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## SPECIAL ISSUE: TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING IN JAPAN

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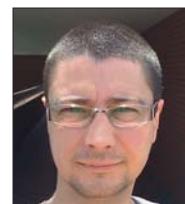
**In this month's issue . . .****Special Issue:  
Task-based language teaching in Japan**

As a refinement to communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language teaching (TBLT) began developing over two decades ago, most famously in the seminal work of Prabhu in India in the 1980's. However, it is still sometimes considered new to many teachers in Japan, where for a variety of reasons CLT has never quite taken hold, and indeed has often left educators or institutions frustrated and looking for viable alternatives. Nevertheless, TBLT continues to grow as a dominant approach to language education worldwide, as evidenced by the increasing popularity of task-based iterations of tests such as the new TOEIC, descriptor systems such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and commercial task-based textbooks.

Therefore, in this special issue of *The Language Teacher*, we are pleased to present three very different yet complementary articles which will hopefully serve to inform, inspire and invigorate teachers and researchers alike. In our first feature article, **Jane** and **Dave Willis**, award-winning authors and two of the most prominent international voices on the subject, make a compelling case as to why TBLT can and should be implemented more widely in Japan. In our second feature **Andrea Little** and **Terry Fieldsend**, Japan-based teachers and researchers, present initial findings on using form-focused tasks with semantically-enhanced input. Finally, **Fergus O'Dwyer** shares his experience supplementing a task-based syllabus by using a variation of the European Language Portfolio.

Ultimately, we share Jane Willis' hope in her introduction to *Teachers Exploring Tasks* (2005) that our readers may be inspired to experiment with a TBLT approach in their classes and contribute to Japan-based research into tasks.

*Marcos Benevides, Kansai Gaidai University – Guest Editor*  
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## 特集号：日本におけるタスクを中心とした教授法

コミュニケーションタイプ言語教授法(CLT)を改善したタスクを中心とした教授法(TBLT)は、今から20年以上前の1980年代に始まったもので、インドのプラブによる画期的な研究が特に有名です。それにもかかわらず日本ではこの教授法は様々な理由からまだ確立されておらず、多くの教員にとっては時として馴染みが薄く、実際にしばしば教員や教育機関が満足できず、現実味のある代替策が求められるケースもあります。しかしながらTBLTは主要な言語教授法として世界的に発展し続けています。新TOEICのようなタスク中心のテストの数々や、CEF(ヨーロッパ言語共通参考枠組)のようなシステム、そしてタスク中心のテキストなどといへんな人気からもそれがわかります。

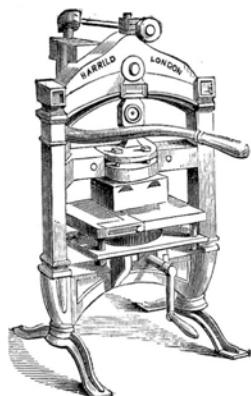
このような理由でこのTLT 特集号では、3つの非常に異なりながらも互いに補完し合う記事を掲載し、読者の皆様に情報と刺激と活気とを与えることができればと思います。1つ目のFeature では、受賞経験者で世界的にもたいへん卓越した著者・研究者であるJane Willis と Dave Willis が、なぜ日本にTBLTが導入される必要があり、どうすればそれが可能かについて述べています。2つ目の Feature では、日本在住の教員であり研究者でもあるAndrea Little と Terry Fieldsend が、意味を強化したインプットを使用した言語形式に焦点をおいたタスクでの現状における所見について発表しています。最後に、Fergus O'Dwyer が、ヨーロッパ言語ポートフォリオを使って、タスク中心のシラバスを補完した経験を分かち合ってくれます。

最終的には、Jane Willis がTeachers Exploring Tasks (2005) の序論で述べたように、読者の皆様がクラスでTBLTを試みて、日本における研究に貢献していただければと私たちも希望しております。

*Marcos Benevides, Kansai Gaidai University  
– Guest Editor*

*Chris Valvona, Okinawa Christian University  
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# Task-based language teaching: Some questions and answers



## Keywords

task-based, TBLT, TBL, TBI, TBA, meaning-based, communicative language teaching, CLT, language descriptors, CEFR, ACTFL, CLB

Dave and Jane Willis present a general overview of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) inspired by questions posed by language teachers working in Japan. The paper includes a brief review of the literature, insights and arguments regarding the benefits of TBLT and how it might fit into the Japanese context, a description of how TBLT can be regarded as a development of Communicative Language Teaching, issues involved with introducing an innovation into existing curricula and, finally, methods of assessing TBLT. The article clarifies broad concerns about TBLT and provides a rationale for adopting it in Japanese classrooms.

本論は、日本で教える外国語教師による問題提起に感銘を受け Dave Willis氏とJane Willis氏により書かれたタスクを中心とした教授法(TBLT)の概要である。先行研究、TBLTの重要性の省察と議論、TLBTが日本の教育現場にどのように受け入れられることができるか、また、どのようにしてコミュニケーション言語教授法の発展したもののみなされるか、現存するカリキュラムに新しい教授法を取り入れる際の問題点、TBLTの評価方法などが論じられている。本論の目的はTBLTに関する主な懸念を取り除き、その教育法を日本の教育に取り入れ活用するための根拠を示すものである。

## Dave and Jane Willis

### Why do we need TBLT?

The aim of language teaching worldwide is to enable learners to use the language they have learned in school or college to communicate confidently and effectively with other users of English in the world outside. This aim prioritises fluency rather than accuracy. Learners should be able to use the language with speed and confidence even if this means sacrificing grammatical accuracy. A task-based approach, where learners actively engage in meaning focused activities, for much (but not all) of their time in class, is explicitly designed to achieve this.

How many learners leave Japanese high schools with a usable competence in English—confidently able to take part in a conversation on everyday topics, able to surf the net in English and to take advantage of the vast array of published material in English? Japanese teachers have often told us, "Our students know the grammar, but they can't use the language." This prompts the question, "Is there any point in knowing the grammar if you can't use it?" Japan is not alone in this.

English teachers all over the world express the same worries. Teachers of Spanish and French in the UK have the

same concerns. There is something seriously wrong with the way languages are taught in many classrooms. We believe that one of the problems is a failure to recognise that language is much more than a grammatical system. Learning a language involves *Learning How to Mean* as given in the title of Halliday (1975). A command of standard grammar is a part of this, but we need to recognise two things. As we have seen it is possible to have some knowledge of how the grammar works without being able to apply that knowledge. On the other hand it is possible to communicate effectively in a language for all kinds of purposes without conforming closely to a standard grammar. Most teachers are aware of this and many are aware that TBLT offers a realistic alternative to the traditional grammar-based approaches which have consistently failed our learners. Among grammar-based approaches we would include PPP. In a PPP methodology learners are so dominated by the presentation and practice that at the production stage they are preoccupied with grammatical form rather than with

meaning. We need to shift the emphasis in teaching foreign languages to a focus on understanding and expressing meanings. This almost certainly entails beginning with a more lexical approach and gradually integrating grammar once learners have a wide enough vocabulary to be able to see how grammar can help fine-tune their message.

The purpose of this article is to address some of the questions which are constantly raised about TBLT and which perhaps get in the way of a much wider application of TBLT principles.

## How does TBLT relate to communicative language teaching?

Approaches to language teaching can be seen on a continuum from form-based to meaning-based. *Form-based* approaches rest on the assumption that language should be introduced or presented to learners item by item as a formal system. Once they have understood how a particular linguistic form is structured and used they can begin to use it for communication. *Meaning-based* approaches make the assumption that learners develop a language system through their attempts to use that language. The role of the teacher is to provide opportunities for meaningful activities, to organise exposure to language which will provide appropriate input for the learner's system, enabling natural acquisition, and to encourage learners to look critically at that input and learn from it, for example by finding a new way of expressing a particular meaning.

TBLT developed from communicative approaches. In TBLT, a task is seen as central to the learning cycle. A task has a number of defining characteristics, among them: does it engage the learners' interest; is there a primary focus on meaning; is success measured in terms of non-linguistic outcome rather than accurate use of language forms; and, does it relate to real world activities? The more confidently we can answer yes to each of these questions the more task-like the activity (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 13). So a task-based approach is very much towards the meaning-based end of the spectrum.

Learners may engage with a task simply because the topic is appealing. For example, a group of teenagers asked to *Work with a partner. What do you think makes a good party?* may well find the topic intrinsically interesting and engage in discussion. But they are more likely to do this if they are given more specific instructions: *Write a list and agree on the three most important ingredients of a good party* (Kay & Jones, 2000, p. 62). And the chances of meaningful interaction may be further increased if there is a teacher led introduction in which the

teacher describes a really memorable party she attended and gives one reason why she found it so memorable. So a successful task starts with a basic idea but it is the way that idea is exploited that helps to ensure real learner participation.

It is possible to take a less promising starting point and generate a lot of meaningful interaction. A written text comparing the climate at the North and South Poles may not seem likely to engage the interest of teenage learners. But if you start with a question *Which is colder, the North Pole or the South Pole?* Learners will begin to commit themselves to an opinion. You can also introduce a questionnaire along these lines:

Look at these statements. Say whether each one is true or false:

1. *There is no land at the Antarctic—only an ice-cap.*
2. *The ice is several metres thick in the middle of the Arctic Ocean.*
3. *Water keeps in the heat of the sun better than dry land.*

Learners then begin to apply their knowledge of the world in order to examine possible arguments. This leads to animated discussion before the question is finally resolved in a reading passage which learners approach with real expectation and interest (for a lesson plan based on this idea see [www.willis-elt.co.uk/taskbased.html](http://www.willis-elt.co.uk/taskbased.html)). So even a relatively unpromising topic can be presented and contextualised in a task sequence in such a way as to maximise learner engagement and a focus on outcome and meaning.

Once we have established the importance of an outcome we can reasonably judge the success of task performance in terms of the achievement of that outcome.

Given the limitations of space here this is necessarily a very brief introduction. The best concise introduction to TBLT is probably Richard Frost's excellent article on the British Council/BBC Teaching English website:

[teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/a-task-based-approach](http://teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/a-task-based-approach)

To supplement this there are two papers (D. Willis *Accuracy, Fluency and Autonomous Learning: A Three Way Distinction* and J. Willis *Task-Based Learning – What Kind of Adventure?*) available online at [www.willis-elt.co.uk/books.html](http://www.willis-elt.co.uk/books.html).

## What does the research tell us about TBLT?

Researchers into second language acquisition over the last forty years disagree over detailed findings, but there is one powerful consensus. There is overwhelming evidence that learners need to engage with meaning if they are to develop a grammatical system. This begins with the interlanguage studies of Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972), through the work of Krashen (1981), Long (1988) to Skehan (1998) and Ellis (2003). There are variations in the detail. Krashen, for example, argues that the explicit study of grammar plays no part in the development of a usable language system. This is largely supported by Long, although he argues for a focus on language within a meaning-based context. Skehan accepts the value of studying grammatical form prior to use, but believes that language use is central to the learning process and explicitly rejects an approach based heavily on the presentation and practice of grammatical forms. The important thing, however, is that almost all studies see language learning as a developmental process which is mediated largely by the learner. In other words it is the learners' experience of using language which enables them to develop a usable language system. The question for teachers is how best to provide that experience and how best to help learners exploit it.

This is supported by our experience in the classroom. How many of these observations match your own experience?

- In the early stages of learning, learners achieve meanings by putting words together without paying too much attention to grammatical niceties. When producing language spontaneously they consistently produce utterances like *Yesterday I go cinema* instead of *Yesterday I went to the cinema*.
- In spontaneous production they continue to make mistakes even after they have learned the relevant grammar. They go on using the base form of the verb to express past time even after they have worked hard on learning the past tense and can produce past tense forms with reasonable consistency under controlled conditions, in a grammar test for example.
- Some grammatical systems are so resistant to teaching/learning that they go on causing problems for years after they have first been presented to learners. We are thinking here of things like the article system and the use of perfect and continuous aspect. We once asked a group of teachers to list the ten most frequent mistakes in year 1 and year 5 of high school. Seven of the errors were identified in both lists.

- If we set the goal of language learners as reaching an error free native-like performance then hardly any learners would ever reach this goal. And this is certainly the goal implicit in a grammar based approach even though many teachers, researchers, and scholars would argue that it is unrealistic.
- Because of their concern, even obsession, with accuracy many learners are reluctant to produce language for fear of making mistakes, and are quite incapable of attaining a level of fluency which would be acceptable for everyday use.

