number of respondents per department and gender*

Department	Number of respondents	Male	Female	Gender not provided
Computer Science	86	75	9	2
Electrical Engineering	25	23	1	1
Mechanical Engineering	39	36	2	1
Total	150	134 (89.33%)	12 (8.00%)	4 (2.67%)

Table 2 *Student hobbies outside of class*

Department	Games	Music	Movies	Manga	Foreign comics	Anime	Western animation Cartoons	Sports	Novels
Computer Science	60	50	24	37	5	47	3	24	24
Electrical Engineering	19	15	9	12	1	9	0	13	6
Mechanical Engineering	19	22	12	17	1	15	1	19	11
Total	98	87	45	66	7	71	4	56	41

Table 3 *What media students would like to use in the English classroom*

Department	Games	Music	Movies	YouTube	Anime	Comics	SNS	Novels	News papers
Computer Science	70.93%	43.02%	44.19%	34.88%	31.40%	23.26%	19.77%	11.63%	5.81%
Electrical Engineering	56.00%	32.00%	24.00%	40.00%	20.00%	16.00%	20.00%	4.00%	0.00%
Mechanical Engineering	53.85%	56.41%	43.59%	35.90%	25.64%	20.51%	15.38%	5.13%	5.13%
Average	60.26%	43.81%	37.26%	36.93%	25.68%	19.92%	18.38%	6.92%	3.65%

Their English language proficiency may be described as low. Few students have taken an internationally recognised language test (TOEIC for instance), however, based on a university mandated placement test, the student participants in this paper were streamed into the fourth class of six classes in total. Although they are able to read, and to a certain extent write English (with the aid of online dictionaries and translation software), they lack listening and speaking skills and in particular spoken, conversational English. Students are often reticent to communicate when a question is posed to the whole class (see King, 2013), and, as is often written of Japanese students, making mistakes in front of peers is a genuine source of anxiety and fear for my students (Kimura, Nakata & Okumura, 2001; personal audio recording, 2019).

The biggest issue in my teaching context before implementing KR was the stifling lack of student agency and opportunity to engage in meaningful activities. As Squire (2011) writes, "later learning is often "laborious," and education generally becomes something done to you rather than something you undertake for fulfilment" (p.51). The current, pre-implementation context fits this description. I associate the prime source of this lack of agency and critical thinking opportunities to the blanket prescription of a generic EFL textbook which forms the backbone of the English curriculum.

EFL "general skills" textbooks and courses are designed as a way to "cater-to-all" yet as a result of this actually end up as "cater-to-none." The synthetic or structural syllabus of generic EFL textbooks are criticised for their promotion of culturally manufactured worldviews (Gray, 2002), and may have content which is either not relevant or inappropriate for specific audiences. That is, generic textbooks are often designed to appeal to the widest audience as possible by featuring "'the structures of language' which are 'the same for everyone'" (Long, 2014, p.7). However, criticisms aimed at generic textbooks observe how there is a lack of "fit" between textbook content and the local teaching context (Altan, 1995). Long also writes that "learners, not teachers, have the most control over [learners'] language development" (2014, p.24) which is used as an argument for avoiding the structural syllabi that appear in such textbooks. In other words, learners' sequential acquisition of grammatical structures as presented by teachers is not as controllable as teachers may think. This guiding philosophy has shaped my approach to language teaching with KR in that the vocabulary, grammar and cultural knowledge that students learn are not predetermined, rather, I provide a teaching framework and support materials which promote students to notice areas of language and culture to explore further which are of interest or relevance to themselves as active learners. In other words, as is typical in a TBLT approach, activity or task performance (in the case of this paper:

gameplay) precedes grammar instruction. Additionally, instead of predicting and prescribing the grammar that learners will investigate at the post-task stage, in KR learners themselves discover the grammar they need to study based on group analysis of their gameplay interactions.

> EFL "general skills" textbooks and courses are designed as a way to "cater-to-all" yet as a result of this actually end up as "cater-to-none."

One could argue that the deeper cause of students' lack of engagement is that the university mandates a communicative language teaching (CLT) perspective towards teaching where student talk time must be maximized at the expense of critical thinking and reflection activities. In such contexts getting students to speak in English for the majority of the class time is perhaps considered the pinnacle of successful language teaching but ultimately only leads to the generation of "empty babble" rather than academic, or other appropriate, real-world skills (Pennycook, 1994, p.311). It should be noted that, although I have questioned the benefits of a CLT approach to language teaching, KR itself falls under the CLT umbrella. It is designed from a TBLT perspective to SLA, and aims to promote students' in-class spoken interaction. Additionally, their ability to speak English accurately and fluently during gameplay informs the main assessment of the class. Whilst I have recently started to garner these concerns towards CLT, I will show in this paper that the model may be considered a successful implementation of games into a CLT/TBLT context promoting learners to improve their English production between gameplay sessions with the aid of solid pedagogical considerations.

1.3 What literature, ideas or experiences influenced or inspired you?

In this paper, I will introduce my attempt at creating a robust, TBLT-grounded framework around games and gameplay for teaching English as a foreign language to university students. The framework has already been through several iterations and is still considered a work in progress. One of the first iterations can be seen in York and deHaan (2017), York (2018) and a more recent version in York, deHaan, and Hourdequin (2019).

There are several strong influences behind the creation of this experimental framework. Mentioned above are my experiences as a language-learning gamer and my dissatisfaction with the false promises of gamification. Related to this point, the completion of project work in order to attain a grade is not a taboo topic in my classroom. This class is not gamified. I make no attempt to obscure the fact that the class is compulsory, and that for some students, they would choose not to take it if given the choice. Therefore, the primary motivation to gain credit is not a problem. I give them a detailed rubric for the final project, as well as self-assessment criteria which I also use for assessing their gameplay sessions. I do not try to sugar-glaze or coat the broccoli of my class with chocolate. Test scores are not XP towards a quest to defeat a dragon, they are a reflection of my evaluation of students' performance, or granted as a result of completing work that is essential to the progression of the class (such as the transcription homework activities).

> I give students a detailed rubric for final projects .... I do not try to sugar-glaze or coat the broccoli of my class with chocolate.

An additional influence is my dissatisfaction with the literature on games in language teaching contexts, that is, the observation of a trend in the literature on game-based language teaching (henceforth GBLT) to focus too narrowly on specific topics such as autonomous learning or the affective affordances of games rather than classroom-based teaching practices with games (Cornillie, Thorne & Desmet, 2012; Thomas, 2012; Reinhardt, 2018). This is particularly pertinent to the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) literature which is one of the few avenues for publishing on the intersection of games and language teaching. Unfortunately, as this subfield of applied linguistics features the word "computer" in its title, the word "digital" is almost a required prefix to game-based language learning, and so DGBLL is the default term for studies exploring games and second or foreign language learning and teaching. This promotes technology over pedagogy and learning over teaching. Concretely: compared to the established acronym of

DGBLL, I propose a sibling: GBLT. In this paper, I am promoting the latter, *teaching*-centred approach to using games in educational contexts.

> *DGBLL* is the default term for studies exploring games and second or foreign language learning and teaching. This promotes technology over pedagogy and learning over teaching.

Other research-related influences include the literature on game-based learning from non-language specific contexts. Squire (2011) inspired the conceptualisation and formulation of my curriculum progression to coincide with typical video game progression (see Section 2.2 below). Farber (2018) introduces several concrete examples of game-based teaching in action, which allowed me to reflect on my own practices. Darvarsi (2016) inspired the direction and style of this paper. He introduces a high-resolution reflection of his own teaching context. Additionally, Molin (2017) is a rare example of a paper which considers teacher roles in GBLT contexts. She writes that teacher roles are multitudinous and far from linear. Therefore, it is vital that teacher roles are recognized and considered in the literature of games in teaching contexts. I have argued elsewhere that "GBLTeachers" need at least the following three core components: game literacy, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge (York, deHaan & Hourdequin, 2019). Though space and scope limitations of this paper do not allow for a detailed exploration of this concept, suffice it to say that it has parallels to the technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK) framework for measuring teachers' ability to use technology in their teaching practices. Indeed, the model has been adapted to measure game literacy and game usage in Shah and Foster (2015). The final, and perhaps most significant influence was my desire to promote students to take responsibility and engage in the learning process. I unpack this last point in much greater detail in Section 1.4.2.

> It is vital that teacher roles are recognized and considered in the literature of games in teaching contexts.

1.4 What was your goal? Why?

The goals of KR may be considered from multiple perspectives: first, from my own goals, as a teacher or researcher. Next, from the perspective of my institution: what do they want me to teach, what do they want the students to learn? And, finally, from the perspective of the students who have their own subjective needs and goals for the class. Possible goals for each of these agents are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 *A non-exhaustive list of goals for this project*

My personal goals as a teacher-researcher	**Institutional goals**	**Student goals**
(research focus) To explore the use of games as a teaching tool. (teaching and research focus) To create a framework for the successful implementation of games into L2 teaching. (teaching focus) To provide students with an engaging curriculum around games which promotes the following skills: ● Integrated second language skills acquisition (i.e. a focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening) ● Meaningful, communicative language *use* (i.e. not focused on *knowledge* acquisition, but communicative competency) ● *Noticing* their errors, weaknesses and gaps in their interlanguage ● L1 communication, teamwork, social skills. (teaching focus) To give students the opportunity to be in charge of their own work, and to create something meaningful	To provide compulsory "communicative English" classes to all first- and second-year students focused on speaking and listening skills. To make sure that students pass the class. To appeal to prospective students that there are not only English classes, but English classes led by native speakers.	The following goals are assumed. That is, no survey was carried out in order to generate this data. Future work-related, ***objective*** language needs are difficult to pinpoint without conducting an extensive needs analysis such as in Lambert (2010). However, Lambert reported that regardless of employment domain, tasks related to English usage were generally the same: ● Locating information from English sources ● Translating documents from English to Japanese ● Summarizing English information in Japanese ● Creating/editing official English documents ● Interpreting between speakers of English and Japanese Possible students ***subjective*** needs (anecdotal): ● To pass the class (get credit for graduation) ● To acquire English for future job prospects (particularly a high TOEIC score) To learn English for travel purposes

The context provides a stimulus for me to pursue my own goals as a language teacher. Subjectively, I consider my university to have ill-defined learning goals in terms of English language education. There are no standards to aim for, no high-stakes testing, no professional development within the department, no input from other departments regarding curriculum development. Such is not rare in Japan, as Negishi (2012) from Tokyo University writes:

> According to the grand design for [Tokyo] university, our mission is to send graduates out into the world with "advanced language proficiency." However, as far as I know, there are no agreed-upon attainment targets in English language teaching in TUFS, and there is no consensus on a teaching methodology to adopt in order to attain such targets. Although this might sound a little surprising, unfortunately, this kind of situation seems to be prevalent in English language teaching in Japan. (p.105-106)

This lack of consensus or "care" regarding the goals of the English department allows me to create my own goals, materials, and decide my own teaching approach. I realise that I am fortunate to be able to do this, and that this level of self-determination is not possible in the majority of contexts. Therefore, I embrace this freedom to pursue research and personal interests. It is fortuitous that the interests of students align somewhat with my own: a strong interest in games. This allows me to explore the intersection of games and language teaching in my classroom.

1.4.1 KR as an "experiment" in GBLT

One goal of KR is to explore the question "What can we do with games in the language classroom (other than just playing on a Friday afternoon)?" KR is an experiment in implementing games into a university language learning context with the goal of improving learners' language proficiency, engagement in the learning process, and ability to cooperate as part of autonomous groups. Additionally, the development of the KR framework follows the design philosophy of rapid iteration. Implications of this are that KR is iterated in response to perceived shortcomings such as students requiring more or less time to do certain activities, or through my interpretation and application of knowledge from the literature on game-based teaching. A concrete example of iteration is the number of pre and post-play activities which have added to the model since its inception, as well as the amount of class time devoted to such activities (compare the model in this paper to York and deHaan, 2017 for example).

1.4.2 But why create this model at all?

The quick answer to this question is a series of goals: To use games as a vehicle for language development, to improve students' literacy regarding language, games, and technology, to promote student agency in learning and an interest in English, and to produce a community of students, players, and content creators. I will now unpack a number of these goals in further detail.

Language development

My approach to language teaching was greatly influenced by a CLT and, more specifically, TBLT approach. The KR model is therefore designed primarily for students to improve their productive (and in particular, speaking) language skills. Games act as a catalyst for verbal communication, however, just as watching a movie in Spanish without any support materials or directed attention does not guarantee that the viewer is able to learn Spanish, KR is rigorously designed to allow students to notice errors in their speech and improve their communicative competence through engagement with pre and post-play activities and subsequent task repetitions (i.e. repeated gameplay sessions).

The repetition of gameplay in the KR model is limited to a single time (at the time of writing this. In the original version of the model, there was no repetition at all..!). This is based on both my understanding of the benefits of task repetition (see Hsiu Chen, 2017), and my own subjective experience as a board game player. That is, even in one's native language, the first gameplay session of a board game is hindered by problems, miscommunications, and additional cognitive demands due to a lack of familiarization with game rules. For a foreign language student, such high cognitive demands may result in a limited capacity for considering the L2.

In keeping with university goals for the class, I assess students on their English productive skills. This university class is a speaking and listening or more specifically "communicative English" class and so in order to appease the university requirements, I am assessing students on their speaking ability during gameplay using a simple rubric based on fluency, accuracy, use of game words, cooperation and their volume (see Section 3.5 for more details). They are also assessing themselves based on the same rubric and are in charge of keeping track of other additional scores which go towards their final grade such as those awarded for completing homework assignments. Thus, responsibility towards learning features highly. Project work and team management are also core concepts. Much like an ecological approach to language teaching, I am providing a rich semiotic budget for students to discover something about their interlanguage, language ability, and identity as a university student, an English learner, and a member of a group (van Lier, 2010). Additionally, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the KR framework is devised to scaffold students' familiarization to the cycle from learning how to play, to playing, and then analyzing their play sessions.

Literacies development

The term *literacy* is used to encompass a broad range of literacy skills that students are expected to acquire during their experience of KR.

- **Digital literacy**: Smartphone usage is stressed throughout the course, where students reference both English, and Japanese websites to find information. The use of QR codes, URLs and other hypermedia are also relied on within the KR workbook.
- **Game literacy**: Data from a post-course questionnaire in 2018 revealed that of 98 students, the average amount of time spent playing video games (including mobile) was 6.3 hours per week. In comparison, board games were seldom played by students with an average play time of 0.9 hours. It is therefore hoped that through their experience with KR, students are able to broaden their knowledge of games to include board and card games.
- **L2 literacy**: This is outlined above in 1.4.3.
- **L1 literacy:** Whilst this may seem out of place here, through KR students are able to improve their L1 communication skills. This is a bedrock-level skill that I hope to promote in my context. In more detail, my students are predominantly male, 18-20 years old and whilst not all, some are shy, introverted, and find it difficult to connect with other students within the classroom. Placing them into random groups can be a source of apprehension. By promoting a positive class atmosphere and concrete goals for groups, it is hoped that students may communicate with, and form bonds with other students, thus improving their L1 communication skills, an important 21st century skill.

2 Design

2.1 How did the background influence your design decisions?

The backbone of the KR framework is informed by an interactionist (Long, 1985), and more specifically, TBLT approach to SLA. The framework loosely follows the Pre-task, Task, and Post-task cycle of Willis (1996). This approach was adopted due to two factors: 1) my formal training in applied linguistics and TESOL and 2) my reading of the CALL literature on digital games and language teaching, specifically, Sykes (2014, p.153) who highlighted the similarities between the affordances of games (and in particular game "quests") and the pedagogical principles for TBLT task design. For a shortened version of Sykes' original table, see Table 5. I have written at greater length regarding these similarities in York and deHaan (2018).

Table 5 *The similarities of gameplay and TBLT principles*

Guiding principles for TBLT task design	Game affordances
Tasks should be goal-oriented.	There is a central goal of gameplay.
Tasks should be interrelated.	Games feature a series of increasingly difficult tasks.
Tasks should provide feedback.	Games offer rewards and metrics to measure progress.
	Games offer the ability to restart quests (in-game missions or tasks) and try again, thus task repetition.
Tasks should require negotiation and collaboration between learners as they work towards a non-linguistic goal.	Multiplayer games often require players to collaborate towards a quest goal, providing player choice throughout.
Tasks are authenticated by learners, not task-creators.	Gameplay is an authentic experience within the confines of the "magic circle" of play (See Salen & Zimmerman, 2004).

Digital (video) games are the most prevalent type of game featured in the CALL and wider SLA literature. However, KR implements board games as the centrepiece of a TBLT approach to language teaching. I was specifically motivated to use board games in this project due to their cognitive and affective affordances on top of those mentioned in Sykes (2014). Benefits include the following:

- **Promoting an integrated approach to developing language skills**.

I often use the following comparison to drive home this point. Digital games feature robust in-game tutorials which gradually teach the player how to play or interact with the game. These tutorials are, for the most part, text-light and use other semiotic means (symbols, images, videos, etc.) to instruct players. Digital games may also feature computer-controlled, autonomous support devices for players similar to dynamic assessment procedures (see Poehner & Lantolf, 2013). That is, a player will receive increasingly explicit feedback to aid their comprehension during the tutorial. This is possible, of course, due to the affordances of the medium, and the skill and foresight of the game's programmers. On the other hand, board games are primarily learned via a text-heavy rulebook (or, increasingly, rules explanation videos). There is no feedback during one's learning of the rules, and rules are learnt in bulk before gameplay starts. In terms of language development, then, a player must transfer knowledge gained from the text into physical action. In this way, receptive skills are garnered and utilized *before* play in order *to play*. During board game play, in lieu of having a computer-generated aid, numerous speech acts are utilized by players in order to progress the state of the game including rule confirmations. Thus, unlike the opaque, closed-systems of digital games (Zagal, Rick & Hsi, 2006) the progression of board game play is mediated by players' shared understanding of the game rules and cooperation. In summary then, receptive pre-play skills are a precursor to productive skills during gameplay. Reading and writing activities lead to speaking and listening activities, allowing learners to check their comprehension as well as engage in collaborative learning akin to learning in a ZPD.

- **Fostering 21st Century skills**.

In particular, collaboration and creativity, as board games often require players to roleplay in collaborative acts towards game goals (see Jenkins et al., 2009). The collaborative nature of board game play (from learning rules to progressing game play) was outlined briefly above. In terms of role play, board games allow a player to forego societal norms for a brief period and experiment with other identities in a safe, sandbox-like environment. Typically, this is instantiated in the form of arbitrary rivalries and competition between players, the imperative to lie to others or to act out the role of a character far-removed from the players reality (a warlord, a vampire, a diver, a mafia boss, a submarine captain, etc.) In comparison to the collaboration written about in video games, board games focus much less on the dexterity of players and thus the pace of play can allow for extended periods of discussion or clarification as players work towards resolutions.

