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# From Task Engagement to Task Worthwhileness: Toward Activity-Specific Yarigai from an Ikigai Perspective

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## Abstract

This paper argues for the need to distinguish domain-general Academic Yarigai from activity-specific yarigai in educational research and proposes the Activity-Specific Yarigai-9 Scale (ASYS) as a task-level complement to the Academic Yarigai-9 Scale (AYS; Kanazawa, 2025a). Academic Yarigai offers an integrative account of meaningful academic experience by bringing together intrinsic fulfillment, intellectual stimulation, personal growth, social contribution, flow, recognition, overcoming challenges, real-world relevance, and purpose of learning. Yet the original framework also repeatedly emphasizes immediate and task-related fulfillment, suggesting that yarigai is not only a broad academic orientation but also a situated experience arising from particular activities. To develop this argument, the present paper draws on research on task engagement, which treats engagement not merely as a stable disposition but as learners' involvement in a specific task or series of tasks. Recent work has shown that engagement may have both trait-like and state-like qualities and that task-level measurement is necessary for understanding how learners' involvement varies dynamically across activities and contexts. In light of this, the paper introduces the ASYS as a task-level indicator of whether a specific activity is perceived as enjoyable, supportive of growth, socially meaningful, challenging yet fulfilling, relevant beyond the classroom, and aligned with broader personal goals. It also presents preliminary empirical findings from Japanese undergraduate learners of English. Across three administrations, the ASYS demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, differed significantly among three active learning tasks, and showed strong correlations with task engagement on each occasion. Mean ASYS scores were also moderately related to the domain-general AYS and to foreign language enjoyment, while showing no significant association with broad classroom engagement. These findings suggest that the ASYS may serve as a promising measure of task worthwhileness and a meaningful companion construct to task engagement.

## 1. Introduction

In applied linguistics and educational psychology, constructs such as engagement, motivation, enjoyment, flow, and well-being have often been discussed in parallel rather than within one unified framework. Kanazawa (2025a) proposes Academic Yarigai as an integrative construct that brings these strands together under a more meaning-centered account of educational experience. In the framework, Academic Yarigai is presented as a way of holistically capturing learners' intrinsic fulfillment, personal growth, social contribution, and real-world relevance, thereby addressing aspects that existing frameworks only partially capture (Figure 1).

A particularly notable move in Kanazawa's (2025a) framework is the application of ikigai via the construct of yarigai. Whereas ikigai refers to a broader sense of meaning or purpose in life, yarigai is narrower, more specific, and more closely connected to meaningful activity, effort, or role performance. The concept centers on "something worth doing," and is therefore more directly linked to the lived experience of action than to purpose at the level of life as a whole (Kemp, 2026). This conceptual distinction is not without methodological consequence. If yarigai is grounded, at least in part, in concrete and meaningful activity, then it should be possible—and theoretically desirable—to assess it not only at the level of academic life in general, but also at the level of a specific activity.

The existing Academic Yarigai-9 Scale (AYS) is a major step toward operationalizing this construct. However, the original scale is primarily suited to capturing personality trait-like tendencies and whether students experience their academic work in general as worthwhile, meaningful, and fulfilling. It is less suited to capturing how such experiences may vary across tasks within the same learner. In real educational contexts, one discussion activity may be experienced as highly meaningful, another as simply routine, and a third as challenging yet deeply rewarding. This kind of variation is not trivial; it sheds light on an important aspect of how learners relate to educational activity itself.

This paper argues that Academic Yarigai should be complemented by a more activity-specific

measure. Drawing on the logic of task engagement research, I propose the Activity-Specific Yurigai-9 Scale (ASYS) as a task- and activity-level extension of the original Academic Yurigai framework. The ASYS is not intended to replace the AYS, but rather to complement it by capturing the learner's immediate sense that a given activity was worth doing.

