

---

# THE LEARNER DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

学習者ディベロップメント研究部会誌

---

ISSN: 2433-5401

<https://ldjournal.ld-sig.org>

## The Learner Development Journal Issue 6: Learner Development Beyond The Classroom

---

Author: Gretchen Clark

Title: Extensive Listening in the Time of COVID-19: Supporting Students so They Can Become Self-Reflective, Independent Learners

Date of publication online: 2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTSIG.LDJ6-3>

Author contact: <[gretchen3clark\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:gretchen3clark@gmail.com)>

Published by the Japan Association for Language Teaching  
Learner Development Special Interest Group, Tokyo

<https://ld-sig.org/>

Copyright 2022 each respective author

---

This article can be cited as:

Clark, G. (2022). Extensive listening in the time of COVID-19: Supporting students so they can become self-reflective, independent learners. *The Learner Development Journal*, 6, 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTSIG.LDJ6-3>

---

This article is part of a collection of practitioner research on the theme of “Learner Development Beyond the Classroom” for Issue 6 of the *Learner Development Journal* (LDJ6), edited by Isra Wongsarnpigoon, Dominique Vola Ambinintsoa, Phillip A. Bennett, and André Parsons. Published once a year, each issue of the *Learner Development Journal* follows a Community of Practices approach over a period of approximately 18 months in which contributors work together, under the guidance of the editors, to share, respond to, and develop their research and writing.

Articles are published in the *Learner Development Journal* under a Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY), of which CC BY 4.0 is the most recent version. Under this agreement, authors grant users the right to unrestricted dissemination and re-use of the work. They ask only that proper attribution is given to the work.

# Extensive Listening in the Time of COVID-19: Supporting Students so They Can Become Self- Reflective, Independent Learners

Gretchen Clark, Ritsumeikan University, Japan  
<gretchen3clark(at)gmail(dot)com>

Due to the spread of COVID-19, universities around the world began making use of online tools such as learning management systems (LMS) and Zoom. For language teachers, teaching skills such as listening and speaking proved to be a challenge. This paper describes how an extensive listening (EL) program was organized asynchronously for a class of 21 students studying English at a private women's university in central Japan. Students were asked to choose at least one audio or video resource from a list provided by the author and complete a digital listening journal for 21 weeks. In the journal students were required to document the resource title, website information, a summary, listening problems, and goals for future journal entries. On the LMS, the author provided feedback to help students navigate listening problems and choose resources that fit their needs. This paper reports on the experiences of three students who completed the task regularly. An analysis of their journals and submission practices was used in combination with semi-structured interviews to understand their listening processes. The students' stories provide insight into how the skill of listening is practiced and may be of interest to educators who wish to introduce EL in their own contexts as an out-of-class activity.

COVID-19の蔓延により、世界中の大学がLMS (Learning Management System) やZoomなどのオンラインツールを活用するようになった。しかし、語学教師にとって、リスニングやスピーキングといったスキルの指導は難しい。この論文では、中部地方の私立女子大学で英語を学ぶ21人の学生を対象に、非同期で行われた多聴(EL)プログラムについて説明する。学生は、筆者が提供したリストから少なくとも1つのオーディオまたはビデオリソースを選択し、21週間にわたりデジタルリスニングジャーナルを完成させるよう課題を行った。ジャーナルには、教材のタイトル、ウェブサイト情報、要約、リスニングの問題点、今後の目標などを記録するよう求めた。LMS上では、著者がフィードバックを提供することで、学生がリスニングの問題を解決し、自分のニーズに合ったリソースを選択できるようにした。この論文では、定期的にタスクをこなした3人の学生の経験を検証する。彼女たちのリスニングプロセスを理解するために、半構造化インタビューとジャーナル、提出物を組み合わせて分析に使用した。彼女らの体験談は、リスニングのスキルがどのように練習されているかについての洞察をもたらし、授業外の活動としてELをそれぞれの文脈で導入したいと考える教育者にとって関心の高いものである。

## Keywords

extensive listening, teacher feedback, metacognition, journal, LMS

多聴、教師からのフィードバック、メタ認知、ジャーナル、LMS

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing governmental mandates to conduct class online, the traditional method of language instruction using textbooks, CDs, or handouts became almost impossible. In Japanese universities, online learning meant fully asynchronous efforts conducted using learning management systems (LMS), such as manaba (<https://manaba.jp>) or Moodle (<https://moodle.org>), or some kind of hybrid course in which webtools such as Microsoft Teams or the video conferencing software Zoom were also used. Not only were teachers and students separated physically, but the digital divide meant all of us had to get used to paperless, digital ways of learning that were unfamiliar, slow, and excruciatingly frustrating at times. The pandemic years were not easy for anyone; however, this period offered an opportunity for both teachers and students to try new ways of learning.