Our own experience in the classroom, our observation of classrooms, and our discussions with teachers over many years suggests that most, if not all, of these observations hold good in the majority of classrooms. And all of these observations reinforce the findings of SLA research. When we persist in a grammar-based approach with its overwhelming emphasis on accuracy we are flying in the face, not only of research, but also of our own classroom experience.

There are a number of research studies which are concerned specifically with communicative language teaching and which are applicable to TBLT. Ellis (1994) summarises the findings as follows:

1. Giving beginner learners opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom helps to develop communicative ability and also results in linguistic abilities no worse than those developed through more traditional form-focused approaches.
2. Communicative classroom settings may not be sufficient to ensure the development of high levels of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, although they may be very effective in developing fluency and effective discourse skills. (p. 604)

By linguistic abilities Ellis means control of the grammar. Given that the proper goal of language tuition is the development of fluency and effective discourse skills rather than a narrow linguistic competence, Ellis can reasonably be taken as endorsing meaning-based approaches. Even if we have some doubts about the efficacy of such approaches we should still be prepared to give them a realistic trial, given the recognised failure of the more traditional methods outlined above.

In the TBL approach proposed in Willis and Willis (2007) there is ample opportunity for learners to pay careful attention to language within the task cycle, and an explicit focus on form after the task cycle. Space does not allow us to provide a detailed discussion of the relationship between task and

language development, but we are sure that it is more complex than suggested in Little & Fieldsend (2009), and Samuda, (2001).

### **Will TBLT work in the Japanese context?**

There are often doubts expressed about the applicability of communicative approaches in classrooms which are traditionally teacher centred and in societies which show a preference for more transmissive styles of teaching. It would be right to be cautious if the existing approach were producing the desired results. But we have seen that this is clearly not the case. The great majority of Japanese learners leave school as *remedial beginners*, without a usable competence in English. Since the current approaches have been shown not to work it is necessary to try some sort of innovation.

Admittedly there are practical difficulties in the implementation of TBLT in Japanese classrooms. Textbooks in Japanese high schools are not designed for such an approach and most teachers are not trained for TBLT. But this is no reason for not making a start. Textbooks can be adapted and supplemented. Willis and Willis (2007) offer a chapter on integrating TBLT with existing materials. The teaching skills acquired in a traditional approach can also be used for a task-based approach. The important thing is to shift the balance of activities from form to meaning. What is needed is the conviction that a task-based approach can work and that it will offer learners much greater opportunities than the current sterile grammar-based methodology, including PPP. In Japanese universities and in the private sector there are fewer constraints because there is greater freedom of choice and action. Again what is needed is conviction and determination.

The level of methodological innovation is not as high as might at first be thought. Teachers in many parts of the world are familiar with the idea of a *skills lesson*. These lessons have a great deal in common with task-based approaches in that they depend on getting learners to do things with language, not simply to manipulate language. At present, skills lessons are seen as the icing on the cake, as giving learners the opportunity to apply the language they have acquired. In such a lesson there is little in the way of language input and much less teacher control of language. The switch to a more task-based approach would see skills lessons predominate. The study of language would be subordinated to the application of communication skills rather than the other way round. In a task-based approach, a skills lesson would end with a focus on forms that have occurred in the course of the lesson.

How will this kind of innovation be received by Japanese learners? Again this question leads us to question how current approaches are perceived by learners. The recognition that English tuition does not enable learners to use the language is widespread not only among teachers. Learners and parents know this as well. They will welcome change if it can be shown to produce results.

We accept that it would be foolhardy for individual teachers to challenge the received wisdom on their own. If innovation is to succeed it needs to be carefully managed. Ideally this should be sanctioned and implemented at as high a level as possible. The freedom to experiment should be sanctioned at a national level. Failing that, it is possible to work at the level of an individual institution—a school or college. There are many examples of teachers successfully applying task-based principles in Japan. Willis and Willis (2007) refer to Jason Moser's work at Osaka Shoin Women's University (pp. 182-183). Moser was careful to set out explicitly the rationale for change and explain clearly to learners, parents, and other interested parties the reasons for the new programme. It is also important to give learners constant feedback to reassure them of their progress.

### **Why is it so difficult to introduce innovations like TBLT?**

The management of innovation is important. If a proposed innovation is theoretically convincing it is met with a number of defensive reactions. The first is the one that we have noted already. All kinds of problems and criticisms are identified, despite the fact that those problems and criticisms apply in even greater measure to existing practice. So critics of TBLT point to the fact that research indicates that TBLT cannot guarantee accuracy, quite ignoring that the same criticism can be made of grammar-based approaches. They suggest that some learners might find the learning outcomes unsatisfactory, but they fail to acknowledge that under the existing approach almost everybody finds the learning outcomes unsatisfactory. They shake their heads and wonder if, given the lack of concern with formal accuracy, the proposed innovation will help learners achieve a usable competence. But they seem not to recognise that the existing approach clearly fails to do this. In other words all kinds of criticisms, problems, and obstacles are placed in the way of innovation, but there is a failure to apply the same critical criteria to existing practice. It is important to establish from the outset that the traditional methodology is failing learners. There is a clear need for innovation.

A second line of defence is to claim that the proposed innovation has already been tried and found wanting. People claim that communicative language teaching has been tried but that it was a failure so people have now gone back to teaching grammar. Although communicative language teaching has been widely recommended in the literature it has rarely been fully applied. A look at course-books and teaching materials worldwide will confirm this. It is difficult to find commercial materials that are communicative on anything but a very weak definition of that term. Overwhelmingly materials are grammar-based, and begin each teaching cycle with the presentation of some kind of language point. This is often the case even when the materials lay claim to some kind of task-based methodology.

### **How can TBLT be assessed?**

It is relatively easy to assess grammar-based approaches, but the important thing is not to find out whether students know the grammar, but whether they can use it.

As a starting point for task-based assessment (TBA), both summative and formative, we can take descriptors like the Common European Framework for Languages, the ACTFL Guidelines, and the Canadian Language Benchmarks. These are attempts to describe what learners can do with the language rather than how well they can manipulate it.

Commenting on procedures adopted by most international exam providers, Hawkey (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 226) writes that "the rationale for task-based language teaching...is equally applicable for language testing. The task has become the basic element in the design of most main language tests." The important thing is to apply communicative assessment criteria like appropriacy, fluency, and achievement of outcome and grade based on that. Many teachers already use split-marking incorporating these criteria, which can be supplemented (e.g., breadth of vocabulary) and weighted according to the task set.

Ellis (2003, pp. 312-316) suggests that for formative assessment, the tasks used in teaching can be used for testing. These "can contribute to the goals of monitoring progress and guiding instruction" (p. 312), and can be carried out by the teacher, using communicative rating scales, and possibly calling on a second rater for more objectivity. Learners can also be trained to use self-assessment. Planned testing of oral performance on tasks is more complex to set up (e.g., learners can be recorded doing tasks in pairs) and more time-consuming than testing writing. However, Ellis distinguishes between planned and incidental (day to day) testing, and,

on the latter, quotes Brindley (2001, p. 128), "with experience, many teachers become skilled judges and observers capable of evaluating the quality of language performances and making fine-grained diagnoses of learners' difficulties."

Any well-designed task-based programme should provide learners with a rich exposure to language and multiple opportunities to use the language for themselves. This experience should result in a wide vocabulary and a feel for what is right and thus equip learners to do better even in tests of a more traditional nature.

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**Dave Willis** worked for twenty years as a British Council English Language Officer, then as a teacher and teacher trainer, most recently at the University of Birmingham. He has published widely in the ELT field, authoring numerous books and twice winning the Duke of Edinburgh Prize. His latest books are *Rules, Patterns and Words: Grammar and lexis in English language teaching* (CUP, 2003) and *Doing Task-based Teaching* (OUP, 2007), co-authored with his spouse, Jane Willis.

**Jane Willis** is a veteran teacher and prizewinning author. She taught most recently in the TEFL/TESOL graduate programme at Aston University. She has authored and co-authored many books, including the *Collins Cobuild* series (with her spouse, Dave Willis), and co-edited *Task-based Instruction in Foreign Language Education* with Betty Lou Leaver (Georgetown University Press, 2004) and *Teachers Exploring Tasks* with Corony Edwards (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Her latest book, for young learners, is *English Through Music* with Anice Paterson (Oxford University Press, 2008).

They can be contacted through their website at [willis-elt.co.uk](http://willis-elt.co.uk).

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# Form-focused tasks using semantically enhanced input

## Keywords

task-based, TBLT, TBL, TBI, form focused, FonF, meaning focused, semantically enhanced, ESP, prepositions of location, realia

Kumaravadivelu (2007) suggested a need for more research into tasks that raise learners' awareness of gaps in their interlanguage (IL) and for the design of tasks that are communicative yet have sufficient focus on form. This paper describes a small research project using realia (a miniature apartment) and Samuda's (2001) design components of input on data, operations on data, and outcomes, to target prepositions. The task design objective was to "create a semantic space," leading learners to use the targeted form (Samuda, 2001, p. 122). The authors believe that semantically enhanced tasks can indeed induce learners to notice a gap in their IL, seek language input on a highlighted form, and then apply that form with a greater degree of accuracy/control as a result of their increased appreciation of that particular meaning-form relationship. The task described, although proactive, follows a meaning → form → meaning task cycle, where meaning is primary.

これまでに、学習者の中間言語に存在する欠落の認識を高めるタスク及び、コミュニケーションながらも充分な言語形式の焦点化 (focus on form) を持つタスクデザインに関する研究の必要性が説かれて来ている (Kumaravadivelu, 2007)。本研究は、前置詞をターゲットとして、実物教材 (ミニチュアアパート) と、Samuda のフレームワークのデザイン構成要素であるデータのインプット・データの操作、及び結果を使用した小規模研究である。タスクデザインの目標は「意味空間 (semantic space) をつくる」ことにより学習者をターゲットとされる言語形式に導くことである (Samuda, 2001, p. 122)。著者らは、意味が強化されたタスクは、学習者が、彼らの中間言語に存在する欠落に気づき、特定の言語形式を持つ言語のインプットを探究し、意味と言語形式の関係を一層理解した結果、その言語形式を高い正確性・制御性をもって応用することを促すと考える。本論で取り上げたタスクは、前もって指示するものではあるが、意味を重視した意味→言語形式→意味タスクサイクルに準ずるものである。

**Andrea Little  
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**T**HIS paper presents preliminary research on a form-focused task using semantically enhanced input data to target prepositions of location. It is based on a small classroom-based study that grew out of a need to develop tasks that targeted specific functions and/or structures in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. The researchers began with three tasks targeting prepositions, passives, and articles, using semantically enhanced input. Tasks were then experimented with to see if they could be adapted to different proficiency levels and courses.

## Background

Within task-based language teaching (TBLT) there is little or no consensus on focus on form. Focus on form (FonF) "consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features—by the teacher and/or one or more students—triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production" (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). At its most basic, the debate ranges from whether to include a FonF to how to include one.

In designing tasks, the researchers' goal was to create communicative tasks capable of targeting specific language forms without being overtly structure trapping; that is, without specifying a particular language form in advance (Skehan, 1998).

Willis and Willis (2001) have criticized meta-communicative tasks, tasks focusing explicitly on a particular form, as not being tasks in their own right as meaning is secondary. Yet, from using tasks in the EFL classroom, the researchers feel that a reactive approach to FonF, where teachers notice language difficulties and address them as they arise rather than targeting them proactively in advance, is not always practical or efficient (Dough-



ty & Williams, 1998). First, it is rare for two learners to demonstrate the same gap or linguistic need during a single task. Second, at other times, a teacher may notice the same mistake recurring over a sequence of several tasks but not frequently enough within any single task to warrant becoming a FonF for that task. Third, some syllabuses, especially for ESP courses, constrain teachers to cover certain linguistic forms in a limited amount of time. Finally, for many learners the FonF comes too late in the task cycle, after the need has passed. Therefore, in creating these tasks, the researchers attempted to use a proactive task design model which nonetheless could allow learners to move from meaning to form and back to meaning in a helpful way.

Kumaravadivelu (2007) observes that two of the most intractable issues in TBLT are the relationship between form and meaning and managing attentional resources. Skehan (1998) notes that within the context of TBLT, task orientations range from an explicit focus on structure to an exclusive focus on meaning, where both extremes "concentrate on one aspect of language performance at the expense of others" (p. 121). Critics of a form-based approach accuse such tasks of being structure-trapping (Skehan, 1998) or of artificiality, producing language for display purposes only (Willis, 1996), whereas critics of a meaning-focused approach contend the lack of structure and control can lead to fossilization as it ignores the need for systematic language development and promotes over-reliance on communication strategies and lexically-based language (Skehan, 1998). A further criticism can be made that a purely meaning-focused approach limits opportunities for teachers to direct systematic language learning through task design.