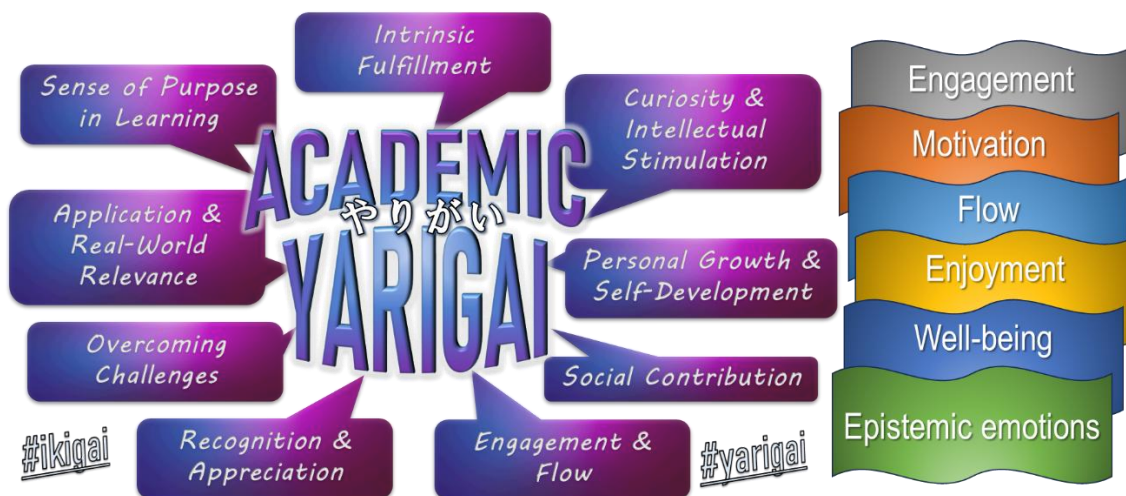


Figure 1. Academic Yurigai

Note. Adapted from “Academic Yurigai” (Y. Kanazawa), Researchmap ( <https://researchmap.jp/ku-kanazawa/yurigai> ).

## 2. Academic Yurigai as an Integrative, Situated, and Value-Laden Construct

Kanazawa (2025a) proposed Academic Yurigai as a response to conceptual fragmentation in educational research. Rather than treating engagement, motivation, enjoyment, and well-being as discrete constructs, the Academic Yurigai framework brings them together within a more integrated account of learners' subjective sense of worthwhileness and meaningful fulfillment in academic activity (Kanazawa & Arriagada, 2026). This step is especially significant in relation to engagement, as the framework argues that conventional engagement models, although valuable, often do not fully address whether learners genuinely feel that academic work is worth doing.

In this respect, Academic Yurigai is not reducible to engagement. Whereas engagement research often emphasizes behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social participation, Academic Yurigai includes these while also foregrounding intrinsic fulfillment, curiosity, personal growth, social contribution, recognition, real-world relevance, and sense of purpose. It therefore offers a more explicitly value-laden and meaning-centered account of academic experience.

Academic Yurigai may also be clarified through the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of experience (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Kanazawa, 2019/2024). A hedonic perspective emphasizes enjoyment, pleasure, and immediate positive feeling, whereas a eudaimonic perspective emphasizes growth, excellence, meaning, authenticity, and contribution. Academic Yurigai appears to integrate both hedonism and eudaimonia. It includes hedonic elements such as enjoyment and absorption, but it also includes eudaimonic elements such as personal growth, social contribution, real-world relevance, and purpose. Framed in this way, yurigai is not simply about liking an activity; it is about experiencing that activity as both enjoyable and worth pursuing. This distinction also resonates with the Deep Epistemic Emotion Hypothesis (DEEH), which suggests that deeper intellectual acquisition and engagement are often supported by epistemic emotions such as curiosity, surprise, and confusion rather than by hedonic enjoyment alone (Kanazawa, 2025b). From this perspective, a task may be experienced as worthwhile not only because it is pleasant, but also because it provokes intellectually meaningful disequilibrium and invites further exploration.

Significantly, the original Academic Yurigai framework is not purely domain-general. It repeatedly emphasizes immediate experiential fulfillment, task-specific experiences, and learners' practical engagement with academic activities. This point is crucial because it suggests that the move toward activity-specific measurement is not an external addition imposed on the construct. Rather, it develops a situated aspect already present in the original theory.

The implication, *prima facie*, appears straightforward. If Academic Yarigai partly emerges through concrete learning activities, then domain-level measurement alone may be insufficient. A broader scale can indicate whether learners generally find academic life meaningful, but it may not capture how that sense of meaning is distributed unevenly and dynamically across tasks and actual occasions (Whitehead, 1929). To address that gap, a task-level complement is needed.

