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Research Article

How Teaching During the Pandemic Impacted Teacher Beliefs and Practices

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Abstract

As we move past the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is still important to reflect on teachers' experiences and the effects the pandemic had on them and their teaching. For some, the pandemic was a transformational period, while for others, it was a time best forgotten. Either way, there are lessons to be learned about language education provided at that time, those who provided it, and whether it impacted how they teach today. This paper shares elements of an ongoing three-year government-funded research project in Japan, which investigates how teaching during the pandemic impacted language teachers' identities and emotions, as well as their teaching beliefs and practices. Research participants taught in various contexts in the public and private sectors, and to all ages, from children to adults. Using narrative inquiry, the researchers analyzed both survey and interview data to identify a variety of themes and explored educators' lived experiences. This paper will share findings on the themes of teacher beliefs and practices through which teacher agency and autonomy are manifested. While most educators were given greater teacher autonomy, their willingness and ability to exercise their agency depended on what skills they possessed prior to the pandemic, as well as the degree to which their institutions provided guidance and support. Greater consideration was also given to well-being, both of the students and that of the educators.

COVID-19パンデミックの余波が過ぎ去ろうとしている今、教師たちの経験や、パンデミックが彼らや彼らの指導に与えた影響について振り返ることは、依然として重要である。パンデミックが変革の時期であった人もいれば、忘れた方がよい時期であった人もいいる。いずれにせよ、当時提供された言語教育、それを提供した人々、そしてそれが今日の教え方に影響を与えたかどうかについて、学ぶべき教訓がある。この研究では、パンデミック時の教育が、語学教師のアイデンティティや感情、そして教育に対する信念や実践にどのような影響を与えたかを調査する、日本で進行中の3年間の政府資金による研究プロジェクトの要素を紹介する。研究参加者は、公立・私立を問わず、また子どもから大人まであらゆる年齢層の様々な場面で教鞭をとっている。研究者はナラティブ・インクワイアリーを用いて、調査データとインタビューデータを分析し、さまざまなテーマを特定し、教育者の生活体験を探った。本論文では、教師の主体性と自律性が現れる、教師の信念と実践をテーマとした調査結果を紹介する。多くの教育者にはより大きな自律性が与えられた物の、発揮する意欲と能力は、パンデミック前に彼らが有していたスキルや、所属機関が提供する指導・支援の程度に依存していた。また、生徒や学生と教育者のウェルビーイングにも、より大きな配慮がなされた。

As we move beyond the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital to reflect on the experiences of teachers, the lessons they learned during that time, and the effects the pandemic had on them and their teaching, so that good practices are documented and not lost to time. This period fundamentally altered how educators, researchers, and the public view teacher and student well-being. This paper examines how teaching in Japan during the pandemic and the gradual return to face-to-face lessons have affected their beliefs and practices regarding their agency and autonomy.

Literature Review

In times of great uncertainty and stress, people must navigate challenging situations, and that experience invariably impacts who they are and how they feel. Teachers are no different in this regard, but the impact can be far-reaching because who teachers are affects what they do in the classroom and how they perceive their students' circumstances or learning. Thus, it is unsurprising that the pandemic and/or implementation of emergency remote teaching (ERT) impacted educators in numerous ways. Language teacher cognition, or "what teachers think, know, and believe" (Borg, 2003, p. 1), influences the extent to which and the effectiveness of changes that are implemented. Nagamine (2023) found that, in the Japanese context, "teacher cognition and emotions reflect the subjective reality teachers face in local school contexts" (pg. 41). If the teacher shows a positive attitude toward change, there is a greater likelihood of practical implementation. Conversely, if there is a negative attitude towards it, there is a greater

likelihood of resistance (Nagamine, 2014, 2018, 2023; Nishino, 2012). The pandemic's circumstances exacerbated these attitudes and reactions. Zhang and Hwang (2021; 2023) similarly found that teaching during this time caused teachers to reconstruct or reassess both their identity and what it meant to be a teacher, while El-Soussi (2022) found it led many teachers to change their beliefs and classroom practices. As many either worked from home or in sparsely staffed schools, the restricted access to their peers (Nagamine, 2023; Zhang & Hwang, 2023) heightened feelings of stress and anxiety regarding their teaching. The lack of both connections and centralized guidance provided most teachers with greater autonomy, resulting in more teachers exercising their agency according to their teacher identity (Ashton, 2022), with positive results for many but exacerbating concerns for others.