Faced with this situation, my department at a Japanese university struggled with how to organize a listening class that would circumvent technical issues yet also be rewarding for

the student and easily managed by the teacher. Initially, we decided to have the students watch and summarize a TED video (<https://www.ted.com>) weekly under the assumption that we would be back in the classroom soon and face-to-face classes would resume as usual. But as we found, COVID cases rose, and in the end, classes remained online. I felt we needed to devise better ways to cope with learning online. Our students seemed to struggle with TED videos, and in many cases the task did not seem to be within their grasp. For example, some students submitted “summaries” that consisted of passages taken verbatim from the transcripts. Any input I gave about writing summaries did not seem to help. At this point, I decided to revamp the assignment, so I looked into extensive listening (EL) as a possible solution.

### ***The Case for Extensive Listening***

Extensive listening can be likened to extensive reading (ER; Waring, 2008). In both pursuits, learners are exposed regularly to a large volume of language. Also, learners are encouraged to choose texts that are interesting to them. ER and EL differ in important ways, however. First, while it is recommended that the level of text be equal to or slightly above comprehensibility for ER, due to the ephemeral nature of the act of listening, researchers have found that aural texts that are equal to or below a learner’s listening ability contribute more to learning (Waring, 2008). In addition, when practicing EL, the use of multimodal scaffolds, in which learners use transcripts while listening, is recommended (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Another option is to have learners practice “extensive viewing” and make use of video resources as well (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). When viewing, learners can utilize subtitles and captions to improve comprehension (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). These multimodal scaffolds are not generally used with pure ER because the written text is readily available for the learner to refer to as they read.

Like ER, extensive listening provides many learning opportunities for students. First, regular extensive listening practice promotes the development of listening fluency (Chang, 2018). Also, listening to samples from different speakers of English helps increase familiarity and comprehension of a variety of accents (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). In addition, choosing texts that are similar in topic will increase the number of meetings with new or unfamiliar vocabulary within a content area (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Finally, using the myriad of options available online instead of sample audio tracks included with a textbook can have positive effects on learners’ motivation for developing their language proficiency (Honarзад & Ressaiei, 2019). EL is a flexible learning activity as it can be used in or outside the classroom and in combination with aids such as subtitles or transcripts, speed controls, or games and quizzes created by website developers.

EL offered the flexibility I felt was necessary for both the students and me. As a new teacher in my department without any first-hand knowledge of the students and their abilities, I believed that EL would allow each individual student to work at their own pace and level. Additionally, if the students used a journal to document their progress and any problems, I could offer feedback tailored to their needs on the LMS. Through this individualized and supportive process, I thought I would be able to teach the students how to listen and encourage them to think about what they were doing and why, thereby helping them develop a metacognitive stance to their learning based on their individual levels.

When researching the role of metacognition in learning, I found that it is considered to be a driver of successful learning (e.g., Anderson, 2008; Chamot, 2008; Griffiths,

2008; Oxford, 2011). In fact, Chamot (2005) suggested the effective language learner is a “mentally active learner” and one who aggressively approaches study through metacognition (p. 115). For example, successful learners plan for study and allot time for it (e.g., Anderson, 2008; Wong & Nunan, 2011). Successful learners are also aware of different strategies (Chamot, 2008) and select those that are appropriate for a given task (Anderson, 2008; Ehrman et al., 2003). They tend to notice any problems that occur during a learning episode, such as a gap in knowledge or a mismatch of strategy in relation to a task, and address them effectively (Anderson, 2008; Chamot, 2008; Wong & Nunan, 2011). In the field of listening, Goh and Vandergrift (2022) emphasized metacognition as the driving force for any learner with a desire to improve. Thinking about these different perspectives, it seemed to me that if I had my learners practice EL with a journal and if I were to work closely alongside them by offering specific feedback on their progress to aid in their self-reflection process, I might be able to help them choose suitable listening resources themselves and give them tools to navigate other out-of-class listening experiences. In the end, EL with a focus on metacognitive awareness seemed to be a suitable task for learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this paper, I describe the process I used to introduce EL and highlight the stories of three prolific listeners who seemed to enjoy the task, made a habit of listening, and achieved some level of success that was meaningful for them. The purpose of this project was to explore how the learners approached the task and to see if the weekly journaling, combined with my feedback, contributed to a sense of autonomy for each learner.

## Participants

The students who were chosen for this research project belonged to the Department of English Language and Literature at a small private women’s university in central Japan. All three spoke Japanese as their first language and were members of my second-year Advanced Listening course, which met once weekly for 90 minutes during the 2021–22 academic year. They were 19–20 years old. I used the Oxford English Listening Level Test (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-level-test/listening>) to measure the students’ listening levels during the first class. All three students began the project in April at a listening skill of CEFR level A2, pre-intermediate. For the posttest in December, they scored a higher level at B1, intermediate level. As far as their exposure to English outside of this project is concerned, the students were exposed to teacher-talk in English in other classes, in addition to mine. Two of the three participants, Hina (pseudonym) and Yue (pseudonym), listened to English frequently outside of their university classes. Hina regularly watched movies and TV shows in English a few times a month. She also used a mobile application called NativeCamp (<https://nativecamp.co.jp/en/>) weekly to practice speaking with an English-speaking teacher in real time. Yue frequently listened to TED talks and textbook tracks to practice pronunciation and intonation outside of class obligations. The third participant, Maki (pseudonym), confessed that her only focused listening practice occurred during my class. These three students were selected for this study because their scores on the tests improved; they demonstrated a steady consistency of journal entry completion; and they also submitted well above the minimum number of entries, thereby making them prime candidates for exploring the development of their listening skills and practices.