### **3. Insights From Task Engagement Research**

A useful analogy can be found in the literature on task engagement. In recent second language (L2) research, engagement is not treated only as a stable learner trait or general classroom disposition. Instead, researchers increasingly conceptualize task engagement as learners' involvement in a specific task or series of tasks. Hiver et al. (2025), for example, define L2 task engagement in terms of how learners focus on, interact within, and learn from a particular task, emphasizing the amount, intensity, and quality of learners' integrated cognitive, social, emotional, and agentic effort.

This task-level orientation has key implications. Task engagement research has shown that engagement may have both trait-like and state-like qualities. Some learners may display relatively stable engagement tendencies, but their actual involvement can also vary significantly depending on the task, context, and moment of performance. Philp and Duchesne (2016) likewise emphasize that engagement should be understood at different levels of analysis and note that, at the level of activity, engagement concerns learners' involvement in a specific classroom task rather than engagement in school or class more broadly. They further describe engagement as a state of heightened attention and involvement that is reflected across cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional dimensions. That logic can be extended to Academic Yarigai. Just as engagement can be considered both generally and task-specifically, so too can yarigai be considered both as a broad academic orientation and as an immediate experience tied to a specific activity.

This distinction becomes clearer when viewed through expectancy-value approaches to motivation. In situated expectancy-value theory, task value is not fixed, but context-sensitive and closely linked to the activity and situation in which learners act (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). From this perspective, ASYS may be understood as extending subjective task value into a broader measure of task worthwhileness—one that includes not only enjoyment and usefulness, but also challenge-based accomplishment, contribution to others, recognition, and long-term purpose.

A similar point can be made from the perspective of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020). If autonomy-supportive, competence-building, and relationally meaningful activities are more likely to be experienced as self-endorsed and worthwhile, then ASYS may be understood as capturing how such activities are appraised by learners at the level of concrete task experience.

This does not mean, however, that the ASYS is merely a relabeling of an existing task engagement scale. Task engagement measures usually focus on how learners are involved in a task. Zare and Derakhshan (2025), for example, proposed a multidimensional model including emotional, agentic, behavioral, social, and cognitive engagement. These dimensions are useful for describing the form and degree of participation, but they do not fully capture whether the activity was experienced as worthwhile, personally meaningful, or purpose-linked.

This distinction is fundamental. If task engagement asks, in effect, "How engaged was the learner in this task?", then activity-specific yarigai asks, "Why did this activity feel worth doing?" The two constructs are adjacent but not identical. Task engagement emphasizes the quality of involvement, whereas activity-specific yarigai emphasizes worthwhileness, growth, meaning, and purpose. Accordingly, the ASYS may be understood as a value- and meaning-centered companion construct to task engagement.

Task engagement research also provides methodological support for the proposed instrument. Hiver and Dao (2025) argue that self-report and discourse-analytic measures capture different dimensions of engagement and should not be expected to converge perfectly. Self-report measures provide an emic account of learners' subjective experience, whereas observational or discourse-based measures offer more external indicators of behavior. Because yarigai centrally concerns perceived value, meaningfulness, and fulfillment, self-report is a particularly suitable starting point for ASYS, even if future validation should also consider triangulation with behavioral or interactional indicators.

### **4. Why the ASYS Alone Is Not Enough**

The ASYS remains a foundational scale, but several reasons support the need for an activity-specific

complement. First, the distinction between broader and more task-specific levels of analysis is increasingly visible in adjacent work on task engagement, where learner experience is treated as unfolding across nested levels of specificity and timescale rather than residing at a single level of abstraction; however, Hiver et al. (2025) also emphasize that the conceptualization and measurement of these levels remain underdeveloped. By analogy with task engagement, Academic Yurigai may likewise be conceptualized across levels, with a broad academic orientation at the domain level and a more immediate appraisal of worthwhileness at the activity level.

