

# FROM SEL TO SEEEM: PEDAGOGY OF WITH-NESS IN JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper critically examines Social Emotional Learning in higher education through the Japanese context, proposing an expanded framework—a pedagogical orientation rather than a skills model—termed Social, Emotional, Ethical, Environmental Movement (SEEEM). Dominant SEL models emphasise individual regulation and competency, yet these approaches isolate inner states from the ethical and ecological relations within which emotions emerge and function. The paper argues for a shift from intra-personal skill training to a relational orientation that recognises learning as participation within social and environmental systems.*

*Drawing on care ethics and process philosophy, the paper conceptualises education as navigation across interconnected human and more-than-human worlds. Human understanding is shaped by cognitive biases including confirmation, framing, authority, and availability that all influence what becomes visible or silenced in the classroom. In Japan, where harmony norms often privilege cohesion over expression, these biases can narrow emotional discourse and limit critical engagement.*

*The paper therefore advocates a pedagogy that helps learners notice how their thinking is shaped by culture, habit, and bias. Classroom practices such as relational mapping, dialogue that holds friction, and a rhythm between wonder and precision, invite students to attend to self, others, and the Earth as connected territories of learning. SEEEM repositions SEL as a collective, humanities-based practice centered on care ethics and ecological awareness, not individual self-management. This approach speaks to current debates in higher education about learning, emotion, and technology.*

## **KEYWORDS**

SEEEM; pedagogy of with-ness; cognitive bias; Japan; ecological citizenship; higher education

## **1. INTRODUCTION: WHY SEL IS NO LONGER ENOUGH**

Over the past decade, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has gained significant traction in higher education, promoted as a framework of supporting student well-being, resilience, and academic engagement. Universities have increasingly adopted SEL-informed initiatives in response to rising anxiety, disengagement, and mental health concerns among students. While these efforts reflect a growing recognition that learning is inseparable from emotional life, dominant SEL frameworks remain largely oriented toward individual regulation where students are encouraged to manage stress, monitor emotions, and cultivate personal competencies within institutional systems that remain structurally intact.

These approaches misdiagnose the problem. Where emotional distress is produced not by individual deficit but by institutional arrangements such as high-stakes assessment cultures, competitive ranking systems, and pedagogies of compliance, approaches which focus on self-regulation can inadvertently shift responsibility onto learners while leaving the conditions of harm unchanged [1, 2]. Critics of SEL's individualising tendency have made precisely this point: when the framework is decoupled from

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questions of power and systemic inequity, it functions as an instrument of adaptation on behalf of transformation.

What would a structurally aware emotional pedagogy look like instead? This paper proposes an expanded framework: SEEEM—Social, Emotional, Ethical, Environmental Movement. SEEEM is not a program, technique, or competency model. It is a pedagogical orientation: a way of designing learning environments that focus on what this paper calls *with-ness*: the ongoing, situated participation of learners within social and more-than human worlds shaped by power, culture, and place.

The framework draws on three traditions not as parallel theories but as mutually clarifying lenses. Care ethics provides the ethical ground, insisting that moral life and therefore learning, is constituted through particular relationships in place of universal principles. Process philosophy offers an ontology in which emotion is not an interior state to be regulated but a relational event: something that happens between bodies, environments, and histories. Ecological thinking extends both frameworks beyond the human, situating learners within webs of interdependence that include the non-human world. Each tradition fills a gap the others leave; together they create a conception of learning that is simultaneously ethical, relational, and planetary.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ETHICAL ATTENTION, RELATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, ECOLOGICAL EMBEDDEDNESS**

The SEEEM framework draws on multiple traditions not as parallel theories but as mutually clarifying lenses. Care ethics names *why* educators should respond to emotion (it signals relational need); critical pedagogy explains *how* power determines whose emotions are heard; ecological thought situates emotion within planetary systems; and second language acquisition research demonstrates *what mechanisms* (interaction, negotiation) support learning. No single tradition addresses all dimensions; together, they construct a complete account of emotion in education as neither private states nor technical obstacles but relational data about the conditions in which learning occurs. Positive psychology has contributed important language for discussing flourishing, yet its educational uptake often treats well-being as a personal mindset to be optimized [3]. SEEEM places these insights within a broader social and cognitive ecology. Kahneman's [4] research shows perception is never purely internal; framing, scarcity, and institutional cues shape judgment. Classroom studies of stress contagion similarly show that emotions circulate across relationships in place of residing within isolated individuals [2]. These perspectives address different levels of analysis, positive psychology foregrounds individual flourishing, cognitive psychology highlights perceptual heuristics, and classroom research reveals relational climates. Read together, they suggest that mental health in education comes from environments, routines, and assessment regimes. SEEEM therefore treats anxiety and disengagement as messages about context as opposed to deficits of character, extending care ethics' emphasis on responsiveness to the design of learning systems and accentuating that learners cannot simply "think better" their way out of environments organized around competition and surveillance.