Teacher Autonomy

Learner autonomy, first defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p. 3), first appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s in Holec’s work for the Council of Europe. Exploration of teacher autonomy emerged decades later, only after the shift towards learner-centered educational models. Little (1995), Benson (2001), and McGrath (2000) began arguing that teacher autonomy is a key component in supporting learner autonomy. Little (1995) noted that

Genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploring the freedom that this confers. (p. 179)

Because there are numerous aspects to consider when defining teacher autonomy, many have tried to categorize its dimensions rather than producing a specific definition. McGrath (2000) identifies two different, but mutually constitutive dimensions of teacher autonomy: “teacher autonomy as self-directed professional action or development; and teacher autonomy as freedom from control by others” (cited in Huang, 2005, p. 205). Therefore, enacting self-direction is a must if teachers are to be free from the control of others. Smith (2003) felt that McGrath’s ideas were a good start, but still not deep enough to address all that teacher autonomy encompassed. He believed it was necessary to acknowledge that “professional development could be considered as one form of professional action, but action and development are not necessarily the same thing” and that “allowance needs to be made for a distinction between *capacity* for and/or *willingness* to engage in self-direction and actual self-directed behaviour” (pg. 4). In an attempt to coalesce the discussion, Huang (2005) produced the following definition: “teachers’ willingness, capacity, and freedom to take control of their own teaching and learning” (pg. 206). In other words, teacher autonomy is not simply about teachers’ ability to self-direct once free from control, but whether or not they are willing to actually implement that self-directed teacher development, i.e., exercise their agency.

Teacher Agency

Language teacher agency, much like teacher autonomy, is challenging to define, and a consensus on it has yet to be reached because it has roots in various fields beyond education, including philosophy, psychology, and sociology. In its broadest form, agency is teachers making choices and taking actions to influence their professional practice. Reeves (2022) argues that meaningfulness and engagement are also essential elements of language teacher agency, underscoring the need for further research. Though we did not adopt a specific definition of language teacher agency, we found the observations of both Nazari et al. (2024, p. 2) and Wang et al. (2017) to be noteworthy.

Although teacher agency is widely recognized as playing a role in educational innovation and transformation, it does not always lead to change; in other words, teachers can shape their teaching environments by leveraging their power and autonomy to either maintain the existing practices or introduce new ones. As such, teachers’ agency does not necessarily impede or facilitate change, but rather, depends on how they choose to exercise their agency.

In other words, teachers are responsible for the choices they make regarding their teaching beliefs and practices. They have the capacity to make choices and act purposefully in their professional lives.

Methodology

This exploratory study employed a qualitative approach. The study was conducted in two parts: a survey using narrative frames, followed by semi-structured interviews. For both the narrative frame surveys and the semi-structured interviews, narrative inquiry, or narrative as method, and thematic analysis were used to analyze data.

The guiding research questions for the project were as follows: How has teaching before, during, and after the pandemic in Japan impacted language teachers’ identities? How has teaching before, during, and after the pandemic in Japan impacted teachers’ beliefs and practices? How has teaching before, during, and after the pandemic in Japan impacted language teachers’ emotions and well-being? What types of professional development have language teachers participated in before, during, and after the pandemic, and for what purposes? What lessons can we take from the findings to provide more effective teacher and professional development opportunities in the future? The research presented at PanSIG2025 and this paper focus only on answering the second question.

Narrative Inquiry and Thematic Analysis

Narrative inquiry and thematic analysis are effective approaches for qualitative research because they enable researchers to analyze patterns, both inductively and deductively, depending on their research goals, while preserving the story contained within the data and the voice of the participant (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). This form of analysis keeps the focus on “the content of the narratives: what they are about” (Barkhuizen, 2011, p. 401, as cited in Barkhuizen, 2023). This analytical focus also enabled us to preserve the structure of the stories (pre-, during, and post-COVID-19 pandemic) and the context by examining the specific events experienced in the stories, the storytelling, or a combination of both.

