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Supporting neurodiverse students through adaptive pedagogy

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The growing popularity of social media sites, coupled with the omnipresence of digital devices, means that most Japanese university English language learners (ELLs) process a tremendous amount of digital stimuli on a daily basis. Thus, it is important that English as an international language (EIL) educators put more emphasis on cultivating students' critical thinking skills. Creating a critically conscious and active learning environment is something that is much easier said than done, especially for neurodivergent learners. Conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), and dyslexia fall under the umbrella of neurodiversity. Neurodiverse students have unique strengths and learning needs that are often overlooked by teachers. This presentation will highlight how EIL educators can make their lessons and instructional materials more accessible to neurodiverse ELLs. The presenters will describe the adaptive pedagogical practices they utilized with neurodivergent students in a communicative English course. They will also discuss how YouTube content (e.g., viral marketing videos) and technology-enhanced learning projects (e.g., multimodal videos, e-portfolios) can be used to foster Japanese ELLs' creativity and critical thinking abilities. This presentation should be of interest to EIL educators who wish to establish a more active learning environment and expand their teaching repertoire. The lesson ideas and pedagogical pointers that will be examined in this presentation can be used with both neurodivergent and neurotypical students and applied to a wide range of instructional contexts.

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