

Cross-Cultural Language Exchange Through  
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A Case Study Between Australian  
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# Cross-Cultural Language Exchange Through e-Learning with iPads : A Case Study Between Australian and Japanese High School Students

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## **Abstract**

*This paper will introduce a collaborative e-learning project involving students, teachers and researchers at 5 locations in Australia and Japan. Students were trained by local instructors to create cultural eBooks that introduce local and domestic culture in a foreign language through digital media using iPads. The Japan-based high school students did this mainly in English, while their Australian counterparts did so mainly in Japanese. Videos were exchanged online throughout this study from October 2016 to September, 2017. Tools used include Comic Life, iMovie, Puppet Pals, Tellagami and eBook Creator. Through the use of these edu-tech tools this paper will highlight the value of ICT usage in foreign language education in recent times. It was discovered that not only digital literacies but also various cognitive and non-cognitive skills like teamwork discussion skills developed in the process.*

## **1. Introduction**

Wherever we look these days, the younger generation seem to be immersed in technology. Computers, music players, smartphones or tablets youngsters of today seem to always be multi-tasking with one or more of these at the same time. Whether we like this or not, this is something that will only escalate with time.

There is no doubt that this trend is having a huge impact on education (Martin et al, 2011). Despite the ubiquitous presence of mobile technology today, high school students here in Japan, for the most part are forbidden to use mobile technologies within the confinements of their school curriculum. This project aims to highlight the benefits that mobile technologies can provide the foreign language learner, especially in a digital cultural exchange like this one between school students in Australia and Japan.

As mobile technologies continue to advance and developers continue to target the education sector, foreign language teachers are left with some very difficult decisions to make regarding which tools to use. This project will hopefully alleviate this dilemma by introducing a cultural exchange project between school students in Australia and Japan that utilises multimodes of digital technologies to exchange eBooks about local and national cultural elements. Each of the ICT tools used in this project will be introduced along with descriptions of students' collaborative output and opinions received obtained from an online survey.

### **1.1 Goals and Objectives**

The primary goal of this project was to encourage authentic language and cultural exchange through the multimodal medium of iPads. With sufficient guidance and facilitation, high school students in Matsuyama Japan, were introduced to several hand-picked iPad applications to create eBooks and videos for exchange. Students used these tools to create videos that introduced local and national culture items in English while their partner school did the same, but in Japanese. Videos, or eBooks, varied in difficulty with time, with user friendly, easy to use tools being introduced first and more complicated tools being suggested later. Videos and eventually fully formed eBooks were exchanged every 2-3 months over the course of one school year from December 2016 to September, 2017. The aim of this

project was for students to create digital material using their respective target languages, while also commenting on each other's work in their native language. The idea was that students could use multi modes of digital tools to complete these tasks.

The main objectives of the project were as follows :

- To **facilitate** new kinds of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
- To broaden **digital literacies**
- To encourage **Active Learning**
- To improve **cognitive skills**
- To improve **non-cognitive skills** like :  
**collaborative learning** and group skills
- To improve **cultural understanding**
- To **raise enthusiasm** for learning English
- To **have fun** using iPads with English

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Background

This paper covers a wide variety of topics from the use of technology in foreign language education, telecollaboration, the establishment of Super Global High Schools, hereafter SGHS, in Japan to promote international awareness and current trends in collaborative learning around the world. There is a plentiful volume of literature available on all of these themes. This short literature review though will highlight several key research areas from an international perspective.

In the context of ICT education, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter MEXT) has recently published education policies

on the promotion and facilitation of teaching with and learning with technology at elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools (Tsuchiya, 2015). In April 2016, MEXT announced a plan for the promotion of ‘digitization of education’ in schools in Japan. This announcement emphasized that school students in Japan should be encouraged to consider what matters in their learning settings, collaborate with others, struggle with the creation of new values, and work better to find and solve problems using ICT with computers and other devices such as iPads and PC tablets. The operative goal of this initiative was to motivate students and to keep up with other developed nations where the use of such tools is already well established.