## **Procedure**

Because this project occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was unclear how the virus would affect the learning environment, I paid special attention to devising simple, easy-to-do tasks for students who may or may not have had much experience with computers and using English-language websites. The procedure for the listening journal task is explained in this section.

### ***Listening Level Pretest and Posttest***

In order to gauge the three students' levels of listening skill at the beginning of the course in April 2021, I used Oxford's online Listening Test. The students took the test a second time at the conclusion of the project in December 2021. Instructions were given in Japanese, and the students took the test individually, using their earphones and mobile phones during the class period. The 24-item test consists of six short listening passages, each followed by four multiple-choice comprehension questions.

### ***The Listening Journal***

After the initial listening test, I introduced the Listening Journal (LJ) assignment. I explained the process verbally during the course period and posted the details of the assignment on the school LMS. It is worth noting that after this initial in-person meeting in April, COVID forced classes to move online until mid-October, when classes shifted back into the classroom. For simplicity, I kept the entire LJ project on the LMS. In principle, the students were to do at least one LJ assignment a week, using a website I recommended, such as News in Levels (<https://www.newsinlevels.com>) or TED-Ed (<https://ed.ted.com>). The full list is included in Appendix A. I made a screencast to explain how to navigate each site and posted the videos on YouTube so the students could view them before completing the assignment. After watching an online video or, alternatively, listening to an online audio track, the students completed a one-page journal entry in English using a Word document template (see the model entry in Appendix B). The students submitted their weekly journal entries on the LMS for the entire LJ project. I asked the students to complete at least one journal entry a week for 12 weeks in the spring semester and 9 weeks in the fall semester to get credit for this portion of the course. However, I also encouraged them to complete as many LJ entries as possible in order to maximize their exposure to English. In addition, to ensure student engagement and accessibility, for the majority of the project, in 17 out of the 21 weeks, I introduced a new website with an accompanying screencast about how to use it. Students were free to choose videos from the new website that week, any previously recommended websites, or use another website of their choice. In Week 18 of the project, students were also given an opportunity to share other websites I did not introduce as an assignment on the LMS message board. Appendix A outlines the list of websites used for this project and other pertinent information, such as the format of resources (audio or video), any available means of support (e.g., subtitles, speed controls), and/or supplementary activities (e.g., comprehension tests or games).

### ***Teacher Feedback***

For the duration of the project, I acknowledged journal submissions on the university LMS every week by commenting in English in the ways described in Table 1. I gave individualized written feedback to each student every week for the two data collection periods. Nearing the end of the fall semester, based on their comments and performance

in the journals, I had a sense that the students now had a grasp of how to navigate the task, so I devised a document with a flowchart of my advice and ceased providing the individual feedback. I invited the students to use this document for the final 3 weeks of the project (see the “Problem-Solution” document in Appendix C). The purpose of this stage of the project was to encourage independence and provide students with an opportunity to use the implicit knowledge they had gained with my support to tackle any problems they encountered on their own. They could also use the document if necessary to decide what action to take.

**Table 1.** *Teacher Feedback*

Semester	Week	Teacher Feedback
Spring (April–July)	1–4	Further instruction was given about how to use the journal if it seemed a student misunderstood what to do. Brief comments were given about the chosen video to create a friendly student-teacher relationship.
	5–11	Based on the problems reported in the log, specific advice was given. The number of completed journals was noted.
	12	The number of completed journal entries was noted.
Fall (September–December)	13–17	Based on the problems reported in the log, specific advice was given. The number of completed journals was noted.
	18	Students recommended resources in the LMS message board.
	19–21	The number of completed journal entries was noted. Students independently used the “Problem-Solution” document to understand listening weaknesses and make informed, self-reflective choices about which videos to use in the future.

## Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

### *Organization of the Listening Journal*

To understand the learners’ experiences of EL, I asked students to complete a listening journal (LJ) using Word, and submit their entries on the LMS. The LJ had two components. First, similar to the journals devised by Bibby (2020) and Gönülal (2020), I asked the students to document practical aspects such as the date of completion, which website was used, the video title and level, a short summary, and to note any new vocabulary they encountered. In addition, like Schmidt (2016) and Chen (2016), I also wanted to encourage the students to think about their listening study metacognitively, so I included a section in which they indicated any listening obstacles by choosing the corresponding issue from a selection of options listed in Table 2. The learners could also indicate they experienced no trouble (option 1) and provide another listening difficulty if the designated items didn’t fit their experience (option 7). The learners also responded to an open-ended item asking them to surmise their goals for the following week. A copy of a model LJ entry is included in Appendix B.