Skehan (1998), in line with Long (1991; Long & Robinson, 1998), argues that an intermediate approach that achieves a productive form-meaning balance is possible by manipulating the learners' attentional resources effectively. In such an approach, the chances for interlanguage (IL) development are increased by maximizing opportunities for noticing in the initial stages of the task and then creating "effective attentional conditions" later in the task to draw learners' attention to a FonF (Skehan, 1998, p. 131). This is possible by alternating between a focus on meaning and a focus on form as learners, through negotiation of meaning, become aware of a need to mean (Swain, 1998). Skehan identifies Samuda's (2001) approach to task design as being representative of this intermediate approach. He further comments that her design has "a means of creating a need for language while at the same time providing methods of supplying that need without too-heavy-handed a focus on form for its own sake"

(Skehan, 1998, p. 147). In a classroom-based study examining the role of the teacher in a knowledge-constraining task to teach epistemic modality, Samuda (2001) demonstrated that it is possible to design communicative tasks using semantically enhanced input, where the form-meaning connections are both salient and obvious to the learners. This design framework and concept of semantically enhanced input seemed particularly relevant for what the researchers wanted to construct; that is, communicative tasks which do not explicitly trap structure.

### The design framework

In Samuda's task framework, three design components (input data, operations on data, and outcomes) operate sequentially as interlocking stages. Output from one component provides input for the following stage in a meaning → form → meaning progression that "manage[s] shifts in attentional focus as the tasks unfold" and provides "opportunities for focusing attention on novel form/meaning connections" (Samuda, 2001, p. 121). The input data highlight an area of meaning to create a semantic space. The learners' current IL resources may not fill this space adequately, but the operations on data, or task demands, are designed to create a need to mean, pushing learners to fill the space as precisely as they can. According to Swain, "[I]t is while attempting to produce the target language (vocally or subvocally) that learners may notice that they do not know how to say (or write) precisely the meaning they wish to convey" (1998, p. 67; italics in original). In Samuda's model, the FonF is introduced to coincide with the learners' awareness of their need for the target structure. Samuda contends that this framework is not structure trapping because the progression is from specific areas of meaning to form and then back to meaning.

In tasks designed with a meaning → form → meaning progression, Samuda (2001) stresses that the targeted semantic area must be highlighted before learner attention can be directed to meaning-form relationships. For semantically complex items, where the form-meaning relationship may not be transparent, the task input data can be designed to be semantically enhanced. In Samuda's study targeting modals, an opaque structure, task input data were semantically enhanced to attract learner attention to probability and possibility. The task input data included instructions to the learners to speculate on a person's identity, a bag of items representing contents from the person's pockets, and a chart for registering the degree of probability.

The input data thus focused learner attention on the targeted semantic area.

## **The study**

The researchers used Samuda's framework and idea of semantic enhancement to design similar communicative tasks to highlight form-meaning relationships. Tasks targeting prepositions, passives, and articles were created, and realia were used to semantically enhance input. This section describes preliminary research using a task designed to target prepositions in a class of low proficiency learners.

### **Research questions**

In creating this task, the following research questions were asked:

1. Does the input data highlight an area of meaning to create a semantic space that learners attempt to fill?
2. Does this type of task, with a meaning → form → meaning progression, aid in acquisition of the target form?
3. Is it useful to adapt Samuda's design to create semantically enhanced tasks for other structures?

### **Setting and participants**

The study was conducted with a small class of three adult learners, teachers in Japanese elementary schools, motivated, but with low levels of English proficiency.

### **The task**

The input data were semantically enhanced to attract participant attention to the location of items (the area of meaning). The input data were (a) a miniature apartment (approximately 40x40x15cm) complete with furniture, crockery and cutlery, cooking utensils and foodstuffs, and electrical appliances, such as a vacuum cleaner and a stove; (b) task instructions; and (c) an empty rectangle drawn on a whiteboard to represent a plan of the apartment. At the start, the apartment was placed in the centre of a table with a cloth covering it. The task rubric instructed one participant to remove the cloth and look at the apartment for one minute. While doing this, the other participants were asked to draw a large rectangle in their notebooks to represent a bird's-eye plan of the apartment (this plan had been drawn on the whiteboard to facilitate accuracy).

Operations on the input data required one participant to describe the apartment in enough detail for

the other participants to draw a diagram showing the location of items in the apartment. As the participant described the apartment, the others were allowed to ask questions to clarify the positions of items. The interaction was recorded for analysis. At no point were the participants instructed to use prepositions.

### **Analysis of task process**

Two aspects of task performance are analyzed as the task unfolds: pre-language focus and post-language focus.

#### **Pre-language focus**

From the start, the learners were fascinated by the realia: the 3D nature of the apartment seemed to result in a curiosity and a level of engagement beyond that usually noted when using the textbook. The Extract 1 is from the start of the interaction.

#### **Extract 1. K describing apartment; H, M drawing diagrams**

1. K: Centre table is circle.
2. H: Centre? Big or small?
3. K: Middle.
4. M: Square, circle?
5. K: Circle?
6. M: Circle?
7. K: Circle. It's a bit right side.
8. M: Right side. Circle table?

Extract 1 seems to show an initial curiosity to understand the sizes and shapes of things in the apartment. The first attempt to explain and understand the location of something (the language target) appears towards the end of the interaction.

#### **Extract 2. K continues describing apartment while H, M draw**

9. K: Yes. And er there is a dish on the table.
10. H: mm mm
11. M: How many? [H: How many?]
12. K: One dish.
13. H: Where?
14. K: Big dish.
15. H: Centre of table?
16. K: No.
17. H: Right side?

18. K: No.
19. M: Up?
20. K: uh? (laughing)

In Extract 2 the location of a large dish becomes the object of attention. With the exception of the first question (line 11), asking about quantity, there are four questions focusing on location. This seems to show that the learners are orienting themselves within the semantic space created by the input data. They have perceived a need for prepositions of location and are using language from their current IL repertoire.

#### **Extract 3. K continues describing apartment while H, M draw**

27. K: And er left side there is a bed.
28. M: Where?
29. K: um...wa...wall.
30. M: Wall side?
31. K: um left side...(5 second pause)
32. M: In front of wall?
33. K: In front of wall? Left side.
34. M: Left side.
35. K: There is a bed er on the left.
36. M: Left?
37. H: Only left?
38. K: Left side.
39. M: Left side?
40. H: Opposite wall not er...corner? [M: Corner left side?]
41. K: Yeah corner.

In Extract 3 the interaction moves through a more difficult phase as K tries to explain the location of the bed. The learners appear to experience greater difficulty in negotiating meaning and become aware of a gap in their current IL resources and the need for language to help them. From the increase in locational phrases and questions, it appears that task demands are pushing the learners to fill the gap with precision.

#### **Extract 4. K continues describing apartment while H, M draw**

42. K: And left side...[H: um]...left side window.
43. M: Window?
44. K: Two window. Left side.
45. M: Two!?

46. H: uh?
47. K: No no no. Left side wall.
48. M: Two window ?
49. H: Opposite wall you said.
50. K: Opposite door (all comment very briefly) and left side. Yes.
51. H: Yes? [K: uh]

With the general location of the bed determined by *a corner* in Extract 3, the learners clearly experience even greater difficulty—and frustration (line 47 *no, no, no*)—as K now tries to explain more precisely the location of the bed in relation to a window in the apartment. The learners now appear to have reached the limits of their IL resources—they “notice that they do not know how to say precisely the meaning they wish to convey” (Swain, 1998, p. 68) and are, at this point, ready for explicit input on the target form.

#### **Focus on form**

After the pre-language stage, the teacher shifted the focus of the task from meaning to form. He introduced the FonF as it became clear that the participants had perceived a gap in their IL resources, which they were unable to fill, and were aware of their need for the target structure. Prior to this point, the task had been purely communicative with no teacher intervention. The teacher introduced a list of prepositions (on, next to, opposite, between, near, under, to the left/right of, etc.) and pictures to assist visual understanding of relative meanings. These prepositions were briefly practiced, T ↔ S, S ↔ T and S ↔ S, using classroom items.

#### **Post-language focus**

After spending five minutes on the FonF, a second participant (H) looked at the apartment for one minute and described the location of other objects. This time, the instruction to describe the location of things was explicit.

#### **Extract 5. H describing apartment; M, K drawing diagrams**

1. H: Tofu is on the sink er...right side.
2. M: Right side.
3. K: Is there the tofu on the sink? And right side of the sink?
4. H: Yes.
5. H: Teapot. On the stand. Teapot is on the stand er left side.

5. M: Where is stand?
6. H: um on the left side. Stand. The stand.
7. H: Soy sauce. Centre of the table.
8. M: The soy sauce is in the centre of the table.
9. K: Where is the soy sauce on the table?
10. H: Centre of the table.
11. K: Centre? Ah!
12. H: Rubbish box is in front of the door.
13. K: Rubbish box?
14. H: Front of the door er and left side.

As might be expected, in Extract 5 the learners immediately begin to use prepositions and locational phrases. Although there are still errors, a greater degree of control in the overall interaction and more precision in the use of prepositions is evident. This indicates that the explicit FonF has raised learner awareness of the saliency of the targeted form in communicating meaning accurately. Although they still need to negotiate meaning, they do it more efficiently than in the pre-language focus phase when they were dependent on inadequate IL resources.

## Evaluation

The study presented here is modest and the data are too limited to make any quantitative evaluation; however, qualitatively they do appear to suggest that the learners have benefited from the task and were able to move from meaning to form and, importantly, back again to meaning without being trapped by structure. Returning to the research questions:

In regards to whether the input highlighted an area of meaning that learners attempted to fill, the learners attempted to either describe or ask about the placement of objects in the apartment, appearing to highlight a semantic space that they attempted to fill.

Second, regarding whether the task facilitated acquisition, output in the extracts show potential evidence of form-meaning mapping. This could be taken as evidence that some sort of internal processing occurred, but without more research it is impossible to say whether the learners' IL developed. The pre-focus extracts also seemed to indicate learners noticed a gap between their IL resources and what they wanted to say, which is a necessary step in second language acquisition (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998).

Finally, regarding adapting Samuda's design, the

use of this task in the classroom seems to indicate it was an effective pedagogical tool for focusing learner attention on a particular language feature. However, given that prepositions of place are essentially lexical in nature, further research needs to be conducted to determine whether Samuda's design can be adapted to a wide enough range of language, both grammatical and lexical, to be truly useful. Nevertheless, the high level of learner engagement while performing the task indicates it was appealing.

## Conclusion

The nature of this study was preliminary and exploratory, as only a single case was presented and a limited amount of data collected and analyzed. The participants were three adult learners whose high motivation may have had an influence on the results. To determine whether the findings are representative or idiosyncratic, it is now necessary to use the task with a broader range of test groups and to take a more empirical approach, using pre-and post-tests as well as a control group. In addition, to see if the design is truly effective in highlighting a "semantic space" and managing learner attentional focus, it would be useful to examine learner perceptions of their performance. This would provide valuable insight into how learners perceive gaps and how effective this type of task is in developing their IL.

The researchers hope that this classroom-based study might encourage other teachers to experiment with designing form-focused tasks for their own classes. Kumaravadivelu (2007) observes that more research is needed into the types of tasks that cause learners to notice gaps in their IL development and also into how to design tasks that are communicative yet have a sufficient focus on form. With its meaning → form → meaning progression, Samuda's (2001) framework appears not only to offer a viable alternative to a typical reactive task cycle, but also to provide a model that can be adapted for research in the areas identified by Kumaravadivelu. Samuda and Bygate (2008) warn, "Until classroom-based studies become a mainstream for research in this field [TBLT], the use of pedagogical tasks will never be properly researched" (p. 191).

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# Supplementing a task-based curriculum with the European Language Portfolio

## Keywords

Task-based, TBLT, TBL, TBI, TBA, language descriptors, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR, language portfolio, ELP, motivation, self-assessment, oral communication, autonomy, Council of Europe, can do checklist

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is designed to encourage more authentic communicative classroom interaction and to boost motivation through clear and quantifiable goals. This paper outlines how TBLT can be supplemented with the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the related Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to foster learner autonomy. The reflective learning cycle of the ELP is explained before describing the use of this approach in the researcher's university EFL class in Japan. Some observations are presented for instructors.