Ease of implementation should also not be overlooked as board games are generally of a lower cost than digital counterparts and require low maintenance compared to game consoles. Of course, compared to free, online browser games, board games may still be considered a financial burden, but by having relatively low purchasing and upkeep costs I am therefore able to curate a game library, providing students with a choice of game to play, and thus providing opportunities for self-determination and engagement in learning (see Nicholson, 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2002).

2.2 Overview of the KR framework

I planned on alleviating the lack of agency for both my students and myself with a curriculum in which classes are connected from week-to-week over the length of the semester. KR has a pronounced beginning, middle, and end. It is a linear path, including rigorous scaffolding at the start, and gradually gives students more agency and responsibility as they go through the course. It concludes with students creating their own gaming groups, choosing, learning, and playing a game as well as evaluating their progress and language ability throughout. Initially, I created supporting worksheets for each stage of the cycle, printing them out for each class, however, as the KR framework became more solid, I published a specific textbook/workbook through my university's publishing department which is a compendium of worksheets, grammar guides, QR codes for quizzes and a section for students to record their scores and grades they receive through the course. Henceforth, I shall refer to this workbook as the KR workbook (York, 2019a). Finally, these groups complete one of several "final projects" that allows students to create something for

their peers, creating a community of practice that spans over multiple generations of the class. This point was inspired by Squire's (2011) observation that in gaming culture, some players progress from Novice players to Master players and beyond to Designers who create content for other players. Squire calls this "the most advanced, sophisticated [form] of participation in game culture" (p.59). Whilst the students in my context do not create content for external audiences, it is hoped that the local community of practice within the classroom and between departments inspires students to engage in interest-driven work (that is, the games they play and projects they undertake are of their own choosing). A representation of the similarities between Squire's notion of gamer identity progression and the KR progression can be seen in Figure 4.

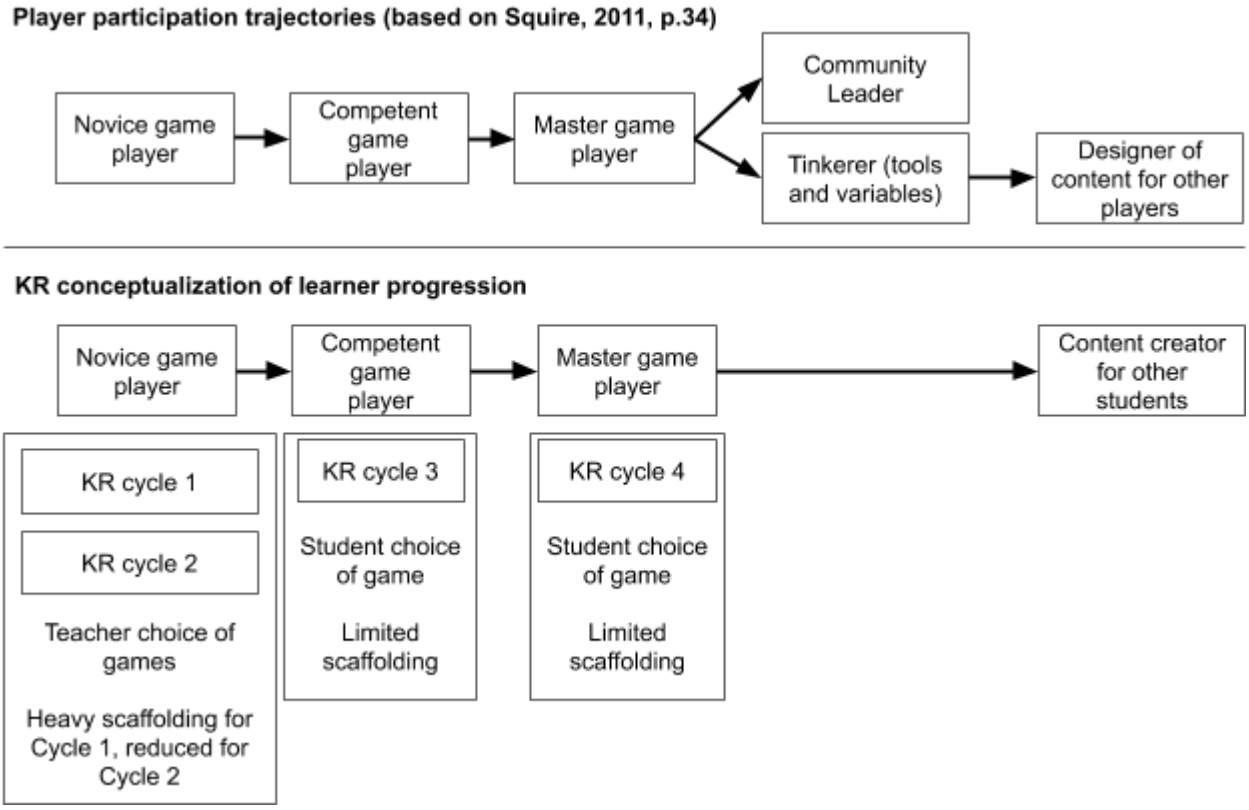


Figure 4 *Student progression through KR in comparison to game player participation projections*

At the "novice game player" stage, students play two games of my choosing via the KR gameplay and analysis cycle. The first two games were chosen by me so that I could create rigorous support materials to acclimatize students to the KR cycle, direct them towards noticing certain linguistic items, and provide a model of what I expect them to do in the following two cycles where scaffolding materials are heavily reduced. At the "master game player" stage, scaffolding is reduced to the barebones worksheets and students control every aspect of the KR cycle. However, it should be noted that my role as an instructor is not reduced to a mere "guide on the side." Far from it, as at this stage, I have to manage the progression of up to six different game groups simultaneously: answering questions, promoting students to notice certain linguistic errors and interesting cultural items in YouTube videos and manage gameplay sessions. The model works on a meta-level of the class, and in terms of how agency and responsibility is gradually provided to students. It should also work in terms of students' increasing ability to both produce and analyse English. During the first two cycles, grammar points and framing questions are provided. These supports are gradually reduced to the bare framework at cycles 3 and 4.

Although there are similarities between Squire's player participation trajectories and the KR model, it should be noted that game player trajectories are voluntary, whereas the "Content creator" end goal of KR is not. Individual gamers that reach the Designer level of Squire's conceptualization number fewer than those at any of the previous levels due to the dedication required to achieve this level of participation. In my own context, students are required to complete the content creation stage as part of their final project, which is also used for assessment purposes. However, there is some choice given to students regarding which final project they complete and therefore the type of content they create.

The first two games are predefined to acclimatize students to the KR cycle and provide a model of what I expect them to do in the following two cycles where scaffolding materials are heavily reduced.

2.3 The KR cycle

A graphical representation of the framework is available in Figure 5. The framework is loosely designed to take students from learning about a game (and thus reading and listening skills are a focus of instruction and activity) to playing a game (focusing on productive language skills) and then analysing their own performance (focusing on form) with the aim of improving their language skills for a subsequent, assessed play session. In later cycles, the research stage is added, where students conduct self-driven research on a number of games from the provided game list (see Appendix 2). This section is the precursor to student-led instances of the KR cycle (cycles 3 and 4).

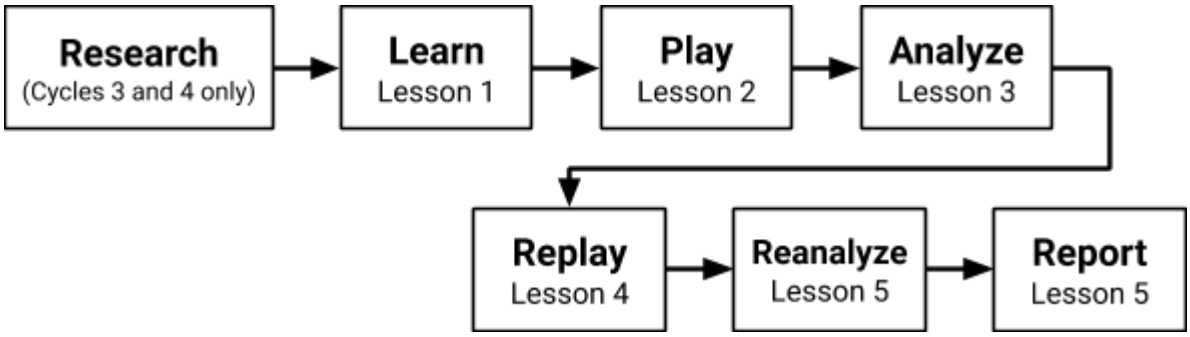


Figure 5 *A graphical representation of a KR cycle*

Taking an interactionist approach to instructed SLA, the framework was designed to adhere to Long's (2009, p.386-387) 10 methodological principles (MP's). These are:

1. Use task not text as the unit of analysis.
2. Promote learning by doing.
3. Elaborate input (do not simplify; do not rely solely on "authentic" texts).
4. Provide rich (not impoverished) input.
5. Encourage inductive ("chunk") learning.
6. Focus on form.
7. Provide negative feedback.
8. Respect "learner syllabuses"/ developmental processes.
9. Promote cooperative/ collaborative learning.
10. Individualize instruction (psycholinguistically, and according to communicative needs).

Whilst the connection between the MPs and KR's individual stages are somewhat salient, MP3 requires greater explanation. The first two cycles of the KR model feature rulebooks that I adapted from the original sources. These rulebooks are elaborated, with the game companies consent, and reprinted in the workbook. Unlike Long advises, these modified rulebooks are simplified to help scaffold students in their attempts to understand how to play.

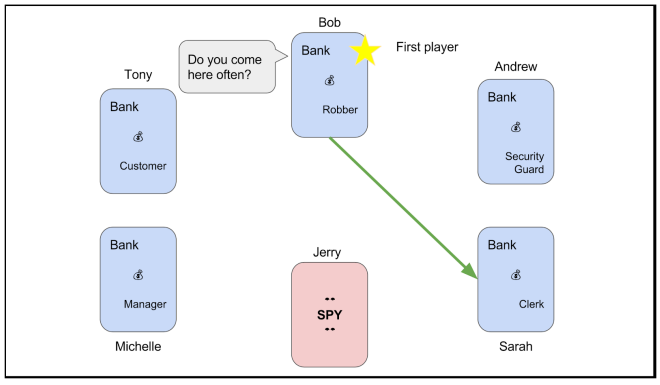
As a concrete example, I adapted the rulebook for the game Spyfall (Ushan, 2014) in the following ways. First, I greatly reduced the length of the rule book from 1902 words to 569 (data generated from https://www.lextutor.ca). This was done by rewriting particularly verbose sections of the rulebook and cutting any text which was considered extraneous. Consider the following text from the official rulebook which contains an idiom: blow one's cover, and 19% off-list vocabulary items.

> The spy's mission is to listen carefully, identify the location, and keep from blowing his cover. Each non-spy must give an oblique hint to the other non-spies suggesting that he knows the location's identity, thus proving he's not the spy. Observation, concentration, nonchalance, and cunning — you'll need all of them in this game. (Ushan, p.1)

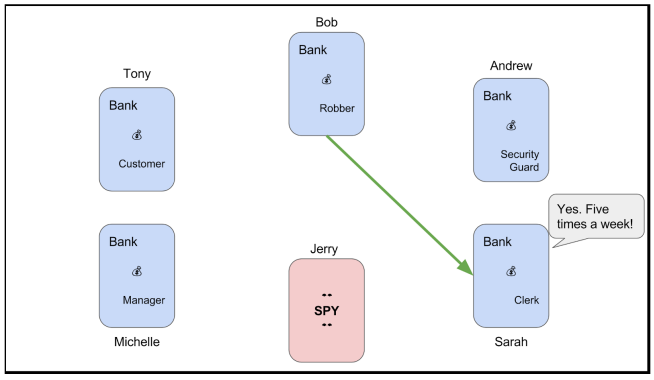
The simplified version of this in the KR workbook I created reads as below. A reduction in terms of length, the removal of the idiom and less off-list vocabulary (but still making up 15% of the text):

> The spy's mission is to listen carefully, identify the location, and not get found out by the non-spies. The spy must guess the location before the end of the round to win. (York, 2019a, p.36)

Secondly, instead of introducing an example of play in writing (as in the original rulebook), I included a number of pictures and short sentences to explain how the game proceeds (Figure 6 below).



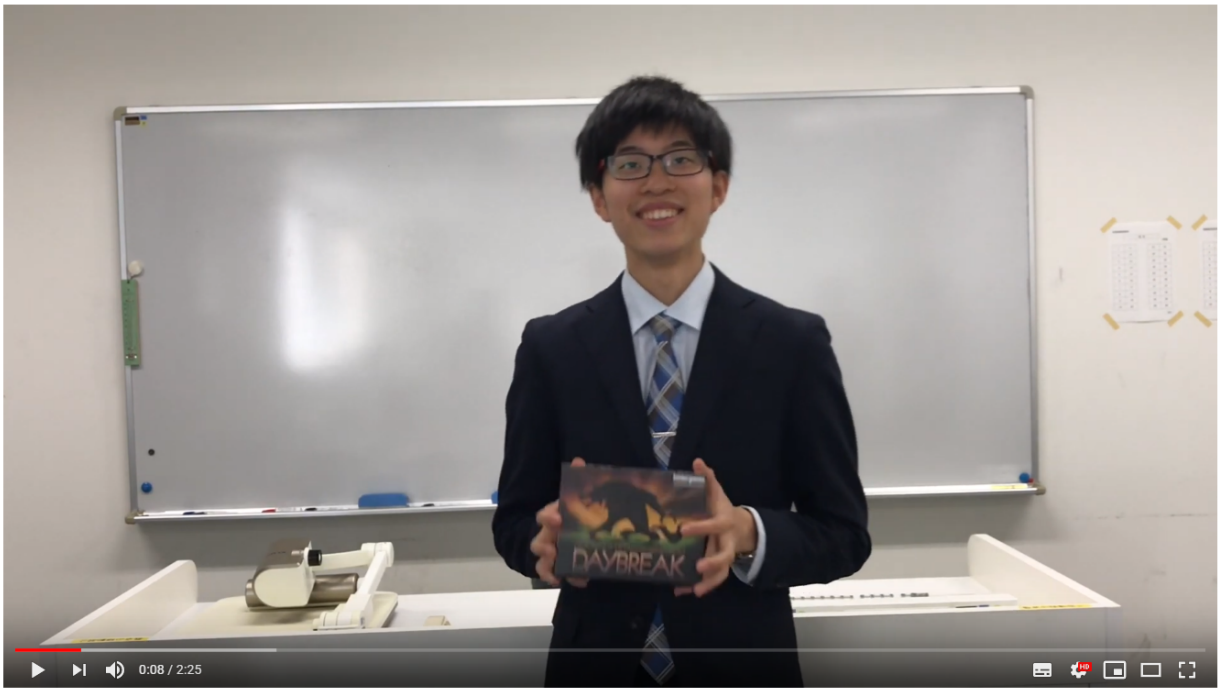
Bob is the first player and asks Sarah a question.



Sarah replies honestly. She is the bank clerk. She works there and so probably goes to the bank five times a week.

Figure 6 *Example of play used for* Spyfall *in the KR workbook*

However, later in the course, *authentic* rulebooks become the core way in which they learn how to play. Related to MP4 also, scaffolding at this stage is provided by 1) access to YouTube videos (thus providing an alternative, multimodal approach to learning rules and checking comprehension), and 2) through the artefacts that previous students created (in previous instantiations of the course). Examples include written game reviews, and videos of either gameplay or rules explanations. As a concrete example, videos are uploaded to YouTube as "unlisted," but some are made public after receiving consent from students as in Figure 7 below. These videos may be utilized by future generations of students learning how to play their chosen games.



#boardgames #GBLTeaching #TBLT
How to Play "One Night Ultimate Daybreak" by Japanese university students

Figure 7 *A screenshot of a group's video project. Full video available here:* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftUFfyeUPkw

Table 6 introduces a detailed description of each phase and how the framework resembles Willis's TBLT framework and adheres to Long's Methodological Principles.

Table 6 *Detailed overview of the KR framework with reference to a TBLT approach*

Framework stage	TBLT stages	Long's Methodological Principles
Pre-play: Game Research (2 lessons) - Learn about games in English or Japanese - Consider keywords and unique points of the games researched - Present on the game in short presentations - Create groups around a specific game	Priming, main task (presenting)	MP4 - Provide rich input MP2 - Promote learning by doing
Pre-play: Learn (1 lesson) - Read the English rulebook - Watch online rule explanation videos - Write questions about the rules - Test play and consider important words/phrases needed to play	Priming Output task, connecting receptive skills to production	MP4 - Provide rich input MP3 - Elaborate input (do not simplify, do not rely solely on "authentic" texts") MP2 - Promote learning by doing
Play (1 lesson) - Play the game in groups - Record the game with their smartphones - Transcribe gameplay audio	Main task Speaking output task w/ focus on fluency Writing task, repetition, consciousness raising, noticing	MP1 - Use task not text as the unit of analysis MP2 - Promote learning by doing MP7 - Provide negative feedback
Analyze (1 lesson) - Find errors in their transcriptions - Compare their performance with online videos - Consider their gameplay performance	Post-task report Grammar intuition, focus on accuracy	MP5 - encourage inductive "chunk" learning MP6 - Focus on form MP7 - Provide negative feedback MP8 - respect learner developmental processes
Replay (1 lesson) - Play the game - Transcribe gameplay audio	Task repetition Fluency focused speaking and listening task	MP1 - Use task not text as the unit of analysis MP2 - Promote learning by doing
Reanalyze and report (1 lesson) - Find errors in the second transcription - Compare the two transcriptions	Post-task focus-on-form and accuracy	MP5 - encourage inductive "chunk" learning MP6 - Focus on form MP7 - Provide negative feedback MP8 - respect learner developmental processes
Final Project (2 - 3 lessons) (Not a part of a KR cycle. Only completed *after* the fourth cycle) - Choose from a number of projects and create a document or video for submission.	Accuracy task Formal report Transfer knowledge and experience into another format.	MP1 - Use task not text as the unit of analysis MP3 - Elaborate input (do not simplify, do not rely solely on "authentic" texts") MP2 - Promote learning by doing

2.4 Technology use within KR

KR utilizes board games as the main mediating tool for language and literacy related practices within the classroom, but the framework also relies heavily on technology. That is, KR does not require any specific, external hardware, but utilizes the ubiquitous hardware that all of my students have available to them: smartphones. An overview of how smartphones are used over the course of one cycle of the framework is provided in Table 7. Whilst smartphones are the default piece of technology students use to access online materials and sources, some students do have access to personal computers (laptops). They are also permitted to use these devices. In sum, there is no strict rule regarding *how* students access networked content. It is left for them to decide which they are most comfortable with.