Survey

The first phase of our study involved distributing a bilingual Google Form-based questionnaire. Japanese translation was done by one of the researchers and checked with an L1 Japanese speaker for accuracy. After piloting it in January 2024, we shared it with Japan-based language educators via our professional networks and various social media groups from February to April. The survey asked participants to provide demographic information and complete narrative frames focused on experiences before, during, and after the pandemic. The results were analyzed using narrative thematic analysis of both pre-determined and emergent themes.

Narrative frames

The decision to use narrative frames in particular was based on the work of Barkhuizen and Wette (2008). A narrative frame is a response template that contains sentence starters or sentences with blanks in the middle that are to be filled in by participants. These frames provide guidance and support for the structure and content of responses, ensuring that the gathered information answers the research questions. Furthermore, by organizing the frames chronologically (in our case, before, during, and after COVID), the responses immediately create a story for the researcher to navigate (see Appendix A). This structure naturally brings key elements to the forefront, allowing for a deeper, richer understanding of each story. This study, which examines identity, emotions, well-being, beliefs, and practices, required the selection of an approach that maximized the opportunity for the expression of all these aspects.

Interviews

In the study’s second phase, a call for participants was distributed in autumn 2024, through the same distribution methods as the survey. The aim was to gather participants from diverse backgrounds who were willing to participate in semi-structured interviews. We received a total of 37 willing participants. From those, we randomly selected 20 participants and invited them to participate in an interview between December 2024 and January 2025. Although randomly selected, we prioritized selecting those who were teaching in contexts underrepresented among the survey participants, namely, non-university educators. Due to various reasons, only 17 of the invited participants were able to complete the interviews, and limited time prevented adding more. While participants were given the option of conducting the interviews in English or Japanese, all those selected chose English.

The semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix B) were based on the questions from the narrative frame survey and intended to collect more detailed and in-depth information than was possible from the surveys. The interviews were conducted either using the Zoom video-conferencing platform or audio-recorded in person, with at least one researcher present. Despite having the same base questions, the interviews lasted from 45 to 120 minutes, depending on the responses from the interviewee. After the interviews, transcripts were created by the video-conferencing company and reviewed by the researchers. They were then shared with participants for confirmation. The transcripts were then coded individually by each researcher using both preset themes of agency and autonomy, as well as emergent themes. After the initial coding phase, the researchers met to share and discuss their codes and to reach a consensus on the themes. Each researcher used narrative inquiry to conduct a thematic analysis of the transcripts individually, reading through the transcripts, taking notes, and coding the text for both the pre-set themes as well as for emergent themes. After individually coding the text, the researchers met to share their codes, identify patterns, and discuss the broader, overarching themes that emerged. Six of these transcripts were randomly selected for this paper and also coded for the preset themes of teacher agency and teacher autonomy.

Results

Survey

Demographics

We received 18 responses to the survey, from 11 participants identifying as women and seven as men. We aimed to achieve a diverse range of responses in terms of background, experience, and teaching context. Regarding teaching level, the tertiary level was overwhelmingly represented, with sixteen participants at that level, one at the junior high level, two at the primary level, one *eikaiwa* teacher, and two who taught private lessons. During the pandemic, 14 participants were employed full-time, three part-time, and one doing both. Only two teachers had fewer than sixteen years of experience in the field.

Findings

Regarding the research question, which examines the pandemic's impact on teachers' beliefs and practices, some teachers reported that their beliefs and practices had changed, while others did not. A common theme about teaching beliefs during the pandemic was the importance of prioritizing student connection and communication opportunities. Participants said it was hard to gauge comprehension or engagement otherwise. Many also demonstrated care and concern for their students as humans beyond the learning space, taking personal circumstances, mental health, or learner differences into account in a way they had not previously. Post-pandemic, teachers who perceived a change in beliefs reiterated this focus on student needs as a key consideration now, as well as being more open to flexibility than before. Those who reported no change in their teaching beliefs maintained that student engagement or interaction had always been important and would remain so. Another teacher felt that "the fundamentals of [their] teaching are sound, the same as always."