タスクを中心とした教授法(TBLT: Task-based Language Teaching)は、教室における真正な会話のやり取りを奨励し、明確で数値化可能な目標設定することにより、学習動機を高めることを目的とする。本論では、このTBLTにヨーロッパ言語ポートフォリオ(ELP)やヨーロッパ言語共通枠組み(CEF)を取り入れることにより、いかに学習者自律を育成することができるかについて論述する。ELPの内省学習サイクルについて説明を行い、著者の所属大学での英語の授業におけるこのアプローチの実践例について述べる。

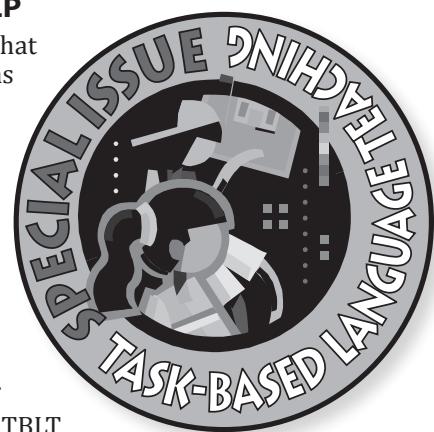
## Fergus O'Dwyer

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**T**HE expressed aim of many Japanese university EFL instructors is to encourage learners to see English as a means for communicating with others, rather than simply as an object of study (Long & Robinson, 1998). Claro (2008) found that 81% of his university EFL learners want to improve their spoken English but find open-ended speaking activities difficult or impossible; learners have rarely had the chance to speak English since the focus of previous language instruction has been on reading, writing, and grammar. The role of the learner has traditionally been to listen, absorb, and retain information (McVeigh, 2002) with little learner self-direction. This paper offers an approach to foster autonomy through use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and to encourage more authentic communicative classroom interaction by implementing a task-based language teaching (TBLT) approach. It describes how a commercial textbook is supplemented with reflective and self-assessment elements of the ELP in a university EFL class in Japan.

## TBLT and the ELP

Ellis (2003) states that tasks can function as useful devices for planning a communicative curriculum, particularly in language learning situations where there may be few opportunities for authentic communicative experiences. One of the advantages of a TBLT approach is that learners are less constrained by prescribed language in a natural, personalised, and relevant context. Learners have a much more varied exposure to language with TBLT (Frost, 2004). Burrows (2008) argued that TBLT places too heavy a burden on learners in a collectivist culture such as Japan's; however the results of research by Falout, Murphrey, Elwood, and Hood (2008) shows that the majority of Japanese EFL



learners favour less instructor-centred classrooms with more opportunity for oral communication. Kanemura (2008) also found that TBLT contributes to fluency development and produces a positive shift in attitude towards language learning for Japanese university EFL students. However, Kanemura went on to assert that practically it would be difficult for many secondary level instructors, whose learners must prepare to pass grammar-intensive university entrance exams, to switch to a TBLT curriculum. Nevertheless, with greater flexibility for curriculum development at the tertiary level, some instructors are in an important position to affect learners' continuing attitudes toward L2 learning. Not all Japanese EFL learners may make a smooth transition to a highly communicative approach, but TBLT does present the possibility for incremental, long-term learner development through interaction in realistic communicative situations.

Assessment is an important variable to consider when implementing a communicative curriculum. Traditional standardized objective achievement tests have been generally criticized as invalid measures of students' competencies (Lynch, 2003). The movement toward authentic, performance-based assessment is an attempt to achieve a more appropriate representation of student communicative competencies.

The ELP is one such attempt, which has come to be used widely in Europe and further afield. The language portfolio used in this study is based on an ELP created by the European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education (CercleS) in 2002, and includes three components: a language passport, in which learners summarize their linguistic identity and assess their own language competence; a language biography, where intermediate learning goals are set and progress is reviewed; and a dossier, which collects samples of work and evidence of achievements in language learning. The ELP is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which was designed in 2001 by the Council of Europe to be an extensive, coherent, and transparent reference grid to describe communicative language competencies (see Appendix A). Both tools are explicitly designed to make the learning process clear to all stakeholders and to increase learner autonomy.

Designed to be robust enough to fit any language, teaching style, and curriculum, the ELP can enhance the pedagogy of a TBLT curriculum by introducing a reflective learning cycle of self-assessment, goal and objective setting, language task planning, self-monitoring, and finally a return to self-assessment to begin the cycle again. Self-assessment and reflec-

tion enable the learner to see how quickly they are progressing toward quantifiable and realistic language learning goals.

When using the ELP, learners initially summarise their proficiency in five language skills (reading, listening, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing) according to the six levels of the CEFR: A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User), and C1 and C2 (Proficient User). This leads to the setting of language goals, including how well these are to be achieved and what may be learned in the process. Learners can set long-term goals of progressing onto the next level of CEFR proficiency by referring to the *Goal-setting and Self-assessment Checklists* which contain a set of *can do* statements for each skill at each level (Figure 1). These break down the long-term goal (e.g., reaching the next CEFR proficiency level) into a series of language tasks/intermediate learning goals (e.g., achieving specific *can do* statements). Thus, learners can easily observe their near-term progress toward their more distant goals. Perhaps more importantly, they are introduced to a potentially lifelong method of language learning: self-assessment through setting and reviewing goals. As the language learning process continues, learners can realise their developing skills and ascertain what they need to work on in order to progress. O'Dwyer (2008) outlined how this approach might be used in Japanese EFL university classes; the following will deal with how it has been implemented and the resulting observations.

## Implementation

Groups of approximately 40 pre-intermediate learners in General English classes in a Japanese university were introduced to the ELP and to a TBLT course based on a commercial textbook (Benevides & Valvona, 2008). This six-stage textbook, which involves learner groups simulating being employees in a company as they participate in a variety of connected discussion, interview, and presentation tasks, was selected as it was perceived to offer a structured, logical introduction to TBLT for instructors and learners. The ELP was modified to incorporate Japanese translations alongside the English explanations of its format and functions, and took the form of handout materials inserted into an A4 clear file (see Appendix B).

The instructor made an effort to adapt ELP usage to the psycholinguistic level of the learners. In particular, the learners' competence, prior exposure to English (predominantly through grammar-focused translation methods), and attitude toward English (possibly with little confidence in communicat-

ing in English) were considered. There was an explicit effort to value competence in a positive way. The learners were encouraged to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in spoken, communicative English. The need for learners to use the English they knew was emphasized.

After self-assessment using the CEFR, most learners placed themselves within the A2 level. After consultation with the instructor, the class agreed upon a learning goal of progressing from level A2 to B1 of the CEFR for speaking. As the learner group started each of the six stages of the textbook they agreed upon near-term goals by using *can do* statements from the spoken interaction or spoken pro-

duction checklist. For example, the goal for stage 3 of the textbook, which involves discussing the pros and cons of several ideas previously brainstormed by peers in Stage 2 and deciding on the best one, was seen to fit with the fourth *can do* statement of Figure 1, *I can say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree with people, and make comparisons*. Thus the goal was to go from *I can do this well*(\*\*) to *I can do this very well* (\*\*\*)�.

The learners planned for this goal, as shown in Figure 2, by considering the influence of available time on the achievement of target, deciding dates for self-monitoring, making decisions about working methods, and by self-assessing perceived gains in language competency (Little & Simpson, 2003).

## Goal-setting and Self-assessment Checklist

**Language:**

**Skill:**  **SPOKEN INTERACTION**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
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Conselho Europeu

This is a checklist of SPOKEN INTERACTION skills drawn from the illustrative scales in the Common European Framework. Use this checklist (a) to set personal learning goals and (b) to record your progress in achieving these goals. Decide what evaluative criteria you want to use in the three righthand columns, and enter dates to record your progress. For example:

I can do this \*with a lot of help, \*\*with a little help, \*\*\*on my own

I can do this \*with a lot of effort, \*\*under normal circumstances, \*\*\*easily in any context

Evaluative criteria: \* I can do this reasonably well    \*\* I can do this well    \*\*\* I can do this very well

### Level A2

|  | My next goal                | *   | **  | *** |
|--|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| I can handle short social exchanges and make myself understood if people help me   | Stage 1 Orientation         | 0 → |     |     |
| I can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest   | Stages 2-6 Interview        | 0   | 0 → |     |
| I can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies and requests for permission                                      |                             | 0   |     |     |
| I can say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree with people, and make comparisons  | Stage 3 Selecting an idea   | 0   | 0 → |     |
| I can express what I feel in simple terms, and express thanks  | Stage 4 Brainstorming ideas | 0 → |     |     |
| I can discuss what to do, where to go, make arrangements to meet (e.g., in the evening, at the weekend)                        |                             | 0   |     |     |
| I can ask and answer simple questions about familiar topics (e.g., weather, hobbies, social life, music, sport)                | Stage 5 Market Research     | 0 → |     |     |
| I can ask and answer simple questions about things that have happened (e.g., yesterday, last week, last year)                  |                             | 0   | 0   |     |
| I can handle simple telephone calls (e.g., say who is calling, ask to speak to someone, give my number, take a simple message) |                             | 0   |     |     |
| I can make simple transactions (e.g., in shops, post offices, railway stations) and order something to eat or drink            |                             | 0   | 0   |     |
| I can get simple practical information (e.g., asking for directions, booking accommodation, going to the doctor)               |                             | 0   |     |     |
| from spoken production checklist:  |                             |     |     |     |
| I can give a short presentation  | Stages 5-6 Informational    | 0 → |     |     |

Note that the checklists do not pretend to be exhaustive. For each proficiency level other tasks or activities can be specified (you can add your own in the blank spaces at the end of each section). It is not necessary to be able to perform all the tasks or activities listed in order to achieve the level in question. If, for example, you can already perform about 80% of the items on the list for A2 SPOKEN INTERACTION, you have probably achieved that level in terms of the self-assessment grid in the language passport.

Figure 1. Checklist of spoken interaction for A2 level

When assessing their performance in stage 3, one learner reflected "I could not disagree very well in stage 2 [which also involved discussing their own product ideas with team members]. I learned to disagree politely much more effectively in stage 3. I should use some of the forms to politely disagree suggested in the textbook (e.g., Yes, but what about...)." After each stage, learners reflected on how well they achieved the goal and what they learned. This shows how learners can focus on perceived weaknesses and on improving their proficiency in terms of *can do* statements and quantifiable learning goals.

Approximately 20% of the overall assessment for the learning period was based on homework which contributed to understanding and accomplishment of tasks. The remaining 80% was based on

## My next language learning target

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Language</b><br>English   |  |
| <b>Learning target (1)</b> Stage 3 goal<br>(Use the self-assessment grid in the language passport and the checklists in the appendix to formulate your next learning target as precisely as possible.)   |  |
| To say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree, and make comparisons<br>very well (***)<br><i>To say what I like or dislike, agree or disagree, and make comparisons<br/>           very well (***)</i>  |  |
| <b>How much time can I devote each day/week to achieving my target? (2)</b><br><i>2 to 3 hours a week</i>  |  |
| <b>When shall I begin? (3)</b><br><i>Week 5 - May 14th</i>   | <b>When do I plan to finish? (3)</b><br><i>Week 7 - May 28th</i> |
| <b>How do I intend to achieve my target? (4)</b><br><i>For example, can I work alone or do I need to work with other people?</i><br><i>Complete Stage 3 of the Widgets textbook with my group</i>  |  |
| <b>What learning materials do I need? (4)</b><br><i>Textbook, DVD, Consulate Portfolio</i>   |  |
| <b>How shall I know whether or not I have achieved my target? (5)</b><br><i>(For example, can I take a test or set and correct a test for myself? Or shall I need to ask my teacher, another learner or a native speaker to assess me? Or can I depend entirely on my own judgement?)</i><br><i>Judge from class activities and assessment of my Stage 3 presentation</i>  |  |
| <b>Review of learning progress on or near my target date: (6)</b><br><i>Have I achieved my target? In working towards my target have I learnt anything new about (i) the target language or (ii) language learning? What am I going to do with what I have learned?</i><br><i>I could not disagree very well in stage 2. I learned to disagree politely much more effectively in stage 3. I should use some of the forms to politely disagree suggested in the textbook (e.g. Yes but what about...)</i> |  |

**Figure 2. My next language learning target**

how well the learners achieved tasks at the end of each textbook stage. This was connected with the *can do* statements used in goal-setting (see Figure 3 for an instructor assessment for stage 5 which involved making and presenting infomercials). In this way both instructor assessment and self-assessment were made transparent and directly related to learners' communicative competencies and progress toward learning goals.