## 2.2 Technology in foreign language education

Whether to enhance learning, to compete for students or to improve educational standards there is no denying that the tendency in modern day institutions is to adopt technology as much as possible. This sentiment is no more true than with the foreign language education as each year brings with it the introduction of new digital technologies that target this field. *Memrise*, *Quizlet*, *Speexx*, *WordEngine*, *Google Classroom*, and *Schoology* are just some of the currently available tools that target this area of education.

However, the contents of information and literature available online is changing. Technology has changed drastically over the years from expert-generated content to user-generated content. Dyson and Ernst (2016) describe that this paradigm shift has its parallel in education which highlights the benefits both educational providing those involved with invaluable 21st century learning skills and in this case the added bonus of improving on language skills and cultural understanding.

*“with students increasingly involved in student-generated multimedia projects in which they produce videos, podcasts, digital stories, games, screencasts, photographs, slomations (slow animations), and a host of other digital content as a way of engaging with the curriculum and their peers.”*

(Dyson & Ernst, 2016 p. v)

The influence that technology is having on the younger generation of today cannot be underestimated. According to Dale (2014) *“young people are the web generation and they are hungry for more”* (2014, retrieved from the Guardian October, 2017). Technology is shaping the way they learn, interact and socialize with each other and the world. The use of technologies in all shapes and forms continues to gain interest in education as schools, universities and educators around the world improve their facilities in line with modern technological advancements.

### **2.3 Telecollaboration**

Several studies have focused on the value that a relatively new area of research called *telecollaboration* has brought our field of education (O’Dowd, 2006). Telecollaboration involves students from different language and/or cultural backgrounds collaborating online on common tasks, whether synchronously or asynchronously, in recognition of the fact that both language learning and intercultural learning are enhanced by interaction and negotiation of meaning (Helm, 2015). Through this process of exchange, students come into contact with native speakers of their target language and with the addition of user friendly, edu-tech tools. Telecollaborative projects can benefit students on both sides through authentic oral exchange with video conferencing tools like Facetime and Skype. Students can also exchange written comments with each other through online video uploading tools like YouTube and Vimeo. The aims of most telecollaboration

projects go beyond the development of language competence to include the fostering of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997) as well as new online literacies (Guth and Helm, 2010). Through the use of telecollaborative techniques students can learn new skills that will prepare them for future endeavours.

*“Authentic learning activities and assessment tasks that require students to produce multimedia address the need for them to be expert communicators, and not just in the traditional forms of writing and speaking, but using the communication tools and new media of our age.”* (Dyson & Ernst, 2016 p. vi)

#### **2.4 Collaborative learning with technology**

Despite the high-tech image that Japan has, various studies have highlighted the poor digital literacy skills of Japanese students and the preference of teachers to continue to opt to teach without technology (Kusano et al, 2013, Cote and Milliner, 2016). MEXT would like to change this and is trying to encourage collaborative learning through the use of ICTs and promote active learning.

MEXT seeks to establish an environment where students can learn and research with future prospects and enrich education through dialogue and cooperation with society. From a Japanese perspective, collaborative learning is defined as a kind of learning method whereby several students form into groups, work on their common issues, and deepen their understanding of these issues while expressing opinions with each other on the topic at hand (Tsuda, 2013). Other Japanese researchers argue that collaborative learning can support self-independence and raise awareness of autonomous learning (Erikawa, 2012). It is also suggested that skills acquired through collaborative learning projects like this one, can build both cognitive and non-cognitive skills like motivation, perseverance and teamwork skills which can influence learners later in life and impact society in general (Tsuchiya, 2015).

Through the use of ICT integration in education we can encourage collaboration and motivate our learners to become better prepared for future endeavours.

