

# Friendship Across the Sea Instructor's Guide

## Table of Contents

<b><i>Links to Important Tech for Class</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Information about Gather Town</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Basic Tutorials for Gather Town</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Using the Gather Town Environment for Discussion</i></b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Whole Class Discussion</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Pair Work</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Group Work</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>“Kaigi UT Zone”</b>	<b>6</b>
<b><i>Group Discussion Strategies</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Icebreakers</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Think-Pair-Share</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Fishbowl Discussions</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Jigsaw Groups</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Socratic Method</b>	<b>13</b>
<b><i>Facilitating Intercultural Communication Between American and Japanese Students</i></b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Being Aware of Social Hierarchy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Intercultural Competence and Communication Guides for Instructors</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Intercultural Competence and Communication Guides for Students</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Authentic Communication Design and Observation Tool (ACDOT)</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Rubrics for Self, Peer, and Teacher Evaluation of Communication Skills</b>	<b>16</b>
<b><i>Advice for Lessons, Flipgrid, and ELLLO videos</i></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>About the Lesson Plans</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>About Using Flipgrid</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>About Using Videos from ELLLO</b>	<b>18</b>
<b><i>About the Final Project</i></b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Group Management Strategies</b>	<b>20</b>

### ***Links to Important Tech for Class***

- Main Class Website—should be shared with students
- Virtual Classroom Gather Town
- Flipgrid Prompts

### ***Information about Gather Town***

Gather Town is a virtual environment that allows for real-time teleconferencing, collaboration, and interactive elements. Think of Zoom but in an actual space. You have an avatar that you can design and then walk around the environment like in a video game. Just like in Zoom, you have access to your camera and microphone to see and communicate with others. You can also share your screen. The biggest difference is that it uses proximal audio and video. This means as your avatar approaches someone's else avatar, the video and audio of that person pops in, just like if you walk up to someone in real life, you can see and hear them more clearly. This allows for more natural conversation and is one of the reasons this environment was chosen for usage over Zoom.

Gather Town can also make use of virtual breakout rooms that are more natural for both students and instructors, as you can physically (virtually) walk your avatar to a private breakout room space. In these spaces, only those inside the enclosed area can hear and see each other. As you exit the private space, you can no longer hear or see the participants of the breakout room. This allows the instructor to hop into different breakout rooms more easily and also for students to see where the instructor is. Uh oh, the teacher is coming in! We better make sure we are on task. This is another plus for using this environment.

The last benefit is that Gather Town can have interactive elements that can help complete an online classroom environment. A little bulletin board can be posted where users can find the class schedule or assignments within the environment.

### ***Basic Tutorials for Gather Town***



The GT classroom is at <https://gather.town/app/QHMHRME32kttDLnr/FATS>. The password is FaTS. Gather Town can be run in a browser, on mobile devices (although this method is not preferable), and can be a downloaded standalone software installed on students’ machines if they wish. [Here is the downloadable version.](#)

Why are we using Gather Town instead of Zoom? Here is a brief list of the benefits and features:

- Unlike Zoom, GT uses proximal audio and video, which mimics more real-life conversation. As you move your avatar closer to another person’s avatar, they become clearer to see and hear—just like in real life. This allows for people to walk around and move from one conversation to another. Plus you get a cute little customizable character.
- Like Zoom, breakout rooms are possible. But there’s no guessing or hoping that students are actually talking and staying on task. Breakout rooms are achieved by using “private” tiles, so once the avatar enters the space, the proximal audio and video only works for those standing on the same “private” tiles. It will always say “you have entered a private space” at the bottom to show you are in a private space. Private spaces can also be used with interactive objects, like the “whiteboards” in each of the classroom’s breakout room, so that participants can be working on an activity or shared document. Unlike Zoom, is much easier for instructors to see what’s going on in breakout rooms, walking around from group to group just like you would in a real classroom. Instructors can also see at a glance who is currently speaking in a private space even if you can’t hear what they are saying, as they will have a little speech bubble above their avatar’s head, as seen in the image to the right.



Lastly, instead of taking the time to assign students to breakout rooms like in Zoom, you can simply have students move to room 1, 2, 3, etc.