**Table 2. Possible Listening Problems**

Options	Description
1	I had no problems understanding the video.
2	I didn't know a lot of the vocabulary.
3	I couldn't understand the speaker's accent.
4	I could understand the words but not the full meaning of the content.
5	The speed was too fast.
6	I was not familiar with the topic at all.
7	Other (Please explain.)

During the data analysis phase, I used several methods to understand the learners' listening patterns. First, I used the submission data on the LMS to understand how frequently the students practiced EL. Second, using the journals themselves, I was able to compile frequency totals for the websites used and the type of problem that was encountered. Finally, for the open-ended item in which I asked the students to set goals for the following week's journal assignment, I reviewed the students' textual responses, identified 21 themes, and coded them accordingly. Table 3 lists the 21 goals identified by the three students.

**Table 3. Goals Identified Over the 21-Week Period**

Goal	Hina	Maki	Yue
1. accent	1	2	1
2. change level	18	25	5
3. change website	1	2	0
4. comprehension goal	2	1	1
5. concentration	0	1	0
6. content focus	4	8	3
7. do my best	1	0	0
8. make no changes to process	16	12	11
9. increase time on task	28	23	21
10. increase variety	1	1	1
11. longer tracks	1	3	0
12. mid-task change	0	2	0
13. understand in one take	5	7	4
14. pass test quiz	4	0	0
15. repeat task	0	1	0
16. speed goal	2	2	1
17. change strategy	2	3	0
18. study grammar	2	2	2
19. transfer to other skill	1	3	1
20. understand without support	5	3	0
21. vocabulary	13	11	11

## ***My Feedback***

Following each submission period, I scanned the journals and noted any problems and goals, crafted individualized feedback for each student, and compiled my comments in an Excel file to upload into the school LMS. Each comment was in English and between 1–3 sentences long. I uploaded the majority of the feedback before the following week’s submission due date to help students choose future resources. At the end of the project, I then downloaded all the comments from the LMS and affixed them to a printed version of each student’s journal for analysis. During this stage, I was looking for evidence the students were reading and utilizing my advice to make changes to their listening strategies, and if so, how.

## ***Interviews***

At the end of the project, I invited the three target students to speak with me about their experiences. Two interviews were conducted on Zoom (Yue and Maki) and one was conducted in person on campus (Hina). The interviews were recorded and lasted about 30 minutes. The main language in each case was Japanese. The interview followed a semi-structured format to allow for some flexibility to discuss related ideas more deeply (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The core interview questions are listed in Appendix D. All three students were compensated for their time with a small gift. To analyze this portion of the data, after the interviews had been conducted, I reviewed the conversations, noted important points that illuminated the students’ experiences with the journal, and translated their responses into English myself. An L1 Japanese speaker confirmed the accuracy of my translations. For this data collection method and all previously mentioned, I obtained the students’ permission to use the data for research purposes.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this section, I will narrate the results from the interviews I conducted with the three target students chosen for this research project.

### ***Interview Participant 1: Hina***

Of the 17 resources I recommended, Hina used 12 but favored Listen a Minute (22 entries) and Randall’s ESL Cyber Listening Lab (15 entries). She wrote a total of 53 entries over the academic year, submitting a minimum of one entry a week but sometimes as many as seven. As far as how Hina coped with her chosen resources, it seems she encountered minimal difficulties with comprehension and reported *I had no trouble understanding the video* 39 times. She documented 11 problems in total throughout the period, with *I didn’t understand the full meaning of the audio* (6 instances), *I didn’t know a lot of vocabulary* (3 instances) and *The speed was too fast* (2 instances). As for goals, she reported 107 goals in total, spanning 18 kinds, with the following four being the most salient: She indicated a desire to *increase her time on task* 28 times, she decided to *change the level* of the video 18 times and *continue her current strategy* 16 times, and finally, she reported a desire to *study vocabulary* 13 times.

When cross-checking my written feedback with Hina’s performance, and goal-setting practices, there was evidence that she seemed to be reading my comments and reflecting on her approach. For example, in response to her Week 4 entry, in which she recorded *no problems* with a Level 4 Breaking News English track, I replied, “If you thought Level 4 was too easy, please listen to a more difficult video.” The following week, she listened to



both Level 5 and Level 6 videos and noted that the number of unfamiliar vocabulary items increased with the Level 6 video.

Another pivotal moment occurred in Week 8. She started using Listen a Minute (LAM) and recording her comprehension quiz score in the goal portion of the journal, often remarking that she hoped to improve her score the following week. In the interview, when I asked about her general goal throughout the LJ project, she mentioned that she wanted to speak English and improve her TOEIC score in order to get a job in the airline industry. So, it is understandable that scoring high on the LAM comprehension quizzes would be motivating for her to listen more and more, which she demonstrated by using the quizzes 17 times over the following 4 weeks.