One of the more widely accepted and well-known arguments that acknowledges the attributes that technology can contribute to education is by Mark Warschauer of the University of California who has published widely in the field. Warschauer, suggests three main goals for using technology in education: (1) to improve academic achievement, (2) to facilitate new kinds of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning, and (3) to promote educational and social equity (2011). Modern day technology can make the transition from teacher dependence to learner independence that much smoother, further promoting the concept of learner autonomy in contemporary pedagogy. The relation here to foreign language education is paramount.

## 2.5 Similar projects

This study is similar to that of a broader e-learning project in Europe called eTwinning, that enables schools in more than 40 European countries to collaborate online through digital storytelling using ICT tools. Digital storytelling involves the use of digital technologies such as computers, tablets and mobile phones to create stories, which are usually multimodal; they integrate a variety of modes such as written text, images, audio, and video (Churchill, Lim, Oakley & Churchill, 2008). The eTwinning goals and objectives are to bring school children together through the exchange of digitally produced pictures, videos and stories from varied cultures and linguistic backgrounds across Europe. In the eTwinning case, all materials are exchanged through the safety of their own portal, a European Commission approved and endorsed private site. According to the 'Learning with eTwinning handbook', *"The portal is a highly sophisticated communication and collaboration platform that offers a wide range of tools to teachers to facilitate their project work"* (Crawley, Dumitriu, Gillearn, 2007). Established in 2005, eTwinning declares on its official



website through a recent online survey that “*eTwinning has had a positive impact on increasing student motivation and fostering collaborative work among them*” (etwinning.net, retrieved 12/14/2017).

Helm and Guth claim that there are several models of telecollaboration, the first of which they refer to as the eTandem and the Cultura model (2015). These models are based on the partnering of foreign language students with “native speakers” of the target language, usually by organizing exchanges between two classes with each group studying the other’s native language as was the case in this project.

The Cultura model involves learners communicating through the digital exchange of materials in their L1, their native language through digital platforms. This communication in the digital sense could mean giving comments to videos or digital media uploaded in their own language rather than the target language. This would mean Australian students giving comments to uploaded material in English with students in Matsuyama doing so in Japanese. The rationale behind this, according to Helm & Guth, is twofold “first, learners can more accurately describe cultural subtleties in their native language and, second, in this way learners provide rich linguistic input for each other” (Helm, Guth, 2015, p. 247).

A similar school exchange multimodal e-learning project to this one was carried out between middle school students in Australia and China in 2015 (Oakley et al, 2017). According to Oakley, et al (2017) the exchange led to improvements in students’ language, cultural understandings, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including digital literacies and technological skills, and helped teachers extend their pedagogical horizons. As of yet, no similar studies to this one could be identified between Australia and Japan.

## 2.6 Super Global High Schools (SGHS)

Since 2014, Japan and MEXT has designated over 123 high schools nationwide for the purpose of international and cross cultural awareness. There are multiple objectives for this international initiative, with the operative one being to raise global awareness. This can be achieved through cross-cultural exchanges both through initiating partner schools abroad and inviting foreign students to Japan and Japanese student to study temporarily elsewhere. According to the official super global high school website, available in both Japanese (<http://www.sghc.jp>) and English (<http://www.sghc.jp/en/>) there are several international directions that this initiative plans to take.

*“The Super Global High School Program aims to foster globalized leaders who will be able to play active roles on the international stage through education at high schools that contribute to this mission. Students will achieve goals such as awareness and deep knowledge of social issues, communication ability and problem-solving skills.”* (www.sghc.jp/en accessed March 12th, 2018).