Second, the AYS mainly captures whether learners experience academic study in general as fulfilling and meaningful. It does not directly target the specific activity just completed. As a result, it is less sensitive to within-person dynamic variation across tasks. Third, task engagement research suggests that features of task design matter. Differences in interaction pattern, challenge level, relevance, autonomy, and collaboration can substantially shape learners' experience. This point is also supported by Egbert et al.'s (2021) evidence-based model, which identifies authenticity, social interaction, learning support, interest, autonomy, and challenge as key facilitators of language task engagement. If task characteristics systematically shape engagement, they are also likely to shape whether learners experience an activity as worthwhile, fulfilling, and yurigai-generating. Fourth, the original Academic Yurigai framework already gives conceptual priority to immediate and task-related fulfillment. A measurement model that remains only domain-general risks muting this situated core. For these reasons, a task-level instrument is needed. The AYS can indicate whether a student generally experiences academic life as worthwhile, whereas the ASYS can indicate whether a specific activity was experienced as worth doing.

### **5. The Proposed Activity-Specific Yurigai-9 Scale**

The Activity-Specific Yurigai-9 Scale (ASYS) is proposed as a task-level complement to the AYS. It retains the same broad conceptual scope while shifting the unit of analysis from academic study in general to the specific activity just completed. This preserves theoretical continuity with Kanazawa's (2025a) framework and its preceding Ikigai-9 framework (Fido et al., 2020) while increasing sensitivity to situated fluctuations in learners' experiences.

More specifically, ASYS is intended to assess the learner's appraisal that a particular activity was worth doing. This appraisal is not confined to enjoyment or engagement alone. Rather, it integrates multiple dimensions of task worthwhileness, including intrinsic enjoyment, cognitive and skill growth, personal development, contribution to others, absorbed involvement, recognition, challenge-based accomplishment, real-world relevance, and goal alignment. The correspondence between the AYS and the ASYS can be summarized as follows.

The original AYS Item 1, which concerns Intrinsic Fulfillment in academic study, corresponds to ASYS Item 1, *This activity was enjoyable and engaging*. The shift here is from a general academic orientation to immediate task experience.

AYS Item 2, relating to Curiosity & Intellectual Stimulation, corresponds to ASYS Item 2, *This activity provided new knowledge or improved my skills in a meaningful way*. This preserves the idea of intellectual and skill-related development, but grounds it in a specific activity.

AYS Item 3, focused on Personal Growth & Self-Development, corresponds to ASYS Item 3, *This activity contributed to my personal growth and confidence*.

AYS Item 4, which addresses Social Contribution, corresponds to ASYS Item 4, *This activity had a positive impact on others or helped me collaborate effectively*.

AYS Item 5, relating to Engagement & Flow, corresponds to ASYS Item 5, *I was deeply engaged in this activity and lost track of time*.

AYS Item 6, concerning Recognition & Appreciation, corresponds to ASYS Item 6, *I feel that this activity was valuable because it was recognized by teachers, peers, or colleagues*.

AYS Item 7, dealing with Overcoming Challenges, corresponds to ASYS Item 7, *This activity was challenging at times, but I felt a strong sense of accomplishment afterward*.

AYS Item 8, addressing Application & Real-World Relevance, corresponds to ASYS Item 8, *I can see how what I learned from this activity can be applied in real-life situations*.

Finally, AYS Item 9, concerning Sense of Purpose in Learning and alignment with broader aims, corresponds to ASYS Item 9, *This activity aligns with my long-term goals or personal aspirations*.

Collectively, these adaptations preserve the multidimensional structure of Academic Yurigai while operationalizing it *in situ* and *in concreto*, at the level where learners may experience it most

vividly: the specific activity.

## 6. Preliminary Empirical Evidence for the ASYS

### 6.1 Method

Participants were Japanese undergraduate learners of English enrolled in English classes at a Japanese university. Questionnaire participation was voluntary and conducted in accordance with relevant ethical procedures. Only participants who completed all required questionnaires across all administrations were included in the analyses. The final analytic group consisted of 58 students.

Data were collected across three task administrations plus one end-of-semester administration. At the end of each of three different active learning tasks, participants completed the ASYS (this study) and the Engagement Scale for Task Performance (Toyama, 2018). At the end of the semester, participants completed the AYS (Kanazawa, 2025a), a classroom engagement scale (Eerdemutu et al., 2024), a foreign language enjoyment and anxiety questionnaire (Xethakis et al., 2022). This design made it possible to examine whether ASYS functioned as a task-sensitive measure while also assessing its links with broader, domain-level constructs.