### **2.1. From Regulation to Ethical Attention**

Dominant SEL frameworks treat emotion as an internal resource to be monitored and managed [30]. Martha Nussbaum's work on the humanities offers a different orientation: education, she argues, should help students to see the world ethically, to notice suffering, complexity, and interdependence rather than merely optimize personal functioning [5]. Ethical attention is not a skill added to cognition but a way of seeing that shapes what becomes thinkable and feelable [5].

SEEEM proposes that emotional literacy therefore begins not with regulation but with attentiveness—a cultivated responsiveness to others, to institutional conditions, and to more-than-human worlds [6], [7]. Such attention resists the reduction of feelings to private states; it treats them instead as signals of shared situations shaped by classroom relations and institutional design. This orientation resonates with hooks' [8] conception of the classroom as a site where learners come to voice through relational and critical engagement, in contrast to compliance with predefined norms. When students experience anxiety or

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silence in classrooms, research on stress contagion suggests these are not isolated individual states but shared classroom phenomena [2,9].

## **2.2. Relational Responsibility**

Paulo Freire locates education in dialogue instead of transmission; learning emerges through relationships in which participants become jointly responsible for meaning [10]. This orientation aligns with Martin Buber's distinction between I–It relations of use and I–Thou relations of encounter [11]. In many contemporary universities, students are positioned primarily as objects of assessment—measured, ranked, and optimized, which encourages I–It orientations toward both knowledge and peers [8,12].

SEEM reframes responsibility as distributed and relational. Research on teacher collaboration and emotional climate [13], [14] suggests that classrooms are co-produced by teachers, students, institutional policies, and technologies, not by individuals acting in isolation. Responsibility therefore cannot be outsourced to individual self-management programs [10]. Instead, classrooms must be designed as spaces where students learn to respond to one another and to the situations they inherit [5]. Relational responsibility also involves the courage to engage disagreement and uncertainty, a dynamic this paper later terms dialogic friction and treats as necessary for ethical growth [8].

## **2.3. Ecological Embeddedness**

David Orr and Fritjof Capra extend relational thinking beyond the human [6],[7]. Orr argues that education which ignores ecological interdependence “trains students to live in a world that no longer exists” [6]. Capra's systems view portrays life as a web of relations in which cognition, culture, and environment are inseparable [7]. Within SEEM, emotional learning is therefore incomplete without an awareness of place, materiality, and planetary limits [15]. This ecological dimension challenges anthropocentric versions of SEL that frame well-being solely in terms of personal flourishing. As Karkulehto et al. [16] argue in their analysis of planetary activism, emotions like worry and grief register ecological loss — they're forms of ethical perception, not symptoms requiring correction. An ethical pedagogy must help students dwell with such emotions collectively, resisting the tendency to frame them as individual resilience deficits [8].

## **2.4. Collective Engagement as Method**

John Dewey reminds us that education grows from experience that is continuous and participatory [17]. Learning occurs when students act in the world and reflect on those actions with others. John Hattie's synthesis of meta-analyses similarly highlights that engagement and collective meaning-making exert a stronger influence on achievement than isolated instructional techniques [18]. This framework therefore treats classrooms as communities of practice, not simply delivery systems for competencies [17].

Practically, this means designing rhythms of participation in which students speak, listen, revise, and act together [19]. Experience becomes the medium through which ethical attention and ecological awareness are rehearsed. The aim is not the production of correct answers but the cultivation of responsible presence [8].