## 2.7 Ehime University High School 愛媛大学附属高等学校

Ehime University High School, or the affiliated high school with the national university of Ehime was established as a SGHS in 2014. This school is one of three Super Global High Schools in Ehime. The other two are Minami High School also in Matsuyama and Uwajima Minami HS in the town of Uwajima. They currently have over ten foreign exchange programmes established in seven countries including, Romania, the US, Australia, Indonesia & Mozambique. Every year small groups of students from most of these countries visit the school on a short term basis with several students a year enrolling in long-term, mostly year-long exchanges. In a similar manner, several small groups of students from the school

here in Matsuyama visit these partner schools each year. One such reference to this can be found on their website (<http://www.hi.ehime-u.ac.jp/sgh/gaiyou.html>) that outlines the purpose and objectives of their SGHS status with this phrase highlighted in bold: 伊予の学びから世界の学びへ (*Iyo no manabi kara sekai no manabi e*) meaning “*learning in Ehime to learning with the world*”. This is a cross reference to the popular phrase *Glocal learning*, a blend word of local and global which is often referenced to, in mostly Japanese education based literature (Kinoshita, 2009, Stephens, 2008, Whang, 2015). Grants awarded to this school through the SGHS enterprise helps fund such projects and also this case helped purchase the school 120, 4<sup>th</sup> generation iPads in the summer of 2014. It was with these facilities and the well-established international reputation that it has which led to this school being chosen as the partner school for this project.

## 2.8 Foreign Language component

One hugely significant supplementary gain in the SGHS initiative is the foreign language component. Through projects like this one students are using their foreign language skills in a more meaningful way than simply plying through textbook assignments in a regular English class, for example. Cross-cultural projects like this actually promote authentic exchange with native speakers of the language in this case through multi modes of digital tools. What’s more, through the paradigm of telecollaboration projects and digital technologies, students on both sides can obtain this valuable exchange with minimal costs and form valuable long-lasting friendships in the process. Schools that have been lucky enough to be selected under the SGHS format will receive governmental funding to promote their objectives and encourage students and teachers to become more involved which can help such school meet MEXT requirements.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

This project was part of a wider cultural exchange project sponsored by the Australia-Japan Foundation (AJF) from their Perth branch in Western Australia. The AJF was established by the Australian Government in 1976 to “*create a bilateral and regional relationship between Australia and Japan*” (dfat.gov.au retrieved Sep’ 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017). The project was managed by Professor Grace Oakley of the University of Western Australia (UWA). Professor Oakley recruited participants of this project from three sectors of education, university teachers who coordinated the project from their locale, teachers of the partner schools and students within the partner school setting. In total there were 411 participants involved with this project. This number comprised of 398 students from eight different schools (four in Japan and four in Australia), 8 teachers, 4 from each country and 5 coordinators. Four of the coordinators were based in Japan, while the project leader was at UWA in Perth, Australia. Funding provided by the AJF only covered costs from the Australian side including school visits, workshops, travel to and from Japan by the project leader and any further costs incurred. In line with Australian education protocol, consent forms were retrieved from all parties before commencement of this project including, school students and their parents, the school principals on both sides, teachers involved and all co-ordinators and their subsequent institutions. Ground work on this project began in April 2016, but commenced in full six months later, in September, 2016.

### 3.2 Recruitment and Support

The author of this paper was the local based co-ordinator who visited Ehime University High School (愛媛大学附属高校) 12 times over the duration of this project. He worked closely with the head of the English department to provide informative workshops and support sessions for students. With the huge help of the head English teacher, consent forms for 40 students were recruited for this project initially. This was a huge success and tantamount to the popularity of already long-standing international projects at the school as initially we were only expected to acquire up to 20 student recruits. Over the course of the project 3 students pulled out meaning the group comprised of 37 students from Matsuyama. The first workshop was held at the school on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 where students were introduced to the partner school in Western Australia and their first assignment.

The Matsuyama based students were all 16-year-old first year high school students, 31 female and 6 male. All students officially had 4 years of English learning experience and ranged in ability from beginner to intermediate level. There were 12 student participants, 7 female and 5 male, involved in the project from the Australian side, all of whom were 14 and 15 years old and had been learning Japanese for one or two years. Their Japanese level was all at the beginner level.