In Week 11, I suggested to Hina that LAM might be too easy for her, as she had indicated time and time again that she had no trouble with the content. I encouraged her to try a different website to challenge herself. In the final week of the spring term (Week 12), Hina tried out two different websites, Storyline Online and Talk English. Her comment about Talk English showed strong metacognition about her listening process. She wrote, "This video is too short for me, so I try to watch longer videos. However, first time is with subtitles while second time is without subtitles. These are my favorite point" (Week 12 entry). At this point in the project, she could communicate her desire to increase time on task and also detail specific aspects of her approach to listening, both of which indicated she was aware of her needs and understood what tools she could use and how they suited her.

Upon returning to classes in the fall, Hina had another pivotal moment. During Week 13, she used LAM again but also commented in the journal, "I choose the more difficult website for improving my English skills" (Week 13 entry), demonstrating self-awareness that the LAM videos are not challenging. I corroborated this feeling and told her directly, "Perhaps Listen a Minute is too easy for you? You had no trouble with it three times . . . . Choose a more difficult website please." The following week, she started using Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab, tried three different levels, and reflected on her ability to comprehend all three in the "goals" section of the journal. Hina then settled on the advanced level by saying she thought it "suits [her]" and would use it the following week (Week 14 entry). In the interview, she explained a bit more about this process: "If I chose a difficult one [and decided] it was impossible, I lowered the level and continued. When I get used to it, there is nothing to listen to, so I reverted back to the higher level." When Hina stated that there was nothing to listen to, this possibly indicates that she had acquired the language; the fact that she then chose to increase the difficulty shows she understood that listening to tracks that are at or below her level would not help her with new acquisition. Finally, when asked if she had any advice for other students practicing EL with a journal, she said, "Try different websites, [and] find one that suits you. Continue to use that website and increase your level. If you use many websites, you will get confused so you should concentrate on one."

### ***Interview Participant 2: Yue***

The second student, Yue, wrote 62 entries in total and, like Hina, tended to submit one a week with occasional spurts of increased productivity. In the first week of the project, for example, she submitted 11 entries. She did not use a variety of sites and committed to only five of the 17 I recommended. She seemed to enjoy News in Levels the most, using

it two-thirds of the time (42 entries). She sporadically used Breaking News English (11 entries) and TEDed (seven entries).

As far as her experience with the aural texts, Yue reported *I had no trouble understanding the video* (47 times) most often. She mentioned having trouble with *vocabulary* (13 times), and then *problems understanding the full meaning* (2 times). She indicated nine kinds of goals, with 62 reported in total. *Increase time on task* was reported the most frequently (21 times), then *continue with my current strategy* and *study vocabulary* (both reported 11 times).

An examination of Yue's performance and goals compared with my comments revealed a few points of interest. First, I noted that she wrote she wanted to learn more words but never translated the words into Japanese in the journal or indicated in the goals section of the journal when or how she would tackle this task. In the interview, I asked her about her vocabulary study. Yue admitted she never studied the vocabulary directly. She simply said that "if they were words I might use in my daily life I decided to remember them." When pressed on this point, she could not explain any further.

I also noted that she tended to use News in Levels heavily and encouraged her to try out other sites. Her website choice for the following week was usually the same. For the most part, I felt my feedback was ignored except in one instance: I had noticed that she seemed to have copied a summary verbatim from the script on the website and told her so. In the interview, when I asked if she thought my advice was helpful, she enthusiastically agreed and mentioned this incident, saying she had made an effort to write the summary in her own words the following weeks. However, in the interview, when asked directly if she had used my feedback, of the three participants, she said that she reviewed my advice the most frequently. This was slightly surprising, since I had not seen any indication that she was reading or reacting to my written feedback in any way as I mentioned previously. The other two students admitted they read it immediately after it was posted on the LMS; however, Yue said she read the previous week's advice a second time before beginning the following week's assignment. She also said the "Problem-Solution" document I provided was helpful both for the journal assignment and other listening she did on her own. The fact that she did not seem to change her habits or write a specific goal to address a problem is a bit mysterious but perhaps indicates that she had a command of her listening practice that was internalized or unconscious.

Furthermore, during the interview, Yue was able to explain her listening process in detail. First, she listened to the track and then practiced saying the phrases. Her goal was to improve her speaking ability and become trilingual. (Her first languages are Japanese and Korean, and she wanted to add a third by joining the English department.) Yue stated that that goal was not necessarily related to any kind of career goal but instead, "If I can speak well it'll be a strength, and I'm in the English department so it's a good chance to speak properly, so that's why I am studying."

Finally, when asked what she would advise future students to do to succeed with this task, she said, "Don't do it once a week. If you do it more than once a week it affects your TOEIC score. My TOEIC improved. If you not only do the assignment but also make a daily habit of listening to English, you will improve." Yue's advice seemed to have paid off, as she announced her TOEIC score had improved by 200 points over the course of the year.