In addition to developing task awareness by reflecting on their ability to use English communicatively to achieve curricular tasks, learners were encouraged to occasionally reflect on personal awareness (e.g., What do I expect of myself in this course? What are my strengths and shortcomings in communicating in English?) and situational awareness (e.g., What is a good group member like in our language class? Why? How might I improve my participation in my group?). The instructor made an effort to justify the benefits of reflection before undertaking the activities (Kohonen, 2007). Specific

and concrete instructor feedback on reflection (e.g., describing how the observations noted by learners in reflection on "How might I improve my participation in my group?" could be applied in the following textbook stage) and progress toward goals (i.e., generalizations on how learners carried out specific tasks and on which competences could be improved) is important. Once learners understood the concept and purpose of self-reflection, they completed the reflective exercises with enthusiasm.

### Challenges in implementation

While use of the L2 is an important part of the ELP-based classroom practice, reflection in the L1 alongside English was not discouraged as reflection can achieve a higher level of

sophistication, is more natural, and the learners' ability to reflect develops more effectively (Kohonen, 2007). Though learners weren't accustomed to such reflection, immediate positive results were seen, particularly in terms of higher personal and situational awareness. Learners prefer to be guided through the process but should gradually be encouraged to set goals themselves. Originally learners were expected to formulate goals independently by the end of the learning period but this proved unrealistic. Learners needed specific help, guidance, and support to achieve goal-setting, reflection, and self-assessment. For instance, the ability to work through the checklists and select a *can do* statement relevant to a particular learning stage was challenging. As a result, it became necessary to highlight relevant *can do* statements while goal-setting. One solution to this could be to provide the goal-setting and self-assessment checklists in Japanese translation. Accessing or creating a translation could benefit lower-proficiency learners, particularly in

### Stage 5 Assessment

Member name:

Total: 16/20

- 1 Your teams information was clear, well-prepared and informative      Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 Agree
- 2 Your presentation was clear and well-prepared      Disagree 1 2 3 4 Agree
- 3 You made a good effort      Disagree 1 2 3 4 Agree
- 4 Overall impression      1 2 3 4 5

**Feedback:** You can give a short presentation \*(Reasonably well) \*\* (Well) \*\*\* (Very well)

**Comments:** Always try to maintain good posture + speak clearly.

**Figure 3. Instructor assessment of learner presentation tasks**

goal-setting and in self-assessment. Nevertheless the learner reflection upon achievement of their goals, as in Figure 2, appears to have been beneficial for learners. Equipping learners with tools to independently set and achieve language goals, however challenging, aids in fostering life-long language learners and should be pursued.

The time needed for instructors to become acquainted with the workings of the ELP should not be underestimated. For instance, adapting ELP usage to the psycholinguistic level of the learner (e.g., learner age, proficiency level, linguistic and cultural background, prior exposure to an L2 and English, and attitude toward English) and specific curricula need to be considered before implementation. Fortunately, there are many resources available online (see [www.geocities.jp/dlinklist/ENG/CefrSIG.html](http://www.geocities.jp/dlinklist/ENG/CefrSIG.html) for collated links about the CEFR and the ELP), and a growing interest in this type of approach; for instance, the establishment of the forming Framework & Language Portfolio SIG at JALT 2008.

The ELP does not promote one particular language teaching methodology, but instead presents options for the instructor to encourage learner autonomy in a particular context (COE, 2001). One further important observation should be noted when considering implementing or modifying an ELP in class: The CEFR is an extensive grid, which can be intimidating at first sight. Thus, rather than presenting the grid and asking learners to self-assess their level, the first class was made up of several communicative activities which can be mapped to the descriptors for level A2 of spoken interaction (e.g., exchanging information on familiar topics). These were designed to elicit examples of

spoken language which learners could later use to reflect on their level. After these activities, the CEFR in English with a Japanese explanation was presented for self-assessment. For the sake of simplicity and to discourage unrealistic self-assessments, only levels A1, A2, and B1 were presented. Furthermore, the Japanese translations allowed immediacy and greater understanding of the CEFR and the ELP's format and functions.

### Conclusions

Supplementing a TBLT curriculum with the ELP and CEFR can facilitate learning through setting and achieving quantifiable and authentic language goals (Benevides, 2008). If psycholinguistically-relevant TBLT pedagogy is implemented, learners, rather than shouldering a heavy burden (Burrows, 2008), do react positively with steps toward increased fluency and a positive shift in attitude (Kanemura, 2008).

The ELP can bring learners incrementally toward the goal of life-long language learning, by highlighting the exact whats, whys, and hows of learning through self-assessment and goal-setting. In short, it creates a focus and transparency missing in most communicative language courses. The EFL learners observed in this study benefited from reflecting on and working toward the achievement of specified intermediate language learning goals and language tasks, whereas metalinguistic considerations (i.e., personal and situational awareness) appeared to lead to greater self-direction. Learners quickly understood and adapted to the general workings of the CEFR and ELP when it was presented to them in a methodical manner. This in turn led to greater learner autonomy and motivation.

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## Appendices

The appendices for this article can be downloaded from [jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2009/0903a.pdf](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2009/0903a.pdf).

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**JALT2009**



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## ...with Myles Grogan & Mark de Boer

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We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 700 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used which can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see any edition of *The Language Teacher*). Please send submissions to [<my-share@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:<my-share@jalt-publications.org>).



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In the first contribution for this special issue, Daniel Jackson uses corpora to help students do peer response work. Then Zorana Vasiljevic gives us an activity to help students learn useful word combinations.

# A corpus-informed approach to peer response tasks

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### Quick guide

**Key words:** writing, discourse hedges, peer response

**Learner English level:** Advanced

**Learner maturity level:** Adult

**Preparation time:** Varies

**Activity time:** 90 minutes

**Materials:** Sample dialogue(s), copies of a sample draft, student-prepared drafts

### Introduction

Contemporary approaches to teaching writing acknowledge that professional writing occurs in collaboration with others. In classrooms where students read and comment on each other's work as an ongoing, formative assessment, spoken corpora can offer a starting point for understanding the expression of social conventions associated with the task of evaluating writing. Below I relate how writing instructors can use samples of spoken discourse in combination with writing samples to enhance peer response sessions, drawing on task-based methodological principles.

### Preparation

**Step 1:** Collect and analyze samples of spoken discourse appropriate to the task of responding to peers. Use these to create sample dialogues for your students. You can record and transcribe your own material or, to make the process easier, use online corpora such as the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English, MICASE (Simpson, Briggs, Ovens, & Swales, 2002), accessible at [<quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/), from which the sample dialogues in the Appendix are adapted. For a helpful demonstration video, go to [<lw.lsa.umich.edu/eli/lecture/micase/video.html>](http://lw.lsa.umich.edu/eli/lecture/micase/video.html).

**Step 2:** Locate a writing sample for students to practice on. See if you can collect this from a former student who is willing to share.

**Step 3:** Decide which format will work best for presenting the material, and prepare any additional resources you will need: In my classes, I present sample dialogues using PowerPoint and a video projector.

**Step 4:** Your students should also bring a completed draft of an assignment.

### Procedure

**Step 1:** Explain that you are going to present examples of two people talking about an unfinished piece of writing (see Appendix). To begin, students should read the transcripts to comprehend the dialogues.

**Step 2:** Inform the class that hedges are words or phrases that lessen the impact of a statement. If your students speak Japanese, they will have heard the word *chotto* used to mitigate directness. L1 examples like this can help them quickly grasp the concept. Ask them to locate hedges in the dialogues. If they cannot, focus on form by using underlining, font changes, color changes, highlighting, animation, or a combination of these. This is easy to do

using presentation software. In the Appendix, I have underlined the hedges.

**Step 3:** Pass out the sample draft paragraph or essay and ask students to read it and jot down comments. These can be general comments related to meaning or, if you are working on a particular feature of writing, you may want students to direct their comments toward punctuation, style, or organization, for instance.

**Step 4:** Pair students up and ask them to exchange their comments, alternating between reader/writer roles. Encourage them to practice hedging, reminding them that, as suggested in the sample dialogues (see Appendix), hesitation noises (*um*) and modal constructions (*shouldn't it be*) are frequently used when pointing out misspellings, for example.

**Step 5:** Assess student performance by writing on the board some successful hedges you overheard.

**Step 6:** Invite the same pairs of students to exchange their own drafts. Repeat steps 3 through 5, above, using these drafts.

**Step 7:** Request that students revise their drafts based on the suggestions they receive from their partners, as you would normally do after a peer response session.

## Variations

Present the dialogues using audio (or better yet, both written and aural texts), or employ similar steps to help students respond to peers' speeches or presentations.

## Conclusion

Responding to peers can cause anxiety either when the linguistic means for softening statements fall outside a student's repertoire, or when the student does not realize that many speakers employ hedges when commenting on another person's work, so as to avoid face threat to the listener/writer. Approaches that highlight these interpersonal elements of communication offer opportunities to learn useful language, replacing the discomfort many students feel when asked to do peer response tasks.

## Reference

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## Appendix

### Sample dialogue 1: A run-on sentence

- S1: what do you think? things you would change? if any?  
 S2: it's to the point. it's clear.  
 S1: <LAUGH> are you just being nice? or do you really feel that way?  
 S2: um, one thing is that, the last sentence, is that a um, run-on sentence sort of?  
 S1: hm?  
 S2: the last sentence of the paragraph, could that be like maybe broken up?

### Sample dialogue 2: A misspelled word

- S3: um, you used aloud A L O U D...[pause]  
 S3: shouldn't it be A L L O W E D?  
 S4: oh where?  
 S3: um in the second sentence "since the women of Gilead aren't allowed."  
 S4: oh right...thanks for spotting that.

# Teaching collocation

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## Quick guide

**Key words:** vocabulary, collocations, output errors, pair work, motivation

**Learner English level:** Intermediate and above

**Learner maturity level:** College students

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Activity time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Handouts

## Introduction

Although high-intermediate and advanced learners usually have a large receptive vocabulary, their productive vocabulary knowledge is often limited,

lacking in conciseness and precision of expression. Therefore, it is important that classroom instruction include activities that not only help students acquire the meaning of new words, but also enrich their knowledge of previously met words. Explicit teaching of collocations can help students learn and use words more effectively. Word-level transformations are one collocation teaching activity that works well with Japanese college students. In this activity, students are provided with sentences they need to paraphrase using words from a list of near synonyms. For example:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Student A reads a sentence: <i>There were many cars on the street that day.</i>                  |   |
| Student B listens and selects suitable words from the list:                                      |   |
| Adjectives<br>• <i>strong / big / heavy</i>  | Nouns<br>• <i>traffic / vehicles / transportation</i> |
| Student B transforms the sentence: <i>Traffic was heavy that day.</i>                            |   |
| Student A checks this response against the model response ( <i>Traffic was heavy that day.</i> ) |   |
| Student A confirms to student B the response is correct.   |   |

This activity helps students recognize that near synonyms often cannot be used to replace each other and also makes them aware of differences between typical word combinations (collocations) in Japanese and English.

## Preparation

**Step 1:** Compile a list of ten collocations you would like to teach, ones related to class topics and relevant to your learners' needs. Feel confident about using your own knowledge of English as well as referring to collocations in texts students have previously read. Information about collocations can also be obtained from corpus-based dictionaries such as the Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English (2002) and the LTP Dictionary of Selected Collocations (1997).

**Step 2:** Write ten sentences that paraphrase the target word combinations.

**Step 3:** Paraphrase these sentences using the selected collocations. These paraphrases will be used as model answers.

**Step 4:** Divide the sentences into two sets of five.

**Step 5:** Since this is an information gap sort of activity, you will need to prepare two pages. Divide each page into two sections: For Student A, Section 1 contains a set of five sentences and their paraphrases. Section 2 is a list of word combinations (such as verbs+nouns, adjectives+nouns) from which suitable collocations will be selected. For Student B, reverse the order of these sections.

## Procedure

**Step 1:** Place students in pairs and distribute the handouts to students A and B.

**Step 2:** Explain that handouts are paired for students A and B, and that they should look at their own page only.

**Step 3:** Explain the activity procedure (see Appendix for model instructions). Student A starts as a coaching partner and reads aloud a sentence to Student B. Student B listens and restates the sentence by selecting a suitable word combination from the list. Using the model response, Student A corrects Student B if necessary. After Student A completes the five sentences, the students switch roles. When both A and B have completed both roles on their handouts, students switch pages, so each transforms ten sentences altogether.

**Step 4:** Follow up by encouraging students to use the target collocations in output activities such as class discussions or writing assignments.

