

Team Teaching: Situations and Suggestions (Cheatsheet)

SITUATION	JTE PERSPECTIVE	ALT PERSPECTIVE	SUGGESTIONS
<u>High-energy</u> students	Must avoid disrupting other classes; difficult to monitor all students at once.	Can't get involved in controlling the students' behavior; can provide positive reinforcement to complement JTE's efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical games Fast-moving activities (use a stopwatch) Increase English level: channel energy into thinking ALT can subtly reward good behavior with personal attention.
<u>Low-energy</u> students	Students don't like or care about English. Won't risk volunteering wrong answers. Maybe other/previous teacher is/was very strict.	Encourage students to make mistakes, and learn from them. Use alternative teaching tools (movies, TV, manga) to stimulate interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize group work to avoid singling out individuals. Increase energy level over time (during class and over multiple classes). Consider options of physical vs. mental energy.
Large class (30+ students)	Large schools often have classes of 30+ students, so students almost never get 1-on-1 time. Adding an ALT is a chance to provide many students with the opportunity.	Time management is challenging in big classes. Keep comments positive but instructional; identify mistakes, then help others while student practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split students into groups for activities; both JTE and ALT can walk around and provide instruction. Plan minimal instruction time: too many distractions. Focus on back to back activities.
Small class (<10 students)	Small classes are more common in rural areas with limited resources. ALT time is valued and students really cherish the attention.	Students can get overwhelmed with too much ALT attention. They're thinking hard and trying to impress. Keep class low-key and relaxed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask JTE to assist Special Ed students. Focus on 1-on-1 interaction; the ALT's visit is a very special thing in rural areas. Communicate with JTE to plan special classes/events.
Combined Classes (Same Grade, 50+ students)	To fit more students into the ALT's schedule during busy times, combining multiple classes can be convenient.	Combined classes are rare, but exhausting. Consider large format games like bingo or cultural lessons (American football, line dancing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JTE(s) and ALT can make the class English immersive, with or without any translation. Roving teachers can help students as needed and encourage students to practice Big rooms welcome more walking space; step among the students to keep their attention moving with you.
Combined Classes (Mixed Grades, Small Schools)	Not enough students in class for group activities or games. Students learn a lot from listening to others practice.	Some students will be higher or lower level than expected. Must adapt to each student's skill level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask JTE to assist lower-grade students in keeping up with higher grades. Provide more correction to higher grade than lower grade students.

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“By the Book” or Rote Memorization JTE	Obligated to meet standardized testing requirements. No time for games or “fun.” Might use ALT as a ‘living CD player.’	Book is predictable; students become bored and lose interest. ALT is bored with tasks assigned by JTE. Changing the dynamic takes time and trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stick to familiar materials (textbook) but create a minor twist. ● Introduce brief (10-20min) alternative activities outside textbook to create trust between JTE/ALT. ● Plan with JTE to meet scholastic requirements through activities.
Creative JTE	Wants to utilize ALT as source of exposure to foreign culture and language. Will likely ask ALT to provide some materials.	Selected bits of culture and language that teacher chooses can seem odd. Think out of the box for activity ideas (consider childhood games).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan with JTE to feature personalized culture (different accents, regionalisms). ● Communicate before class day; ALT can provide new materials from home, like photos, a slideshow, or a demonstration.
“Omakase” (however you like) JTE	Wants students to get an authentic experience. JTE might not be comfortable with their own English.	ALT can feel overwhelmed; remember that JTE seeks the experience, not high test scores.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For role-play, integrate the JTE. ● Ask JTE to review the grammar or vocabulary with students in Japanese for clearer understanding. ● Even as main teacher, ALT can take opportunity to do an English-immersive class with JTE help.

Additional Suggestions:

- ALT can be proactive, starting conversations with JTEs in advance of class dates. Reach out via email or phone.
- Some teachers won't get involved in the students' behavior if they consider the ALT as the main teacher. ALTs do not have disciplinary authority; work with the JTE and consider positive reinforcement as a way to defuse the situation.
- If you're not someone who uses gestures, working with ES or JH students will give you crazy-mad skills! In HS, you'll want to focus more on professional body language and realistic interactions. Funny faces work wonders as icebreakers with all age groups and can set the tone for cultural references, like sarcasm.
- Use the front of the classroom as “instructional space.” During activity time, wander around and assist or praise. If students are presenting, try standing at the back or side of the room. This avoids bad behaviors (letter passing, whispering) and gives students the excuse to be antsy in their chairs... we all appreciate that feeling!
- Practice your Japanese with your JTE (or the school's Japanese teacher!) to build trust and make connections. Lunch with students can be an English practice time, or a time to let down your guard and try Japanese with them.

NOTES: