



Contribution ID: 20 Type: Practice-focused presentation (25 minutes) 実践報告発表 (25分)

Why We Should Sleep More

Saturday 3 February 2024 15:25 (25 minutes)

How much are you sleeping each night? How about your students? Probably not enough, if you live in Japan, which ranks among the most sleep-deprived societies in the world. School schedules, after-school activities, commuting times, homework, and screen time can all contribute towards students' (and teachers') lack of sleep. Students face additional obstacles towards good sleep with the changing of their circadian rhythms, which makes adolescents unable to fall asleep until later at night and unable to wake up until later in the morning. It's little wonder that so many students are sleep deprived! However, research shows that good sleep is not only essential for memory function during the day, but that the brain actually continues learning during sleep. Good sleep, then, can be the ultimate study tool.

This presentation aims to serve as a brief introduction to the neuroscience behind sleep—what happens during sleep, how much sleep is necessary, the consequences of sleep deprivation, and how sleep quality and duration can be improved. Participants will then discuss what role teachers have (if any) in encouraging better sleep for our students.

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Session Classification: Presentations B

Track Classification: Language Teaching and Brain Science