- GT has screenshare and share computer audio options like Zoom. However, please avoid screensharing videos, as the lag and bandwidth can make them somewhat...unbearable. Instead, give students a link to the video and have them watch it using their own Internet connections.
- GT has chat functions and reactions which can be used for nonverbal communication. Reactions are customizable!
- Unlike Zoom, GT can have interactive objects, arguably one of the best features of this environment. This is extremely helpful in allowing students a space to type answers to things, use a whiteboard, take a quiz, share documents, and other things. Interactive objects glow yellow and there will be text at the bottom that prompts users to press "X" to open the interactive element, and press "X" again to exit. Here are some interactive objects I have placed in GT:
  - Classrooms: **Whiteboards** link to an open Google Slides. Instructors can place text and activities there and students can type, place images, do whatever, as if it were a whiteboard. Adding a new slide adds a blank canvas, so no need to erase anything. This could be good for instructors to come back and see what students have done. Students and instructors do not need to log into anything to interact with the whiteboard.
  - Classrooms: **The projector screen** near the instructor's podium is a Google doc. The instructor can add notes and lesson plans to share with the students there, if desired. Please email me ([seratsuki@gmail.com](mailto:seratsuki@gmail.com)) for access to this document. It's locked so that students don't -accidentally- erase it.
  - Classrooms: **The clock** above the podium is a timer. This can be useful for timed class activities. Be aware that if it beeps, only you can hear it, unless you are sharing your screen and sound with the timer shared.
  - Classrooms: **The bulletin board** contains a Padlet where students can upload a photo of themselves and some information to introduce themselves. Other students from the other classroom can come and take a look, and other classmates can learn about each other anytime. This activity should be completed in the first week and is one of the suggested activities in the lesson plan document.
  - Common Room: The bulletin board...
  - Common Room: **The globe on the table** is an interactive map where students can place pins where they are from.
  - Auditorium: This room should only be used for the final **poster presentations**. The interactive objects in here are the posters. [Here is an example and help for sizing for posters](#) from another university, and here is [Gather's official tutorial](#) for poster presentations.
  - Game Room: Heck yeah I made a **game room**. Encourage students to come in and play—just not during class. Games are interactive objects on the tables.
  - Game room: There is a **piano** near the main entrance.

- Outside: One of the **cherry blossom trees** plays “Sakura Sakura.” You heard me. The tree plays music. Spring time and cherry blossom season will be soon. It may be a good conversation point for students, especially during the holidays topic week.

[Here is everything you need to know about Gather Town.](#) Please share with students as soon as possible. And press and hold down the “z” button when you get a chance ☺.

Please note that as a student, unless they make an account, they will need to go through the built-in tutorial and character creation each time they try to access the GT environment. They can use a Gmail/Google account or any email address. Don’t forget that UT students can log into Google using their UT email address and password.

The GT FATS classroom has a password for a reason. Hopefully you will not have any kind of “Zoombombing” or...“Gatherbombing.” But just in case, [here is some information about how to ban users.](#) Please advise students to not share the GT classroom link and password with others. If they would like to make their own space to hang out with non-FATS participants, have them make their own GT spaces—it’s free.

Although I have designed the Gather Town classroom so that instructors will not need to make interactive pieces on the fly, you may want to add something, change something in the environment. So, [here is a tutorial on how to use the mapmaker](#) to add objects and make them interactive. Of course, always test your newly added items to make sure they work properly BEFORE using them in class.

### ***Using the Gather Town Environment for Discussion***

#### ***Whole Class Discussion***

For whole class discussion, the instructor should have their avatar stand at the podium (where it has the icon of a bullhorn) and students should sit in the classroom area, with their avatar in a chair. If they are not in a chair, they may be muted, so be careful. (If you don’t like this, you can change the entire floor tile set of the classroom area to be “broadcast” tiles but be aware that they will be audible by everyone in the space. If they happen to be talking in the classroom area and students are in breakout room, those in breakout rooms can hear them.

#### ***Pair Work***

For pair work, you can send students to breakout rooms, to the “Kaigi UT Zone” chairs and have them sit across from each other, or simple anywhere outside of the classroom floor and breakout rooms. As long as they are near their partner, they will only be able to hear them. I believe if you double click on your partner’s avatar or walk into them, it may automatically make a private space for just those 2 avatars.

#### ***Group Work***

All group work can be done in the breakout rooms. Assign students a number and have them take their little avatar into the numbered space. They should stand inside the colored area to participate in the breakout room. Instructors can “spy” on breakout rooms using the numbered boxes in the lower left-hand side next to the teacher’s desk. Muwahaha.



As you can see, I am standing on “5” and the group 5 area is lit up to show I am currently part of this private area.

### **“Kaigi UT Zone”**

This area was specially built for “speed-dating” type activities for pairs of students. Each vertical set of chairs are private areas, so have partners sit across from each other, not next to.



### **Group Discussion Strategies**

This program focuses on building confidence in communication skills. Thus, a variety of discussion styles and techniques should be implemented for better practice and student engagement. In addition to preparing discussion

questions and prompts, instructors should carefully design engaging discussion environments. The following discussion strategies are in order of easiest to most difficult to implement.

### **Icebreakers**

Icebreakers are so important to the communication process. They can help you learn more about the students and better pair them for the final presentation activity.