Table 7 *Examples of smartphone usage in KR*

Framework stage	Smartphone/PC usage
Pre-play: **Game Research** (2 lessons)	Access the TDU Game List[2]. Search for game rules in Japanese. Search for game rules in English. Use online dictionaries.
Pre-play: **Learn** (1 lesson)	Use online dictionaries. Watch online game reviews and rule explanation videos.
Play (1 lesson)	Record gameplay audio (or video). Use the recording to generate a transcription of play.
Analyze (1 lesson)	Use online dictionaries and grammar guides. Watch online gameplay videos.
Replay (1 lesson)	Record gameplay audio. Use the recording to generate a transcription of play.
Reanalyze and report (1 lesson)	Use online dictionaries. Complete a final online report[3].
Final Report (2 - 3 lessons)	Some, not all of the following: Watch gameplay videos. Watch "how to play" videos. Search for and read written game reviews. Record gameplay videos. Collaborate on Google Docs to write a game transcription or grammar guide.

2.5 Games used in KR

A comprehensive game list can be found online (see Appendix 2), however, in short, the majority of games used in this context are of two varieties: cooperative games and hidden role/social deduction games. The curation of a game list represents a major role of teachers in GBLTeaching contexts. That is, an educator should be able to choose suitable games for their context, and be able to explain rules or answer questions from students. We must become the *game master*.[4]

[2] https://drive.google.com/open?id=12hjQKq3g8se-4crbTu_8WClOAUloDRDj3kBHJo8ZWL8
[3]https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfR491_TO1daleKpAFtrjNbxjyZZ8M0O4uQKYlPqVHaxK75LQ/viewform
[4]In reference to the non-player in *Dungeons & Dragons* (see Polygon's guide to being a GM: https://www.polygon.com/2018/5/26/17153274/dnd-how-to-play-dungeons-dragons-5e-guide-spells-dice-character-sheets-dm)

Concretely, cooperative games provide the following language learning affordances. They have clear, non-linguistic goals, much like tasks in TBLT. Goal orientation is shared between students, which reduces individual cognitive load and encourages social, collaborative learning (Nebel, Schneider & Rey, 2016). This is linked to joint creation of a ZPD where expertise may arise from collaboration between learners (Donato, 1994). An example of a typical cooperative board game is *Burgle Bros.* by Fowers (2015) (Figure 8). The theme of this game is a bank robbery where all players work together to steal loot from safes on three separate floors before escaping to the roof. Players have unique roles and must work together to uncover the location of the safes, crack the codes, and avoid the guardsmen before escaping.

Figure 8 *An example of gameplay of the cooperative board game* Burgle Bros.

Hidden role games are similar to jigsaw information gap tasks (Skehan, 2003). Each player has access to a limited amount of information at the start of the game (some players having more than others) and in order to solve the mystery of the game players must converse as a group supplying information as they see fit. Typical interactions in a hidden role game revolve around which player's information can be trusted. That is, a number of players may belong to a "betrayer" team who are deliberately trying to mislead the group in order to not be found out. These games thus afford experimentation with a new identity and role-playing a "good" or "bad" team player. *One Night Ultimate Werewolf* (Alspach, 2014) is a typical example of a hidden role game where players work together to uncover which of them is a "werewolf" character (Figure 9).

Figure 9 *Playable roles in the game* One Night Ultimate Werewolf

These game genres were primarily selected for their affordances to promote conversation between students. Although there is little in the applied linguistics literature to cite regarding such affordances, a paper by Xu, Barba, Radu, Gandy and MacIntyre (2011) outlines four major speech acts that occur around board game play including *reflection on gameplay*, *strategic planning*, *out-of-game talk*, and talking about the *game components*. In addition to these "chore" related speech acts, hidden-role games may be considered jigsaw information gap tasks, and cooperation games decision gap tasks, which are commonly used task types in TBLT contexts to promote spoken interaction. The games, therefore, act as meaning-focused tasks to encourage students to communicate with each other in the L2. The "magic circle" of the gaming environment provides a safe place and authentic environment where students test hypotheses regarding English and engage in goal-oriented activity.

2.6 *Translanguaging* in KR

The aim of the class is for students to produce and analyze English. However, a precursor to this is for them to develop their communication skills in general, including their native language: Japanese. It is therefore worth mentioning here that there is no restriction on students use of the L1 in my context. Reading a rulebook as a group requires extensive checking of rules, sentences, phrases, and word meanings. Not allowing students to check their comprehension with others during this phase of the class would be overly restrictive to the point of being damaging to their L2 development. The term put forth by Zheng et al. (2017) known as "translanguaging" or more simply as code-switching is a useful conceptualisation of how groups communicate during this stage of the cycle. The joint activity of reading and understanding the rules (English input) and the backchannel communication in the L1 allows for deeper understanding than can be achieved when working alone. Donato (1994) considered this as collective scaffolding where students operate in a jointly-created ZPD, void of an outsider "expert" as is typically prescribed in SCT. If the group dynamic is supportive, open, and communicative, students have the opportunity to comprehend more than can be achieved alone. However, one caveat of group work which is not specific to KR is that roles can quickly stagnate leading to large differences in the amount of work that each student contributes towards the group. My own personal philosophy, however, is that the advantages of group work outweigh such disadvantages. Less proficient students that contribute fewer translations or rule confirmations to the group are still receiving the "teaching" from those students with higher proficiency.

3 Playtest

Unless otherwise stated, this section provides a play-by-play description of the fourth (and final) cycle of the KR framework in action, spring 2019. At this point, students had been through the cycle three times before and were therefore accustomed to how the cycle plays out. This section focuses on teacher roles, choices, and guidance as well as the products of students' interaction with the framework. A table is presented at the start of each subsection to outline activities and mediation for that specific lesson. Detailed descriptions of some (not all) points in the table are then subsequently provided. That is, some of the mediation points are self-explanatory. Those that require additional explanation or are of specific importance are unpacked in the body of the paper.

3.1 Pre-play: Game Research lessons

Table 8 Student activities and teacher mediation during the Game Research lessons

Student Activity	Teacher mediation
In pairs, research two games from the game list.	- Emphasise the goal and progression of KR (Figure 10). - Model an effective method for researching games (Table 9). - Promote students to collaborate. - Provide suggestions for games to research based on students' preferences.
Present the results of their research to other students (repeated a number of times).	- Model a presentation. - Participate in the presentations. - Provide corrections and advice regarding presenting. - Promote students to not only listen to game explanations, but ask questions regarding rules or unknown vocabulary.
Choose a game to play and create gaming groups.	- Make suggestions regarding which games to play.

I introduced the research lesson with the following question written on the board (See Figure 10). This was to prompt students to consider the end goal of KR at the outset. This is thus an explicit attempt at raising learners' awareness of what is expected of them as they move through the cycle.

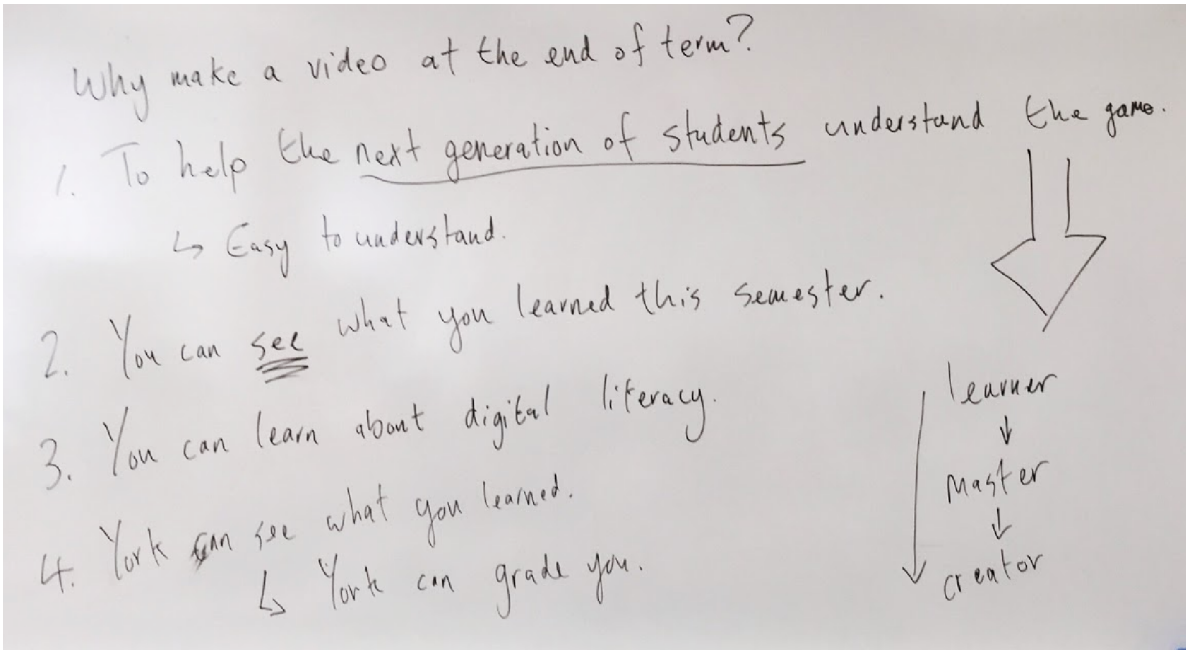


Figure 10 *Answers to the question "Why make a video at the end of term?"*

We discussed the question and extrapolated it to all of the final projects. The aim of this questioning was to understand whether the students were conscious of the community-generation aspect of the class that I had in mind (students creating artefacts for the next generation of students to use). They provided answers which I added to the board, and with a little more prying, we teased out the idea that student-created videos would be a suitable scaffolding tool for students, as the native-speaker videos on online video sites were difficult to understand due to the speed of hosts' speech and level of English used throughout (answer 1). In addition to this point, students were cognizant that the final projects were not only about learning English, but allowed them to develop their digital literacy skills (answer 3), and for me to be able to grade them (answer 4).

Following this introduction, students were instructed to work in pairs to research two games from the game list. The list was given to students as a URL[5] which caused a problem for a number of students who tried to input the URL into their smartphones: searching for the URL on Google, misspelling the URL, adding spaces between words, not knowing that lower and upper case letters need to be input exactly as shown, not knowing how to insert certain characters due to their lack of a qwerty keyboard, etc. This point illustrates the students' lack of digital literacy skills (even in this science and technology university context).

A specific section of the KR workbook was provided to guide students through this activity with sections to complete: game keywords, verbs and their interest in the game. I explained to students that they were to give a presentation about their chosen games in English in the following class and that these pages would help them collect information which could be used in the presentation. See Figure 11 for a completed version of this page. The figure shows how the learner has copied some text verbatim from the rulebook, "If the first team whose submarine suffers..." and paraphrased other sections, "To attack enemy ships." Additionally, this figure indicates that there may not be enough space provided for students to complete this activity. The workbook has been updated since, based on this observation.

[5] https://bit.ly/TDUGameList

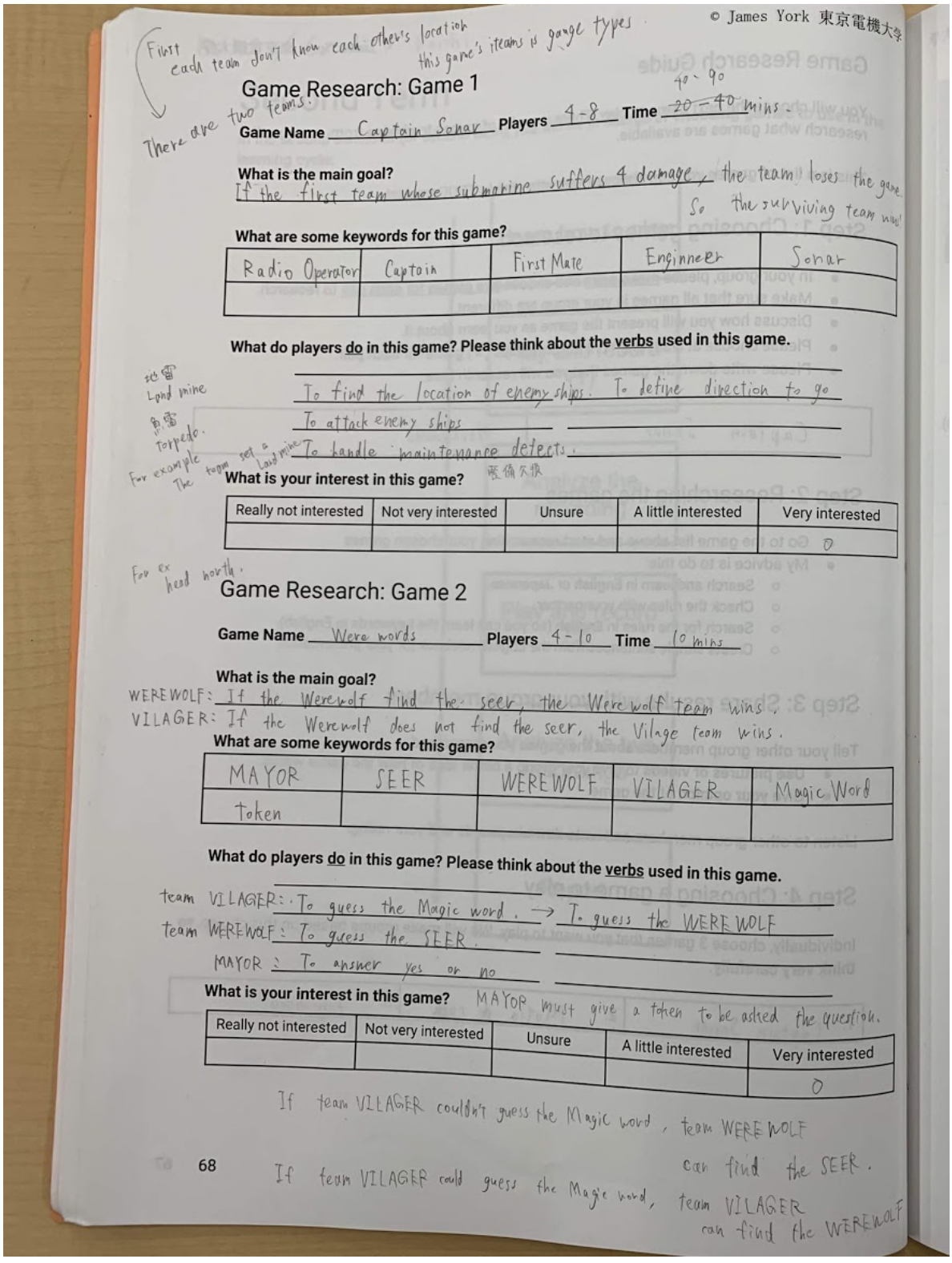


Figure 11 *An example of a students KR workbook with the Game Research section completed*

The research strategy suggested to students is shown in Table 9. The guide posits that students should gain game knowledge in the L1 first, so that they can quickly understand how to play. However, as they are required to present the game in English, they should reference English sources to understand what keywords are in English and to use the rulebook to find useful expressions they can use in their presentations.

Table 9 *A sample game research guide presented to students*

A good approach to researching games	A bad approach to researching games
Learn about the game in Japanese ↓ Learn about the game in English ↓ Complete your worksheet.	Learn about the game in Japanese ↓ Use online translation software to complete the worksheet.

I also specifically illustrated how I wanted pairs to collaborate during the research process. That is, pairs were told to research two different games together, rather than one game each. This instruction was necessary because I noticed a number of groups researching this way:

- Student 1 → Research Game 1
- Student 2 → Research Game 2

This is clearly the most efficient way of researching the two games. It is therefore hard to fault students for thinking this is a reasonable way of conducting the research. However, my aim of having students work in pairs was not for efficiency, but so that they could communicate regarding rules, words, sentences, or any other game-related points that they did not understand. I, therefore, had to make it explicit that I wanted students to work in the following way:

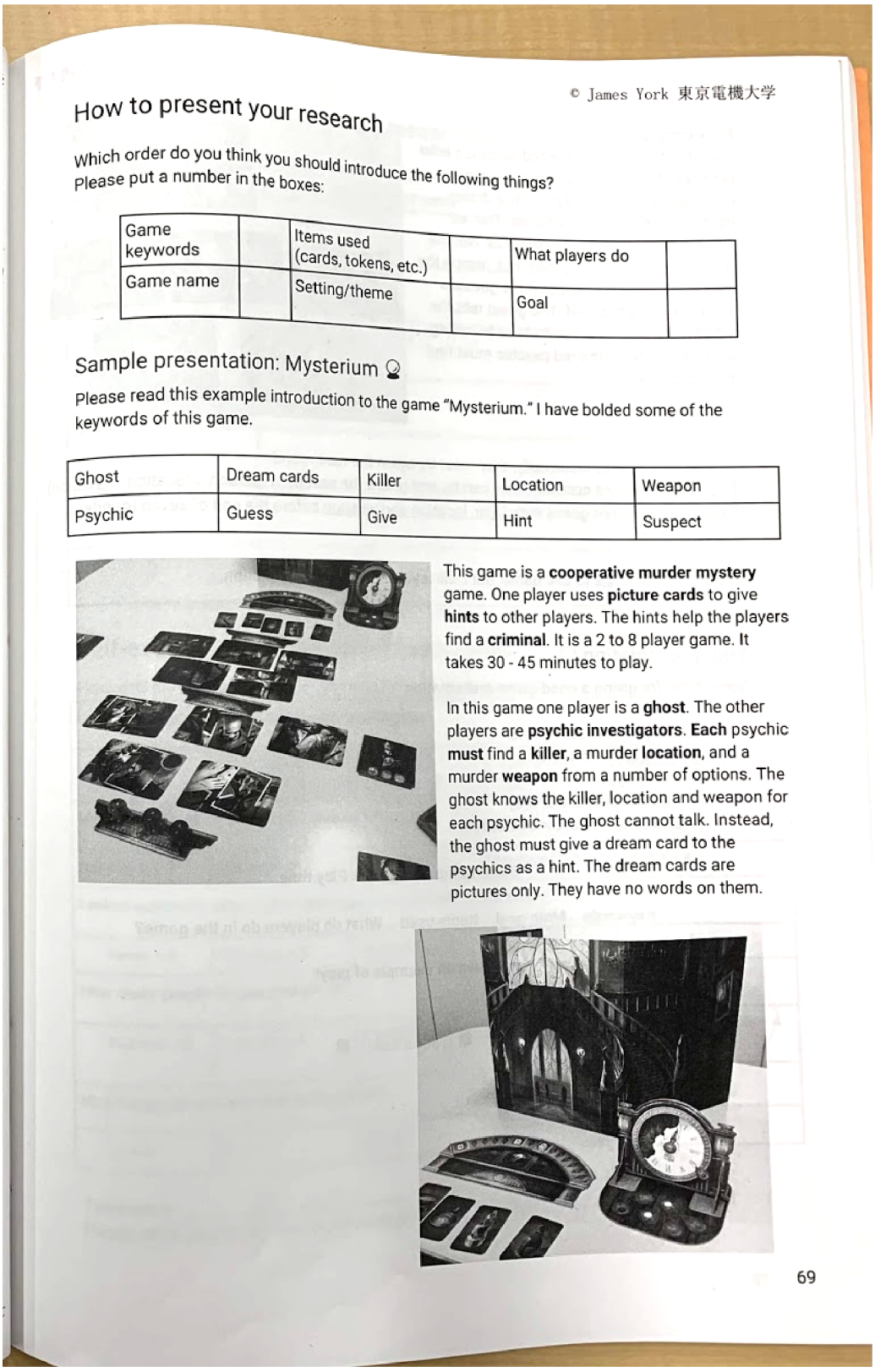
- Student 1 and 2 → Research Game 1
- Student 1 and 2 → Research Game 2

This was achieved by stopping the class, and writing out the information presented in Table 9 on the whiteboard.