### **Interview Participant 3: Maki**

The third participant, Maki, wrote 45 journal entries over the 21 weeks of the project, maintaining a consistent submission rate of twice weekly. When asked about this pattern during the interview, Maki said that she had made a commitment to this rate of submission. She also had a defined schedule for doing the task. She did one entry during the actual class time and then another at another time. Unlike Hina and Yue, Maki was very good about setting a time to commit to the task regularly. At the beginning of the project, she tried out in succession the websites I recommended, but in the end, used nine resources in total, favoring News in Levels (21 entries). She used English Listening Lesson Library Online (ELLLO) seven times and Breaking News English four times. Maki reported 43 difficulties when listening, with *I had trouble understanding the full meaning of the audio* (21 times), *I had trouble understanding vocabulary* (13 times) and *The speed was too fast* (two times) as the top three. She indicated *I had no trouble understanding the video* 69 times. She reported 112 goals (19 discrete kinds) in total. The most reported goal was to *change level* (25 times), then *increase time on task* (23 times), followed by *continue with her current strategy* (12 times), and finally, she felt she should *study vocabulary* (11 times).

Examining her LJ comments and my feedback, one unique point about Maki was that her level of listening comprehension seemed to fall between two different levels. For the first 10 weeks of the project, I responded to this issue by encouraging her to move up or down a level initially, but eventually suggested she mix the two by saying, "That's great that you noticed that the lower-intermediate video was too easy for you and so you tried a more difficult video. It seems you had trouble with the intermediate one, so perhaps continue listening to the lower-intermediate ones for a while and add in a few intermediate ones that you are interested in." In the fall, weeks later, she seemed to understand this advice and responded that she would "lower the level and gradually challenge difficult levels" (Week 14 entry). Exchanges of this nature continued for the remaining weeks of the project. During the interview, we spoke about my feedback and its usefulness. Like Yue, Maki seemed to have internalized the advice I wrote and the advice on the "Problem-Solution" document (Appendix C) and by the end of the project did not need to refer to the document to proceed with her listening practice.

Finally, in the same way as Hina and Yue, Maki also improved her score on the Oxford Online Listening Test from CEFR A2 to B1. However, when asked about any improvements in her TOEIC score, Maki said there was not a vast difference, but that it was gradually rising. When asked if this was due to the LJ assignment, she said that she listened to English more because of the assignment, so it was helpful. When asked about her listening process, she was able to explain her strategy immediately. She said she listened and took notes once, read the transcript to confirm its meaning, and then listened again, sometimes as many as five times. As far as advice for future students is concerned, Maki said, "If you only listen once, you won't understand a lot of the tracks, so you should listen to many repeatedly. If you only do the journal once a week you won't improve. Do it two to three times a week." Maki thus seemed to credit her success to this systematic approach.

### **Discussion**

The main takeaway from examining the extensive listening practices of these three students is that learning to listen is not a universal process but rather a deeply personal one. Working alongside the teacher and building their metacognitive awareness, all three

students were able to shape their approaches and succeed in several ways, including but not limited to an improved TOEIC score. All three, aided by the LJ task, created a listening habit and seemed to understand how to manipulate the tools offered on the website to help themselves. All three could identify and explain their approach to choosing and utilizing videos and audio files. Each student used the resources in different ways that were unique to them. As demonstrated in their journal entries, my weekly feedback seemed to be helpful; however, I think that perhaps my advice confirmed their previous knowledge of strategies for choosing videos, or perhaps over time, the advice was internalized and eventually woven into their implicit knowledge. In any event, the Listening Journal project seems to have served its purpose and provided a reason for students to practice the skill of listening outside of the classroom, for the most part without teacher input, and to learn how to navigate choosing online resources in a purposeful way.

### Future Considerations

While these three students seem to have each had a successful experience with EL using a digital journal, there are some issues to consider for future classes. First, using the LMS, manaba, to collect journal entries was effective because the LMS organized the journal submissions by each individual student and then kept them in the Cloud (i.e., saved online). The students and I could all access the journals easily and did not have to worry about keeping track of a paper journal, which we might have used in pre-COVID times. Also, feedback could be given quickly and easily by entering comments on an Excel spreadsheet and uploading it into the LMS system. Unfortunately, however, the Excel spreadsheet allowed for only one comment per student, so this meant there was one space to comment about the journal assignment regardless of whether the student had submitted one or seven entries. In this case, the feedback may have been entirely misconstrued by the student, as it was impossible to understand to which entry it referred. Finally, concerning the practice of giving feedback itself, regardless of the mode of execution, I found it difficult to keep up with the amount of feedback required per student per week. For this project, I had a total of 21 students, so providing weekly feedback for all of them was quite time intensive. In this case, it might be prudent to introduce a “peer” element to the project as suggested by several researchers, including Chen (2016) and Renandya and Jacobs (2016). Allowing students to support each other in their EL journeys via Zoom video conferencing might have provided more or different kinds of support that I, as their teacher, simply could not give due to time constraints.

Looking back at the students’ experience with EL and Listening Journals, I feel that each student had ample opportunity to explore the vast range of online resources available on the internet and make good use of the time we spent learning during the unprecedented circumstances caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The three students I spoke with for this paper reported that doing extensive listening and using listening journals had been a largely positive experience, which was a satisfying outcome for me as their teacher.