#### **Icebreaker suggestions:**

**Find someone who:** For this activity, you will need students to be able to walk around and ask people some yes or no questions. They could write their names down or take note of who said yes, or you could have them as group start finding who all said yes, eventually making one group that has answered yes, and one that has answered no. Of course, the ability to walk around and ask individuals questions is possible in the Gather Town environment. You could possibly add a “find someone who” question to each of the “whiteboards” in the breakout areas and students could write their name on the list. This may reduce the chances that students ask or are asked a question, with students opting to read the question and write in their own name without any kind of communication, but for an initial activity of getting to know one another, it is still a good springboard. It’s also a good example of how to take answers of yes/no questions and keep the conversation going using follow up questions—a skill that will be touched upon later in the program.

[Here’s an example worksheet you could use for this activity.](#) You could also have students make their own “find someone who” prompts.

**“The Intercultural Me” (from NAFSA):** This might be a good icebreaker activity, especially early on. It’s important to bring out the intercultural communication component early to build the confidence of both the Japanese and American students.

**Making true/false questions:** and having students predict the answer about their partner first, and then asking their partner their answer. You could give students a Word Doc with the questions. See the next image as an example.

## True or False

Your Name: Charity

Your Partner's Name: Margaret

DIRECTIONS: read statements below and guess if each statement is true or false for your partner. For every correct guess, they get a point!

Statements	Your Guess	Real Answer	Points
1. I am never late to any meeting. I am very punctual.	(T) / (F)	(T) / F	✓
2. I am an early bird. I enjoy waking early and work best early in the morning.	(T) / F	(T) / F	✓
3. I choose sleep over food. 100 %!	T / (F)	T / F	✗
4. I am addicted to coffee.	(T) / F	T / F	
5. I have a sweet tooth.	(T) / F	T / F	
6. I prefer eating at home. I do not like eating out even after a long day.	(T) / F	T / F	
7. I prefer texting over calling.	T / (F)	T / F	
8. I am a city person. I can't imagine living in the country.	T / (F)	T / F	
9. I speak multiple languages, and I would like to learn a couple more!	(T) / F	T / F	
10. I love my job. I would do it for free.	T / (F)	T / F	

**A speed dating type exercise:** Use the Kaigi UT Zone (with the orange and white chairs) and a timer to give a set of questions or prompts for students to talk about for 1 minute. After 1 minute, everyone on one side moves to the chair to the right or left, and then they get another minute to answer with a new partner. This is good for practicing conversation skills as well as getting to know each other.

**Ask partner questions** until you find 5 things (that are not obvious) that you two have in common (this can be good for question grammar as well)

**Playing guess the word** with sticky notes on the forehead. You could use [digital flashcards](#) for this, giving a different set of words to each partner (otherwise, they will know what their cards say!)

Even though we tend to use icebreakers only at the beginning of semesters or programs, it is important for students to get to know each other and learn about each other other than on the first day. These activities can be done every now and then as warm-ups to help enhance the classroom culture and environment and can be used to practice and review course topics. They can be very handy for the US/Japan conversation hours. They don't need to take up more than 5-10 minutes of class time.

### Think-Pair-Share

Students need some time to warm up to each other. So that this strategy works well—start out small. Icebreakers, then pair work, then moving to group work and discussion. “Think-pair-share” is one of the easiest ways to implement this. In the future, you could also implement “think-group-share” as well. This gives students a good way to summarize and repeat what they have learned from their classmates.

Here is some information about think-pair-share from [Fegely, A. Cherner, T. \(2021\)](#). Facilitate the think-pair-share teaching strategy virtually with breakout rooms. In A. deNoyelles, A. Albrecht, S. Bauer, & S. Wyatt (Eds.), *Teaching Online Pedagogical Repository*. Orlando, FL: University of Central Florida Center for Distributed Learning. <https://topr.online.ucf.edu/facilitate-the-think-pair-share-teaching-strategy-virtually-with-breakout-rooms/>. (CC-BY-NC-SA)

The think-pair-share (TPS) teaching strategy is an engaging social constructivist method of instruction (Fauzi & Fikri, 2018; Kothiyal et al., 2013), and its effectiveness has been validated in face-to-face instructional contexts (Kaddoura, 2013; Usman, 2015). According to Azlina (2010), the core value of TPS is that it “enables students to assess new ideas and if necessary, clarify or rearrange them before presenting them to the larger group” (p. 21). This entry will next explain the TPS strategy before providing examples of it in practice and conclude with guidance for digitizing it using online video-conferencing platforms.