## **3. STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS OF EMOTIONAL HARM: JAPAN AS ILLUSTRATIVE CASE**

Japanese English education offers a particularly clear example of how institutional design shapes emotional life for three reasons. First, the yakudoku method's 150-year continuity creates stable emotional patterns across generations. Second, the gap between policy rhetoric (communicative competence) and assessment reality (grammar-translation) exposes the disconnect between stated educational values and actual incentives. Third, Japan's consistently low English proficiency rankings despite massive investment demonstrates that outcomes reflect system design, not individual effort or cultural deficit. Despite decades of reform and substantial investment, Japan remains in the Low

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Proficiency band of the 2024 EF English Proficiency Index, with outcomes lagging behind comparable East Asian economies [12]. This gap is not primarily a failure of individual learners but the result of a system organized around the long-standing grammar–translation tradition (yakudoku) and high-stakes examination washback [20], [21]. Showing how such structures cultivate specific emotional dispositions—silence, anxiety, and learned passivity—that competency-based SEL cannot address.

### **3.1. Yakudoku as an Emotional Technology**

Yakudoku is commonly described as a teaching method; however, scholars have argued that it functions more accurately as a sociocultural regime of reading and assessment [22],[20]. Students learn to decode English texts through Japanese explanation, precise grammatical parsing, and written translation. Within this regime, interaction recedes as accuracy becomes the dominant measure of worth [13], [21]. Error is positioned as public failure, speech as risk, and correct answers as signals of moral diligence [23].

The method persists due to examination washback [24], large class sizes requiring controllable routines [25], teacher preparation emphasizing grammar over interaction [26], and cultural norms valuing accuracy over risk taking [27]. Emotional self-protection replaces curiosity, and communicative risk becomes socially costly [23].

### **3.2. Psychological Consequences**

Research on Japanese learners consistently reports elevated foreign-language anxiety, low willingness to communicate, and fragile self-efficacy [28], [29]. Motivation declines from junior high through university as grammar-translation intensifies [30]. Students often come to associate English with humiliation instead of possibility [27]. Many develop what scholars describe as learned helplessness, the belief that effort does not change outcomes, leading some to disengage entirely rather than continue experiencing failure [31].

Such patterns are not accidental side effects; they are logical products of a system that equates learning with error elimination [20]. When classrooms reward silent accuracy, emotions that support experimentation, such as curiosity, playfulness, and risk-taking, have little room to grow [29]. SEL programs that encourage individual regulation of stress therefore address symptoms while leaving the generative structure untouched [2].

### **3.3. Teachers in the Double Bind**

Teachers themselves are caught in an impossible position. Policy documents mandate communicative instruction, yet examinations continue to privilege grammar-translation skills [21]. Many instructors have limited opportunities to develop spoken proficiency and face heavy administrative loads [26]. Assistant Language Teachers provide exposure to authentic English but are often positioned as peripheral [32]. The result is a dual burden: to enact communicative ideals while preparing students for non-communicative tests [30].

This tension shapes teachers' emotional labor [13]. Innovation carries risk; traditional routines offer safety [26]. Consequently, reform rhetoric coexists with conservative practice, and students learn to read the unspoken message: compliance matters more than expression [27].

### **3.4. From Individual Deficit to Systemic Reading**

The Japanese case illuminates a broader problem in global higher education. Emotional difficulties are frequently interpreted as personal weaknesses requiring coaching, mindfulness apps, or resilience training [3]. Yet here we see how institutional logics manufacture particular affects [27]. Silence, anxiety, and disengagement are not failures of SEL but signals about the environments in which SEL is asked to operate [2].

SEEEM responds by shifting the unit of analysis. The focus moves from how students regulate themselves within yakudoku-style systems to how classrooms might be reorganized to support ethical attention, relational responsibility, and ecological awareness [5] [6]. The following section sketches pedagogical orientations that move beyond coping toward collective re-orientation.

## 4. SEEEM AS PEDAGOGICAL REORIENTATION

SEEEM differs from existing SEL frameworks in three ways. Unlike CASEL's competency model, which emphasises individual skill development across five domains (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making), SEEEM treats emotion as systemic feedback rather than personal capacity. Unlike Transformative SEL, which adds social justice but retains a skills orientation, SEEEM reframes the unit of analysis from competency to ecology, asking not what skills students lack, but what conditions produce emotional patterns. Therapeutic approaches often position distress as pathology requiring intervention [3]. SEEEM instead reads anxiety and silence as rational responses to institutional arrangements, treating them as messages about environments rather than personal deficits that need fixing. If institutions shape classroom emotion, pedagogy is about redesigning environments, not applying techniques. This section outlines four orientations through which this framework can be enacted in higher education: dialogic friction, relational rhythm, ecological noticing, and collective authorship. These are not add-on activities but principles for reorganizing how learning is structured and experienced. The SLA literature is read here through a SEEEM lens, where interactional mechanisms are understood not merely as cognitive processes but also as ethical encounters in which students risk recognition.

