



Kamakura Jogakuin students use *The Japan Times Alpha* as both a learning tool and stepping stone

中高一貫教育を行なう神奈川県鎌倉市の鎌倉女学院高校では、英語の授業に *The Japan Times Alpha* の記事を活用している。この授業を担当する田中真木先生の願いは、生徒たちが英文記事を通して社会の問題を学び、自分の意見を発信できるようになることだ。田中先生と、先生の授業を中学1年生のときから受けてきた高校3年生6名に *Alpha* が話を伺った。

(Clockwise from top left) Nayu A., Saki S., Rion K., Ms. Maki Tanaka, Emi T., Nazuki N. and Emika W. in a classroom at Kamakura Jogakuin High School

SATOKO KAWASAKI PHOTOS

1 It takes a special teacher to **helm** a special class, and Maki Tanaka at Kamakura Jogakuin High School in Kanagawa Prefecture, is one such **mentor**. Ms. Tanaka has taught English to the students at “Kamajo,” as the school is **affectionately** called in the Kanagawa area, for most of her teaching career. And for the past three years she has been using *The Japan Times Alpha* to teach her students “live English” **i.e.**, the kind of **colloquial** English used in news articles and interview

columns. 2 Says Ms. Tanaka: “Reading English-language articles helps the students get a better understanding of the **issues** happening in society today. *The Japan Times* is a good choice, but often difficult to **comprehend**. *Alpha* on the other hand, **is geared toward** English learners and so is easier to study. The contents are **authentic** and the topics are **spot on**. *Alpha* articles also have a star **rating system**, which enables me to **gauge** the difficulty

level of particular articles, and make adjustments in class **as needed**.” 3 On the day I visited, there were a total of six students who had gathered in the classroom. They had all been learning English with Ms. Tanaka throughout their junior high and high school years, and share a special **camaraderie**. As the **term** ends, the students will graduate and leave Kamajo **for good**, so she wanted to give them a **send-off** in the form of their very own news story. “We’ve been studying *Alpha* together for years, and some articles were especially inspiring. I thought it would be a good idea for *Alpha* to **cover** the students’ discussion.”

4 One by one, they talked about issues that held a special **relevance** for them. Emika W. cited an April article on Japan’s **departure** from the **International Whaling Commission**. She’s headed toward a career in **STEM**, and suggested that perhaps whale **farming** could be a possible solution to Japan’s whaling dilemma. “Things that had been thought impossible in the past **have come to fruition** in the present. Whale farming may sound crazy



Ms. Tanaka talks in front of a screen.



Students wrote their opinions about news articles in Ms. Tanaka’s class.

but as technology becomes more advanced, maybe it’s not so **far-fetched**.”

5 Nazuki N. said: “I was interested in the article about (Ngozi) Okonjo-Iweala being the first woman and African to **be appointed as** the head of the World Trade Organization. Feminism and women’s issues are often discussed in Ms. Tanaka’s class and I’ve **become more aware of** gender issues. I think feminism



Emi T. says she learned a lot from Ms. Tanaka’s class.



Emika W. remembers the *Alpha* article about Japan’s departure from a global whaling body the most.



The main building of Kamakura Jogakuin High School

benefits society as a whole. If we get rid of gender **stereotypes**, men too can become more **liberated**.” 6 Emi T., who is a **returnee**, said she **has gotten a lot out of** Ms. Tanaka’s classes. “I plan to become a journalist so it’s important for me to get **different perspectives** on a particular issue. Reading *The Japan Times Alpha* provided me with that opportunity.” Nayu A. said: “I like

reading the news in Japanese, but reading English news articles gives me a much broader perspective. It’s like having a window on the world without setting foot outside Japan.” 7 Saki S. commented: “When I write in English, I find that I can express my feelings more freely.” She, too, is interested in feminism and **was struck by** the article on Okonjo-Iweala. “Before discussing



Saki S. says discussions in the class after reading an *Alpha* article changed her way of thinking.