In the TPS teaching strategy, the instructor first presents an open-ended prompt to students that is related to the lesson content. The prompt is designed to engage students by compelling reflection, analysis, or critical thinking in what is known as the “Think” step of the TPS. For example, in literature, an instructor may ask students what they believe will happen in the story based on the setting and motivations of the main characters. Students are then asked to note their initial responses to the prompt. Next, in the “Pair” step, the students are partnered with another student, and they are asked to share, compare, and contrast their initial responses. This step’s purpose is to open students’ responses to critiques, new information, and alternative perspectives based on the informal conversation with their partner. Finally, for the “Share” step, all the pairs join in a whole group discussion facilitated by the instructor, and the instructor may ask each pair to share a synopsis of their responses to the prompt. This final “Share” step offers students a wider variety of perspectives to students and cultivates their understanding of the lesson content. The TPS teaching strategy links to social constructivist theory because it utilizes a collaborative community of learners to co-construct knowledge (Vygotsky, 1980) as students refine, combine, and iterate their responses with the input of peers as well as the full classroom. Moreover, collaborative communities of learners provide meaning to new information by helping students develop their thinking and link it to prior knowledge (Vygotsky, 1980).

Researchers have studied the TPS teaching strategy in various contexts. At the primary level, Tyminski et al. (2010) observed kindergartners’ communication patterns to evaluate if the strategy could improve students’ listening and speaking skills in math. After observing students for one year, the researchers utilized the intervention of a customized TPS protocol for the mathematics. The researchers found the TPS intervention to be successful, with the students exhibiting enhanced mathematics understanding. At the high school level, Jack (2015) evaluated the effectiveness of the TPS teaching strategy in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade algebra classroom. The students in the experimental group were introduced to the math lesson and learned basic algebra concepts through the TPS teaching strategy while the control group learned through traditional methods (Jack, 2015). Jack (2015) found students in the experimental group that learned using the TPS had statistically significantly increased attitudes about learning algebra and statistically significantly increased learning outcomes than their peers in the control group. At the university level, Prhal (2017) studied whether the TPS teaching strategy was beneficial to students in undergraduate biology courses. Prhal (2017) directed instructors to use both lectures and TPS activities as their primary pedagogical

techniques in their courses. The findings suggested that TPS activities that included well-designed, open-ended prompts better facilitated discussion, while the lecture strategy was more effective for students to internalize new information.

The TPS teaching strategy can be facilitated in a digital environment via video conferencing tools with breakout room functionality. Breakout rooms are supplementary, separate meeting rooms in a video conference platform that are set up by the host for smaller portions of the meeting's guests to join when the host makes them available. Video conferencing tools that offer breakout rooms with that functionality include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, BlueJeans, and Ring Central (Pang, 2020). (Note: Of course, you'll be using breakout rooms and the "Kaigi UT Zone" in Gather Town.) To implement a digitized version of the TPS strategy, the instructor will have the entire class in a video conferencing meeting. The instructor then will introduce the lesson and teach relevant background information to provide context for the prompt. Next, for the "Think" portion of the TPS, the instructor will pose an open-ended prompt or prompts to the whole group of students verbally along with on a document or slide in a screen shared with the students or in the video conferencing tool's text chat. It is important that instructors provide the prompt in multiple modalities to support students in accessing and processing it. After the instructor has given students time to process the prompt(s) and record their initial response(s), the instructor will pair students and assign them to breakout rooms. Pairing can be done randomly or purposefully by the instructor, or the instructor can allow students to self-select their partner. Each of these pairing options is possible through the video conferencing tool's breakout rooms interface. Once students are assigned, the instructor will open the breakout rooms for the "Pair" portion of the TPS. All students will receive and accept the invitation to their respective breakout room to meet with their assigned partner. Then, the pairs will discuss their responses to the prompt(s). During this period, the instructor may enter each breakout room to engage the conversations and provide any clarification or feedback students may require. Finally, the instructor will summon students back to the whole group "Share" portion of the TPS by closing the breakout rooms. The instructor will conclude the TPS by asking each of the pairs to share their updated responses with the whole class and will facilitate the subsequent discussion.

### ***Fishbowl Discussions***

The following information is adapted from the University of Wisconsin-Madison's [Center for Teaching, Learning & Mentoring](#) (CC-BY-NC):

**The Fishbowl Discussion** is a teaching strategy that encourages full student participation, reflection, and depth of knowledge. A small group of students is selected to be the fish (in the fishbowl) while the rest of the class will be observers (out of the fishbowl). Students in the bowl participate in a discussion responding to an instructor prompt. Students outside of the bowl listen and reflect on the alternative viewpoints.

#### **Use it when you want...**

- To make sure all students participate in a discussion,
- To develop strong speaking and listening skills,

- To encourage reflection on and assess the elements of a good discussion, or
- To provide a useful process of discussing controversial or difficult topics.

### **Workflow**

The following workflow is meant as guidance for how you can facilitate a Fishbowl Discussion active learning online.

#### **Pre-Class**

- Identify an engaging question or problem that has many potential responses. Try responding to the question yourself.
- Develop guidelines for students to assess the quality of the discussions.
- Select the desired approach and prepare the technology to facilitate the activity (ex. Create a shared **Google Doc** for each group or set up your **GT** session for the class).