Just as with teaching beliefs, many teachers reported some sort of change to their teaching practices post-pandemic, while others felt that nothing had changed. Unsurprisingly, many reported changes in technology usage in their classrooms. More broadly, one person noted that their teaching practices had certainly changed because "they are always changing [and] adapting." Another educator stated that they have changed some practices because they consider student needs and mental health more. Interestingly, one teacher noted that the circumstances led to negative changes, saying, "In some ways, I think the pandemic has made me lazier. The lack of good expectations during the pandemic has led to bad practices." Those teachers who felt that their teaching practices had not changed post-pandemic noted that flexibility had always been important; thus, the pandemic had merely reinforced this aspect of their teaching. Others said they were already using technology in their teaching, so the rapid shift towards greater digitization happening societally was not novel to them. "I was already using technology and have continued to do so." Overall, the situation seemed to help educators realize the importance of flexibility and ICT skills, and for those already relying on them, it confirmed that their practices were sound, so they continued to do so.

Interviews

Demographics

The aim was to gather a diverse range of perspectives from participants with varied backgrounds, thereby providing a broader range of insights than the survey results alone. There were 17 respondents, eight men, eight women, and one individual identifying as non-binary. They also represented various teaching backgrounds immediately before, during, and after the pandemic, including elementary school, secondary school, eikaiwa, and dispatch teaching. Diversity was also evident in their teaching positions, with participants working part-time, full-time, or a combination of both. Presentation time constraints at PanSIG2025 prevented the contents of all respondents' from being shared; therefore, six respondents were randomly selected for analysis (Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Teaching Profiles

Participant	Gender	Teaching Experience	Teaching Level	Position Type	Teaching Format
Rebecca	Female	20+ years	Secondary (HS)	Full-time	2 months online, then face-to-face (F2F)
Kevin	Male	10+ years	Tertiary → Secondary (JHS/HS)	Full-time	Fully online
Martin	Male	20+ years	Secondary → Tertiary	Full-time	Online & on-demand
Sarah	Female	20+ years	Tertiary (changed institutions)	Part-time	Fully online
Madeline	Female	10+ years	Tertiary (changed institutions)	Full-time	F2F (except during COVID peaks) or fully online
Luke	Male	10+ years	Tertiary (changed institutions)	Full-time	Fully online

Note. HS = High School; JHS = Junior High School; F2F = Face-to-Face.

The first interviewee, Rebecca, has been teaching for over 20 years and is currently a full-time secondary school teacher. She spent the first two months of the pandemic teaching online but then returned to face-to-face lessons. The second participant, Kevin, has more than 10 years of teaching experience and began his teaching career in Japan, working first at university before transitioning to full-time secondary-level teaching. After a delayed start, he taught fully online from the start of the pandemic. Martin has the opposite career trajectory of Kevin. He began teaching in secondary schools more than 20 years ago but now teaches at university. He spent the pandemic teaching

many classes online, both synchronously and asynchronously.

Similar to Martin, Sarah also has over 20 years of teaching experience. She moved to higher education institutions at the pandemic's start and taught part-time at multiple institutions throughout it. Her lessons were fully online, but her context changed depending on institutional requirements. Madeline also changed institutions at the start of the pandemic. She has more than 10 years of experience teaching at the tertiary level full-time. She had two distinct types of classes during the pandemic. Her small, seminar-type courses were held entirely face-to-face, except during COVID-19 spikes, whereas her larger classes were held online. Our final participant, Luke, has more than 10 years of experience teaching in Japan, and he, too, changed institutions at the beginning of the pandemic, and taught completely online during it.

Participant One - Rebecca

Rebecca's interview highlighted two main themes regarding her beliefs and practices. The first was that she was given the autonomy to exercise her agency because of her training and ability. Her background in technology and pre-pandemic teaching practices enabled her to play a key role in her institution's transition to online teaching during the pandemic. Her students already had Gmail email addresses and were a part of her Google Classroom, so it was more a task of onboarding the other subject teachers and administrators into Google Classroom rather than the students.

Rebecca recalled:

Finally, the guy sitting next to me is in my department, looks at me and looks at everybody else, and is like 'Well, every single child at the school is on Google Classroom...through Rebecca's classes. And all of us have the ability to get on Google Classroom, so we could maybe use that.' And like 88 people swivel their heads and look at me, and they're like, 'Can we do that?' And I'm like, 'Yes,' and they're like, 'Okay, so Kokusai section, you're in charge of the Google. And you will teach us all the Google.' And I was like, 'Oh, God!'