## Conclusion

Collocation-based word substitution enables teachers to direct learners' attention to important collocations in text that learners often fail to notice. Forced-choice practice of collocations also reduces the frequency of output errors in their speech and writing. Furthermore, the communicative nature of the task has a positive effect on students' motivation and class participation.

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## Appendix

The Appendix offering model instructions is available online at [jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0903a.pdf](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/resources/0903a.pdf)

## ...with Robert Taferner

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**T**HIS month's column features a review of *Presentation Zen* by Maria Trovela, Tim Murphrey, and Christopher Stillwell.

# Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery

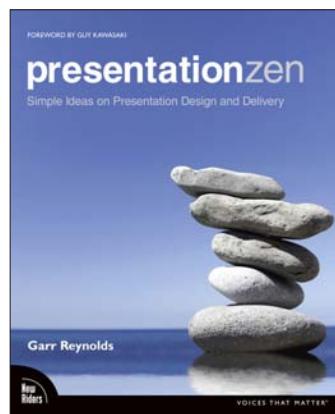
[Garr Reynolds. Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2008. pp. ix + 230. ¥2,499. ISBN-10: 0-321-52565-5.]

Reviewed by Maria Trovela, Meikai University, and Tim Murphrey and Christopher Stillwell, Kanda University of International Studies

*Presentation Zen* is a book intended for people in any field who give presentations with slides. The 10 chapters, divided into five sections, are filled with striking photography in full color and many practical examples of presentation slides that clearly illustrate the main points. At the end of each chapter are bulleted summaries of important ideas. Garr Reynolds accomplishes what he proposes early in the book: "a good balance of principles and concepts, inspiration and practical examples" (p. 6), including providing insights from other accomplished presenters. We have used the concepts in this book

in developing recent conference presentations as well as in presenting information to our students.

Reynolds invites us to let go of ineffective habits that we may have unconsciously learned through witnessing hundreds of bad presentations. He reminds us that it is useful to believe that we are creative and willing to make mistakes—both essential for progress. He encourages us to plan most of the presentation away from the computer in the early stages, an exercise we have all recently tried with good results. "Planning analog" (Chapter three) describes using such things as paper, pens, whiteboard, and post-its. Then, you can ask yourself some simple and useful questions: "What's your point?" "Why does it matter?" (p. 62). To drive this point home, in the *Elevator Test* (p. 64) the reader is asked to imagine a situation in which a presentation is cancelled because the boss has a schedule conflict. On the way down in the elevator, the boss asks for a quick summary of the presentation. If presenting your main points in just a few seconds seems impossible, chances are you need to work more on just what your main points are.



Reynolds sees preparation in three parts: the slides, the notes only you will see, and the handout to be taken away by the audience. He advises keeping the slides simple and making the handout as detailed as you think necessary to avoid information-crammed visuals that can distract the audience from understanding what is most important—what you say.

In the *Design* section Reynolds teaches how to use pictures, text, and empty space effectively. He provides useful online sources for great images, and models the use of suggestion, empty space, stillness, and simplicity in his slide design.

In the *Delivery* section, Reynolds advises us "to be in the moment" (p. 185). What is special in this section comes from Benjamin Zander, conductor for the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, who says:

"rather than getting bogged down in a sea of measurement where you compare yourself to others and worry about whether you are worthy to be making the presentation or whether someone else could be doing it better, instead realize that at this moment in time—right here right now—you are

the gift and your message is the contribution" (p. 196). Reynolds reminds us also of the importance of humor to move us into that resourceful state.

A number of salient principles from *Presentation Zen* have influenced our presentations of late. In the preparation stage, we go less immediately to presentation software, for even the templates of PowerPoint can have an undue influence on how we organize our message. Replacing tired old slide backgrounds with vivid images that bleed off the page brings dynamism, allows for contrast, and makes our messages more memorable. Our teaching is also influenced as we design handouts and manage class in ways that help us communicate our lessons more clearly, with designs that provide support rather than adding to the noise.

This is not only an excellent book for our learning and presentations—it is so artistic you could

leave it out on your coffee table for guests to look at. Truth be told, we wish every academic who does presentations would read and apply Reynolds' suggestions. They would save us from the proverbial "death by PowerPoint." Potential readers should be warned that *Presentation Zen* could have two unintended side effects. First, the ideas are infectious, and once they take hold it can be hard to resist spending your next few weekends searching for amazing visuals. Second, your newfound awareness of how easy it is to make quality presentations may cause you to have a little less patience for text-filled slides at your next conference or meeting. This is the one book that we recommend to all our colleagues who give presentations. We think *Presentation Zen* can greatly increase our effectiveness as we teach, give presentations, and facilitate the improvement of our students' presentations.

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## RESOURCES • RECENTLY RECEIVED

### ...with Greg Rouault

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

A list of texts and resource materials for language teachers available for book reviews in *TLT* and *JALT Journal*. Publishers are invited to submit complete sets of materials to the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison address listed on the Staff page at the back of *TLT*.

#### RECENTLY RECEIVED ONLINE

An index of books available for review can be found at <[jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/)>

\* = new listing; ! = final notice. Final notice items will be removed 31 Mar. Please make queries by email to the appropriate JALT Publications contact.

#### Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Greg Rouault

<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

\* *American English File*. Oxenden, C., Latham-Koenig, C., & Seligson, P. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. [4-level four skills coursebook incl. class audio CD, DVD, workbook w/multi-ROM, teacher's book, and *Test Generator* CD-ROM].

! *Check it Out!* Broukal, M. Boston: Cengage Heinle, 2008/09. [4-level four skills coursebook featuring language, literature, and culture incl. workbook, audio, teacher's edition, teacher resource book with reproducible activities, *ExamView* assessment CD-ROM, classroom presentation CD-ROM,

and professional development program].

\* *Join In*. Richards, J. C., & O'Sullivan, K. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [3-level conversation skills coursebook incl. student book w/ edited CD, full class audio CD, teacher's book, and test pack w/CD].

\* *Open Career Doors*. Tsuda, A. Tokyo: Pearson Longman/Kirihara-Shoten, 2009. [Basic business communications skills coursebook through TOEIC-type materials 300-500 level incl. CD, crossword puzzles, answer key, and vocabulary and cultural notes in Japanese].

*Present Yourself*. Gershon, S. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. [2-level presentation skills coursebook incl. audio CD and teacher's manual with photocopiable worksheets, assessment forms, answer keys, and audio scripts].

*Stay Healthy and DNA Stories*. Stapleton, P. Tokyo: Cengage Learning K. K., 2009. [Reading comprehension texts on health and genetics incl. vocabulary notes and teacher's manual with answer key and Japanese translations].

! *Teaching Chunks of Language: From Noticing to Remembering*. Lindstromberg, S., & Boers, F. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2008. [The Resourceful Teacher Series classroom activities book with photocopiable handouts and downloadable worksheets].

\* *Technical English*. Bonamy, D. Essex, UK: Pearson Education, 2008. [2-level English for technical purposes coursebook (CEF A1 and A2) incl. audio CD, workbook w/audio CD, teacher's book with *Test Master* CD-ROM, and companion website].

**TWO NEW BILINGUAL TITLES!**

Two very popular titles from our *in Use* series are now available in bilingual editions. For each title, the language support is given in Japanese which adds an additional level of assistance to students either studying alone or in the classroom.

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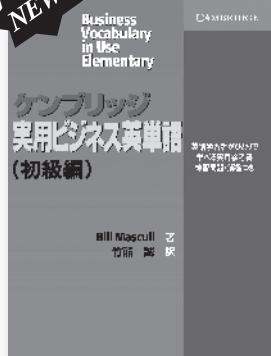


Michael McCarthy &amp; Felicity O'Dell

Translated by Shuichi Takeda

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*Business Vocabulary in Use Elementary* provides basic, essential vocabulary in a business context for learners of Business English. The book comprises a number of thematic sections including work, time, money, products, services; and Skills units including numbers, telephoning, emails and faxes, meetings and presentations.

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English  
Collocations  
in Use  
Intermediate



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For more details about Cambridge materials, please contact:

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## JALT News

### ...with Marcos Benevides

[<jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org)



JALT Focus contributors are requested by the column editor to submit articles of up to 750 words written in paragraph format and not in abbreviated or outline form. Announcements for JALT Notices should not exceed 150 words. All submissions should be made by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

#### JALT FOCUS ONLINE

A listing of notices and news can be found at:

[<jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/>](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/)

This month, JALT's Director of Treasury, Kevin Cleary, brings us a clear explanation of JALT's increasingly easy to understand financial reporting system. Read it, post it to your blog, share it with that special treasurer in your life. The world economy may have collapsed and we may all be barbecuing our favourite pets for dinner next month, but at least we can rest assured that JALT's finances are in good hands.

#### JALT's financial environment

The main purpose of accounting is to communicate financial information to people who need it. In other words, although it is essential for JALT and its Chapters and SIGs to have enough money to function effectively, it is even more important that we make accurate and timely reports on our usage of money. Our system of financial reporting helps Chapters, SIGs, and JALT as a whole manage current activities and plan for the future.



The annual audit is so important because of our NPO Status. As a Non-Profit Organization, JALT is subject to special reporting requirements. We need to satisfy the government that their investment in our organization is worthwhile and our privileged status is warranted. Part of this investment is tax forgiveness: As an NPO, we do not pay tax on financial gains resulting from our core activity. Also, as an NPO, we can use certain governmental facilities, such as the site for our past two conferences, and apply for special sources of funding. Clearly, it is of the utmost importance for us to maintain our NPO status.

Our compliance with reporting for managerial and NPO purposes starts at the local level. Every month, each Chapter and SIG treasurer reports their group's financial activity to their lead officer and to the JALT Central Office (JCO), through local monthly audits. Chapter Presidents and SIG Coordinators should use this information in their planning, and should make sure that their treasurer is keeping up with reporting requirements. JCO uses this information to identify problem areas and deal with them when they are most manageable. For example, bank balance discrepancies and missing membership forms are signs that some action needs to be taken.

Our next step in compliance is a formal, annual audit. The audit is a major factor in satisfying all

### JALT Calendar

Listings of major upcoming events in the organisation. For more information, visit JALT's website <jalt.org>, the JALT events website <jalt.org/events>, or see the SIG and chapter event columns later in this issue.

- ▶ 24 Apr 2009: Deadline for submissions to present at JALT2009 in Shizuoka. See <jalt.org/conference> for more information.
- ▶ 23 - 24 May 2009: Eighth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference: *Infinite Possibilities: Expanding Limited Opportunities in Language Education* at Toyo Gakuen University, Nagareyama Campus, Chiba.
- ▶ 5 - 7 Jun 2009: JALT CALL Conference 2009, Toyo Gakuen University, Hongo Campus, Tokyo.
- ▶ 21 - 23 Nov, 2009: JALT2009 "The Teaching Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror" will be held at Granship Shizuoka. See <jalt.org/conference> for more information.

interested parties, inside and outside the organization, that JALT is financially sound. This year the internal audit team will be headed by Kevin Ryan, the Financial Steering Committee Chair. Kevin and his band of auditors will check each ChapSIG's bookkeeping. The work done by this team will provide our external auditor with much of the information necessary for the rendering of an expert opinion on JALT's financial situation.

The external auditor is a CPA (Certified Public Accountant). It is important to note that CPAs do not work for clients: They work for, and are responsible to, the public. The external auditor will decide if JALT has a proper accounting system and if that system is producing reliable reports. The opinion of this independent auditor is taken very seriously by the governmental NPO administrators. A side benefit of the strict nature of this audit is that we get professional advice on how to improve business processes and how to satisfy NPO reporting requirements.

All of the information requirements detailed above depend on timely submissions of clear documentation to ChapSIG treasurers. If you are approved to spend money on JALT's behalf, please get receipts, fill out an Officer Expense Claim form (OEC), and give it to your treasurer promptly (there is a 3-month limit on expenses). The treasurer's job is much easier when everyone sends in their OECs on time. Treasurers who get OECs before the end of the month can complete their bookkeeping on time. They can then easily get their audit package ready by the deadline and are likely to pass the audit quickly. Remember that annual grants for Chapters and quarterly payments to SIGs are contingent on audit completion. Chapters that complete the audit promptly get their grant earliest. Thus, in order to serve its membership and JALT in general, each Chapter and SIG needs to maintain its bookkeeping.

Finally, to help JALT keep up its great work, please consider becoming part of the JALT financial team. The more people that have knowledge of how JALT does its bookkeeping, the better we can do our planning and programming. With a diverse group that continually has new members, we will have a better environment in which we can succeed as an organization. In closing, a big "Thank you!" to past, present, and future members of JALT's Financial Team. You are vital to the organization and much appreciated.