#### **Online (Synchronous)**

- Direct students to the **GT** session during scheduled class time.
- Present students with the topic to discuss or debate.
- Provide students with guidelines for listening to and participating in the discussion.
- Send students to their small groups. Consider limiting the group size to 3-5 students.
- Provide small groups with time (up to 5 minutes) to gather their thoughts before beginning the Fishbowl.
- After 5 minutes, bring students back from their breakout groups into the main room.
- Begin the Fishbowl discussion by calling attention to the performance of one group.
  - In **GT**, hover your cursor over the students you would like to spotlight as Fish in the Fishbowl. Select the three dots in their window and select "Spotlight."
- Present the fish with the question again and ask them to begin their discussion or debate.
- Non-fish students take notes or use a rubric shared through **Google Docs** to evaluate the discussion. In some situations, students are given time to ask questions of the participants.
- Once the discussion is complete, refocus the class on the performance of the next fishbowl group ("unspotlight" spotlighted students).

- When fishbowl time is up, facilitate a debrief. Students should reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of each discussion, the quality of their performances, and what they learned from the activity. The debriefing may be facilitated by a fishbowl assessment form.

#### **Post-Class**

- Review the outcomes of the activity.

#### ***Jigsaw Groups***

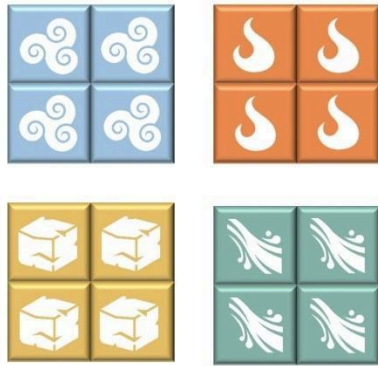
Jigsaw discussion groups may be a good choice for the US & Japanese student meetings. In this kind of discussion group, for US-Japan discussions, you may want to have round 1 (as described in the chart below) with 2 Japanese and 2 Americans, and then for round 2, Americans and Japanese only in the group to share with their group their findings and what they learned from the opposite country group. It would be up to you to allow the Japanese students to use Japanese. Using L1 might be useful for a discussion that is more culture-based than language-based.

For Japan-only discussion participants, you could do something like give each group a different, short, easy reading or video to watch in their group, give time for discussion, and then in round 2, one representative from each group is now their own group so each of them can discuss what they watched / read and learned, emphasizing comparing and analysis of what they learned. For example, maybe group 1 watches a video about greetings in English, group 2 watches a video about ways to say goodbye, group 3 a video of how to show gratitude, and group 4 a video of how to apologize. In their groups they discuss what they watched, and then in round 2, discuss with the other groups who didn't watch the video what they learned. As you can see, it's called a "jigsaw" discussion because each group member learns about a topic and becomes one piece of the puzzle that combines with the round 2 group to complete the picture.

# JIGSAW

## Round 1 – Expert Groups

Divide students into four groups and give each group a different text to read and discuss.



## Round 2 – Teaching Groups

Mix the groups so that students can teach each other what they encountered in the first round.



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### **Socratic Method**

This last method may be the most complicated one to implement, but it may be worth the effort. It also may take more preparation on the part of the instructor and students, and may require a great deal of facilitation for the teacher, but its purpose is to help students' discussion skills, practice, critical thinking and argumentation skills, and build teamwork skills—all of which are important goals for this program, so I feel it is worth a try. Be patient—give it a few tries with little expectation for perfection. Celebrate the small wins. This may be a difficult activity for the Japanese students given the cultural and language barrier. You may want to implement the “Socratic Smackdown” with mixed US-Japan discussions so that the American students can help encourage the Japanese students.

[Download the guide to “Socratic Smackdown” here.](#) (CC-BY-NC-SA)

### **Facilitating Intercultural Communication Between American and Japanese Students**

As mentioned above in the explanation of the Socratic Smackdown activity, culture may be a barrier on both sides of the equation, for the Japanese and Americans, for quality communication, possibly more so than language barriers themselves. It is important before the Japanese and American students meet, that some intercultural communication training and awareness be done so that they are better prepared to communicate and can encourage each other and have confidence to communicate across cultures.

### ***Being Aware of Social Hierarchy***

One struggle with communication with Japanese students, which is often seen as “shyness,” is a lack of comfort communicating with the instructor. Japanese educational systems are very passive. Teachers are held very highly and shouldn’t be questioned. Information should be consumed and then spit out for standardized tests. There isn’t much room for sharing opinions, and the most important opinion is that of the teacher, so often they will agree with you just to appease you. Japanese students are also not quite sure how to talk with instructors since they have different grammar structures for talking to those in a higher status. It may be very strange to call a teacher by their first name or respond to informal greetings like, “what’s up?” Because of this hierarchy, getting responses from Japanese students may be like pulling teeth. This is also in addition to not knowing how to say what they want to say in English and fear of saying something wrong and making the teacher angry. So be patient, and make sure you have a warm, open classroom where mistakes can be made and learned from.