This opportunity also allowed Rebecca to be recognized for her contributions to the school, with a teacher saying, "Thank you, Rebecca-sensei. She really saved us," and everyone gave a little clap." She realized, "I'm a puzzle piece here, I, I fit."

Rebecca was passionate about providing her students with quality learning opportunities. She was adamant that, "my kids will learn and not get COVID on my watch, and if I have to do it myself, I will." She spent hours developing lessons and organizing her classroom so students could do nearly identical activities, while also respecting the institution's COVID-19 protocols. "It was awkward, but it was regular." She used tools like a two-meter "social distancing stick" and color-coded tape marks on the floor.

Since her institution allowed her both agency and autonomy in lessons, she spoke about her relationship with teaching quite fondly. "I loved school. So school actually helped...I think if I'd have had to go into lockdown for the whole year, I would have been terrible, but I think that's probably another reason that drove me to make sure we were doing all the cool stuff that we always do, because you know what, I wasn't gonna let these kids lose a year."

Participant Two - Kevin

Kevin also had two main themes connected to his agency and autonomy. The first was reality versus ideal, doing what the students needed versus what he believed was necessary. Kevin worked at a secondary school, and due in part to the decrease in administrative tasks during online teaching, he had more time to learn and focus on the Japanese teaching context.

I took...quite a...lot of time actually to learn more about, like, the Japanese high school system, more in general...It wasn't necessarily that I sort of proactively did it...somehow, there was more time to absorb the information because it wasn't just, you know, lessons, lessons, busy work, busy work, bookkeeping. So, I would talk more with the other teachers and learn more about not just the school system itself, but also student expectations and parent expectations.

He also spoke about the challenges of teaching at a private high school, "We need to get butts in seats. We don't have butts in seats, we're dead." He also shared about the importance of parental approval, "If the parents are not happy, it doesn't matter what you do in the classroom...If kids hate it [but] the parents think they're getting their money's worth, they don't complain."

The second theme for Kevin was embracing the paradox. Kevin shared his background growing up and his beliefs regarding language learning, as well as how they had evolved since teaching in secondary school. He realized that "even though it's [using the L1] against my own beliefs, it made me feel way better." He recalled that before the pandemic, classes were 95% L2 but now 70-80% L1, "and the crazy thing is the classes are going way smoother. We have a much better relationship. The kids and I are much closer, and they feel like they can sort of rely on me more." He also pointed out that lessons are "not necessarily communicative anymore," while also explaining that he has chosen to shift to more "traditional materials more because the kids are so happy." His choices of how to teach and what materials to utilize showed his autonomy as well as his agency.

Participant Three - Martin

Martin took a somewhat different path to his teaching position during the pandemic, and these life experiences seemed to have given him an interesting perspective on Japanese culture, classroom practices, and the behavior of educators. He was simultaneously extremely critical and fiercely optimistic about the impact of the pandemic on the Japanese education system and what it meant for the future. When he taught in secondary school, he saw students being broken down by the system and observed teachers who seemed disinterested in meaningfully teaching students. His excitement in the interview was palpable when he described how he felt that the pandemic was going to be “game over” for the traditional “nonsense” and “mush” of English language education, which he felt was doing more harm than good. He was looking forward to the system changing for the better. In his university department, he identified two “islands” of teachers: the ones who “pad their resumes”, were unwilling to change during the pandemic, and did only on-demand lessons; and the ones who were willing to “get all the juices flowing”, who collaborated, connected, and responded to the adversity with action. He seemed disappointed that the ultimate outcome of the pandemic was that certain things did not change; however, his resolve to work for his students and protect them was only strengthened.

Martin’s interview repeatedly showed how passionate he was about his students and their learning during COVID. When thinking about students missing chances for interaction or connection he said,

There was three or four of us that were really just saying, ‘What can we do here?’ And it was from a sense of love these poor kids sitting in their apartments...it was an emergency, like a spiritual and emotional and development[al] emergency for these poor kids in these formative years, you know, and we can’t drop the ball in this. Never. And we can’t even enable anyone to let it happen.

He seemed comforted by the fact that he was not alone in his commitment to education, even if there were many around him who did not share the same beliefs. This particular interview showed the importance and value of teacher community during challenging times.