### 4.1. Dialogic Friction: Learning With Disagreement

Research in second language acquisition and educational philosophy converges on the idea that learning requires moments of productive disturbance. Long's Interaction Hypothesis demonstrates that negotiation for meaning during communication breakdowns promotes acquisition [33]. Swain's Output Hypothesis similarly shows that attempting to express meaning exposes gaps between intention and linguistic resources, prompting deeper processing [34]. From a philosophical perspective, Freire [10] describes dialogue as a site where subjects become co-authors of knowledge, moving beyond the role of passive recipients.

SEEEM reframes these insights as *dialogic friction*. Classroom discomfort is not something to be eliminated, it is treated as ethically necessary. Disagreement, hesitation, and partial understanding become shared material rather than private failure. Teachers design tasks where meaning cannot be produced alone, such as interpretive problems, ethical dilemmas, or place-based inquiries, requiring students to rely on one another's perspectives.

This orientation contrasts with yakudoku classrooms where correctness precedes speech [20]. Dialogic friction deliberately delays correctness in favor of tentative expression, enabling what hooks [8] calls education as the practice of freedom. Emotions that surface, including uncertainty, irritation, and excitement, are interpreted as indicators of relational engagement, not as deficits requiring regulation.

### 4.2. Relational Rhythm: From Episodes to Ecology

Dewey [17] argued that education depends on the continuity of experience. Yet many university courses are organized as discrete episodes—lecture, worksheet, test—offering little temporal coherence. Hattie's synthesis of achievement research highlights that engagement grows when learners experience visible progress within supportive relationships [18].

SEEEM therefore emphasizes relational rhythm: predictable cycles of preparation, encounter, reflection, and revision. For example, students might:

- prepare questions from lived contexts,
- discuss in mixed-language groups,

- record collective insights,
- revisit them in subsequent weeks.

Such rhythms redistribute responsibility. When the class shares emotional management, it becomes a holding environment [35] where attention circulates. This approach responds to findings that Japanese learners' willingness to communicate fluctuates with situational safety more than with fixed personality traits [28]. Stability of process, not intensity of technique, supports risk-taking.

### **4.3. Ecological Noticing: Learning With Place**

Orr [6] and Capra [7] remind educators that cognition is inseparable from material worlds. Yet language classrooms often float free of place, treating English as a neutral code. SEEEM introduces ecological noticing—activities that connect linguistic practice to local environments and planetary concerns.

Students might document sounds in their neighborhoods, map energy use on campus, or interview community members about climate experiences. These tasks align with content-based and task-based research showing that meaningful contexts enhance language development [24]. More importantly, they position emotions such as climate worry as collective sense-making, not as personal pathology.

This orientation resists anthropocentric SEL models that define well-being solely as individual flourishing [2]. Instead, well-being is participation in more-than-human relations, echoing Capra's systems view.

### **4.4. Collective Authorship and Assessment**

Traditional assessment individualizes responsibility and intensifies anxiety in Japanese contexts [27]. SEEEM proposes collective authorship as an alternative. Projects are evaluated for contribution to shared understanding, including dialogue portfolios, group field reports, or public exhibitions, alongside individual reflection.

Such assessment draws on Swain's notion of collaborative dialogue as a site of learning [34], and on care-ethical arguments that responsibility is relational [1]. Feedback emphasizes how contributions affected the group's thinking rather than only linguistic accuracy. This approach mitigates the learned helplessness documented among Japanese learners [31] by making progress visible and social.

### **4.5. The Teacher's Role: From Manager to Witness**

Teachers in exam-driven systems often become managers of compliance [31]. SEEEM repositions the teacher as witness and designer of conditions. The task is to notice how space, timing, language policy, and assessment generate particular affects and to intervene at that structural level, not by correcting individuals.

This role requires acknowledging teachers' own emotional labor. Professional development thus extends beyond techniques to ethical perception, understood as the capacity to read classroom atmospheres and respond with humility, as advocated by Nussbaum [5].