This also means take advantage of the US/Japan conversation hour as much as possible. The Japanese students will come to life and be more talkative during these times since they probably feel more comfortable talking with someone of their same social level. Observe the difference in students when they interact with American students and when they interact with you. And don’t take it personally.

You may want to read (and have your American students also read) this article about some cultural differences: <https://owlcation.com/social-sciences/Cultural-Differences-Between-the-US-and-Japan>

### ***Intercultural Competence and Communication Guides for Instructors***

As the instructor for the course, it’s a good idea to be aware of intercultural communication as well. Here are some resources. Some of them may have some activities you may want to use in the classroom.

- <http://interculturalcommunicationkit.weebly.com/uploads/1/4/4/5/14456032/strategies.pdf>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1167261.pdf>
- [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=cip\\_pub](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=cip_pub)

### ***Intercultural Competence and Communication Guides for Students***

The following guide will be very helpful for your American students. You may want to give some of these to students BEFORE they interact with their Japanese peers.

- <https://nearshore.perficient.com/nearshoring-outsourcing/10-tips-for-improving-your-intercultural-communication-skills/>
- [https://liveutk.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DOS-TokyoGrant2021/EX96R-GY3T9Ph05o5wgcl5ABxrLg\\_hkB01cvLQ2PvB4xlA?e=4XdpOG](https://liveutk.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DOS-TokyoGrant2021/EX96R-GY3T9Ph05o5wgcl5ABxrLg_hkB01cvLQ2PvB4xlA?e=4XdpOG) (Very good guide to give students, but instructor will need to log in with UT account to download)

## **Authentic Communication Design and Observation Tool (ACDOT)**

The following guide is from this...[kind of unknown website](#). It might be helpful as you observe student discussions in the classroom.

### **Authentic Communication Design and Observation Tool (ACDOT)**

The purpose of this tool is to facilitate the analysis and improvement of the communicative features of activities to develop language across disciplines. *Authentic communication* means that, rather than focusing on memorizing rules and word meanings to give the appearance of language learning and use, activities actually require and foster communication--they motivate and support students in using language to get interesting and meaningful things done. See if your teaching or assessment activities have these features, and if not, consider how to strengthen them.

**FEATURE 1 – Purposeful Building of Idea(s):** In the activity, students use language to build up a relevant and useful idea in a discipline (beyond just answering questions or doing the bare minimum to get a few points)

- Do (most) students try hard to communicate or understand idea(s) to/of others? (e.g., Do they rephrase, use facial expressions, prosody, visuals, gestures, etc.) Do they ask you or others how to best communicate/understand ideas?
- Do they maintain their communication (listening, reading, writing, talking, conversing), using more language than expected or required? Do students remain focused on the task?
- Can students tell you why they are doing the activity? Does it help them build up a big idea?

**FEATURE 2 – Clarifying and Supporting are Needed and Pushed:** In the activity, students need to clarify and support ideas in order to accomplish a task that they need and want to accomplish. If clarifying or supporting

- If students don't clarify or support ideas, it is harder or impossible to do well on the task
- Are there activity additions and adaptations in which teacher and/or students push selves or others to clarify and support (more than they think they need to)

**FEATURE 3 - Information Gaps:** In the activity, students get or give information that they want, need, and don't have.

- Do students share information that is not known to their listener(s), watcher(s), reader(s), or viewer(s)?
- Do students receive, interpret, or learn (listen/watch/ read/view) information that they need or want and do not already know?

**Attention to Language:** In the activity, there is extra teaching and assessment focused on improving how language is used to accomplish the other three features. This includes structuring interactions, modeling, practicing, giving

feedback, and/or scaffolding (e.g., visuals, teach grammar or vocabulary, re-read, re-listen, pairs, have them paraphrase).

- Does the teacher highlight how to use language to help fortify students' communication and understanding?
- Do students use teacher support or feedback to improve how they communicate and/or understand ideas?
- Do students use scaffolds to improve how they communicate and/or understand ideas?

### ***Rubrics for Self, Peer, and Teacher Evaluation of Communication Skills***

The following rubrics and advice for communicative activities is from a TESOL 2019 presentation by Ann Glazer & Tamara Smith from Tokyo International University of America in Salem, Oregon. The presentation focused on low-level English speaking skills with Japanese university students, so I hope this will be a very helpful rubric and guide!

Please check the "project planning documents" folder in Microsoft Teams for the "discussion rubric" and "extended discussion rubric" files. They are not copy-paste friendly for this file. But please use the rubrics!