Participant Four – Sarah

The first theme for Sarah can be best described as conducting educational triage to support students. She was working part-time at multiple institutions, each with their own individualized approach to conducting classes and disseminating information, as well as language management systems and video conferencing services. Working part-time at several institutions meant she had to be proactive in her preparation and lesson delivery before the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, she had the necessary tools in place during the pandemic to tackle the challenge. Her initial focus was, “Can they [students] access” [the materials]? Followed by, “Can they interact?” To highlight her second point, she mentioned that she often used tools such as Jamboard and Padlet “because I want people to be writing and talking as much as possible.”

The second theme that highlights Sarah’s autonomy and agency was labeled as “felt a sense of freedom and exercised it.” Due to her experience and proactivity, she didn’t hesitate to take the necessary steps for her classes and students during the pandemic. Unlike other participants, she seemed more at ease with the situation from the onset, even during times of stress.

My career is not about to take off...saddle and bridle are gone, you know. I will bite and kick whoever I want. So, I do feel more like it’s my job to speak up and say things that might damage someone else’s career.

Participant Five – Madeline

A clear theme that emerged from Madeline’s interview was simply getting through each day and what that meant in terms of managing expectations during the pandemic. She learned to make peace with not achieving things as she normally would. When speaking about her daily life, she said,

During the pandemic...It was very stressful, but I also, I think, learned to let go of a lot of unrealistic standards or expectations I had for myself, because I was just like, I can’t do it all. It’s literally impossible. You know, if my children get garbage for lunch, they get garbage for lunch, you know. If we go and get McDonald’s in between classes, it is what it is, you know. And I, okay, I don’t have to perfectly plan this lesson. I can have the students, you know, lead to the degree they can online. And I’ll take my kids to the park real quick before I go into the classroom, so that they burn off some of their energy and aren’t as disruptive during the actual class, you know.

Over time, she had no choice but to come to terms with the reality of caring for her young children, whose childcare was unavailable, and also having to teach students online or occasionally in-person while her partner was deemed an essential worker. It was clearly hard for her to do this because, “there were times I felt like this isn’t fair to my kids, this isn’t fair to my students, this is, this is, you know, unsustainable, untenable.” She also gradually accepted that her research was “out the window” during the pandemic since it relied on visits to facilities or institutions that were closed.

Participant Six – Luke

Luke had just started a new position when the pandemic hit, so he was unable to meet colleagues or students in person. This was initially stressful and lonely, but eventually he came to see it as quite freeing as he exercised his agency. Luke's interview seemed to center on the idea of acknowledging everyone's humanity amidst the pandemic's difficulties. Regardless of location or limitations, in the classroom or at home in our pajamas, he prioritized the connections they made in lessons so that no one felt alone. He was able to develop his identity online and encouraged students to connect with each other and do the same. "First, I am Luke, and that will never change. Second, I'm a teacher, not just a language teacher... And then next, I am a language teacher." His deliberate focus on how they were all people first, then language teachers and learners, seemed to create a safe and comfortable environment for everyone. As a result, "even though we were trapped in a room, physically, I mentally felt kind of free." To support this, he made conscious decisions about clothing to show who he really was rather than appear as "the stuffy guy in the suit". It was important to him that community and authentic connection happened in his online lessons. "Everything in class should be a positive experience, even the small things like speaking up, even with small things like choosing someone." These teaching beliefs and practices were already present pre-pandemic for him, but the circumstances of ERT made it even more critical that he maintain them.

Limitations

Despite efforts to have both Japanese nationals and non-Japanese participate, the results were overwhelmingly from foreign educators, and, as stated before, there was a higher representation of tertiary educators. This limits the scope of what implications can be drawn. Research focusing on the experiences of Japanese nationals who were English language educators during the pandemic would allow for greater understanding of the situation. Furthermore, the self-reporting of emotions and perceptions means that they have likely become muted with time and would have been more intense closer to the pandemic itself, which could have brought even more salient insights to light. As there is still insufficient research documenting the experiences of educators in Japan during the pandemic, research should continue to be done and uncover what was learned.