*Kevin Cleary  
NPO JALT Director of Treasury*

## Announcements

### **Position available: TLT Associate Editor**

*The Language Teacher* is seeking a qualified candidate for the position of Associate Editor, with future advancement to the position of Co-editor. Applicants must be JALT members and must have the knowledge, skills, and leadership qualities to oversee the production of a monthly academic publication. Previous experience in publications, especially at an editorial level, is an asset. Knowledge of JALT publications is desirable. Applicants must also have a computer with email and word processing capabilities.

This post requires several hours of concentrated work every week editing feature articles, scheduling and overseeing production, and liaising with the Publications Board. Applicants should be prepared to make a minimum three-year commitment with an extension possible. The assumption of duties is tentatively scheduled for June 2009.

Applicants should submit a curriculum vitae (including details of publication background and published works), a cover letter, and a statement of purpose indicating why they would like to become Associate Editor (and later advance to Co-editor) of *The Language Teacher* to: Steve Brown, JALT Publications Board Chair <[pubchair@jalt.org](mailto:pubchair@jalt.org)>. Deadline for receipt of applications is May 31st, 2009.

## **Call for submissions**

*The Language Teacher* is seeking papers (1,500-2,000 words) for a special issue focusing on lifelong language learning. Papers should be research or classroom based and related to language education for adult learners (post-graduation) in various contexts. Papers may address topics such as local or national guidelines and facilities for lifelong language learning; reasons that adults study languages; business-related language learning; language classes for the elderly; materials and methodology for adult learners; the challenges faced by lifelong learners and their teachers; the future of lifelong language learning; and other related topics. In addition, shorter papers for My Share, book reviews, and teacher or learner profiles are welcome. If you are interested in submitting a paper for this special issue, please contact Julia Harper <[harper.julia.k@gmail.com](mailto:harper.julia.k@gmail.com)>. The deadline for manuscript submissions is 30 Sep 2009 and publication is expected in September 2010.

## **Competitive bidding process**

JALT has a regular and ongoing need to provide quality services to ensure the smooth running of

the organization at all levels. To that end the following service contracts are available on an annual to triennial basis: *JALT Accountant Contract*, open now for March 2009; *Conference Inputter Contract*, open now for 31 Mar 2009; *Publications (Layout) Contracts* open now for April 2009; *The Language Teacher, JALT Journal, TLT Directory and Supplement, Conference Proceedings, Conference Preview, and Conference Handbook Publications (Printing) Contract* open now for April 2009; *Travel Contract (covering conference travel)* open now for July 2009; *Website Administrator Contract* open now for October 2009; *SIG Publications Clearing House Service Contract (new)*, process to begin soon.

In order to ensure that JALT receives professional

and affordable services, a competitive bidding process has been implemented to oversee the selection process. The bidding process is open to any individual or any company wishing to participate. Tenders will be accepted up to midnight on the closing days stipulated in the Call for Tenders. All tenders must demonstrate: a professional level of skill and experience; the ability to get the work done on a regular basis and year round; the lowest possible cost to the organization; and a willingness to develop a sound working knowledge of JALT's organizational structure. All tenders must be submitted in the format requested, and may be submitted digitally in both English and Japanese to vp@jalt.org. Signed originals must follow and be sent to the JALT Central Office.

## JALT FOCUS • MEMBER'S PROFILE

29

### ...with Damian Rivers

[<memprofile@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:memprofile@jalt-publications.org)



Member's Profile is a column where members are invited to introduce themselves to *TLT*'s readership in 750 words or less. Research interests, professional affiliations, current projects, and personal professional development are all appropriate content. Please address inquiries to the editor.

**N** this month's Member's Profile, Ashley Moore discusses the origin of his research interests and their impact upon his teaching practice.

### MEMBER'S PROFILE

## Ashley Moore

I clearly remember the exact moment that I became interested in the idea that would become the driving force behind my current research interest: the notion of sexual identity and how it interacts with second language learning. My first job in Japan was working as an ALT in Kagoshima prefecture and



I would often travel into the city with friends for "international" parties. These parties are a fantastic opportunity for foreign residents and their Japanese friends to get together and socialise. It was at one of these events that I first became aware of the possible links that might exist between the two seemingly disparate ideas of sexuality and second language learning. Surveying the room my friend noted that the majority of the Japanese men at the party were gay. Moreover, they were generally very good speakers of at least one second language. I began to wonder if there was a connection between their sexual identities and their motivational investments in learning a second language.

Informal chats with my Japanese friends who were gay gradually began to develop into a research project as I began to realise that many of these people shared similar experiences and opinions. Many of the men I spoke to had spent a considerable amount of time living abroad, often explicitly stating that the different opportunities available to them as gay men (such as same-sex marriage in Canada) were the main reasons for them choosing to live abroad. In the early stages of the research I really felt that this was the answer, but as I began to carry out more thorough interviews and analysis, an altogether more complex relationship began to emerge. Many gay Japanese men manage to live happily in their native country without learning a second language or moving abroad. The participants in my research, however, resisted what they felt to be the restrictive, feminine modes of male, gay sexual identity available to them in Japan. They also tended to resist the very powerful heteronormative pressures that pervade Japanese society (such as the perceived need for a man to be married and begin a family) and saw foreign travel as a way

of circumventing them. To this end, they invested in learning English as an international language in order to maximise their chances of communicating with other people around the world.

Of course, this research has affected the way I look at not just how the sexual identity of some gay learners may drive them to learn a second language but, more generally, how the professional, ethnic, and gender identities (amongst countless other kinds of identity) of learners may spur their motivational investments in learning another language. In seeking to better understand how learners' experiences of various aspects of their identity develop as they learn a second language and (hopefully) participate in the target language culture, we can better scaffold their development through the classroom and promote a deeper engagement with the second language and its speakers.

In my own teaching practice, I've started to sit down with individual students and actually ask them about their long-term motivation for learning English. Simply asking students about when they first decided to study English at university and what they hope to use English for in the future has

enabled me to reflect some of their desires in the materials that I present to them. From these informal chats I am now beginning to develop a research project to explore and record how the various identities of the students that I teach interact with the learning process and how this relationship changes over time. Engaging students on this subject also provides me with the opportunity to encourage them to think critically about the limitations and frustrations that learners often experience in terms of their identity when they move to another country (and what happens if and when they return to their native country).

My work on sexual identity and second language learning is something I plan to develop during my doctoral studies in the future. Ultimately, I'd like to explore the ways in which the work on identity currently being undertaken by SLA researchers around the world might practically inform our teaching practices and serve students better. I'd be pleased to hear from people with similar research interests.

Ashley Moore can be contacted at [ashley-m@kanda.kuis.ac.jp](mailto:ashley-m@kanda.kuis.ac.jp)

## ...with Joyce Cunningham and Mariko Miyao

[<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:<grassroots@jalt-publications.org>)



The co-editors warmly invite 750-word reports on events, groups, or resources within JALT in English, Japanese, or a combination of both.



**D**O you have a thirst for adventure and a kit full of teacher know how and lesson plans? If so, Teachers Helping Teachers, in our first report, is the SIG for you. In our second report, Fergus O'Dwyer informs you of a newly formed SIG aiming to encourage and facilitate language education reforms in Japan.

## Teachers Helping Teachers: Origins of a concept

by Pat Dougherty, Coordinator,  
Teachers Helping Teachers SIG

On 28 Jun 2008, Teachers Helping Teachers was approved as a JALT Special Interest Group. It was a new start to an organization that had established itself as something of a swashbuckling group of volunteers three years before, in late March of 2005, when a six-member delegation arrived in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to conduct a six-day teacher training workshop with BELTA (the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association). At that time, we did not have a name. We were simply FOBs, Friends of the late Bill Balsamo, the founder of the organization, and the then President of Himeji JALT. That early team was made up of Steve Cornwell, Ann Irish, Cecy Wales, Aya and Pat Dougherty, and Bill himself. We had expertise in teaching English to young learners, high school EFL, and university-level EFL. We thought, at the time, that we would be

joining a one-off program. We did not realize that we would become the first delegation of a vibrant and thriving organization.

The origin of this program was a conversation between Bill and Arifa Rahman, the president of BELTA. They had met at the 2003 AsiaTEFL conference in Seoul, Korea. Bill had been active in philanthropic work in Bangladesh for several years. He had sponsored the building of dormitories at several orphanages and schools. In their conversations during the conference, Bill asked Rahman about the needs that she saw for Bangladesh and especially for Bangladeshi education. Rahman explained that there was a paucity of opportunities for teachers in Dhaka and rural areas to get teacher training. BELTA was actively trying to organize programs, but it was very much an uphill battle in everything from funding to locations to transportation of teachers to program venues. Bill, on the spur of the moment, offered to bring a team of educators from Japan to Bangladesh to put on a conference. Through the course of 2004, discussions with Rahman continued, and the volunteer presenters were assembled. When I use the term, "assembled," I mean that Bill contacted each of us, informally, about joining a program in Bangladesh. Of the team of volunteers, only two, including Bill, had been to Bangladesh previously. A theme was selected, "Teaching Strategies for the ESL Classroom," and the dates of 25-30 Mar 2005 were settled on. This would be a new experience for all involved: As volunteer Ann Irish said, "This was the first time such a conference had been held in Bangladesh."

We had anticipated a small crowd of English teachers to attend the workshops, perhaps about forty. We were greeted by more than 180 attendees who crowded into the main hall of Presidency University in Dhaka, and spilled out into other sessions that crowded the handful of classrooms in that brand new school, in its single building, in the middle of the bustle of the Bangladeshi capital. The turnout stunned even BELTA. We presented on using student heritage in the language classroom, presentation techniques, the four skills, and activities that could be done, as Bill Balsamo liked to put it, in a PC way, using only Pencil and Chalk. "The overwhelming response to the conference was very gratifying," said Aya Dougherty, one of the Himeji JALT members who attended. "That the participants came from every corner of the country and from little village schools to the large public universities made it a special experience for all involved," she explained.

It wasn't until just before we arrived in Dhaka to hold our inaugural program that Teachers Help-

ing Teachers was christened. Asked by our Bengali hosts how our delegation should be introduced, Bill brought the question to a Himeji JALT meeting. Knocking around ideas, we stopped to really focus on what we were, and that was a group of practicing teachers, or retired teachers, who had spent and were spending their lives and energies in the vibrant arena of the classroom. We were not ivory tower dwellers, but people who prided ourselves on being in the trenches, working with students, whatever the age or level. We were teachers, and we wanted to help other teachers. Teachers Helping Teachers was born.

Since our founding, THT has sponsored teacher training in the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. We have a full complement of programs in all four of these countries scheduled for 2009. Want to join us? Contact Pat Dougherty, THT Coordinator, at <ct180@hotmail.com>.

## **The Framework and Language Portfolio SIG (forming)**

by Fergus O'Dwyer, Momoyama Gakuin/St. Andrew's University

In recent years, there has been lively discussion in Japan about language learning curriculums and frameworks, especially the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP). In forming the Framework and Language Portfolio SIG at JALT2008, those present sought to gather interested individuals in order to garner ideas, discuss developments, and coordinate efforts.

The CEFR and ELP can be used in curriculum planning, assessment, and other related language-teaching endeavours, ranging from elementary school to university level. There are also other similar frameworks such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks. The SIG wants to discuss these frameworks and their relevance for curriculums in Japan, while carrying out projects and communicating the results. There will be an emphasis on developing materials to support educators who would like to use these pedagogic tools.

The Sunday morning forum at JALT2008 in Tokyo that led to the forming of the SIG started with some

of the participants explaining how they have been using the tools in Japan:

1. Bernd Jacob described the promotion and use of the CEFR to integrate language classes and tests by the Goethe Institute.
2. Noriko Nagai explained how Ibaraki University has been using the CEFR for their Integrated English Program curriculum since 2004.
3. Naoyuki Naganuma (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) talked about the development of *can do* scales to complement the ELP self-assessment checklists in Japanese university EFL classes.
4. Kazumi Sakai gave an account of the use of the CEFR and ELP to create cohesion and transparency in language education from the elementary to tertiary level at Keio University.
5. Fergus O'Dwyer (Momoyama Gakuin) presented on the use of a language portfolio in general university EFL classes.

After these presentations the forum continued with the moderators explaining what the SIG plans to do (most importantly: establish project teams and maintain discussion groups). A brief exchange of opinions followed, where it was pointed out that the group's focus should be wide and include other frameworks (e.g. Canadian Language Benchmarks). All present then split into project teams to begin action plans with the immediate goal of developing materials to present at a seminar to be held on 14-15 March.