#### **Academic Discussion Sub-Skills**

##### **Knowing how to talk about a text**

- Knowing how to read/listen to a text and talk about it
- Knowing how to reference a text/author in a discussion
- Knowing how to connect a text to your own ideas and world experience

##### **Knowing how to show that you are listening**

- Knowing how to listen
- Using gestures such as eye-contact and nodding
- Using noises
- Asking follow-up questions
- Asking for clarification and repetition
- Repeating key ideas (mirroring)

##### **Knowing how to make yourself understood**

- Planning in advance
- Being able to explain your ideas in level appropriate-language
- Being able to rephrase your own ideas to respond to a clarification request

#### **Turn-taking in an organic and balanced manner**

- Not waiting to be invited
- Inviting those who need to be invited
- "Keeping the ball rolling"
- Being asystematic in turn-taking
- Aiming for balance among speakers
- Learning phrases for providing wait time

### **Discussion Sub-skill Development Activities**

#### **Class activities to learn and/or practice how to show that you are listening**

**Asking for Clarification and Repetition:** The goal of the activity is for the students to practice using clarification questions. Begin the lesson by pre-teaching the target phrases. The phrases might include expressions such as "I am sorry I didn't catch that, can you say that again

please? /Can you give an example?! Sorry. What do you mean?! Can you explain that another way?" The students should write the target phrases onto index cards or small pieces of paper. They will use these index cards/papers during a discussion. When you are ready for a class discussion, the students will try to use each of these phrases during the discussion. Each time they use one correctly, they can lay down the card with that expression on it. The student who is able to use all their cards correctly and at the appropriate time is the winner, or alternatively you might say that the students who lay down all their cards in five minutes are winners. *Reese, C., & Wells, T. (2007).*

**Question Answer Response Line:** The teacher points out that in conversations between two people, generally when person A asks a question, person B answers the question, and person A responds to that answer in some way. (I like to point out that in an *interrogation*, person A asks a question and person B answers. Person A asks a second question and person B answers, but *conversations* are different.) The teacher then introduces some possible ways to respond in English such as "I see. That's a good point. That's an interesting idea." Now the students can begin the line game to practice. Students in line A ask a question to their partner, students in line B answer the questions, and students in line A respond with the target expressions. After a minute or two, have students in one of the lines

move down a space, so that they all have a new partner. This way, students can repeat the same activity several times in a fresh way.

**Follow-Up Questions:** First, the teacher needs to pre-teach the idea of follow-up questions and give some examples. Next, one person tells a story about their weekend, everyone else has to ask at least one original follow-up question about the story.

**Question Answer Response +Follow-up Questions:** Once the idea of follow-up questions has been introduced, follow-up questions can be integrated in to the line game. Person A asks a question. Person B answers the question. Person A responds to the idea with one of the target response expressions AND asks a follow-up question.

### *Advice for Lessons, Flipgrid, and ELLLO videos*

#### *About the Lesson Plans*

The lesson plans were designed to give instructors flexibility. As students may have different needs, some extra time is built into the lesson plan in case students need more practice with a particular lesson point. In addition, multiple resources on the same topic are provided, not to suggest that all should be done, but to give the instructor some options that they see fit the classroom needs.

You may want to use [the following resource](#) to build springboard questions for the conversation hour and/or the communications skills course. Please note that this website is more than 10 years old.

#### *About Using Flipgrid*

[Here is a guide for instructors.](#) Please note that the group and topics will be pre-populated for you. You will need to add students to the Flipgrid, however. And of course, it would be useful for you to participate! Also encourage students to reply to each other, and to seek out posts that have no or few replies. That is why there are only 2 Flipgrid assignments a week. Good luck!

[Here is a blog post that might also help as well.](#)

[Here is a short video](#) you can give to students on how to record their videos.

#### *About Using Videos from ELLLO*

There are many reasons why I like the ELLLO videos. They have rather natural conversation as opposed to the scripted stuff from textbooks. But I think the biggest advantage is that the ELLLO audio often come with a transcript. You can use the transcript to create cloze activities. They also have mini-vocabulary and comprehension quizzes that you can use.

[Here is a website where you can make cloze activities.](#)

My advice would be to not just share the whole site to students—share only the audio and video component. You could give students the vocab component either before they listen or test them during class. The same for the comprehension questions. You could also assign the vocabulary and questions as part of the asynch homework and answer in class, but just be aware that they can check their answers that way and they have access to the transcript—so they might use that instead of the video to check their answers.

ELLLO has so many great videos and audio you can use, but it's a little difficult to search their site. My advice is to go to the Google search, type in "site:ello.org" (without the quotations) and then your search terms directly after. This way, Google is only searching the ELLLO website for those terms.

### About the Final Project



There should be some time built in for pairs to work on their final project—a poster presentation that should take place in the final days of the program. The poster presentation should focus on cultural learning from the two presenters—one of the best ways to do that is through comparison. The pair should choose a topic, such as fashion, education system, language point, food, gender roles, music, or some other point and compare how they are similar and different in the US and Japan.