Working in pairs rather than individually provides a number of benefits. Firstly, from a sociocultural perspective, having an interlocutor to work with creates a zone of proximal development where students can help each other with gaps in their understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Other benefits include 1) opportunities to practice presenting their findings in English, and 2) an increase in responsibility towards the completion of the task (see Dornyei & Murphey, 2003).

Presenting their findings

The culmination of their game research is for students to present their findings to the rest of the class in English. This is another output-oriented task, and a model is provided for them in the KR workbook. However, I find that students have difficulty doing this activity in English. A model of how I would like the students to present their findings is presented in the KR workbook (Figure 12). I explained the presentation model, but based on previous years experience, I felt that this activity should be enhanced from students merely talking about the games they had researched to giving a presentation in a mock poster presentation session as often found in conferences.



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How to present your research

Which order do you think you should introduce the following things?
Please put a number in the boxes:

Game keywords		Items used (cards, tokens, etc.)		What players do	
Game name		Setting/theme		Goal	

Sample presentation: Mysterium

Please read this example introduction to the game "Mysterium." I have bolded some of the keywords of this game.

Ghost	Dream cards	Killer	Location	Weapon
Psychic	Guess	Give	Hint	Suspect

This game is a **cooperative murder mystery** game. One player uses **picture cards** to give **hints** to other players. The hints help the players find a **criminal**. It is a 2 to 8 player game. It takes 30 - 45 minutes to play.

In this game one player is a **ghost**. The other players are **psychic investigators**. **Each** psychic **must** find a **killer**, a murder **location**, and a murder **weapon** from a number of options. The ghost knows the killer, location and weapon for each psychic. The ghost cannot talk. Instead, the ghost must give a dream card to the psychics as a hint. The dream cards are pictures only. They have no words on them.

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Figure 12 *An example presentation (in the KR workbook)*

The affordances of the room in which I teach with its moveable tables, nine whiteboards, and ample space allowed for all tables to be moved to the sides of the room and a row of whiteboards to be set up in the center (see Figure 13). Students were instructed to write what they had written in the workbook as well as include a flowchart of game play. Flowcharting was a new concept for some students, so I created a flowchart for the game *Two Rooms and a Boom,* which they had already experienced. Examples of students' presentations can be seen in Figures 14 and 15.

Figure 13 *Students working on their "posters" for the mock poster presentation*

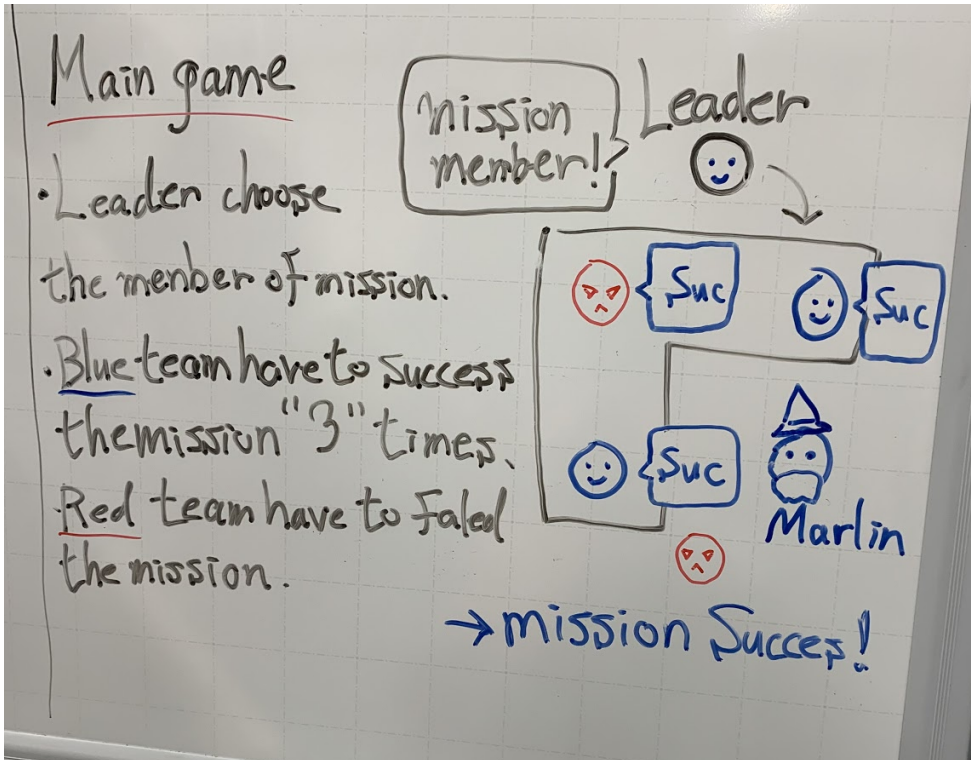


Figure 14 *An example of a student's introduction to the game* Resistance: Avalon

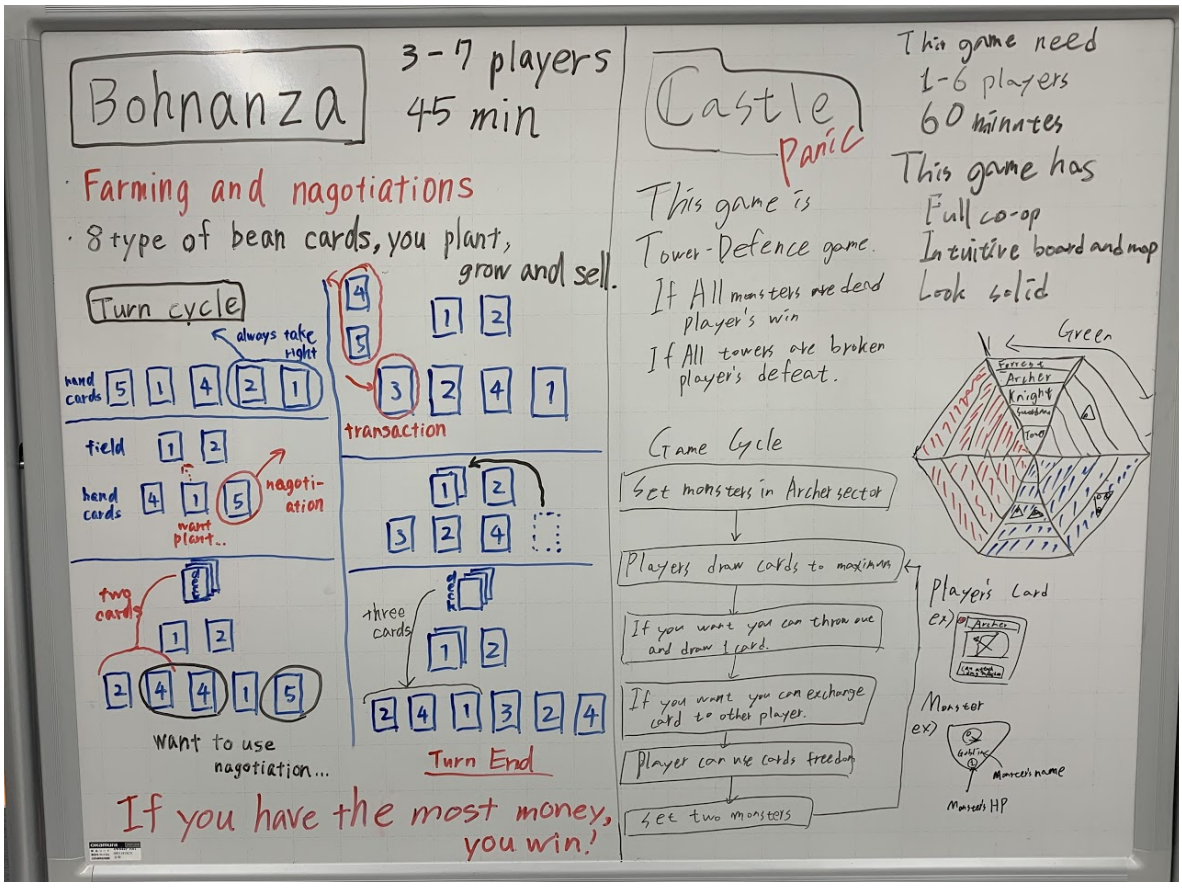


Figure 15 *Another example of students' game overviews for the poster presentation*

Student presentations were organised so that half of the room were presenting and half were walking around and listening. I participated as a listener, and because I have an intimate knowledge of all the games, I elicited further questions to check comprehension in both presenters and listeners. As I circulated the room, I noticed that some students tried to present in English only, others read the content they had written on whiteboards and add more detail in Japanese, and some only spoke Japanese whilst pointing to the content on the whiteboard.

> Unless desired behaviours are made explicit, some students will do as little as possible. This prompts a call for rigorous and lucid assessment criteria at each stage of a pedagogical intervention

In order to make their L1 usage conscious to them, I stopped the class and pointed out that the class itself is a game of sorts. In particular, I framed the classroom as a game in the vein of Suits' definition (2005):

> To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit the use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude]. (p.54-55)

More simply, and applied to this classroom: I mentioned that the overall goal is to gain credit, the means permitted are by completing prescribed activities using English. Therefore, English is the less efficient means of achieving the class goal. The analogy breaks down with the last part of the definition: some/most students are NOT accepting of the rules voluntarily. However, with explicit instruction given to students regarding how I wanted the activity to be done, I felt that students' willingness to use English and consciousness regarding their Japanese usage was improved. This is a common theme of the class in my opinion: unless desired behaviours are made explicit, some students will opt for the easiest path to passing

the class. This prompts a call for rigorous and lucid assessment criteria at each stage of a pedagogical intervention, of which KR is not fully realizing, yet.

3.2 Pre-play: Learn lesson

Table 10 *Student activities and teacher mediation during the Learn lesson*

Student Activity	Teacher mediation

Read the rulebook as a group	- Instruct students to avoid using a Japanese version of the rulebook.
	- Help groups with poor communication to engage better:
	  - Model ideal group behaviours.
	  - Ask such groups to watch how other, more successful groups are cooperating.
	- Answer questions regarding rules, grammar, vocabulary, etc.

Make questions about the rules	- Provide example questions.
Watch YouTube videos	- Answer questions regarding the language used in videos. - Instruct students to pay attention to certain parts of videos. - Ask questions regarding the videos to generate group discussion.
Test play the game	- Promote students to reflect on what they are saying during gameplay. - Correct any errors regarding language use or the game rules.

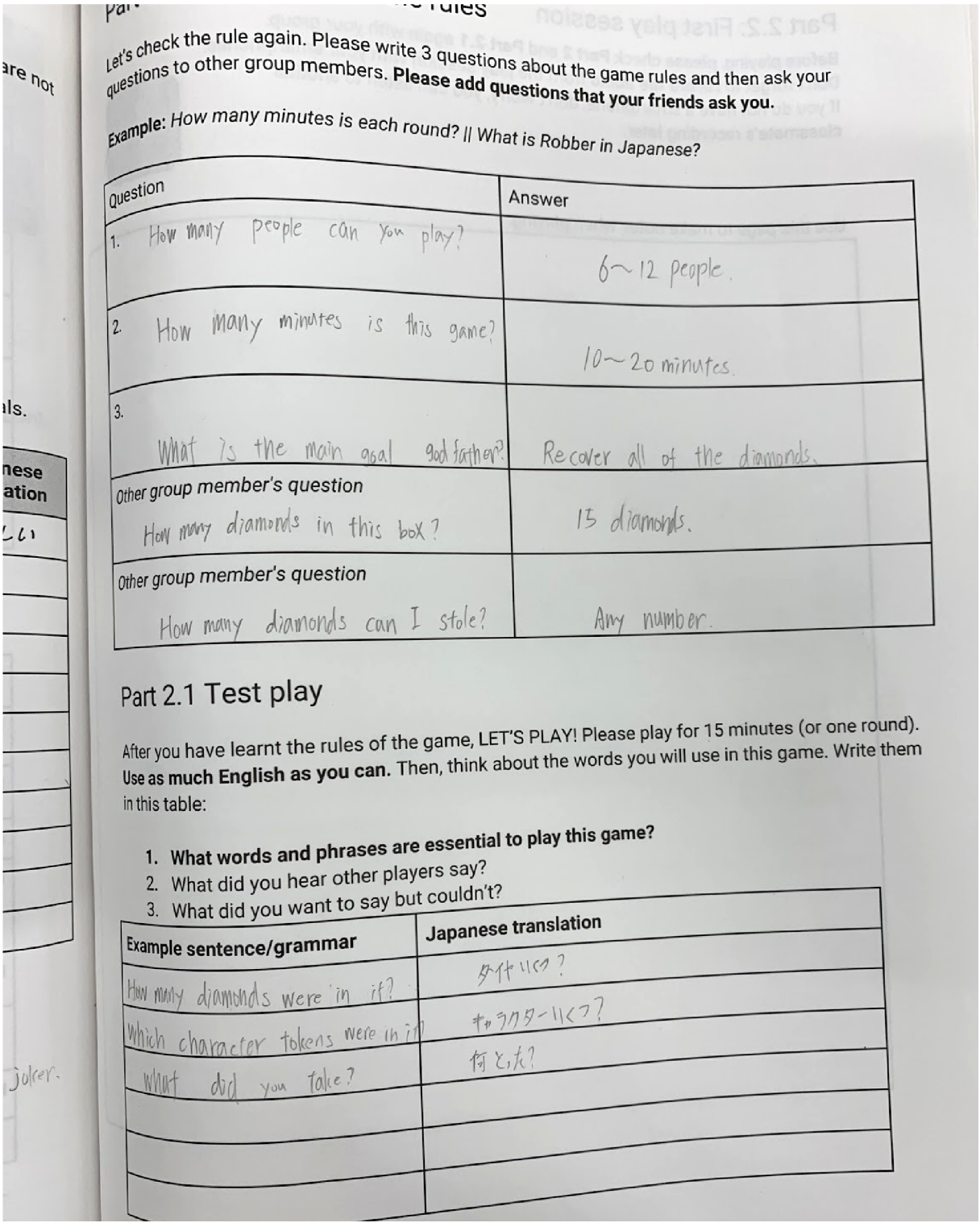
This lesson is the start of the KR cycle for students to work together in small groups. It is therefore especially important to instil a positive, supportive, communicative group working environment. This was achieved by explicitly instructing groups to take it in turns to read and translate the rulebook, ask questions if they did not understand what they had read, and ask me if they could not arrive at a suitable answer as a group.

Unlike the Game Research class, students were not allowed to use Japanese sources to learn the rules of their game. One explicit rule for this class was given at the outset, and relates to Suit's game definition again:

> ***The use of a Japanese language rulebook is prohibited.***

The "inefficient means" for learning how to play their game of choice is that they had to do it through the use of the English language. In this class, then, that means that their source of input should be English. However, as mentioned above, the use of the L1 to discuss, translate, and check rules is completely acceptable and encouraged.

Students were asked to write three questions about the game rules in their workbook (see Figure 16 or Appendix 1, Part 2). These questions are designed to be used in a group activity to check all members' comprehension of the rules. These questions can be used in this class and the following class before play as a way to refresh their memories and prime them for the upcoming English task. However, many groups ignored this section of the workbook and went from learning the rules directly to the test play. Therefore, I asked students to complete the activity before the end of the class while the rules were still fresh in their minds.



Let's check the rule again. Please write 3 questions about the game rules and then ask your questions to other group members. **Please add questions that your friends ask you.**

Example: *How many minutes is each round? // What is Robber in Japanese?*

Question	Answer
1. How many people can you play?	6~12 people.
2. How many minutes is this game?	10~20 minutes.
3. What is the main goal godfather?	Recover all of the diamonds.
Other group member's question How many diamonds in this box?	15 diamonds.
Other group member's question How many diamonds can I stole?	Any number.

Part 2.1 Test play

After you have learnt the rules of the game, LET'S PLAY! Please play for 15 minutes (or one round). **Use as much English as you can.** Then, think about the words you will use in this game. Write them in this table:

1. **What words and phrases are essential to play this game?**
2. What did you hear other players say?
3. What did you want to say but couldn't?

Example sentence/grammar	Japanese translation
How many diamonds were in it?	ダイヤいくつ？
Which character tokens were in it?	キャラクターいくつ？
What did you take?	何とった？

Figure 16 *A section of the workbook for creating questions about game rules*

Teacher mediation - flowchart creation

As with the game research classes, I instructed students to make a flowchart of game progression in order to understand how the game progresses more easily (See Figure 17). This teacher mediation was not premeditated, but arose out of observations of students reading the rules but not having a place to formalize their comprehension in the KR workbook. That is, the workbook provides space for language related items (vocabulary, grammar) and questions about the rules, but no scratchpad or space to make notes *about* the rules. Whiteboards were therefore utilized for flowchart creation. All groups completed flowcharts which I noticed some students referred to during test play sessions. At the end of the class,

students were instructed to draw the flowchart on an empty page in their workbooks for reference during the following sessions.