The central measure was the Activity-Specific Yarigai-9 Scale (ASYS), administered after each of the three active learning tasks. The Academic Yarigai-9 Scale (AYS) served as a domain-level comparator. Task engagement was assessed after each task using Toyama's (2018) scale, which includes emotional, behavioral, state, and cognitive engagement subscales. At the end of the semester, participants also completed measures of classroom engagement, foreign language enjoyment, and foreign language anxiety.

Preliminary validation evidence for the ASYS was examined in four ways. First, internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Second, repeated-measures analyses were conducted to determine whether ASYS scores varied across the three activities. Third, convergent validity was examined through correlations with task engagement at each occasion and across mean scores. Fourth, conceptual continuity and distinctiveness were examined through correlations with the AYS, classroom engagement, foreign language enjoyment, and foreign language anxiety.

### 6.2 Results and Discussion

Internal consistency estimates were satisfactory for the central measures. Cronbach's alpha was .85 for the AYS, .87 for ASYS in Activity 1, .89 for ASYS in Activity 2, and .92 for ASYS in Activity 3. Reliability was also high for the comparator measures, including classroom engagement ( $\alpha = .87$ ), foreign language enjoyment ( $\alpha = .94$ ), foreign language anxiety ( $\alpha = .85$ ), and task engagement across the three activities ( $\alpha$ s = .92, .95, and .96, respectively). Corrected item-total correlations for the AYS ranged from .41 to .83, whereas those for the ASYS ranged from .47 to .81 in Activity 1, .51 to .84 in Activity 2, and .55 to .82 in Activity 3.

Descriptive statistics showed that ASYS scores differed across the three activities, with means of 29.28 ( $SD = 6.01$ ) for Activity 1, 27.55 ( $SD = 6.46$ ) for Activity 2, and 24.66 ( $SD = 7.29$ ) for Activity 3. Task engagement totals likewise varied across activities, with means of 91.84 ( $SD = 13.57$ ), 85.21 ( $SD = 17.80$ ), and 79.34 ( $SD = 18.89$ ), respectively. Across the three activity administrations, the mean ASYS score was 27.16 ( $SD = 5.75$ ), and the mean task engagement score was 85.47 ( $SD = 14.87$ ). For the broader, end-of-semester measures, the AYS total had a mean of 35.48 ( $SD = 4.98$ ), classroom engagement had a mean of 31.05 ( $SD = 5.60$ ), foreign language enjoyment had a mean of 50.40 ( $SD = 9.97$ ), and foreign language anxiety had a mean of 23.07 ( $SD = 6.39$ ).

A repeated-measures ANOVA showed that ASYS scores differed significantly across the three activities,  $F(2, 114) = 19.73, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$ . Bonferroni-adjusted paired-samples  $t$  tests indicated significant differences between Activity 1 and Activity 2,  $t(57) = 2.75, p = .024, dz = 0.36$ , between Activity 1 and Activity 3,  $t(57) = 5.42, p < .001, dz = 0.71$ , and between Activity 2 and Activity 3,  $t(57) = 3.95, p < .001, dz = 0.52$ . Task engagement also differed significantly across the three activities,  $F(2, 114) = 23.30, p < .001, \eta^2 = .29$ . Bonferroni-adjusted paired-samples  $t$  tests showed significant differences between Activity 1 and Activity 2,  $t(57) = 3.54, p = .002, dz = 0.46$ , between Activity 1 and Activity 3,  $t(57) = 6.15, p < .001, dz = 0.81$ , and between Activity 2 and Activity 3,  $t(57) = 3.76, p = .001, dz = 0.49$ . These results can be interpreted to indicate that both ASYS and task engagement were sensitive to differences across activities.

As expected, ASYS was strongly and positively associated with task engagement at each measurement occasion. The correlations between ASYS and task engagement total scores were  $r(56)$

= .66,  $p < .001$ , for Activity 1;  $r(56) = .78$ ,  $p < .001$ , for Activity 2; and  $r(56) = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ , for Activity 3. The correlation between participants' mean ASYS score across the three activities and their mean task engagement score was also strong,  $r(56) = .76$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Correlations with the task engagement subscales were consistently positive. For Activity 1, ASYS was associated with emotional engagement,  $r(56) = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ , behavioral engagement,  $r(56) = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ , state engagement,  $r(56) = .51$ ,  $p < .001$ , and cognitive engagement,  $r(56) = .55$ ,  $p < .001$ . For Activity 2, the corresponding correlations were  $r(56) = .71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r(56) = .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r(56) = .62$ ,  $p < .001$ , and  $r(56) = .69$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively. For Activity 3, the correlations were  $r(56) = .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r(56) = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r(56) = .53$ ,  $p < .001$ , and  $r(56) = .63$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively.