Conclusions

The pandemic affected educators in different ways, but it definitely served as a catalyst for many. For our participants highlighted in the PanSIG2025 presentation, it triggered changes, realizations, and reflections. Most teachers had greater autonomy in their teaching during the pandemic, but their skill set and level of institutional support impacted the degree to which they exercised their agency. More broadly, a few themes stand out. Regarding change or the perception of it, many used technology differently or worked within the system to teach effectively. Others had realizations about students, teaching, and realistic expectations. Post-pandemic, more language educators view their students more holistically, taking into account their needs, emotions, troubles, and desires. Continuing to do so will allow teachers and schools to better understand and support their learners. Another lesson teachers learned was the need for greater flexibility and understanding regarding themselves, their students, and the broader educational system in Japan. By being less rigid and putting student needs at the forefront, schools and educators can provide the most effective education. Institutions can better support their teachers by reviewing what realistic workloads look like and by providing clearer guidance and necessary training, not only in, but especially during times of uncertainty.

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Appendix A

Survey Question & Narrative Frames

1. How long have you been in the English teaching profession? 英語教師になって何年になりますか？

0-5 years 0年–5年, 6-10 years 6年–10年, 11-15 years 11年–15年, 16-20 years 16年–20年, 21-25 years 21年–25年, 26-30 years 26年–30年, 31-35 years 31年–35年, 36-40 years 36年–40年, 41+ years 41年+

2. How long have you been teaching in Japan? いつから日本で教えているのですか？

0-5 years 0年–5年, 6-10 years 6年–10年, 11-15 years 11年–15年, 16-20 years 16年–20年, 21-25 years 21年–25年, 26-30 years 26年–30年, 31-35 years 31年–35年, 36-40 years 36年–40年, 41+ years 41年+

3. If you’ve taught elsewhere, where and for how long? 日本以外で教えていたことがあるなら、どこで、どれくらいの期間教えていたのですか？

4. What level do you teach at? (ex. primary school, university, cram school, eikaiwa) どのレベルで教えているのですか？(例：小学校、大学、塾、英会話)

5. During the pandemic, how were you employed as a teacher? COVID-19パンデミックの最中、あなたは教師としてどのように働いていましたか？

full-time 常勤・正社員, part-time 非常勤・パート, Other その他

6. How are you currently employed as a teacher? 現在、教師としてどのように働いていますか？

full-time 常勤・正社員, part-time 非常勤・パート, Other その他

7. How do you identify? (e.g. man, woman, non-binary, prefer to self-describe) あなたはどのようなジェンダー・アイデンティティ？(例：男性、女性、ノンバイナリー、自己申告を希望する)

Narrative Frames - Before COVID-19

Before COVID-19, in terms of teaching beliefs, I thought _____ was/were important. I thought this because _____. Teaching my lessons made me feel _____. I often taught lessons using a _____ approach. I like this teaching method because _____. Technology played a _____ role in my classroom. Personally, the way I used technology in my classroom was _____. My students used technology in the classroom _____ because _____. One way I engaged in professional development before the pandemic was _____. I found this useful for my development because it (+ verb) _____.	COVID以前は、指導信念の観点から、私は〇〇が重要だと考えていた。その理由は〇〇。レッスンをしていると、〇〇な気分になった。私はよく〇〇のアプローチでレッスンをした。私がこの教授法を気に入っているのは、〇〇だからだ。テクノロジーは私の教室で〇〇役割を果たした。個人的に、私が教室でテクノロジーを使う方法は〇〇だった。私の生徒が教室でテクノロジーを〇〇(頻度)使ったのは〇〇(理由)からです。パンデミックの前に私がプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントに取り組んだ方法のひとつは〇〇だった。その方法を活用して何が得られましたか？
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Narrative Frames - During COVID-19

Teaching my lessons during the pandemic made me feel _____. I did/did not switch to Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). This is because _____. At that time, in terms of teaching beliefs, I thought _____ was/were important. It was/They were important because _____. An adaptation I made to my teaching practices during the pandemic was _____. One way I engaged in professional development that I stopped doing during the pandemic is _____. I stopped because _____. One professional development event/activity I engaged in was _____. This made me feel _____. I felt this way because _____.	私はCOVID-19 パンデミック時にレッスンを教えしていた時に〇〇を感じた。緊急遠隔指導(ERT)に切り替えた／切り替えなかった。その理由は〇〇。当時、指導信念の観点から、私は〇〇が重要だと考えていた。重要だったのは〇〇からだ。Covid-19パンデミック時に私が行った教育方法の変更は、〇〇であった。COVID-19パンデミック時にやめてしまったプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントの方法のひとつは〇〇だ。辞めた理由は〇〇だ。私が参加したプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントイベント／活動のひとつは、〇〇だった。それは私を〇〇に感じさせた。私はこう感じた理由は～だ。
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Narrative Frames - After COVID-19