Poster presentations should be held in the GT auditorium to the right of the common room. There are only 10 posters available, so I suggest having some presentations at a certain time, for 30 minutes or so, and then a 10 minute break to switch them out for the next set of posters for another 30 minutes. You can use the object editing function to switch out the poster presentations. The info below can help you manage how to do that and what you need from the groups to do that smoothly.

[You can see what a poster session may look like in this video.](#)

[This document from another institute's poster sessions in GT](#) may be useful for poster sizes and what kind of images you will need for the poster presentation.

[This help guide from Gather](#) also gives information on how to embed the poster images. This will need to be done by either the facilitator or...I guess depending on when it happens, I (Charity) can do it.

### **Assessment**

Below is an example assessment that could be used for scoring or general assessment of the group presentations. You may want to make it into a Google Form and give it to all poster presentation participants to evaluate the groups.

**Poster:** \_\_\_\_\_ [make this a drop box of all posters for easy sorting of evaluations]

Instructions to reviewer: Use these criteria to rate the poster presentation on a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly disagree; 3=neutral; 5=strongly agree).

#### **Poster Visuals**

1. Words are easy to read.                    1 2 3 4 5
2. Poster is well organized and easy to follow.                    1 2 3 4 5
3. Graphics and other visuals enhance presentation.                    1 2 3 4 5

#### **Content**

4. Content is clear and easy to understand.                    1 2 3 4 5
5. Poster is free of unnecessary detail.                    1 2 3 4 5

#### **Oral Presentation**

6. Presenter's response to questions demonstrated knowledge of subject matter and project.                    1 2 3 4 5
7. Presenter could succinctly (2-3 minutes) describe the scope and importance of the project, major accomplishments, and recommendations.                    1 2 3 4 5
8. Each presenter talked for an equal amount of time.                    1 2 3 4 5

## ***Group Management Strategies***

The following information is from [Meeting Strategies for Group Work. Centre for Teaching Excellence. University of Waterloo.\(CC-BY-NC\)](#). This info is not only important for you to know and help manage the groups, but to share with students so they can build teamwork skills on their own. You may want to incorporate this info in class.

### **Meeting Strategies for Group Work**

Working in groups is quite different than working individually. One of the main reasons why students find it difficult is that they were not trained to perform effectively in a team setting. An instructor can help by teaching organizational, personal, and discussion skills that will help students manage group dynamics and have a positive teamwork experience. Meetings are key events during group work, and there are several techniques for running effective meetings.

#### **Planning and running a meeting**

Steps that should be taken before a meeting happens:

- plan the meeting carefully: who, what, when, where, why, and how many
  - prepare and send out an agenda, identifying issues to be discussed
  - set up meeting room send out background information about members
- 

#### **Steps that should be taken during a meeting:**

- start on time
  - make introductions of group members
  - clearly define roles
  - review, revise, and order the agenda
  - set clear time limits
  - review action items from previous meeting
  - focus on one issue at a time
- 

#### **Steps that should be taken at the end of and after a meeting:**

- record final decisions or actions to be taken

- assign tasks to group members
- set deadlines for the tasks
- set the date and place of the next meeting and develop a preliminary agenda
- evaluate the meeting, get feedback from members
- close the meeting positively
- clean up the room
- prepare the group memo, distribute to members and others who need to know

### **Group roles**

Different roles group members may play during a meeting:

- facilitator/leader
- timekeeper
- note taker
- expert
- mediator
- devil's advocate
- presenter
- progress chaser

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### **Important tasks that should be performed by the facilitator of a meeting:**

- encouraging participation
- summarizing input
- discouraging domination
- encouraging decision making
- keeping group focused

- making final decisions, if necessary
  - clarifying ideas
  - delegating roles and tasks
  - providing feedback
  - keeping the peace
  - energizing group members
- 

**Skills that students need to develop to promote effective group work:**

- active and tolerant listening
- communication skills
- flexibility
- accountability
- respect for others' contributions
- helping others to master content
- participation
- giving and receiving constructive feedback
- patience
- managing disagreements
- motivation
- keeping deadlines

**Activities and tools that can be used in a group meeting for:**

**Opening discussion**

- list available resources
- state different perceptions of what the real problem

- brainstorm ideas - all ideas are encouraged and accepted
  - legitimize - show an understanding of how others see the problem
  - kickstart with an example
  - propose some potential solutions
  - ask each individual for a possible solution
- 

### **Narrowing down the solutions**

- evaluate solutions using some criteria
  - make sure solutions address the issues
  - rank ideas in order of priority
  - categorize solutions
  - separate solutions based on "pros/cons"
  - look for redundant and overlapping ideas
  - force field analysis (what ideas give support to solving the problem? which ones prevent reaching a solution?)
- 

### **Closing the discussion**

- majority voting
- consensus
- build-up/eliminate (add or subtract from different options to arrive at a new option that everyone can support)
- combine ideas (avoid either/or decisions)