To examine links with broader related constructs, correlations were calculated between the mean ASYS score and the AYS, classroom engagement, foreign language enjoyment, and foreign language anxiety. Mean ASYS was positively associated with the AYS,  $r(56) = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ , and foreign language enjoyment,  $r(56) = .47$ ,  $p < .001$ . This pattern suggests that activity-specific yarigai is meaningfully related to positive task experience, but is not reducible to enjoyment alone. In other words, learners may find an activity enjoyable and still differ in the extent to which they experience it as growth-promoting, purposeful, socially meaningful, or worth sustained effort.

Mean ASYS also showed a weak positive association with foreign language anxiety,  $r(56) = .30$ ,  $p = .021$ , but was not significantly associated with total classroom engagement,  $r(56) = .21$ ,  $p = .109$ . Although the positive relation with anxiety may seem counterintuitive and should be interpreted cautiously, it is not necessarily inconsistent with the broader literature on L2 anxiety. Recent work has noted that anxiety is often detrimental to the quality of L2 learning and performance, yet can also function as a motivational force in goal pursuit by heightening vigilance, effort, and action readiness under conditions of perceived obligation, challenge, or possible negative consequences (Papi & Khajavy, 2023). From this perspective, the present preliminary finding may indicate that activities experienced as worthwhile are not always comfortable or purely pleasant; they may also be experienced as demanding and effortful. This interpretation is broadly compatible with recent calls to distinguish among different forms of L2 anxiety, including task-specific anxiety and goal-pursuit anxiety, rather than treating anxiety as a uniformly negative construct. When examined separately for each activity, ASYS correlated with the AYS at  $r(56) = .25$ ,  $p = .054$ , for Activity 1,  $r(56) = .41$ ,  $p = .002$ , for Activity 2, and  $r(56) = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ , for Activity 3.

Overall, these findings offer preliminary support for the ASYS as a construct that is closely tied to task-level engagement and moderately associated with domain-level Academic Yarigai, while not being reducible to broad classroom engagement tendencies.

## 7. Implications for Research and Pedagogy

The proposed ASYS has potential value for both research and practice. For research, it could support comparisons across task types, repeated-measures designs, and studies examining links with task engagement, task motivation, subjective task value, epistemic emotions, boredom, and learning outcomes. It may be especially useful in designs that distinguish within-person fluctuations from between-person tendencies, thereby clarifying whether learners differ mainly in their general level of academic yarigai, in their sensitivity to task features, or in both. Another important implication is about measurement. Because task engagement research has shown that self-report, observational, and discourse-analytic approaches may capture different aspects of learners' task experience, ASYS ought not to be understood as a stand-alone substitute for other approaches to task analysis. Rather, it is best viewed as an *emic* measure of perceived worthwhileness that can be triangulated with participation patterns, interactional behavior, and performance outcomes in future studies.

For pedagogy, the ASYS could function as a diagnostic and reflective tool for evaluating task design. Teachers often know whether students participated in an activity, but not whether students experienced that activity as meaningful, growth-promoting, socially relevant, or aligned with personal aims. The ASYS offers a way to assess not only engagement, but also whether learners regard an activity as genuinely worth doing. In this respect, it responds to a practical problem noted by Kanazawa and Kemp (2025): although constructs such as motivation, enjoyment, flow, and learner identity have become increasingly differentiated in research, these distinctions may be difficult for teachers to use in everyday classroom practice. By contrast, Academic Yarigai provides a more pragmatic, integrated lens through which teachers and learners can reflect on whether a task feels fulfilling, intellectually stimulating, purposeful, and worthwhile. Kanazawa and Kemp (2025) further

suggest that the nine dimensions of Academic Yarigai may be understood not simply as separate components, but as “nine gates” into a holistic sense of yarigai. From this perspective, the ASYS may help teachers identify which dimensions are present or missing in a given activity and thereby support the design of learning experiences that foster not only immediate engagement, but also more sustainable and multifaceted forms of motivation and well-being.