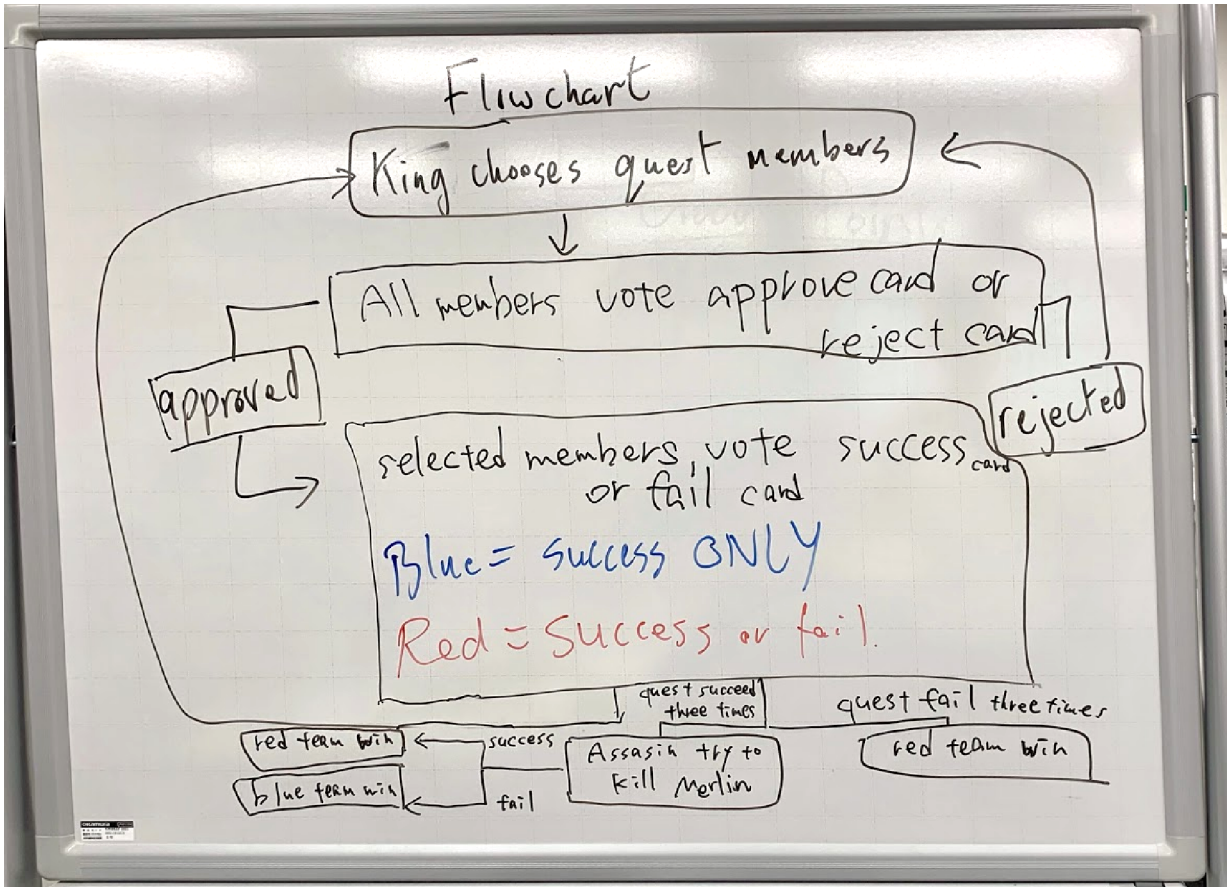


Figure 17 *An example of a group's flowchart for the game* Resistance: Avalon

3.3 Play lesson

Table 11 *Student activities and teacher mediation during the Play lesson*

Student activity	Teacher mediation
Check rules.	- Instruct students to use the questions they made in the previous lesson to check comprehension.
Drill "useful expressions."	- Instruct students to drill in pairs. - Let students know that the translations in the book are only one example, and that there are various alternatives.
Consider what words, phrases and grammar will be required to play the game in English.	- Offer advice proactively -- find errors in students test play considerations, ask students how they might say an expression from their L1 in the L2. - Offer advice reactively -- walk around the classroom and answer questions that students might have.
Play and record the game.	- Observe each group playing. - Write useful words, phrases or grammar points on nearby whiteboards. - Offer corrections to rules that are not fully understood ("Offer" rather than "inform" because sometimes students want to play with their own "house rules").
Prepare for their transcription homework.	- Instruct students to divide the recorded audio evenly between players. - Offer advice on how to share the audio for those that did not record.

Surprisingly, the "essential English expressions" at the back of the KR workbook proved extremely useful for gameplay. The list can be referred to during play sessions to complete common game-related tasks (asking whose turn it is, confirming rules, accusing others of cheating, etc.) as well as repairing communication breakdowns. Students were instructed to drill the expressions in pairs, testing each other on their knowledge of the expressions. I was initially very reluctant to do this drilling activity and planned on just pointing students to the final two pages of the KR workbook as something to refer to during their play sessions. This reticence on my part comes from a feeling that such drilling exercises are a taboo activity in CLT (see Swan on the TEFLOLOGY podcast, 2019 for a discussion on this topic[6]). Drilling was however accepted by the students, who showed great enthusiasm for the activity. For example, I noticed some students smiling or laughing when their partner couldn't answer their question. The activity primed them for production during play, and refreshed their memory regarding expressions that they had forgotten. For example, a student was seen to have an "Aha!" moment as they recalled the expression "What did you say?"

There was little teacher mediation during the play sessions. Occasionally I wrote down phrases or words on the whiteboard that I thought could help groups communicate more effectively or I would help them debrief what happened during shorter games. However, in general, I wanted their recordings to be authentic representations of their collective language ability at that time. That is, I want them to analyse their gameplay conversation during the following lesson and so try not to disturb them during play. Common errors and observations of their language use are presented in the section below.

[6] https://teflology-podcast.com/2019/06/12/tefl-interviews-54-michael-swan-on-pedagogy/

3.4 Analyze lesson - The Pareto Principle at work

Table 12 *Student activities and teacher mediation during the Analyze lesson*

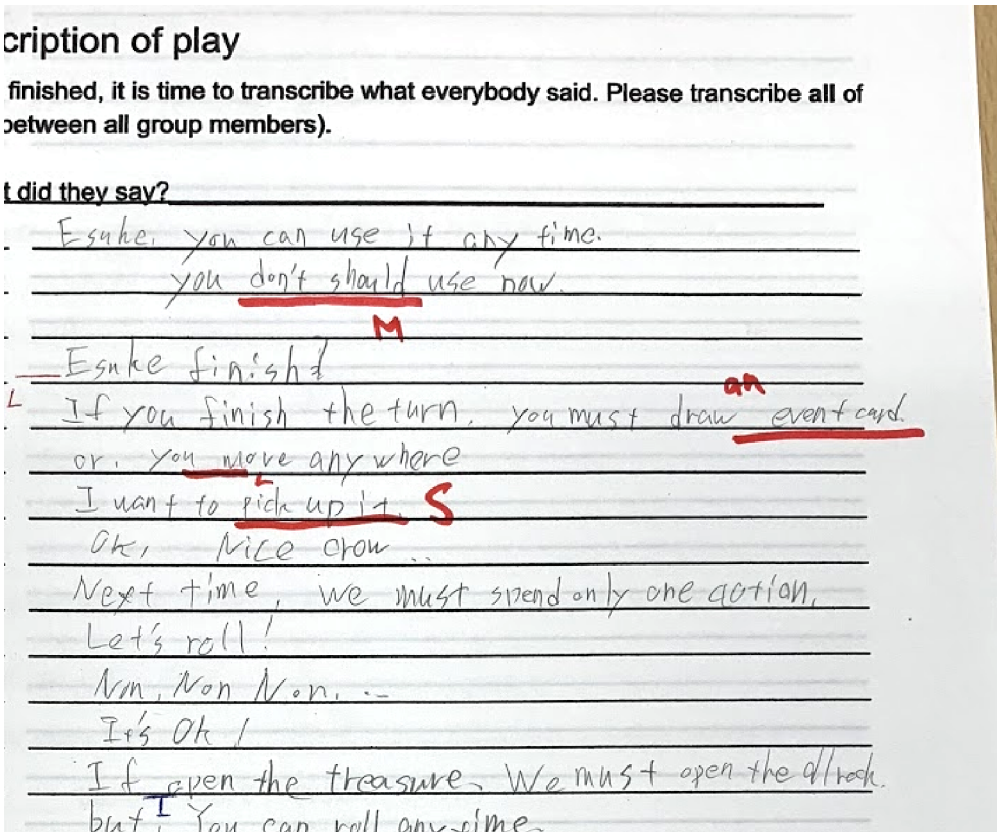
Student activity	Teacher mediation
Find errors in transcription.	- Introduce the Pareto principle. - Refresh students' memories regarding error types. - Check students transcriptions for errors. - Promote students to look up specific grammar points.
Translate Japanese into English.	- Provide suggestions for translations. - Encourage groups which have a large volume of Japanese speech in their transcriptions. The Japanese speech is valuable data for figuring out what they need to say in English during subsequent play sessions.
Watch online gameplay videos.	- Observe students as they watch individually. - Check answers to questions on the worksheet and promote students to look for answers in the video.
Create a short presentation and quiz questions based on group research.	- Check grammar points. - Check quiz questions. - Provide additional information if group presentations fall short of explaining something.

Noticing, errors, and translations

The first activity in the analysis lesson was for students to correct their mistakes during the previous lesson's gameplay. Students classified their mistakes into morphological, lexical and syntactic errors to help them realise what kind of errors they are making and identify the errors that are most common. They were able to do this based on prior teacher and workbook mediation, where I explicitly introduced error types. Following that, students worked together with their group mates to translate any Japanese they spoke into English. I asked that students find which expressions are most common and to translate those first.

The reasons students were asked to find the most common errors is related to Pareto's 80/20 principle (see Koch, 2011). According to this premise, by understanding how to say the most common 20% of errors in English allows them to reduce the total number of errors in subsequent gameplay by 80%.

A sample of a student's worksheet with errors coded is available in Figure 18 which shows a typical example of students' interaction during gameplay and how they perceive the different errors. L refers to a lexical error, M to a morphological error, and S to a syntactic error. My own corrections are presented in red, again, as an example of how I provide support to students during this activity. One issue with this activity is that I am not able to provide such detailed feedback to all students in my context due to the large number of students and time limitations. One way that I have tried to solve this issue is to have students check each other's transcriptions for additional errors. That is, once students have found all the errors in their own transcriptions, I asked them to rotate their workbooks within their group and check another group member's errors.


cription of play

finished, it is time to transcribe what everybody said. Please transcribe all of
between all group members).

t did they say?

Esuke: you can use it any time.
you don't should use now.
M
Esuke finish!
If you finish the turn, you must draw an event card.
or, you move anywhere
I want to pick up it. S
Ok, Nice crow..
Next time, we must spend only one action,
Let's roll!
Non, Non Non. --
It's Ok!
If even the treasure. We must open the attack.
but I You can roll anytime.

Figure 18 *An example of a student's transcription and error coding*

Although I have no statistical data on this next point, I noticed that students used the drilled expressions during play and as such these phrases appear in their transcriptions, too (Figures 19 and 20, underlined in red).

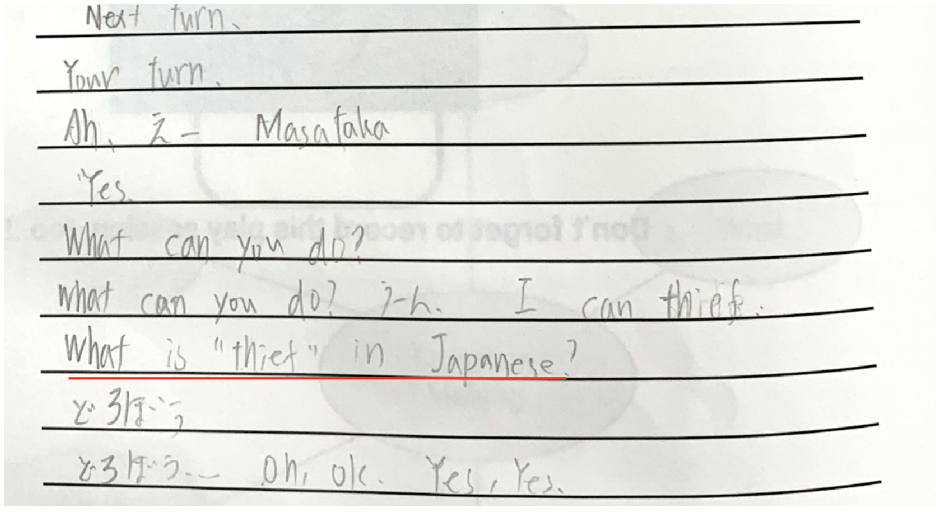

Next turn.
Your turn.
Ah, え- Masataka
Yes.
What can you do?
What can you do? ?-h. I can thief.
What is "thief" in Japanese?
ぬすむ
ぬすむ-- Oh, ok. Yes, Yes.

Figure 19 *An example of a "useful expression" being used during play*

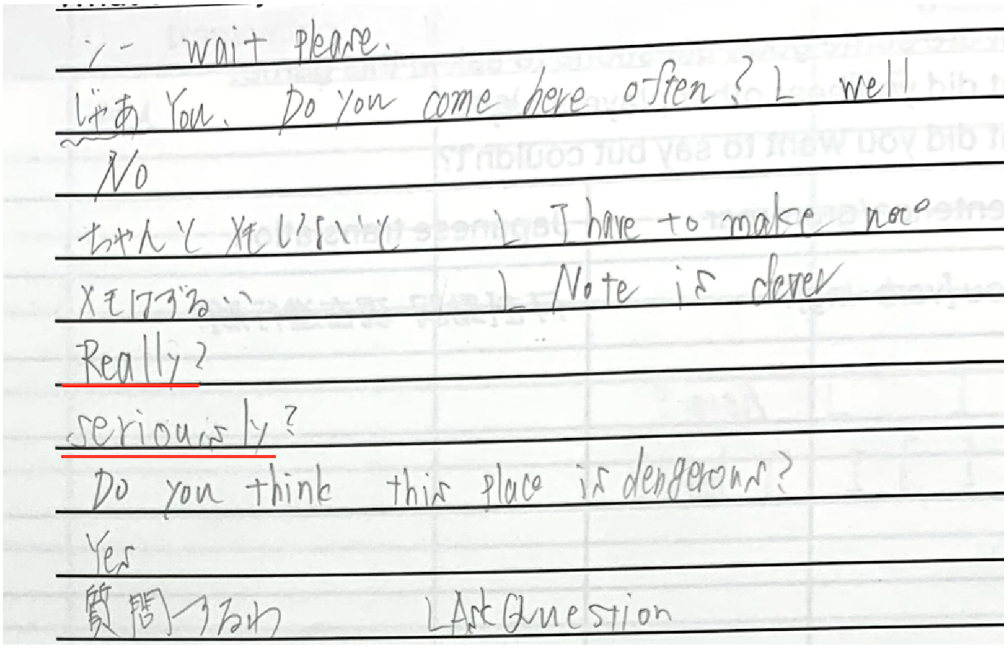


Figure 20 *An example of a "useful expression" being used during play*

Youtube, smartphones, smiles and frowns

Watching online videos of native speakers playing games is one of the more difficult activities in KR, and requires extensive scaffolding and teacher mediation. For this section of the walkthrough, I depart from the spring 2019 class and focus on the post-play video watching activity which follows *Spyfall* (the second of four games students play, with a detailed post-play worksheet).

Students were instructed to watch a particular video of *Spyfall* gameplay on YouTube[7] and answer predefined questions regarding the players and the way they interact during gameplay. In more detail the questions are:

1. Who are the players? (age, jobs, relationships, social status, etc.)
2. Where are they?
3. What are some interesting questions they used?
4. How did they accuse another player of being the spy?
5. How did they check (confirm) what a player said?
6. What words or phrases appear frequently? Why? What do they mean?
7. What is the difference between how you played and how the native speakers play?

First, students were instructed to watch the video individually on their smartphones. They were allowed to use earphones or headphones. At this point, I noticed many students smiling and laughing as they watched the video. After watching, I asked one student what he thought of the video, to which he replied that he thought it was "amazing." I followed up my first question asking why he thought so, to which he replied, "they played so well." Finally, I asked him what he learnt from his viewing, to which he stated, "nothing." He really enjoyed watching the native speakers play, but did not have the cognitive capacity to watch critically. This prompted me to instruct all students to watch their videos a second time, with the explicit goal of listening to what the players were saying, not just watching what they were doing.

Whilst that particular student seemed to be enthralled with the video, there were other students who frowned intensely as they tried to understand what was being said, and others who became sleepy and closed their eyes.

[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AJva1xq160

After they watched the video individually, they worked as a group to answer the questions posed in the KR workbook. Students were instructed to use YouTube functionality to help them understand what was being said. That is: how to turn on automatic captioning and how to rewind and slow down their video. Then, finally, as a full class, we watched the gameplay one more time. I paused the video at key moments to check comprehension or to show specific situations relevant to the questions in the KR workbook. As a concrete example, the workbook asks "How did they accuse another player of being the spy" and in this video, after one of the players provides an answer to a question, another player says, "I'm ready to vote already" which, in the context of this game means "That answer was so bad, he must be the spy!" Students were not able to pick up on this nuance by themselves, and therefore teacher mediation was considered useful in this instance.

Regarding students' reaction to watching the native speakers play (enthralled, sleepy, frustrated, etc.), I collected data from one specific class in the form of answers to these questions in order to understand how students perceived the video watching activity. This data is provided in the Evaluation section below.

3.5 Replay Lesson

Table 13 *Student activities and teacher mediation during the Replay lesson*

Student activity	Teacher mediation
Recheck rules.	- Inform students that this class will be evaluated, and introduce the rubric. - Refer students to the questions they made about game rules during the Learn lesson (Part 2 in the workbook).
Rewatch online videos. Review language from the analysis lesson.	- Instruct students to drill and practice useful expressions from the KR workbook, expressions from online videos, grammar, phrases and vocabulary.
Play and record gameplay.	- During the play session, circulate between all groups and complete my evaluation. - Offer suggestions and feedback regarding language usage. I want students to perform as well as possible during their evaluation, thus a dynamic approach to assessment is taken.
Divide audio for transcription homework.	- Instruct students to divide audio equally between players.

The replay session is one of the few formally evaluated stages of the KR cycle. A simple rubric is used based on the following constructs. I make students aware of this rubric throughout the cycle, and directly before I observe them playing. The rubric contains the following categories, of which they are rated from 1 to 5 for each sub-category. A current limitation of the rubric is that students are not graded during their first play session and so the grade recorded here is not based on any improvements they made between sessions.

- **Fluency** -- How much are they speaking?
- **Accuracy** -- How accurately are they speaking?
- **Use of game words** -- I expect students to have a firmer understanding of game rules and specialised vocabulary during the second play session. Components and characters should therefore be referred to correctly.
- **Cooperation** -- depending on the game, this construct can be expanded to how often they help to keep the game progressing, help peers with language problems, or shadow expressions for the rest of the group to hear.
- **Volume** -- Volume appears on the rubric due to its importance in showing that one is confident in their language use, as well as communicating effectively with other group members.
- **Extra points** -- Usually awarded for particularly creative or unexpected uses of language.

Regarding the second gameplay session, I noticed that most students have a firm understanding of how to play their game to the extent that the component "Use of game words" is unnecessary. In other words, whilst during the first gameplay session students back channel in Japanese to check rules or keywords, at this stage language is generally focused on play, and is carried out in English. Additionally, as is a common topic in boardgaming circles, some groups had an "alpha gamer" problem where one student would dominate the direction of the group and the conversation. As a result, some students spoke much less frequently than others. This has a dual effect in that it becomes difficult to rate the alpha gamer's cooperation score and the other players fluency and accuracy scores. The alpha gamer could be working hard towards game goals and therefore doing their best to cooperate (positive view) or just trying to boss the rest of the players into accepting their proposal (negative view). Additionally, depending on the game and players specific roles, speech is prohibited or limited in some way which makes evaluation of speaking skills particularly problematic.