### Author Bio

**Gretchen Clark** is an assistant professor of English in the Department of Business Administration at Ritsumeikan University, Ibaraki, Osaka, Japan. Her current research interests include the role of teacher feedback in language learning, interactional competence, and accessibility and ELT.

## Review Process

This paper was open-reviewed by Jo Mynard and Ted O'Neill of the *Learner Development Journal* Review Network and by the Journal Steering Group. (Contributors have the option of open or blind review.)

## References

- Anderson, N. J. (2008). Metacognition and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 99–109). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511497667.010>
- Bibby, S. (2020). Listening in the language classroom: The case for extensive listening. *Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at Kobe Shoin*, 23, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.14946/00002163>
- Chamot, A. U. (2005). Language learning strategy instruction: Current issues and research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25, 112–130. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511497667.024>
- Chamot, A. U. (2008). Strategy instruction and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Ed.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 266–281). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511497667.024>
- Chang, A. C.-S. (2018). Extensive listening. In J. Liantas (Ed.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (pp. 1–6). Wiley and Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0564>
- Chen, C. W. (2016). Listening diary in the digital age: Students' material selection, listening problems, and perceived usefulness. *JALT CALL Journal*, 12(2), 83–101. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v12n2.203>
- Ehrman, M. E., Leaver, B. L., & Oxford, R. L. (2003). A brief overview of individual differences in second language learning. *System*, 31(3), 313–330. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(03\)00045-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(03)00045-9)
- Goh, C. C. M., & Vandergrift, L. (2022) *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429287749>
- Gönülal, T. (2020). Improving listening skills with extensive listening using podcasts and vodcasts. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 7(1), 311–320. <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.685196>
- Griffiths, C. (Ed.). (2008). *Lessons from good language learners*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497667>
- Honarzad, R., & Ressaie, E. (2019). The role of EFL learners' autonomy, motivation and self-efficacy in using technology-based out-of-class language learning activities. *JALT CALL Journal*, 15(3), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v15n3.170>
- Ivone, F. M., & Renandya, W. A. (2019). Extensive listening and viewing in ELT. *TEFLIN Journal*, 30(2), 237–256. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v30i2/237-256>
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2016). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315750606>
- Oxford, R. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies*. Pearson Education. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315838816>

- 
- Renandya, W. A., & Jacobs, G. M. (2016). Extensive reading and listening in the L2 classroom. In W. A. Renandya & H. P. Widoyo (Eds.), *English language teaching today* (pp. 97–110). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-38834-2\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-38834-2_8)
- Schmidt, A. (2016). Listening journals for extensive and intensive listening practice. *English Teaching Forum*, 54(2), 2–11. [https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource\\_files/etf\\_54\\_2\\_pg02-11.pdf](https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/etf_54_2_pg02-11.pdf)
- Waring, R. (2008). Starting extensive listening. *Extensive Reading in Japan*, 1(1), 7–9. [https://hosted.jalt.org/er/sites/jalt.org.er/files/ERJ/erj\\_issue\\_1.1.pdf](https://hosted.jalt.org/er/sites/jalt.org.er/files/ERJ/erj_issue_1.1.pdf)
- Wong, L. L. C., & Nunan, D. (2011). The learning styles and strategies of effective language learners. *System*, 39(2), 144–163. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.05.004>

## Appendix A

### List of Websites Recommended Each Week to Students

Week	Resource	Format	Level	Features
1	News in Levels <a href="https://www.newsinlevels.com">https://www.newsinlevels.com</a>	Audio	Levels 1-3	Transcript, difficult vocabulary defined in English
2	English Central <a href="https://www.englishcentral.com/browse/videos">https://www.englishcentral.com/browse/videos</a>	Video	Beginner A1 (level 1 & 2), intermediate A2/B1 (level 3 & 4), advanced B2-C2 (levels 5-7)	Personalized dictation exercises and vocabulary study, ability to pause after each line, speaking practice activities, speed controls, rewind/FF
3	TED-Ed <a href="https://ed.ted.com">https://ed.ted.com</a>	Video	Advanced	English CC, other language subtitles, speed controls, rewind/FF
4	English Listening Lesson Library Online (ELLLO) <a href="https://www.elllo.org">https://www.elllo.org</a>	Audio/Video	6 levels: low beginner (CEFR A1), mid-beginner (A1), high beginner (A2), low-intermediate (B1), mid-intermediate (B2), high-intermediate (C1), advanced (C2)	Transcript, grammar explanation, keywords with English definition and pronunciation, comprehension quiz; English CC, speed controls
5	Breaking News English <a href="https://breakingnewsenglish.com">https://breakingnewsenglish.com</a>	Audio	6 levels, 1-6	6 speeds; online activities (e.g., dictation)
6	Learn English with TV Series YouTube channel <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKgpamMIm872zkGDcBJHYDg">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKgpamMIm872zkGDcBJHYDg</a>	Video	Advanced	Free PDF lesson with a transcript, vocabulary definitions, grammar explanation, cultural notes
7	The Fable Cottage <a href="https://www.thefablecottage.com">https://www.thefablecottage.com</a>	Audio/Video	Advanced	English subtitles, speed controls