When I look back on my teaching during the pandemic, I feel _____. Something that I started doing in my classes during the pandemic that I have continued to this day is _____. Something I stopped doing once the pandemic ended was _____. I feel that my teaching beliefs _____ changed post-pandemic. This is because _____. I feel that my teaching practices _____ changed post-pandemic. This is because _____. One change to professional development that happened as a result of the pandemic, which I want to continue, is _____. One change in teaching or professional development that happened as a result of the pandemic that I would not continue is _____. I wouldn't do it now because _____.	パンデミック時の指導や教え方を振り返ると、私は〇〇と感じる。COVID-19パンデミック最中に私が授業で始めたことで、今日まで続けていることは〇〇だ。COVID-19パンデミックが終わってから私がやめたことは、〇〇だった。私の指導信念は、パンデミック後は〇〇と感じている。その理由は〇〇。私の指導法は、パンデミック後は〇〇と感じている。その理由は〇〇。COVID-19パンデミックを契機としたプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントの変化で、私が今後も継続させたいと考えているもののひとつに、〇〇がある。COVID-19パンデミックを契機としたプロフェッショナル・デベロップメントの変化で、私が今後も継続しないと思うもののひとつは、〇〇だ。継続しない理由は〇〇だ。
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Appendix B

Survey Question & Narrative Frames

面接の質問 (Interview Questions)

Demographic Questions

- How do you identify in terms of nationality? あなたはどこの国で生まれ育ちましたか？
- How do you identify in terms of gender? あなたの性自認を教えてください。
- How long have you been in the English teaching profession? 英語教師になって何年になりますか？
- How long have you been teaching in Japan? いつから日本で教えているのですか？
- What level do you teach at? (ex. primary school, university, cram school, eikaiwa) どのレベルで教えているのですか？(例：小学校、大学、塾、英会話)

Beliefs and Practices

- What was a typical lesson for you before the pandemic? パンデミック以前の通常のレッスンはどのようなものでしたか？
- Could you tell us what a typical lesson was like for you during the pandemic? パンデミック時の通常のレッスンはどのようなものでしたか？(1)(3)
- Could you tell us what your lessons are like now? 現在のレッスンについて教えてください。
- How interested/engaged were you in your lessons?
 - How do you think the pandemic affected your level of engagement in planning?
 - How do you think the pandemic affected your level of engagement in teaching?
 - How do you think the pandemic affected your students' level of engagement in lessons?

5. Engagement: degree of attention, curiosity, interest, passion, & optimism-extends to motivation?
 - a. Behavioural, emotional, and cognitive (NAIS)

Identity, Emotions, and Well-being

1. How did the experience of being a teacher or teaching during the pandemic affect you? 教師として、あるいはパンデミック中に教えるという経験は、あなたにどのような影響を与えましたか?
2. How, if at all, did you feel you changed as a teacher during the pandemic? Post-pandemic? パンデミック中、教師としてどのように変わったと感じましたか? パンデミック後は?
3. How did you feel teaching before the pandemic? During the pandemic? After it? パンデミック以前はどのように教えていましたか? パンデミック中は? パンデミックの後は?
4. Who did you talk to about your experiences as an educator before, during, or after the pandemic? パンデミックの前、最中、あるいは後に、教育者としての経験について誰に話をしましたか?

Professional Development

1. How did you engage in professional development before the pandemic? パンデミック以前は、どのように専門家としての能力開発に取り組んでいましたか?
2. What were you most worried about in terms of PD during the pandemic? パンデミック中、PDに関して最も心配していたことは何ですか?
3. How did you engage in professional development during the pandemic? パンデミックの最中、どのようにPDに取り組みましたか?
4. Have you continued any PD you were engaging in during the pandemic? パンデミック中に取り組んでいたPDは継続しましたか?
5. What types of PD, if any, are you currently engaging in? 現在携わっているPDがあれば、どのようなものですか?