3.6 Reanalyze and report

Table 14 *Student activities and teacher mediation during the Reanalyze lesson*

Student activity	Teacher mediation
Check if errors were corrected in the second play session. Check if words and phrases translated from Japanese were used. Check if words and phrases collected from YouTube were used. Complete a self-evaluation form.	- Instruct students that they are looking for new errors AND checking whether their previous errors have been corrected.
Introduce their game to other groups (Poster session/presentation).	- Introduce a model presentation. - Inform students that the presentation sessions will require *each student* to individually present their review of the game they played. - Circulate through the room, listening to presentations, asking questions about various games, modelling an ideal audience member, and helping presenters with language difficulties.
Complete the online report form.	- Remind students that this report is not a test and that they are free to discuss their answers with other group members.

The final stage of the KR cycle is for students to compare their two gameplay performances. A clear example of how a group went from mostly speaking Japanese in the first play session to using mostly English in the second play session is represented in Figures 21, 22, and 23. In terms of the player progression metaphor, there is a clear progression from beginner to expert in terms of their knowledge of both the game and the language needed to play the game.

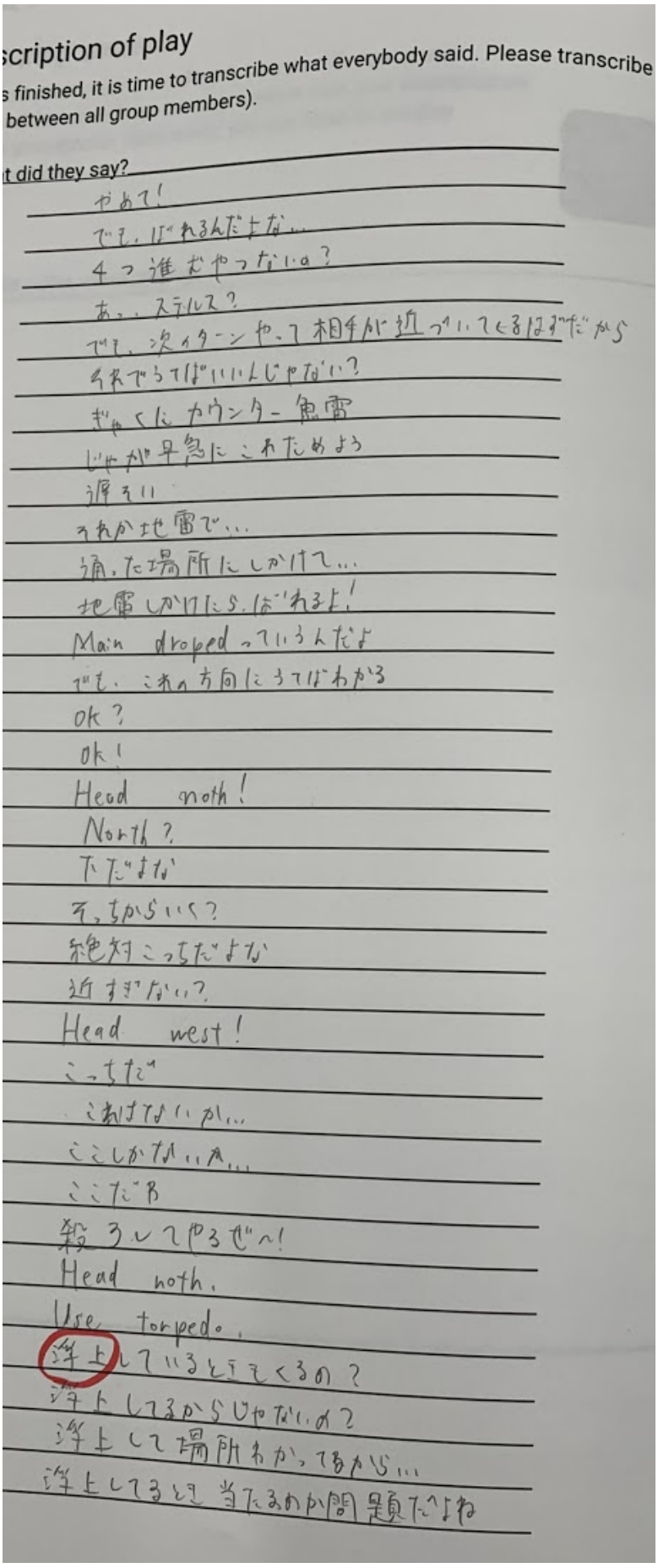
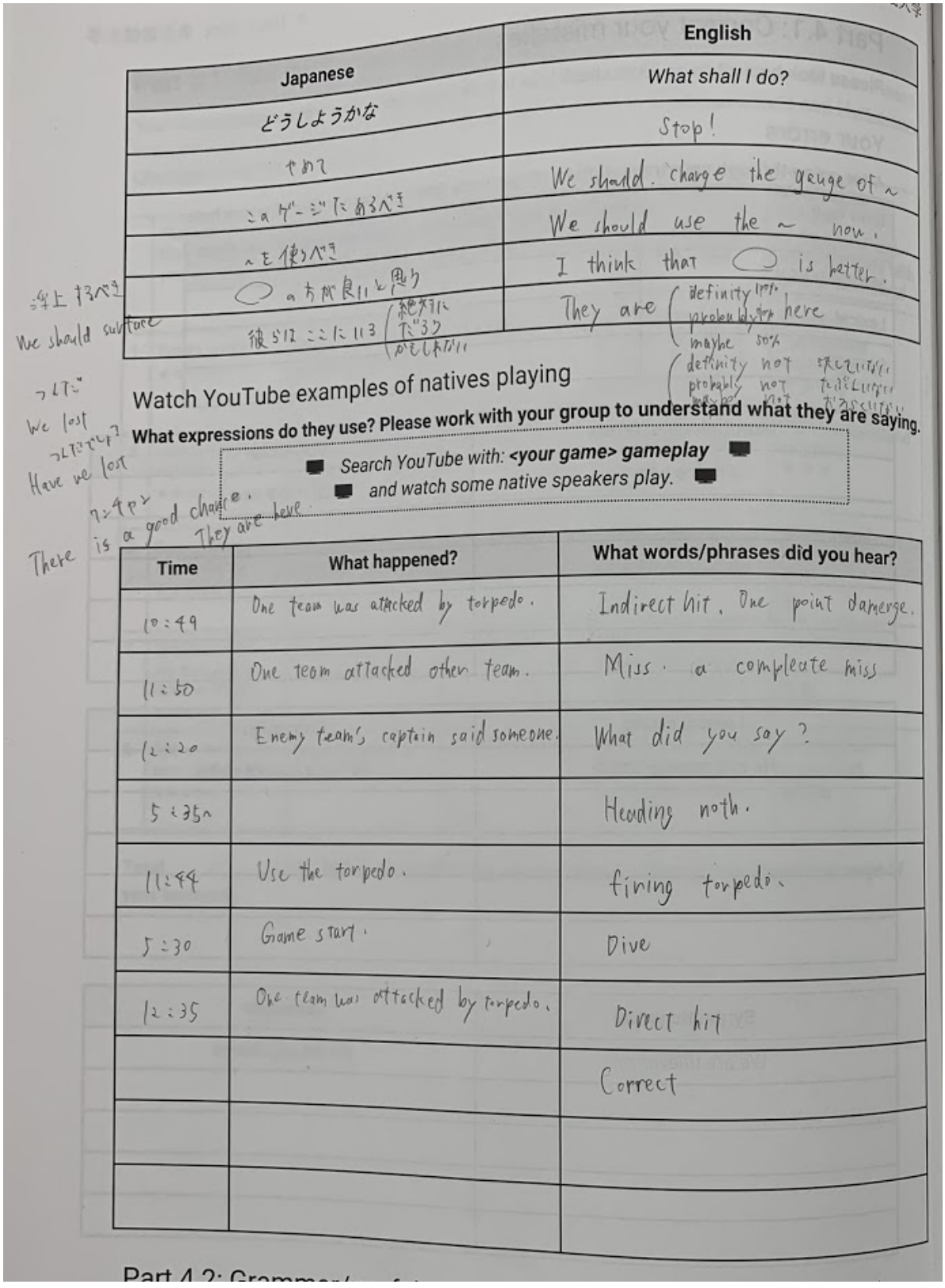


Figure 21 *Photograph of one student's transcription after the first play session*

Figure 21 shows a verbatim, faithful transcription of their first gameplay session where a lot of the discussion around turns was carried out in Japanese. I complimented the group for doing this, as some groups only write out what was said in English and leave any Japanese utterances untranscribed. It is essential for growth to occur that students have a record of what they can *and* cannot say in English.



Japanese	English
どうしようかな	What shall I do?
やめて	Stop!
このゲージをあるべき	We should charge the gauge of ~
～を使うべき	We should use the ~ now.
○の方が良いと思う	I think that ○ is better.
彼らはここにいる（絶対にだろうかもしれない）	They are (definity / probably / maybe) here (definity not / probably not / maybe not)

Watch YouTube examples of natives playing

What expressions do they use? Please work with your group to understand what they are saying.

Search YouTube with: **<your game> gameplay**
and watch some native speakers play.

Time	What happened?	What words/phrases did you hear?
10:49	One team was attacked by torpedo.	Indirect hit. One point damerge.
11:50	One team attacked other team.	Miss. a compleate miss
12:20	Enemy team's captain said someone.	What did you say?
5:35~		Heading noth.
11:44	Use the torpedo.	firing torpedo.
5:30	Game start.	Dive
12:35	One team was attacked by torpedo.	Direct hit
		Correct

Figure 22 *A photograph of the same student's analysis work (Japanese translated to English and interesting and useful expressions from online video watching)*

Figure 22 shows how the student completed the exercises in the workbook. Note that because this student had a faithful transcription with numerous Japanese utterances, he did not have enough space in the workbook to translate all of the Japanese utterances into English. The page shows that this student focused on how to give advice, and in particular the word "should." Although anecdotal, I witnessed students using their mother tongue / L1 /Japanese to discuss what words and phrases they should choose for translation, and check comprehension during the video watching activity. This group also asked me about the Japanese expression "ワンチャン" [wan chan] which is a *wasei-eigo* (Japanese-made English-like) expression from the two words"one" and "chance" meaning "there is a chance." Such words *sound* like English and so there is a tendency for students to think that the expression would be comprehensible to English speakers[8]. This case represents a typical example of teacher mediation during this class: responding to student requests, or proactively looking through transcriptions and picking up expressions for further inspection.

[8] Another example is ドンマイ [Don mai] which comes from the English words "Don't mind," which is close to the expression "never mind."

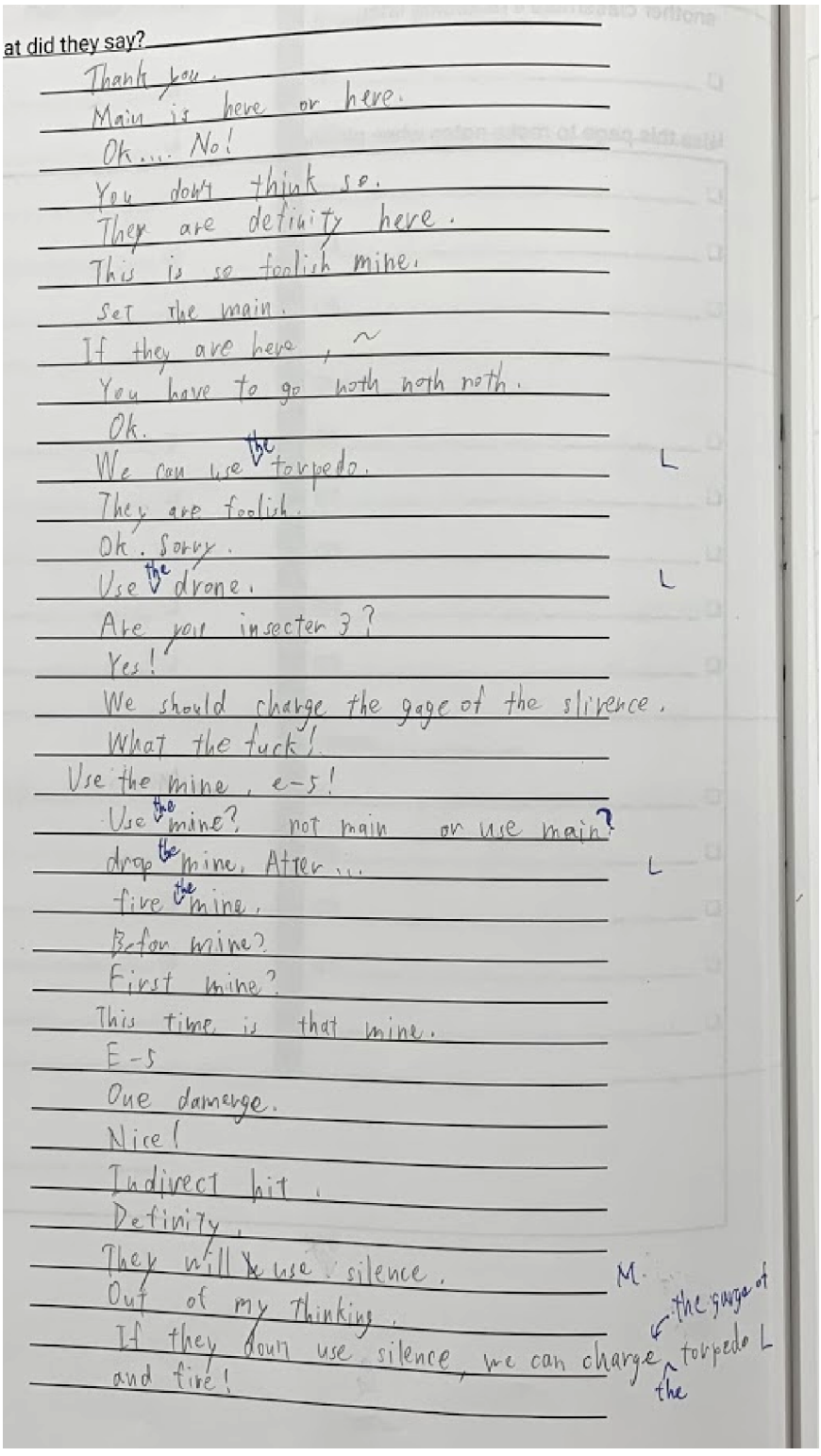


Figure 23 *A photograph of the transcription from the same student's second play session*

Figure 23 shows a sample of their second gameplay transcription. Note how the use of Japanese has been drastically reduced in this play session. There is some evidence that the phrases and expressions that this student researched in the analysis class were used here, thus, supporting the finding that non-gameplay activities aided language production. The word "should" occurred multiple times. There is some confusion around what verb to use with a "mine" but they settle on "fire." My mediation is also recorded in the transcription as I try to increase participation from one student (line 4) and react to their performance (line 28).

Non-gameplay activities aided language production in subsequent play sessions.

Although data regarding a reason behind their "poor" performance in the first play session was not collected in written form, informal conversation with the group revealed that, as expected, unfamiliarity with the game and the difficulty of juggling language and game rules were perceived to be too much of a cognitive demand during their first play session. This is not particularly surprising, as playing a board game in one's native language for the first time is often an affair punctuated with references to the rulebook and uncertainty.

During my rotation around the class to check groups' transcriptions for errors or areas that may require further analysis, this student told me that he was particularly embarrassed that his group (comprised of 3 males and 1 female) predominantly spoke Japanese. I supported this student by reframing their transcription as a rich source of data to be translated into English for their subsequent play session. Regarding the second play session, Figure 23 shows that their communication was mostly English. However, the group mentioned that mental fatigue was a reason for the L1 to start creeping into their gameplay session. This group played a game called *Captain Sonar* which took over an hour to complete. This gameplay session therefore represents the longest length of time these students had ever been asked to focus on using English, which they did to the best of their ability. When asked, "If I asked you to speak English for an hour before this class, would you be happy," students replied that they probably would not. The longest they had spoken previously was six minutes in a discussion regarding a topic such as their "dreams." Whilst not wanting to hype the use of games or student speaking time as the peak goal of language teaching, it is hard not to write positively about this affective benefit.

Game reviews, reflections, and final presentations

Before completing one of the Final Projects, students review their game and present good and bad points to other groups. This, for me, is considered a transformed practice activity in that students transfer their concrete experience of playing the game into a presentation for others (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016). It could also be considered a post-task report activity which allows students to focus on accurate language use. Regardless, this activity is the chance for students to not only reflect on what they enjoyed and disliked about their game, but to also learn what other students played and increase their game literacy (this is especially useful after Game 3, as students may choose one of the games that another group has played based on a positive review).

I chose not to bring the physical games into the classroom for this activity. This forced groups to use additional, non-game props. In lieu of having the game available to them during the presentation, students were instructed to use visual aids to support the comprehension of their audience. This took the form of drawings (Figure 24), flowcharts (Figure 25), or the use of online materials (Figure 26).

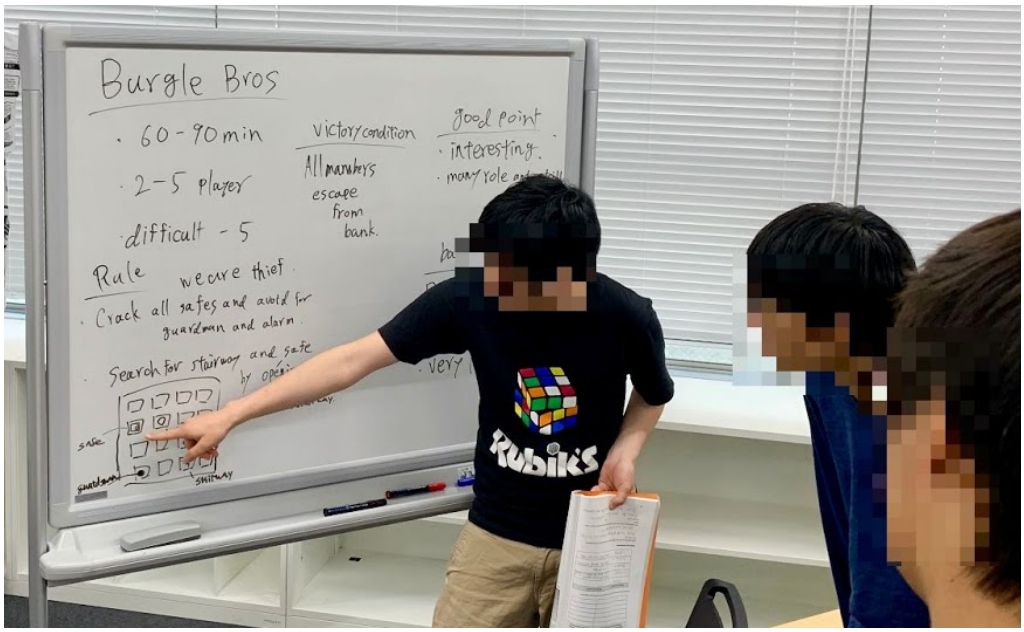


Figure 24 *A student introducing the safe-cracking mechanism of* Burgle Bros.

