

## Drawings Reveal Beliefs of Japanese University Students

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**Abstract :** Although Japanese students study English for six years in secondary schools, they demonstrate little success with it when they enter higher education. Learners' beliefs can predict the future behavior of students, so it may be effective to investigate how learners' beliefs limit their success and how beliefs might be nudged in a positive direction. While many researchers still depend on a questionnaire called BALLI to reveal explicit beliefs, alternative approaches, especially those designed to reveal implicit beliefs, might be helpful for promoting learning. The present study seeks to identify beliefs with a discursive approach using visual metaphors and narratives. Employing a sociocultural framework, this study investigates how students' beliefs are revealed by drawings of themselves and their surrounding environments and artifacts while they are engaged in language learning. Research questions are: (1) Can we identify beliefs through an analysis of students' visual narratives? (2) What environments and artifacts can be found in students' drawings, and what do they mean? (3) To what extent do students see language learning as a solitary, rather than a social, activity? Participants are university students majoring in science and technology in Japan. The questionnaire was administered to 70 entering students in April, 2014. Data included students drawings of themselves as learners of English as well as written descriptions of students' backgrounds, English-learning experiences, and analogies and metaphors that they used in written descriptions of themselves as learners. Data will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Anticipated results include students' perceptions of themselves as language learners, including their sense of agency, awareness of artifacts, and social contexts of language learning. Comments will be made on implications for teaching, as well as the use of visual narratives as research tools, and recommended further research.

**Keywords :** drawings, learners' beliefs, metaphors, BALLI

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