### 3.3 School Workshops

A total of 12 tools were used to create eBooks with iPads by students in both Australia and Japan. Students were gradually introduced to each tool in workshop style sessions that were held from 4pm after school hours, and lead by the local coordinator in Matsuyama. In these workshops, students were given tutorials with two prime objectives, to introduce the video task and to demonstrate what tools

could be used to reach these tasks. Hands-on style demonstrations of each tool were conducted where students would work in groups with iPads to make simplified videos. The difficulty and complexity of each tool increased over time. The first tools introduced in task 1 were very simple, while tools in task 5 were more advanced. Table 1 below, gives a description of tools used and a brief overview of the contents of each task.

**Table 1. Tasks and their contents**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Student Tools used</b>
1	Oct' 13-31 <sup>st</sup> , 2016	Self-introductions	Comic Life 3, iMovie (2)
2	Dec' 1 <sup>st</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	Local culture	Comic Life 3, iMovie, Vimeo (3)
3	Jan' 19 <sup>th</sup> -Mar' 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2017	Pop culture	Comic Life 3, iMovie, Vimeo Puppet Pals, Tellagami (5)
4	May 20 <sup>th</sup> -Jun' 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2017	Daily routines	Comic Life 3, iMovie, Vimeo Puppet Pals, Tellagami, Book Creator (6)
5	Jun' 10 <sup>th</sup> -Jul' 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Introduction to Local sightseeing spots	Comic Life 3, iMovie, Vimeo Puppet Pals, Tellagami, Book Creator, Puppet Pals 2 (7)

The number in brackets in Table 1, indicates the total number of apps students used for each task. For task 1 this number was two, while for task 5 the total number was seven comprising of a combination of all tools introduced thus far. Although the ICT tools used to create each task became progressively more complicated over time students became more efficient users. As such, the quality of end products improved exponentially each time.

### **3.4 Student created digital media**

For completion of the first task students were asked to use two iPad applications called Comic Life 3 and iMovie. Comic Life is a simple tool that allows users to create digital comics with pictures, speech bubbles, onomatopoeic

sound effects like “bang, bash, slap”, and other captions if required. Narration for these comics were then provided using iMovie, a free tool available from the Apple App Store in the form of 1 minute self-introductions. For the completion of each task students worked in groups of either six or seven members. These short individual recordings were then transferred to one central device using Airdrop and then edited with iMovie to make a 6-minute video. The second task used a similar production process, but with new contents involving introduction of local cultural items. In the Matsuyama case students in groups chose to introduce Matsuyama and local sightseeing spots, while other groups introduced Shikoku, Tokushima, local winter customs, their school and new years traditions. This was all quite timely as the time frame for this second task was December 1<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Similarly, the Australian students introduced their hometowns in simplified Japanese using almost the same methods.

The ICT tools used for the completion of task 3 included the previous two applications, but also an additional two called *Tellagami* and *Puppet Pals*. According to their official website, “*Tellagami is a mobile app that lets you create and share quick animated videos*” (tellagami.com, Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017). With *Tellagami*, users can record voice and add dialogue which is dictated by an avatar of your choice. Backdrops can be added through the photos function on the tablet. *Puppet Pals* is a similar tool that allows users to choose a wider variety of backdrops and characters to record narratives. Both tools were used to introduce pop culture and daily routines. The topic of the third task was pop culture. The Matsuyama based group chose to create videos on popular movies, animation characters and famous comedians at the time, while the Australian group did something similar. While for the fourth task the Japan based group created videos on daily routine including typical Japanese homes, a typical Japanese school, what students did at weekends and Japanese food. The Australian students had a slight advantage as

they received the videos first which gave them a good model to work on and something to base their videos on.