Nayu A. says reading English news articles gives her a broader perspective.

the article, I **was under the impression that** feminism tended to be **overly favorable to** women especially in politics but afterward, I changed my way of thinking and decided this was a necessary step to achieve gender equality.” Rion K. expressed interest in the Japanese court’s **ruling** of the surname law as **constitutional**. “I have a deep interest in gender equality, espe-

cially in developing countries. But reading the article made me think about the gender issues right here in Japan, like **menstruation poverty** and surnames under marriage.” 8 Ms. Tanaka **summed up**: “I wanted to **equip** the students with knowledge and the **will to express** their opinions, both as women and human beings in today’s society.” (Kaori Shoji)

「生きた英語を教えたい」、授業で *Alpha* を活用する鎌倉女学院高校

(見出し) stepping stone 足掛かり。 1 helm ～を指揮する。mentor 良き指導者。affectionately 親しみを込めて。i.e. すなわち。colloquial 口語の。 2 issues 問題。comprehend 理解する。is geared toward ～～向けに作られた。authentic 典拠のある。spot on 的を射た。rating system レベル分けシステム。

gauge ～を判断する。as needed 必要に応じて。 3 camaraderie 友情、仲間意識。term 学期。for good これを最後に。send-off 門出を祝うこと。cover ～を取り上げる。 4 relevance 重要性。departure 離脱。International Whaling Commission 国際捕鯨委員会。STEM 理系。farming 養殖。

have ... fruition 実現されている。far-fetched 現実離れした。 5 be appointed as ～～に任命される。(have) become ... of ～～をより意識するようになった。stereotypes 固定観念。liberated 解放された。 6 returnee 帰国子女。has ... of ～～から多くを得た。perspectives ものの見方。

7 was struck by ～～に強い印象を受けた。was ... that ～～だと思い込んでいた。favorable to ～～に有利な。ruling 判決。constitutional 合憲の。menstruation poverty 生理の貧困。 8 summed up まとめた。equip ～with ... ～に…を身に付けさせる。will 意欲。 [本文 — 650 words]

Students’ Opinions

2021年11月21日号 World News 掲載の“COP26 climate talks: Over 100 global leaders pledge to end deforestation by 2030”。

この記事を読んで、鎌倉女学院高校の生徒たちは以下のような意見をまとめてくれた。

Q. Do you think the COP26 climate talks will be successful? Why or why not? Please explain your answer.

(購読者専用学習サイト「Club Alpha」の Speaking Practice より)

I do not think that the COP26 is going to be successful ... although the leaders of different countries have made promises to work towards stopping climate change, the governments have done nothing effective and we are still in the same situation. I do not believe that the present leaders have a strong enough will to take action against the crisis. (Michiru H.)

I think COP26 didn’t succeed. The reason I think this is because the goals which the countries formulated were neither consistent nor unanimous. For example, some countries disagreed with the ideas for regulating logging. Thus, I feel that if they

cannot cooperate with something as simple as that, it would be hard to achieve the greater goals. (Miyu T.)

I don’t think the conference succeeded. World leaders discussed their policy to achieve a decarbonized society. ... However, the leaders seemed to persist with the usual style of conferences, for example by using private jets to get to the event even though online meetings have gained in popularity. I can’t help but think that their announcements are superficial because of their attitude. (Suzuno I.)

I think that it is too early to decide

if COP26 was a success or not. Although I think it is good that the world was interested in the environmental situation by holding COP26, as Greta Thunberg says, if world leaders only promise to achieve goals, but they then do not change their attitude towards the environment, I would have to say that COP26 did not succeed and it was just a festival. (Yuka N.)

I think that COP26 has an important meaning. During this session, the global leaders had to submit their countries’ objectives (Nationally Determined Contributions) for the first time since the Paris Agreement. So, I expect that COP26 will

influence many countries who attended this conference and the general public. And it will make them recognize the importance of these measures which I hope will suppress any more emissions of toxic substances. (Sae F.)

I don’t think COP26 will bring changes in terms of solving environmental problems. Focusing on Japan, although there are a lot of businesses promoting new types of environmentally friendly energy resources, I believe that Japanese leaders are taking too conservative an attitude toward environmental problems and so change will be slow or not at all. (Sakura W.)