### **8. Future Agenda: Validation and Applications**

As the ASYS is proposed here as a conceptual and preliminary measurement framework, further empirical development remains essential. Future studies should examine content validity, conduct cognitive interviews, investigate internal consistency across broader samples, and test convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity. It will also be important to determine whether the ASYS is best treated as a unidimensional index of overall activity-specific yarigai, a multidimensional profiling tool, or both, depending on the intended use. Further work should also test the scale across different task types, educational settings, and learner populations. In addition, triangulation with behavioral, observational, or discourse-based indicators may clarify how perceived yarigai relates to task participation and performance. The present positive association with foreign language anxiety should also be examined further, as it may reflect the possibility that worthwhile activities are not always comfortable, but can also be experienced as challenging or effortful.

Beyond psychometric refinement, the ASYS also opens up a broader research and practical agenda. In educational settings, the scale may be used to examine how different forms of learning activity—such as group work, project-based learning, extensive reading, presentations, and discussions—vary in the degree to which they generate yarigai for learners. Such applications would allow researchers and teachers to move beyond asking whether students are merely engaged and instead pay mindful attention to which activities are experienced as genuinely worth doing.

The ASYS may also be extended beyond formal education. In workplace settings, for example, it could be used to evaluate which job-related tasks are experienced as most fulfilling, growth-promoting, or meaningful for employees. This may be especially useful in research on motivation, work design, professional development, and occupational well-being. Similarly, in the domain of personal hobbies, extramural activities, and skills training, the ASYS may help assess how meaningful different activities—such as music, sports, art, coding, or writing—feel to individuals, thereby providing a way to examine activity-specific fulfillment beyond institutional contexts.

Another promising direction concerns cross-cultural research. Because yarigai is originally a culturally grounded concept with potential relevance beyond Japanese contexts, future studies could investigate how people in different cultural settings interpret and experience yarigai in relation to specific activities. Such work would not only test the broader applicability of the ASYS, but also contribute to comparative research on meaning, motivation, and worthwhileness across cultures.

Seen in the round, these directions suggest that the ASYS is not only a promising measurement tool for validating activity-specific Academic Yarigai, but also a potentially versatile framework for exploring how people experience different activities as enjoyable, meaningful, and worthy of sustained effort across educational, professional, personal, and cultural domains.

### **9. Conclusion**

Academic Yarigai has made a contribution by showing that learning should be understood not only in terms of engagement or motivation, but also in terms of meaningful fulfillment and worthwhileness. The next step is to measure these qualities at the level of the specific activity. Drawing on the logic of task engagement research, the present paper has argued that activity-specific yarigai deserves separate conceptualization and has proposed the Activity-Specific Yarigai-9 Scale (ASYS) as a task-level complement to the original AYS. More broadly, the proposed ASYS invites a shift from asking only whether learners are engaged in a task to asking whether they experience that task as valuable, meaningful, and worth sustained effort. The preliminary empirical evidence reported here suggests that ASYS may help researchers and teachers better understand not only whether learners participate, but whether they experience an activity as genuinely worth doing.

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### **Appendix. Activity-Specific Yarigai-9 Scale (ASYS)**

Item	Dimension
1. This activity was enjoyable and engaging.	Intrinsic Fulfillment
2. This activity provided new knowledge or improved my skills in a meaningful way.	Curiosity & Intellectual Stimulation
3. This activity contributed to my personal growth and confidence.	Personal Growth & Self-Development
4. This activity had a positive impact on others or helped me collaborate effectively.	Social Contribution
5. I was deeply engaged in this activity and lost track of time.	Engagement & Flow
6. I feel that this activity was valuable because it was recognized by teachers, peers, or colleagues.	Recognition & Appreciation
7. This activity was challenging at times, but I felt a strong sense of accomplishment afterward.	Overcoming Challenges
8. I can see how what I learned from this activity can be applied in real-life situations.	Application & Real-World Relevance
9. This activity aligns with my long-term goals or personal aspirations.	Sense of Purpose in Learning

Instructions. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement regarding the specific activity you have just engaged in, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

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### **Supplementary Information**

Further resources and project updates on Academic Yarigai are available at the following webpage: Researchmap (<https://researchmap.jp/yu-kanazawa/yarigai>).