The final task that students were assigned was to create an actual eBook with a tool called *Book Creator*. Students used their digital skills acquired in the project so far to add short videos, sound files, pictures and texts and then embed them into an eBook with a minimum of 8 pages. These eBooks were then sent to the group in Australia on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

### **3.5 Exchange process**

In the initial stages of this project a Moodle site was set up where all participants, (co-ordinators, teachers and students) on both sides could view each other's work. However, due to the large numbers involved, after several months of inactivity even after the first exchange, its usage was discontinued. Moodle proved too complicated for the majority of users in our context. In place of this, a Google Drive was set up where teachers on both sides could relay completed material. From there, the co-ordinator would then upload materials to a popular video sharing tool called Vimeo. All videos were password protected for security and privacy purposes and links were distributed. All students had access to the link and provided comments to each video they watched. Students in both Australia and Japan had a selection of 6 videos to choose from and were instructed to watch a minimum of 3 videos each and to provide comments with a minimum of 3 lines each. As expected, Australian students gave comments in English, while Japanese students gave comments in Japanese. This project culminated in a group Skype session where all participants (N=52) including all students involved from both sides, the local co-ordinator and teachers.



## 4. Results

At the end of the project students from both sides were asked to comment on their learning experience through an online survey conducted with survey-monkey. The survey comprised of 10 questions, the first two were scale questions while the remaining 8 were all open ended, (see Table 2). Due to wording limitations of this paper, the answers to just three of the 10 questions will be reported on in this section. The shaded areas below show the four questions that will be reported on. All survey questions were conducted in Japanese and then translated into English.

For both questions 1 and 2 all respondents were asked to choose on a scale of 1-6, where 1 was “strongly disagree” and 6 was “strongly agree”. For question 1, 30% of respondents (11) chose no. 6, 46% (17) chose no. 5, 24% (9) chose no. 4,

**Table 2. Survey Questions**

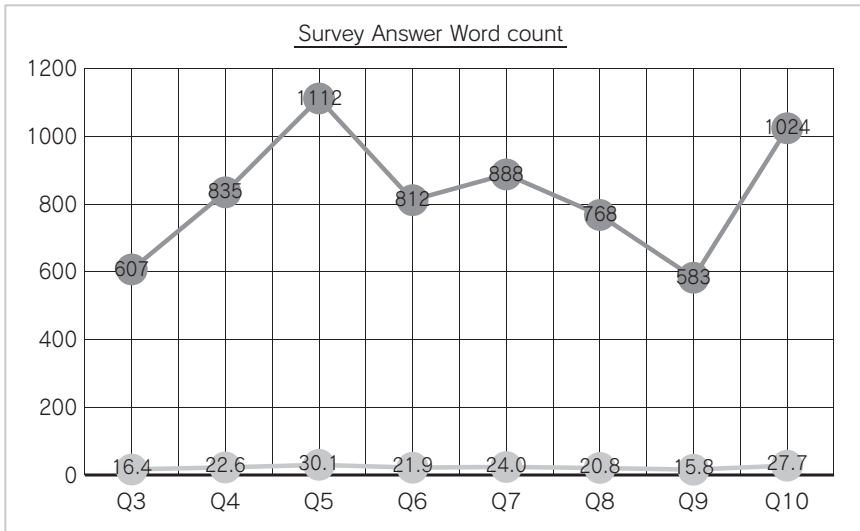
(n = 37)

Questions	Avg
Q1-On a scale of 1-6 how would you agree to the following statement : “This project has been enjoyable”	5
Q2-On a scale of 1-6 how would you agree to the following statement : “I have learned a lot from this project”	4.95
Q3-What did you like best about making the eBooks ?	
Q4-How do you think creating the eBooks helped you learn English/Japanese, if at all ?	
Q5-How do you think creating the eBooks helped you learn about culture in Japan/Australia, if at all ?	
Q6-How do you think creating the eBooks helped you learn more about your own culture, if at all ?	
Q7-What did you learn about using technology through creating the eBooks ?	
Q8-What other valuable skills do you think you have learnt through this project ? For example : Collaborative skills, iPad skills, group learning skills.	
Q9-What kinds of difficulties did you have when creating the eBooks ?	
Q10-How would you improve this project for future students ?	

while just 1 respondent chose number 3. For question 2, 38% of respondents (14) chose no. 6, 24% (9) chose no. 5, 32% (12) chose no. 3, while 8% (3) of respondents chose number 3. The near identical average numbers of 5 and 4.95 for question 2 indicates the overwhelming majority of this group both found the project enjoyable and educational.