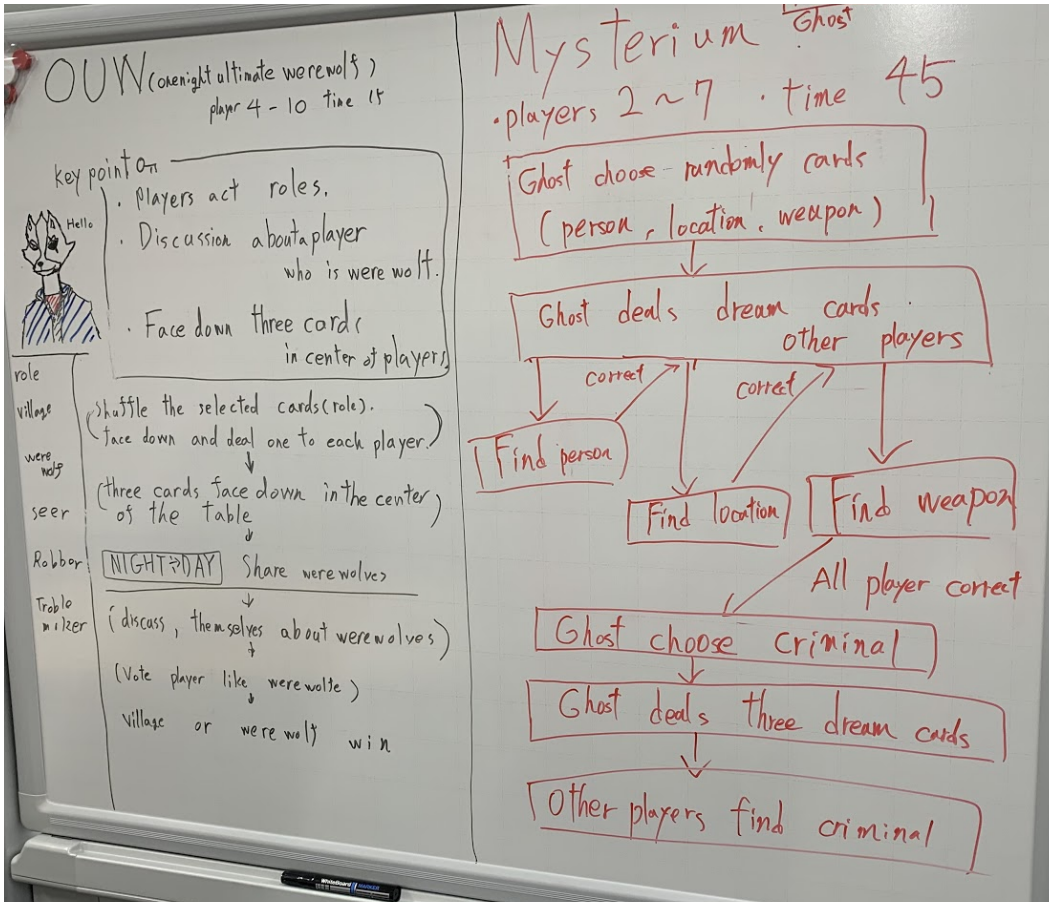


Figure 25 *A flowchart showing how the game* Mysterium *progresses*

Figure 26 *A student using the* Dead of Winter *rulebook to explain game components and how the game progresses*

Again, as is common in the Game Research lessons, students' ability to speak about their game is limited. Certain students spoke English, others only Japanese. My presence as a participant going around and asking questions prompted students to use English. That is, instructor mediation and expectations are essential in forging how students engage with the activity. Between presentations, I praised students on their performances, and tried to inspire learners to use English by positing that they had gone to the effort of creating their poster in English that it would be a waste for them to not use that tool to talk about the game. And, finally, I tried to encourage them by asking them to pretend that the poster session was a roleplay activity and to pretend that all of the other students couldn't understand Japanese. This is a roleplay gambit that I try often with mixed results. The written and visual aids as support on whiteboards seemed to be the biggest help in keeping students on task and in English.

3.7 Final Projects

There is no specific student activity and teacher mediation box for this section as groups engage in one of a variety of different projects autonomously. Teacher mediation therefore varies significantly depending on the projects chosen. Students were instructed to reference the workbook for a complete list of final projects, as well as the grading criteria for each one. A complete list of the available projects is presented below:

- Create a gameplay video
- Create a rules explanation video
- Write a game review
- Produce a transcription of gameplay including grammar examples
- Teach other students how to play the game in real time.

Some groups require very little encouragement to engage with projects, whereas other groups do. This is often due to factors regarding role ambiguity, conflicts, passivity or by having a particularly autocratic leader (see Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). Additionally, being an individual writing project, the Game Review project does not afford the same kind of interaction between students as other group projects.

For individuals completing the game review project, I placed them into the same area of the classroom and asked them to complete their review whilst discussing findings with other students engaged in the same project. This encouraged them to collaborate on research methods and provided them with interlocutors to discuss research methods or to ask for help when they could not understand what I required of them in the workbook in lieu of not being able to speak to me when I was out of the classroom helping other groups (a sample of this section of the workbook is provided in Figure 27).

Rules introduction

Next, introduce the main rules of the game. Think about what you do in this game. Introduce:

1. The main objective (How do players win?)
2. Actions players can do
3. Any interesting rules

Hint: You don't need to explain all of the rules!

*In this game, players are trying to **take** goods to **sell** at the market. They have to **put** items in a bag and **declare** to the Sheriff what they are taking to the market. If the Sheriff **opens** their bag and **discovers** illegal goods, they have to **pay** a fine. But players can **pay** the Sheriff to not open their bag, OR open other players' bags. The person with the most money at the end of the game is the winner.*

Think as a group! How will you explain this game?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Use pictures if it helps you explain what people can do.

Figure 27 *A section of the workbook to aid rule explanations*

In order for groups to complete video projects, I instructed them to find empty classrooms outside of the classroom we were using. This is so that they have a quiet environment, void of background noise when recording. An example of a final video project recorded for this instance of KR is a *Dead of Winter* gameplay video. This group required little mediation from me, as they were generally autonomous in carrying out their project. A screenshot is presented in Figure 28.

In terms of my mediation for this group (and other video project groups), I helped them set up the play area in a way that would best capture the game in progress such as lighting and camera angles. I also referred them to the KR workbook in order to make it explicit how they would be graded based on their video. The workbook also features a space for students to plan their project from watching other student groups' gameplay videos, and deciding roles (game introduction, rules explanation, player introduction, etc.). This particular group had not used the workbook in the planning phase of their project, and upon being told that I had created space for them to write down such information, they were pleasantly surprised that it existed. This is a common occurrence with the final projects. That is, students hear the project titles such as "gameplay video" or "rules explanation video" and head off to begin without considering the planning documents that I have created for them.

Figure 28 *An example of gameplay video created by a student group*

As an example of a group that required more mediation, a group creating an *Insider* rules explanation video had a great deal of difficulty getting started. One contributing factor could have been that there were too many students in the group which caused a great deal of role ambiguity, specifically, a lack of leader figure. For this group, I had to sit down with them for an extended period, explain what the requirements of the project were and delegate tasks to specific students. My observation is that this group felt very unmotivated towards carrying out the project. Unlike the *Dead of Winter* group above, only one person appeared in the final video, again, is a sign that certain members of this group were not intrinsically motivated to get involved.

4. Evaluation

4.1 The good/epic: What was a success? What went well? What worked?

This section introduces the good, epic or general positive elements of this GBLT project.

Collaborative learning was encouraged (and at times, forced)

Group members communicated or engaged in "translanguaging" episodes during joint-reading, game research, play, analysis and reflection activities to learn collaboratively, as evidenced specifically in section 3.6 (group work in the reanalysis) activity, and more generally throughout the playtest above. The group activities introduced above (flowchart making, game presentation creation, video watching, etc.) required learners to collaborate, discuss, and plan their actions, which promoted learners to engage in translanguaging. That is, although there was a requirement for students to produce English during gameplay and presentation sessions, the L1 was utilized as a tool during group activities. Another concrete example of this is in the Learn lesson where students were allowed to and encouraged to use Japanse to aid in the groups' collective comprehension of an authentic English text (in this case, the rulebook for their chosen game). Additionally, for groups that did not function well as a cohesive unit, with poor collaboration skills, I tried to correct their behaviour explicitly by asking the group to stand up, and observe how a "properly functioning" group behaved. I admit that this was awkward for the two groups, but it solidified to the "poorly performing" group both 1) what I expected in terms of group work and 2) what their peers were able to achieve (meaning that they had no excuse for performing so poorly).

Subsequently, as mentioned in Section 3.4 above, watching YouTube videos of native English speakers playing games was an activity that enthralled students or caused them to disengage in their learning. Reasons for this polarity was explored in class with a simple survey where it was discovered that understanding the difficult language in the videos required extensive teacher mediation. The in-class survey was comprised of the following questions.

1. How much of the language did you understand?
2. How difficult was the language you heard in the video?
3. How enjoyable was this activity?
4. How often do you watch videos in English on YouTube?

The questions were formed based on my observations of students as they watched videos. As mentioned, they struggled with comprehension of the spoken language but seemed to enjoy the video regardless because as experienced players themselves, they could understand the flow of the game and empathise with individual players' situations. Answers to the questions are available in Table 15 and graphically in Figures 29 and 30.

Table 15 *Answers to the questions regarding watching native speakers play on YouTube*

Group	Q1: How much of the language did you understand? (0 - 100%)	Q2: How difficult was the language you heard in the video? (0 - 100%)	Q3: How enjoyable was this activity? (0 - 100%)	Q4: How often do you watch English YouTube videos?
1	40%	80% Too fast Grammar is difficult and complex	80% To see they liven up is interesting	3 times a week
2	30%	80% Fast	90% Very laid back	ほとんど見ない (We rarely watch)
3	60%	90% There are long phrases and difficult words	90% We can understand YouTube video because York's commentary was good.	
4	40%	80% English too fast A lot of information in answers.	90%	Once a week Ex) Introducing gun. Shroud (streamer)[9].
5	45%	45% Many easy word but too fluency	75% Many laughing Good reaction	10% Not interesting. I want to watch Japanese video.
6	30%	75% I can't hear native pronunciation.	85% We can know the turn that we don't know.	0%

Examining some of the responses reveals that, yes, teacher mediation and in particular my turn-by-turn commentary was considered an important tool in scaffolding comprehension. Regarding the difficulty of the native speakers' English, items relating to fluency (Group 5), speed (Groups 1 and 4), and difficult vocabulary and grammar (Groups 1 and 3) were mentioned. As expected, students rarely watch YouTube videos in English. The only student that mentioned that he does, revealed that it was because such content

[9] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoz3Kpu5lv-ALhR4h9bDvcw

was not available in Japanese (gun reviews). Therefore, although not explored in any detail, this activity could have been enjoyable due to the novelty factor.

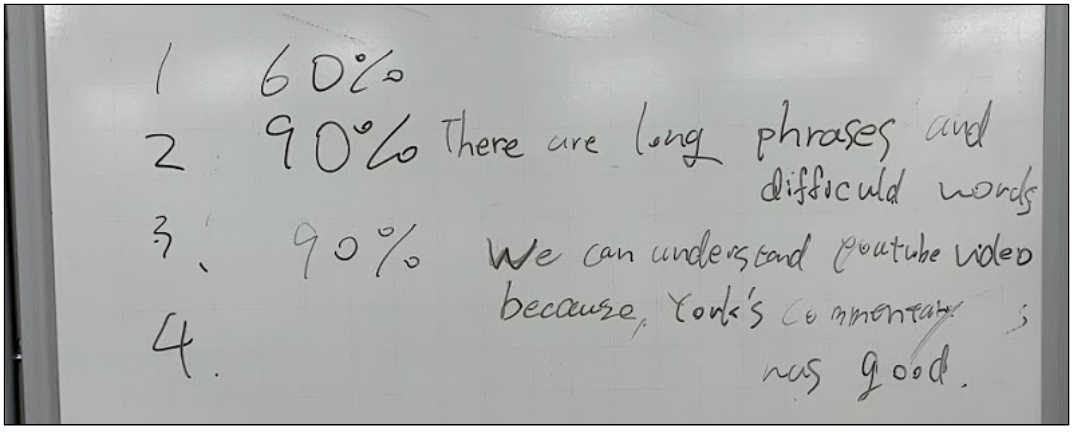


Figure 29 *Group 3's response to questions*

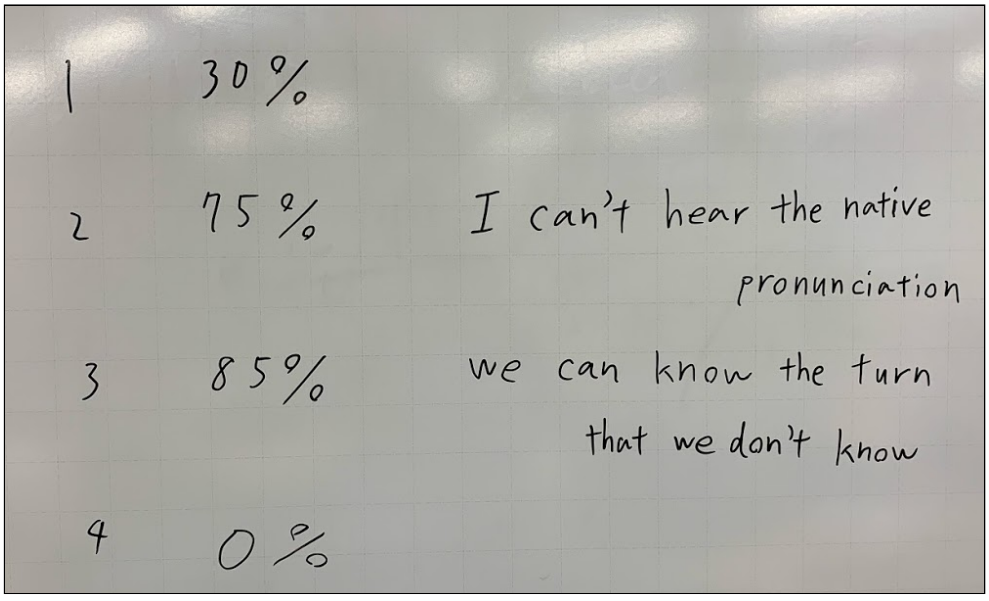


Figure 30 *Group 6's response to questions*

Teaching materials augmented teacher-student communication

Due to the large numbers of students in this class, there was a lack of opportunity for me to provide feedback and individualized teaching to all groups. By providing the workbook to guide groups from learning about their chosen game to play and then analyze gameplay, it was possible to push students in a particular direction and augment the lack of teacher-student communication time. By writing in the workbook I was quickly able to assess how groups were progressing and point out any problems or points that may require further research. Concrete examples of this are shown in Figure 22 (a photo of a students analysis work in the workbook) and 27 (an example of how the workbook helped guide students in their final projects).

Task repetition and transcription led to language development

Task repetition coupled with transcription activities and teacher instruction supported students' progression from gaming predominantly in the L1 to gaming predominantly in the L2 during the second gameplay session (see Figure 21, 22, and 23 for a specific example). It is difficult to elucidate what specific element promoted students to improve their performance during the second gameplay session as there are a variety of analysis activities that are carried out in between sessions. However, it is clear that in this context, even with extensive pre-play activities such as rulebook vocabulary mining and test-play sessions, only playing a game once was not enough to guarantee successful language development (see Figure 21

for example). Analytical activities and subsequent play sessions aided production considerably in this case.

The take away from this point is mentioned in Section 1.4.3. Game-based language teachers need to implement non-gameplay activities in order to promote successful language development. Play alone is not enough.

Game-based language teachers need to implement non-gameplay activities in order to promote successful language development. Play alone is not enough.

Course feedback suggested that students improved their knowledge regarding games, education and teamwork

At the start and end of the course, students were asked to create three concept maps. The topic written in the center of each was: games, education, and finally teamwork. The class was given three minutes to create each one. Upon completion of the mindmaps, students counted the number of connections (nodes) they had created and made a note of it in the workbook. Results of a paired samples t-test ran on the data revealed a statistically significant difference between the two instances (Table 16). However, as these students are enrolled in a number of classes it is difficult to isolate this class as the sole source of improved scores, especially regarding the constructs "education" and "teamwork." Further, deeper analysis is required to elucidate the learning gains associated with KR.

Table 16 *Paired-samples t-test results on students concept map nodes*

Concept Map	Before	After	Average diff	p
Games	7.61	15.09	+7.48	< 0.001
Education	7.57	15.61	+8.04	< 0.001
Teamwork	5.61	12.48	+6.87	< 0.001

Focus on a successful final project: How to play *Sheriff of Nottingham*

As written about in York (2019b), this project is considered a success in that Squire's player progression metaphor of learners going from learning about, to playing, and finally creating content for others was fulfilled. This instance also shows that they were successful in progressing from heavily scaffolded activities to student-centered learning and engagement in the final stages. KR provided these learners with the opportunity to engage in their learning, language development, and literacy skills (second language, digital and media literacies). Indeed, one student from this group told me that of all the classes he had in a week, he enjoyed and worked the hardest in my class because it provided him with concrete experiences and the opportunity to create something that he felt invested in. My own reflection of this is that KR provided this student with the opportunity to engage in a meaningful activity that he felt had personal meaning.

The player progression metaphor of learners going from learning about, to playing, and finally creating content for others was fulfilled.

This group of students completed a "How to play" video project to a high level, resulting in them sharing their video publicly on YouTube[10]. A screenshot can be seen in Figure 31. For me, this is a sign of the students being proud of and confident in the quality of their final "product." That is, disregarding students' proclivity to prefer to stay anonymous on social media websites, I believe that a reticence to share work publicly, or even with their peers comes from a dissatisfaction or embarrassment in the quality of their final

[10] http://bit.ly/KRWalkthroughVideo

product. Rather than engaging fully with the final project, some groups do the bare minimum to pass the class. Such reticence may be unavoidable in this context where motivation towards studying English is low, however, even groups that produce low-effort projects should know that their effort is being graded. This point means that it is vital a grading rubric is provided to students, making salient the connection between their effort and their grade.

Returning to this specific group, in-class observations and viewing the video itself reveals that this group took a playful approach to video creation including comedic elements such as off-camera cheers and dances. This is a common element in "successful" video projects where groups seem to genuinely enjoy being on camera, and are given the chance to act, make jokes and have fun. This suggests that "playing" during the filming process may act as a barrier or "magic circle" between the real world and the "Youtube" world, or as themselves and as someone who is reviewing a game or acting as a YouTuber, thus providing a safe distance from reality. However, as a disclaimer, I have not investigated this point in any depth.