### **4.6. From Coping to Re-Orientation**

Together these orientations shift pedagogy from helping students cope within inherited structures to re-orienting the structures themselves. SEEEM does not reject SEL's concern for emotion; it re-situates emotion as a relational and ecological signal. The aim is classrooms where students learn to ask:

- What is this feeling telling us about our shared situation?
- Who and what are we responsible to?
- How might we act together?

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The next section discusses methodological implications and limitations of implementing SEEEM within current institutional constraints.

## **5. DISCUSSION: LEARNING IN THE AGE OF SMOOTHING**

This paper does not present an experimental intervention but a theory-informed illustration of how SEEEM can be enacted within existing higher-education constraints. Following Dewey's [17] view that method grows from experience, the approach treats classrooms as interpretive sites where ethical attention, relational responsibility, and ecological embeddedness can be made visible. The aim is to show how SEEEM reorganizes everyday practices, not to measure outcomes through conventional proficiency metrics tied to grammar-translation logics [20].

### **5.1. Design Orientation**

The illustrative design draws on three principles:

1. Situated interpretation – Emotions are read as signals about learning ecologies, not as individual traits [2].
2. Collaborative dialogue – Learning tasks require negotiation of meaning and shared authorship [34], [10].
3. Ecological connection – Language activities are anchored in local and planetary contexts [6],[7].

SEEEM works within existing curricula by reframing routine elements including discussion, reflection, and assessment, to cultivate with-ness, or attentiveness to how speech shapes relationships with others and the more-than-human world.

### **5.2. Participants and Context**

The illustrations derive from English-medium seminar courses at a private Japanese university where students typically arrive after six years of yakudoku-oriented schooling. Class sizes range from 18–26. Students report high test experience but limited opportunities for spontaneous speech—patterns consistent with national findings of low willingness to communicate and elevated anxiety [27], [31].

Institutional conditions mirror those described in Section 3: examination washback, limited teacher planning time, and mixed expectations about communicative pedagogy [26]. SEEEM activities were therefore designed to operate inside these constraints, without assuming ideal conditions.

### **5.3. Pedagogical Procedures**

#### **a) Dialogic Friction Circles**

Weekly sessions begin with a question that has no single correct answer (e.g., “What does ‘success’ cost a community?”). Students first write in Japanese or English, then speak in mixed-language circles where clarification requests are encouraged. The teacher withholds correction during initial rounds, aligning with Long's [33] emphasis on negotiation for meaning as central to acquisition.

Emotions such as hesitation or disagreement are named as shared data. Instead of asking students to calm themselves, the class asks: What does this tension reveal about our assumptions? This practice draws on Nussbaum's [5] conception of ethical attention as cultivated perception.

#### **b) Relational Rhythm Journals**

Students keep short weekly journals addressing three prompts:

1. What surprised me?
2. Who helped my thinking?

3. What remains unclear?

Entries are discussed in small groups before any grading. This rhythm foregrounds interdependence and mirrors Hattie's [18] finding that visible progress emerges through feedback loops within relationships. The journals function as a holding environment [35] that stabilizes risk-taking.

c) Ecological Noticing Projects

Groups conduct micro-inquiries into campus or neighborhood issues, including energy use, food waste, accessibility, and river health and report their findings through bilingual posters. Language becomes a tool for noticing, not an object of perfection. This responds to Orr's [6] call for ecological literacy and to Capra's [7] view of learning as participation in living systems.

d) Collective Assessment

Final evaluation combines individual reflection with a group contribution statement describing how each member advanced the project. Accuracy remains valued, but weight shifts toward responsiveness and collaboration, addressing research showing that exclusive focus on correctness intensifies anxiety and learned helplessness [31].

## 5.4. Data Sources and Interpretation

To illustrate SEEEM's affordances, three forms of qualitative evidence were gathered:

- Student reflections documenting shifts in perception,
- Classroom artifacts (posters, dialogue transcripts),
- Teacher field notes focusing on emotional atmospheres.

Analysis followed an interpretive thematic approach attentive to how participants described responsibility, place, and voice. Proficiency gains were not used as the primary coding frame, since doing so would reinscribe grammar-translation metrics. Interpretation instead asked:

- Do students speak of one another as resources or competitors?
- Are emotions read as private problems or shared situations?
- Is the more-than-human world present in language use?