Graph 1 below indicates the volume of answers regarding word count of comments received from all participants. The x-axis shows the question number with the y-axis showing the word count in Japanese. The lower figure indicates the average word-count. The upper figure indicates the total number of words received for that question. Responses received to the above questions were almost entirely positive. This tendency of participants to give positive feedback was uniform both in responses received from Japan and Australia. Table 3 and table 4 below provide sample answers received from four participants from both Australia and Japan.

**Graph 1. Survey Answer Word Count Questions 3-10.**



**Table 3. Responses received to Q4 from four students**

Q. 4	<b>Students from Australia</b>
S1	“I thought that the video assessments were a great learning tool compared to just writing and memorising it. One of my favourite parts was seeing their videos or them commenting on ours. I would love to do this again soon.”
S2	“I feel like I underestimated how difficult it would be to learn the Japanese language. As difficult as it was, I found it enjoyable and challenging and somehow I surprised myself managing to get through the semester. Making the videos was quite funny and fun and I really enjoyed the Skype call and getting to meet them (the students in Japan) face to face.”
Q. 4	<b>Students from Japan</b>
S3	“I enjoyed making the transcripts for the videos we made together. For me, this was a large part of the learning process. Without this project, we would just be doing our English homework without interaction as normal.”
S4	“Taking part in this project was not just like a normal class, we had to find out for ourselves, then think of the English introductions we wanted to say for each video. I think my English level improved a lot thanks to this.”

**Table 4. Responses received to Q8 from four students**

Q. 8	<b>Students from Australia</b>
S1	“I think it was a great idea to make videos because it was fun and a good way to practice our Japanese speaking skills.”
S2	“I found that the course was very educational and I have enjoyed every bit of it. The course was very interesting as it allowed us students who have very little idea of Japanese lifestyle and schooling etc. to understand more about how the Japanese students live.”
Q. 8	<b>Students from Japan</b>
S3	“I learnt a lot about different ways of learning through this project. The only English writing I have had to do so far was for writing homework, but I found writing and making the eBooks for this project more meaningful than that.”
S4	“mutual cooperation and communication ability with other group members.”

## 5. Conclusions

This collaborative project has demonstrated the value of educational technology in foreign language cultural exchanges. However, the digital literacy skills that students attained and the professional development that teachers and co-ordinators acquired from this project were not the only positive outcomes of the project. It

must also be added that it is not the technology or hardware itself that can bring about change. As Warschauer states: “it will not be any particular device that transforms education, rather it will be how the teachers and learners make use of them that will” (2011, p. 41).

Comments received clearly suggested that students built on 21<sup>st</sup> century collaborative learning skills, learnt more about cultural differences in language and culture and perhaps most significantly enjoyed the learning experience. Regarding the non-cognitive attributes that this project has developed, students, perhaps more from the Japanese side, showed incredible cooperative skills and recognition of others, but from the comments in tables 3 and 4 above it is clearly stated that students enjoyed the challenge that this project evoked. These factors can help develop the motivational capacity of foreign language learning with digital technologies. Unfortunately, this project was not permitted to be a part of any curriculum and therefore had to be undertaken after school hours, at least from the Japanese point of view. Perhaps a well-constructed and well-funded language and cultural exchange like this one can persuade national curriculum decision makers in MEXT to make projects like this a permanent addition to foreign language learning courses nationwide.

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