This group acted mostly autonomously on their final project, requiring very little teacher mediation, if any at all during class time. That is, although I was not required to keep these students on task or guide their video production in any way during class time, the final project worksheet acted as a strong guide for student activity. They worked effectively as a team by dividing the workload presented to them on the worksheet between group members, and designed their video based on the listed requirements, thus adhering to the grading rubric.

Figure 31 *A publicly available video of a group's final project work*

This group also showed elements of skills transfer in the creation of their video as they brought in skills from external sources. Specifically, a member of this group was involved in creating music videos for an extracurricular "hobby" (private communication, 2019). As a result, this activity provided an avenue for the student to practice storyboarding skills which he had acquired outside of class (see Figure 32). However, the student only used a few elements of the storyboard worksheet he brought into class as he realised that the final project worksheet provided ample structure for the creation of their video.

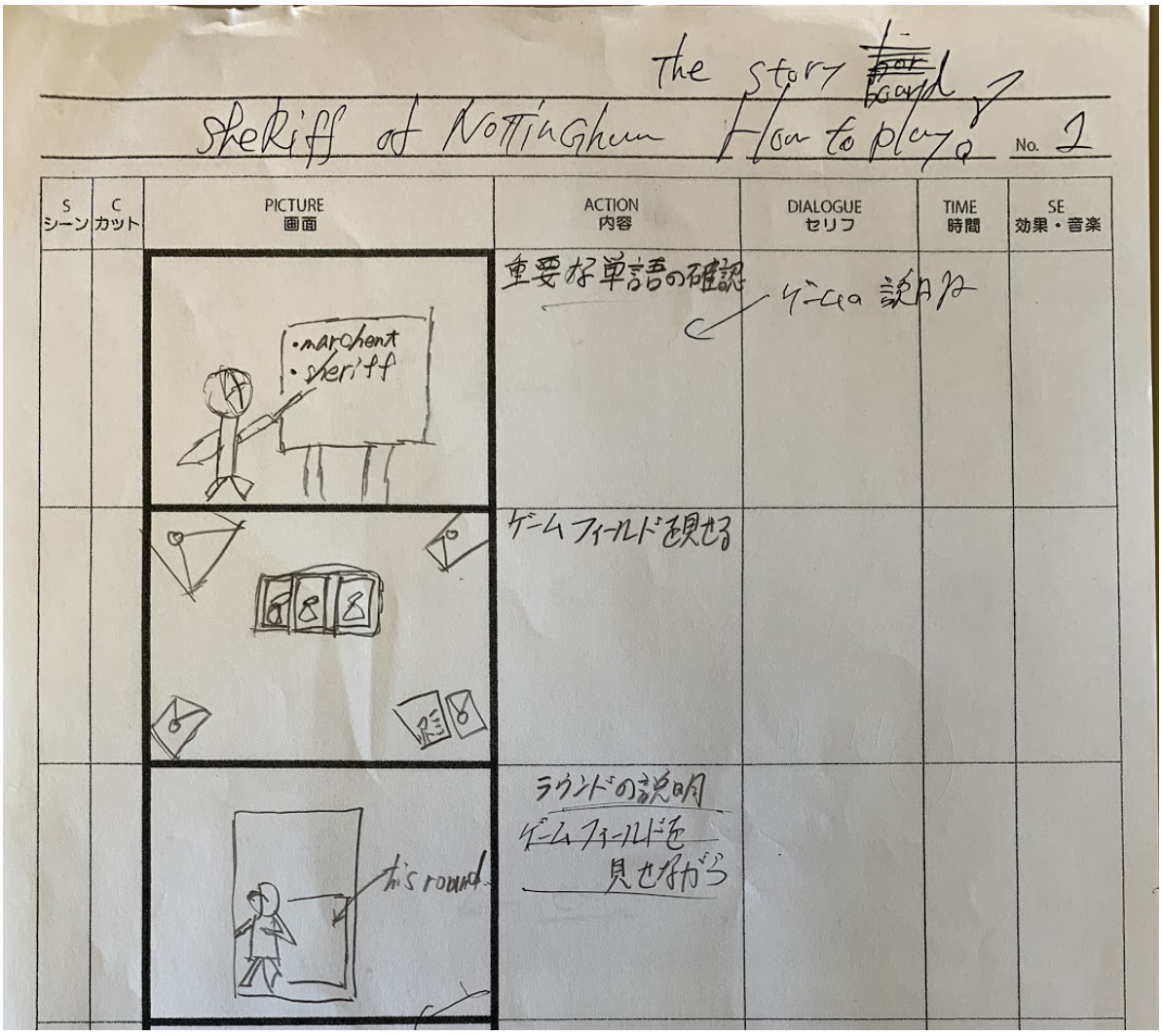


Figure 32 *An example of student O's storyboarding for the final project*

4.2 The bad/ugly: What was a failure? What didn't go well? What didn't work?

My aim for this paper is twofold.

1. To present my current teaching framework in hi-resolution in order for its successful transformation (remix) and adoption (use) in other teaching contexts.
2. To critically evaluate the current state of KR in order to take it to "the next level."

The following section introduces the areas of KR that could be improved or changed in future implementations. They could be considered the "bosses" that must be slain to progress further in this game.

Activities could be more focused on developing specific skills

KR introduces students to a wide range of practices (YouTube video watching, transcription and grammar analysis, presentation skills, etc.) but could, instead, focus entirely on one specific skill.

For example, grammar explanations are student-driven, which fulfils one goal of KR: increasing student engagement and responsibility in their learning. However, there is a trade off. Some groups of students by themselves do not dive as deep as they could if I (the teacher) was involved more fully. That is, grammar exploration often ends at translating Japanese expressions into English, so a one-to-one relationship is formed rather than understanding underlying grammatical patterns that can be used in numerous (rather than singular) cases. As a concrete example, Figure 33 suggests that this student has not considered underlying patterns, but merely translated a Japanese expression for its English counterpart.

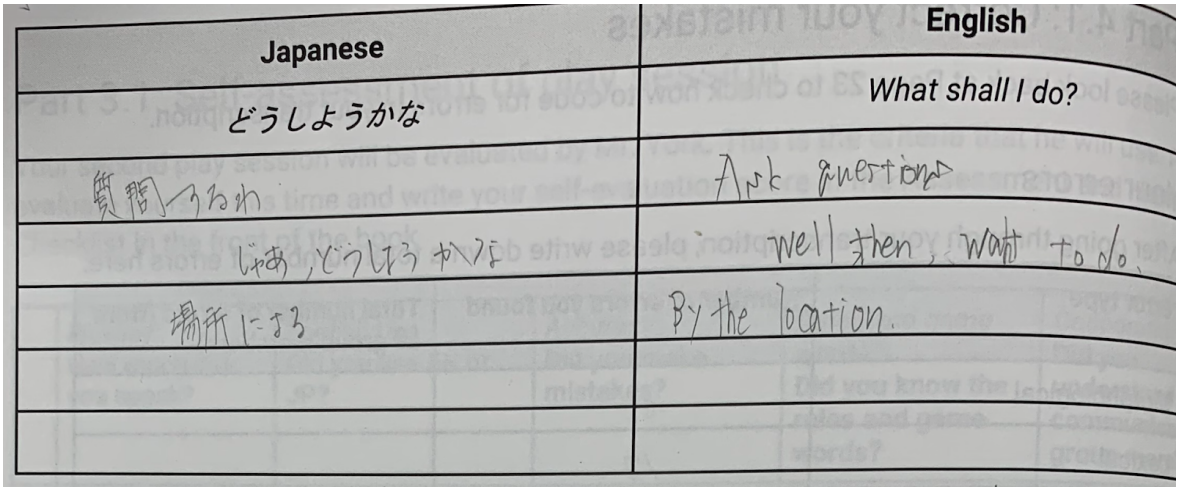


Figure 33 *An example of a one-to-one, shallow grammar exploration*

質問するわ [Shitsumon suru wa]	→	Ask questions
じゃあ、どうしようかな [jyaa, dousiyou kana]	→	Well then, what to do.
場所による [basho ni yoru]	→	By the location

The second phrase (どうしようかな) is even provided for them as an example, which highlights how careless this group has been in their research. Not all the blame can be placed on them, however, as the worksheet is set up in a way that promotes students to write in a one-to-one fashion, a point which has implications for materials creation and how mediating tools can affect learners' behaviour. Providing more teacher scaffolding, more time on task, or a different worksheet layout for this activity, could prompt students to complete it differently, and hopefully to a more thorough level.

Another area that could become the core focus of KR is analyzing YouTube Let's Play videos. As seen in Section 3.4, students expressed great difficulty in understanding the content of the videos and mentioned that my mediation (pausing and explaining utterances and underlying cultural elements) was a great help in aiding their understanding. One avenue of focus for KR could therefore be on helping students develop their understanding of authentic texts. Instead, the YouTube video watching session ends without students gaining skills to critically analyze such videos by themselves. In other words, it would require a full, dedicated course in order to help students become proficient in consuming English language popular culture or media, and in its current form, KR does not dive deep enough into this activity to help develop such skills.

KR could be linked to authentic participation outside of the classroom.

Projects created by past students are only shared with current and future students. Whilst this may be considered a genuine audience for students' work, it does not represent any formal participation in a public sphere. For instance, game reviews could be written on Amazon, Twitter, boardgamegeek.com or posted to the creator of the game via email; videos could be made public on YouTube rather than being kept as unlisted (few groups allow this).

Language development may occur (as evidenced in Figures 21 to 23), but at the moment, one critique of the language development of KR is that it starts and ends in the classroom. If students have avenues for English usage extracurricularly, this may not be such a problem, as it may be hypothesized that the skills they develop as part of this class could be transferred into such private, or personal extracurricular activities. However, the results of a survey asking students if they use English outside of the classroom suggested that 81.4% (n = 197) of students do not use English extracurricularly. This means that for a majority of students, their English education as part of KR is the only time they are engaged in English usage. This is a considerable cause for concern. If education is supposed to support students' participation into various "private, public and professional areas of life" (deHaan, 2019, p.4) then as it stands, skills or knowledge gained through KR may only be transferred to students' participation in L1 communities. Thus, the provision of opportunities for participating in English-speaking communities as part of KR may be a strong starting point to get these students participating on a global scale.

Of the 18.6% of students (n = 45) that stated that they use English extracurricularly, 29 written responses were recorded. These indicated that gaming was the primary domain of their English usage (see Table 17). Although follow up interviews were not conducted, informal questioning of students during class time indicated that a number of popular mobile and video games offer affordances for students to communicate (mainly via text) to players from other East Asian countries such as South Korea and China. If gaming is one of the main avenues for communication with non-Japanese, English-speaking communities extracurricularly, then preparing students for English engagement or analyzing interactions in such environments could provide a solid foundation for further English participation outside of the classroom. However, based on survey data, students who use English when playing games were the minority. Further questioning would help uncover the potential of this avenue for curricular focus.

Table 17 *Coded responses to an open question regarding extracurricular English usage*

Domain of English usage	Number of responses
Game play	10
travel	6
friends	3
giving directions	5
listening to music / watching movies	3
job	1
websites	1
Total	**29**

Issues with self-evaluation

KR lacks a robust evaluation criteria. For a specific example, during the Game Research lesson when all students are presenting their work at the same time, it is logistically difficult for me to assess each student's productive language skills (circulating through the presentations making notes). This, however, may be alleviated by requiring students to present sequentially rather than at the same time. Thus, this is an issue with mediation. Self-evaluation is favoured in situations where all students are engaged in an activity at the same time. However, one issue with this is that students' evaluation of their own performance is likely to be skewed towards being too high, especially as they are aware that their self-evaluations contribute towards their final grade. There is little keeping students from assigning themselves perfect scores for all evaluations. Peer evaluation, or more rigorous teacher evaluation may be more beneficial.

4.3 What are the practical implications for other teachers' classrooms?

This paper has outlined how games may be incorporated into a "general skills," TBLT-informed, university-level EFL curriculum. In other terms, I have shown one example of what can be done with games if taken in as a core component of a curriculum (as opposed to a Friday afternoon "treat"). In terms of classroom implementation, then, KR is an instantiation of TBLT, a very well-established approach, which many teachers in EFL contexts are familiar with, particularly the pre- during- and post-play structure which echoes a typical task-based lesson plan. The conceptualisation of KR may therefore be easily understood, and more importantly accepted by instructors and policy makers as 'ticking the right boxes' by being theoretically grounded in SLA theory.

I have shown that games can be used at the core of the curriculum, but that gameplay must be supported with other, non-gameplay activities to allow students to improve their language ability. The activities students engage in here are the bare minimum for successful completion of gameplay in English over only two play sessions. Other practitioners may want to increase the number of task repetitions (read: gameplay sessions) beyond the two featured in this version of the KR model. It is hoped that this paper has put forth the notion that games should not be used as a "one-off" Friday afternoon treat, or that gameplay should be the only activity that teachers do with games in the classroom. Take your time to teach, play and reflect.

There is a heavy reliance on teachers' game literacy (that is, choosing games that were suitable for classroom use and being able to talk through rules is an important job or role for educators in GBLT contexts), as well as creating worksheets and mediating during classes. Mediating materials (in this case, the workbook) are an important tool in the later stages of the curriculum where students are progressing as isolated groups rather than as a full class (i.e. KR cycles 3 and 4). Worksheets required to complete one cycle of KR are provided in the appendix. These worksheets may be used as-is or modified based on student needs and course goals. However, the success of KR in other contexts is based on three key presumptions: 1) the teacher has game, pedagogical, and content knowledge, 2) the context allows for the curation of a game library for use in class, and 3) the context allows teachers to explore game-based language teaching. This paper has also outlined the criticality of teacher mediation, particularly in creating a positive, communicative atmosphere, modeling appropriate behaviour, being involved in class-wide activities and promoting "noticing" of unknown grammar points, expressions, cultural items, and skills relating to digital literacies.

Worksheets required to complete one cycle of KR are provided in the appendix. These worksheets may be used as-is or modified based on student needs and course goals.

One further practical implication of this paper is in regards to the logistics of setting up a similar project. As mentioned in the introduction, games for language learning or teaching is a topic which appears most frequently in CALL-related literature under the general heading of DGBLL. The games used in this paper do not require expensive game consoles to play, or even a monitor, tablet or device for each student. Set up costs for KR or other board game-based curricular are therefore relatively low compared to digital alternatives. Of course, relying on analog mediating tools does not offer the same affordances of networked computers (such as interaction with native speakers). However, according to a study on teacher cognition and the use of board games by Jones (2019), beginner GBLTeachers are more familiar with board games, and have experience implementing and adapting them for use in their classroom contexts. Therefore, this technology may appear easier and more practical to implement than digital alternatives.

Beginner GBLTeachers are more familiar with board games… Therefore, this technology may appear easier and more practical to implement than digital alternatives.

5. Next steps

5.1 Will you continue (or is it GAME OVER)?

I am constantly iterating the KR model, and although I am at a point where the model is much more rigorous than the initial conceptualization (see York & deHaan, 2017), section 4.2 highlighted areas in which the model could be improved upon for future implementations.

In short, yes. I will be continuing to teach my classes with this model. However, there are concerns that the model may not address specific linguistic or communicative skills of students in this context. That is, my understanding of CLT and, more specifically, TBLT is that classroom activities should be based on the language needs of students. Furthermore, the communicative functions learned as part of a TBLT class should be directly transferable to non-classroom contexts. This is a considerable problem for instructors (like myself) who are teaching in TENOR ("Teaching English for No Obvious Reason" as coined by West, 1994) or "general" English contexts. Without completing an extensive needs analysis, such as in Lambert (2010), it is unknown what communicative language needs the students in my context have, if any. For instance, Lambert's needs analysis conducted at a Japanese university revealed that for both business and education majors, post-graduation English usage needs were practically identical and generic such as: replying to English emails, locating information from English sources, summarizing English information into Japanese, etc. (p.105). If the above tasks are recognized as important for university graduates, perhaps KR should focus on developing these skills instead. In summary, KR is not designed to target language skills

based on a needs analysis, assuming there are specific skills to be developed in the first place, which could be considered a weakness of the model. However, it instead allows students to engage in self- and teacher-directed language learning practices to successfully play games in class. In doing so, they also gain skills tangential to language such as cooperation and teamwork, critical thinking, and gaining knowledge about English slang and popular culture from online searches and watching youtube videos in a mixture of self- and teacher-directed activities. The development of such critical literacy skills is considered advantageous in this, the 21st Century, however, to date, such progressive models of education have not penetrated too deeply into foreign language teaching practices (see Paesani et al., 2015).

KR is not targeting the development of any *specific* language skills, assuming there are specific skills to be developed in the first place

In closing

I have outlined a way of implementing games into a university language course. The project is sprawling and activities are multifarious. I have proposed that a sound teaching model, materials, and mediation are essential elements in helping learners develop. One cycle of the project was documented with teacher observations, teaching tips, and examples of students' work. Materials are also provided for the implementation of this framework in other contexts. KR is my passion project. It is a proof of concept regarding language teaching with games[11]. That is, in this study, KR helped students develop a broad array of skills, but not to any rigorous level of proficiency. With a more focused goal regarding skills development (perhaps mandated by an institution or teaching context), KR may be adapted by teachers to teach specific (rather than general) skills (e.g. pragmatics, cultural studies, media literacy, genre and literacies, test presentation skills, etc.). Therefore, I hope teachers interested in GBLT take the framework and descriptions in this paper as a starting point for their own exploration into teaching with games.

Model, materials, and mediation are essential elements in helping learners develop.

Declaration of conflicting interests

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I am also extremely grateful to the students that have experienced KR, both "good" and "bad" students have given me ample explicit and implicit feedback to help me iterate the model into what it is today. I'd especially like to thank those students who have allowed me to make their work public on YouTube and here in this paper.

Oddly, I'd like to thank my university English department for being as unorganised as they are to allow me to do what I want in my teaching context and explore GBLT fully.

[11] https://teachingwith.games

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Appendix 1: Kotoba Rollers worksheets for each stage of the cycle.

The following project-related teaching materials are available in the Ludic Language Pedagogy Compendium. Each of the numbers below can be considered a single 90-minute lesson. Generic worksheets for each of the phases is provided.

1. Research games to play (Part 0 worksheet)
2. Present research results
3. Learn rules (Part 1 and 2 worksheet)
4. Play (Part 3 worksheet)
5. Analyse their performance (Part 4 worksheet)
6. Replay (Part 6 worksheet)
7. Final analysis and Report (Part 7 worksheet)

Appendix 2: A list of games used in Kotoba Rollers

A list of games used in Kotoba Rollers can be accessed with the following link: http://bit.ly/KRGameListPublic