This analytic stance aligns with care-ethical research that treats relationships as primary units of meaning [1].

## 5.5. Illustrative Vignettes

Three illustrative moments demonstrate how SEEEM reframes classroom interactions. These vignettes do not attempt to prove causality; instead, they show how attention to emotion-as-signal transforms pedagogical responses.

### Vignette 1: Reframing Silence

During an early friction circle, several students remained quiet. Instead of prompting participation, the class mapped reasons for silence on the board—fear of mistakes, respect for seniors, uncertainty about topic. Students concluded that “silence protects relationships.” The discussion transformed non-speaking from personal failure into a collective diagnosis, echoing Yashima's [28] finding that willingness to communicate is situational.

## **Vignette 2: From Grammar to Place**

In an ecological noticing task on campus vending machines, one group shifted from counting units to questioning energy dependence after a member linked the topic to coastal flooding in her hometown. Language work, including comparatives, and conditionals, emerged from genuine concern and was embedded in inquiry, illustrating Ellis's [24] argument for meaning-first tasks.

## **Vignette 3: Shared Authorship**

A group that initially relied on one confident speaker gradually rotated roles after adopting contribution statements. Students reported that "English felt lighter when it was ours, not mine," suggesting movement from I-It to I-Thou relations [11].

## **5.6 Trustworthiness and Limits**

These illustrations do not claim causal proof. They aim to demonstrate plausibility—that SEEEM can reorganize emotional relations without abandoning curricular requirements. Interpretation is shaped by the teacher-researcher position and by the specific Japanese context; transfer to other settings requires caution. Moreover, structural constraints such as entrance examinations remain beyond classroom control [26].

## **6. CONCLUSION: FROM COPING TO CO-CREATING**

This paper has argued that dominant Social Emotional Learning frameworks remain insufficient when emotion is treated primarily as an individual resource to be regulated. SEEEM, Social, Emotional, Ethical, Environmental Movement, reframes emotion as relational and ecological signal, data about the conditions in which learning unfolds. Through the Japanese English education context, the analysis has illustrated how emotional patterns such as silence, anxiety and disengagement emerge from institutional design, not student deficit.

### **6.1. Implications for Language Education**

Language classrooms can function as affective infrastructures. When assessment systems reward caution and correctness, silence becomes rational. Introducing SEL modules without structural change risks reproducing these dynamics.

SEEEM suggests three re-orientations for language classrooms:

1. From accuracy to responsiveness – Evaluation should recognize how students support one another's meaning-making, not only error elimination.
2. From individual confidence to shared conditions – Anxiety is read as a property of situations, not personalities.
3. From abstract topics to place-based inquiry – Language tasks connect to local ecological concerns, making English a tool for noticing, not display.

These shifts do not eliminate grammar; they relocate it within meaning-first participation.

### **6.2. Teacher Development as Ethical Work**

Teachers stand between policy and lived experience. SEEEM reframes professional learning as ethical formation: the cultivation of sensitivity to how classroom atmospheres, space, timing, and assessment generate particular emotional patterns. Educators become designers of conditions, not merely deliverers of curriculum.

### 6.3. Policy Considerations

Well-being initiatives cannot succeed while high-stakes assessment systems remain unchanged. If emotional life is shaped by institutional design, reform must extend beyond individual coping strategies. Universities may consider diversifying assessment, protecting dialogic spaces, and recognizing ecological citizenship as a core outcome of higher education.

### 6.4. Limits and Cautions

Several limits must be acknowledged.

1. Structural constraints remain decisive. Classroom practices cannot by themselves overcome national examination regimes. SEEEM offers orientation, not structural remedy.
2. Cultural translation requires care. Concepts such as dialogic friction may interact unpredictably with norms of harmony and face.
3. Evidence is illustrative. The vignettes presented are interpretive in design, and further mixed-methods research is needed to examine long-term effects.
4. Ecological engagement risks instrumentalization. Place-based tasks must avoid becoming new checklists divorced from genuine relationships.

### 6.5. Toward Collective Re-orientation

Despite these limits, SEEEM offers a path beyond narrow SEL. In contexts like Japanese higher education, where silence has long been rational, the task is not to make students braver individuals but to make classrooms braver places. Language learning becomes participation in planetary citizenship—an education oriented not toward coping with the present, but toward collectively remaking it.

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