8	Listen a Minute <a href="https://listenaminute.com/index.html">https://listenaminute.com/index.html</a>	Audio	Easy	Transcript, games: dictation, word jumbles etc.
9	Voice of America <a href="https://learningenglish.voanews.com">https://learningenglish.voanews.com</a>	Audio/ Video	Advanced	None
10	BBC English <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/">https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/</a>	Video	4 levels: low-intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced	Transcript, listening comprehension questions, vocabulary and grammar lessons
11	Talk English <a href="https://www.talkenglish.com">https://www.talkenglish.com</a>	Audio	3 levels: basic, intermediate, advanced	Transcript, listening comprehension quiz
12	Storyline Online <a href="https://storylineonline.net">https://storylineonline.net</a>	Video	Advanced	English subtitles, Japanese subtitles, speed controls
13	British Council Learn English Podcasts <a href="https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/audio-series/podcasts">https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/audio-series/podcasts</a>	Audio	Advanced	Transcript, listening comprehension exercises
14	Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab <a href="http://www.esl-lab.com">www.esl-lab.com</a>	Audio	Easy, intermediate, difficult	Transcript, listening comprehension questions
15	BBC Learning English Drama <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9s1">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9s1</a>	Audio	Advanced	Speed controls
16	BBC Radio 6-minute English <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9tn">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02pc9tn</a>	Audio	Advanced	Speed controls
17	BBC Radio The English We Speak <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/the-english-we-speak_2022">https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/the-english-we-speak_2022</a>	Audio	Advanced	Transcript
18	Student recommendations			
19-21	None			




## Appendix B

### Model Listening Journal

<b>Video title</b>	
Coronavirus in Royal Family	
<b>Video source / level</b>	
News in Levels, level 1	
<b>Video summary (1-3 sentences)</b>	
This video is about Prince Charles and his family. The prince had coronavirus and was in quarantine in Scotland. His mother, the queen, stays at Windsor Castle to stay healthy.	
<b>Did you learn any new vocabulary?</b>	
Eldest: 一番上      quarantine: 検疫 illness: 病気	
<b>Why did you choose this video?</b>	
I'm interested in news about the British royal family but also I'm worried about Coronavirus so I watch news about it every day.	
<b>Did you have trouble understanding the video? Why? Write the number(s).</b>	
1) I had no problems understanding the video. 2) I didn't know a lot of the vocabulary. 3) I couldn't understand speaker's accent. 4) I could understand the words but not the full meaning of the content. 5) The speed was too fast. 6) I was not familiar with the topic at all. 7) Other (Please explain).	4, 5
<b>What is your goal for next week?</b>	
I want to listen to at least one video every day. Also, I think I'll try an elllo.org video next week.	

## Appendix C

## Problem-Solution Document

Number	Problem 	Gretchen's advice for next time		
1	I had no problems understanding the video.	Choose a more difficult video.		
2	I didn't know a lot of the vocabulary.		Take a memo about new vocabulary, use a dictionary to look them up, and try to find another video about the same topic.	If you answered many options 2~6, choose an easier (lower level) video next time.
3	I couldn't understand speaker's accent.	Turn on the closed captions/ English subtitles and ...	Listen to another video by a speaker with the same type of accent (Possibly the speaker is the same nationality but not necessarily ...)	
4	I could understand the words but not the full meaning of the content.	Read and listen at the same time	Take a memo about difficult phrases and look them up in a dictionary. Try to find similar example phrases.	
5	The speed was too fast.	Listen without subtitles.	Use the settings to slow down the tempo or use an app such as <a href="https://audiotrimmer.com/audio-speed-changer/">https://audiotrimmer.com/audio-speed-changer/</a> .	
6	I was not familiar with the topic at all.		Take a memo about content keywords/phrases, look them up using a dictionary and try to find another video on the same topic to listen to next time.	

## Appendix D

### Interview questions

1. Did you practice listening in other classes? Which ones? How do you do it?
2. What is your favorite way to practice listening to English outside of class?
3. How did you choose a listening resource?
  - a. Did you use only one listening format (video/audio)? Why?
  - b. What was challenging about choosing the resource?
  - c. Did you ever start a video and then stop and choose another? Why?
4. How did you use the video features or support features (example: subtitles etc)?
  - a. Did you use the English subtitles?
  - b. Did you use the Japanese subtitles?
  - c. Did you adjust the speed?
5. Did you listen to the track more than once?
6. Did you do any of the games and quizzes included on the websites?
7. Did you ever talk about the journal with classmates? Why/Why not?
8. Did you read my advice? Why or why not?
  - a. When did you read it? (as soon as I posted it/ before doing the next journal...)
  - b. Did you refer to the advice I gave you in the past at all?
  - c. Do you think my advice was helpful? How? Why/why not?
  - d. How can it be improved?
  - e. Did you refer to the "Problem-Solution" document in the final weeks of the project?
9. What was challenging about this assignment?
10. What advice do you have for future students who do the journal?