This seminar will involve workshops, case studies, and project teams working on action plans. These include "Language portfolio template," "Framework materials resources/syllabus guides," "Teacher training," and "Establishing the use of frameworks in Japan." (It is very difficult to verify how many organisations are currently using these tools in Japan, and in what way.) In time, it is hoped that the Framework and Language Portfolio SIG collection of materials to aid implementation of the pedagogic tools will grow through project team activities. The pool of experience within the SIG can contribute and offer insights into the reform of language education in Japan. The use of the CEFR noted above and in other institutions, most notably as the basis for all 28 language curriculums in the Osaka University of Foreign studies, show curriculum choices that many institutions may choose to pursue. Current research at Keio University sets out a vision of future reforms that can integrate all levels of formal language education.

Japan certainly offers unique challenges, but the aim of the CEFR and the ELP (to be used for all languages in all situations) should not be forgot-

ten. The aspiration of the *CEFR in the USA* working group (to create a single framework for all aspects of language teaching and learning, incorporating the CEFR and other frameworks) is an exciting possibility. This is a far-from-simple exercise but is one theme, among several others, that could be extrapolated in discussions initiated by the SIG. It is not realistic to expect widespread reform of language curriculums in the near future but, as the use of the CEFR increases in Japan, the adoption of tools like the ELP will become easier. The SIG hopes to provide information and resources for learners, educators, and decision makers who are interested in adopting these tools. The way forward offers exciting challenges.

Beyond the seminar in March 2009 there are tentative plans to participate in conferences thereafter. For more information about the Framework and Language Portfolio SIG, details on becoming a member, and links to information about the CEFR, ELP, etc., visit the JALT SIG forums at <forums.jalt.org/index.php/topic,456.0.html>.

## JALT 2009



THE TEACHING LEARNING DIALOGUE  
AN ACTIVE MIRROR  
- Nov 21-23, 2009 -  
GRANSHIP SHIZUOKA  
<JALT.ORG/CONFERENCE>

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## ...with David McMurray

[<outreach@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:outreach@jalt-publications.org)



Outreach is a place where teachers from around the world can exchange opinions and ideas about foreign language learning and teaching. It provides outreach to classroom teachers who would not otherwise readily have access to a readership in Japan. The column also seeks to provide a vibrant voice for colleagues who volunteer to improve language learning in areas that do not have teacher associations. Up to 1,000 word reports from teachers anywhere in the world are welcomed. Contributors may also submit articles in the form of interviews with teachers based overseas.



**T**WO Argentine educators who attended the WorldCALL 2008 Conference in Fukuoka returned home to establish ARCALL, an organization to support Argentine language teachers who are interested in computer-assisted learning. These two founders, Nelba Quintana and Jennifer Verschoor, are interviewed via email by Mary Hillis, an assistant professor of TEFL at Kansai Gaidai University.

## From World CALL to...

The WorldCALL 2008 Conference: *CALL Bridges the World* was held at the Fukuoka International Conference Center so that participants and presenters could gather and share information related to computer-assisted language teaching and learning. Scholarships to attend the conference were awarded to people from developing countries who "have been active in CALL... as evidenced by recent publications, presentations, or ongoing projects" and have "a plan to disseminate the knowledge so gained upon their return home," according to Thomas Robb, chair of the conference scholarship com-

mittee (2008, para. 1). From a list of 125 applicants, Nelba Quintana and Jennifer Verschoor of Argentina were among the 13 finalists selected to be WorldCALL 2008 scholarship recipients.

## ...ARCALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning in Argentina

I had the opportunity to meet Nelba and Jennifer through the online community, *Learning with Computers and Webheads*. We participated in collaborative projects related to blogs and social media. Nelba and Jennifer are educational professionals who are committed to learning and sharing through educational technology. After attending the WorldCALL conference in Japan, they returned to Argentina and founded ARCALL, an organization to support Argentine language teachers who are interested in computer-assisted learning. It is impressive to note that ARCALL is not sponsored by any other organization and is completely the result of grassroots efforts by Nelba and Jennifer.

ARCALL has the following aims (ARCALL, 2008, para. 1):

- to increase the use of educational technology in EFL teaching
- to collaborate in the integration of ICT in Argentina in ways that are effective and appropriate
- to assist teachers in integrating ICT into their daily practices and as a means of developing themselves professionally
- to train teachers on using computers and the Internet in English language teaching
- to develop a research area to further apply new ideas into the classroom

**Mary:** What is your job? Could you briefly describe your teaching context in Argentina?

**Nelba:** Actually I am working as a blog content developer for the School of Languages of the National University of La Plata, Argentina. These blogs are the first steps of the School into the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology). In addition, I am also working as website content developer for ICAB <http://www.elbritanico.com>. This work is really challenging because it is not related to teaching, but to technology and communication, so I have learned a lot about how to communicate on the net, such as the kinds of language, information, and images you are supposed to use in order to catch web surfers' attention.

**Jennifer:** At the moment I am working in several companies teaching business English. I am also director of Teachnet, an ICT firm, and I am a senior teacher trainer at Intel.

**Mary:** In general, what role does technology have in the teaching of English in Argentina? What are some of the obstacles Argentine teachers face in using technology?

**Nelba:** Unfortunately, technology has never played an important role in our education system for several reasons. In general, authorities associate technology with entertainment but, in my humble opinion, the main reason is lack of organization. You cannot expect teachers to use a tool without the corresponding teacher training. A school may be very well equipped with technology but, unless teachers know what to do with it, all the money invested in that material is useless. In most of the other cases, schools do not have access to technology.



**Jennifer:** In many companies, even though all students have computers, they can't view all the websites because some, like YouTube, are restricted. At schools it is very difficult to use technology because most schools lack equipment. Other obstacles include lack of training at schools, resistance from department heads, and old computers.

**Mary:** How did your experience as a WorldCALL 2008 scholarship recipient inspire you to create a CALL organization in Argentina and what is the mission of ARCALL?

**Nelba:** ARCALL was the result of our participation in WorldCALL 2008—an extraordinary experience. Jennifer and I were inspired and influenced by the CALL groups of other countries, especially Venezuela. So, when we came back to our country, we decided to start a group which gathers innovative language teaching professionals in Argentina.

**Jennifer:** WorldCALL has been the source of inspiration for ARCALL. We had the chance to observe what other countries were doing and everybody was really supportive and collaborated in sharing with us their experience with different CALL centers.

**Mary:** I would like to thank Nelba and Jennifer for taking their time to share their experiences.

To learn more about Nelba and Jennifer's work, consult Nelba Quintana's blog post about WorldCALL at <[englishvirtualcommunity.blogspot.com/2008/08/worldcall-2008-fukuoka-japan.html](http://englishvirtualcommunity.blogspot.com/2008/08/worldcall-2008-fukuoka-japan.html)> and Jennifer Verschoor's blog post about ARCALL at <[jenverschoor.wordpress.com/2008/10/02/arcall/](http://jenverschoor.wordpress.com/2008/10/02/arcall/)>

## References

ARCALL. (2008, Sept. 17). Retrieved 2008, Dec. 12 from <http://arcall.pbwiki.com/ARCALL-English-version>

Robb, T. (2008). *Announcing the 2008 World Call Scholarship Awardees*. Retrieved 2008, Dec. 12 from <http://wc3scholar.info/>

Has your email address changed? Help us to help you. Drop a line to <[jco@jalt.org](mailto:jco@jalt.org)> and we'll keep you informed about membership services.

## ...with James Hobbs

[<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>](mailto:sig-news@jalt-publications.org)



JALT currently has 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes announcements of SIG events, mini-conferences, publications, or calls for papers and presenters. SIGs wishing to print news or announcements should contact the editor by the 15th of the month, 6 weeks prior to publication.

### SIGs at a glance

Key: [ ♀ = keywords ] [ 📖 = publications ] [ 💬 = other activities ] [ 📩 = email list ] [ 💬 = online forum]

Note: For contacts & URLs, please see the Contacts page.

### Bilingualism

[ ♀: bilingualism, biculturality, international families, child-raising, identity ] [ 📖 Bilingual Japan—3x year, Journal—1x year ] [ 💬 forums, panels ] [ 📩 ]

Our group has two broad aims: to support families who regularly communicate in more than one language and to further research on bilingualism in Japanese contexts. See our website <[www.bsig.org](http://www.bsig.org)> for more information. 当研究会は複数言語で生活する家族および日本におけるバイリンガリズム研究の支援を目的としています。どうぞホームページの<[www.bsig.org](http://www.bsig.org)>をご覧下さい。

### Computer Assisted Language Learning

[ ♀: technology, computer-assisted, wireless, online learning, self-access ] [ 📖 JALT CALL Journal Newsletter—3x year ] [ 💬 Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops ] [ 📩 ] [ 💬 ]

The CALL SIG welcomes new members to join us at this exciting time of innovations in educational technology both in Japan and abroad. Our next international conference, JALTCALL 2009, will be held at Toyo Gakuen University, Hongo Campus, in Tokyo. For more information on submitting a conference proposal, serving as an officer, or volunteering to help in any way you can, visit <[jaltcall.org/news/index.php](http://jaltcall.org/news/index.php)>.

### College and University Educators

[ ♀: tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching ] [ 📖 On CUE—2x year, YouCUE e-newsletter ] [ 💬 Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops ]

CUE's refereed publication, *OnCUE Journal* (ISSN: 1882-0220), is published twice a year. In addition, members receive the email newsletter *YouCUE* three times a year. Check the CUE SIG website <[jaltcue-sig.org/](http://jaltcue-sig.org/)> for news and updates about CUE SIG events.

### Extensive Reading (forming)

The ER SIG exists to help teachers in Japan start and improve Extensive Reading and Extensive Listening programmes. Our newsletter, *Extensive Reading in Japan* (ERJ), is full of ideas for those new to ER and experienced ER practitioners. It keeps our members up-to-date on ER research and new graded reader releases. Check out our website at <[www.jaltersig.org](http://www.jaltersig.org)>.

### Gender Awareness in Language Education

[ ♀: gender awareness; gender roles; interaction/discourse analysis; critical thought; gender related/biased teaching aims ] [ 📖 newsletter/online journal ] [ 💬 Gender conference, workshops ] [ 📩 ] [ 💬 ]

Cosponsor of PanSIG 2009 at Toyo Gakuen University, Nagareyama Campus in Chiba <[pansig.org/2009/](http://pansig.org/2009/)>. The deadline for submissions is **15 Feb 2009**. Call for Manuscripts for the Journal and Proceedings of the GALE SIG. Deadline for submissions **28 Feb 2009** for the spring issue. GALE works towards building a supportive community of educators and researchers interested in raising awareness and researching how gender plays an integral role in education and professional interaction. Contact <[www.gale-sig.org](http://www.gale-sig.org)>.

### Global Issues in Language Education

[ ♀: global issues, global education, content-based language teaching, international understanding, world citizenship ] [ 📖 Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter—4x year ] [ 💬 Sponsor of Peace as a Global Language (PGL) conference ] [ 📩 ] [ 💬 ]

Are you interested in promoting global awareness and international understanding through your teaching? Then join the GILE SIG. We produce an exciting quarterly newsletter packed with news, articles, and book reviews; organize presentations for local, national, and international conferences; and network with groups such as UNESCO, Amnesty International, and Educators for Social Responsibility. Join us in teaching for a better world! Our website is <[www.gilesig.org](http://www.gilesig.org)>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <[kccates@rstu.jp](mailto:kccates@rstu.jp)>.

## Japanese as a Second Language

[ Japanese as a second language] [ 日本語教育ニュースレター *Japanese as a Second Language Newsletter*—4x year] [ Annual general meeting at the JALT conference] [

## Junior and Senior High School

[ curriculum, native speaker, JET programme, JTE, ALT, internationalization] [ *The School House*—3-4x year] [ teacher development workshops & seminars, networking, open mics] [

The JSH SIG is operating at a time of considerable change in secondary EFL education. Therefore, we are concerned with language learning theory, teaching materials, and methods. We are also intensely interested in curriculum innovation. The large-scale employment of native speaker instructors is a recent innovation yet to be thoroughly studied or evaluated. JALT members involved with junior or senior high school EFL are cordially invited to join us for dialogue and professional development opportunities.

## Learner Development

[ autonomy, learning, reflections, collaboration, development] [ *Learning Learning*, 2x year; *LD-Wired*, quarterly electronic newsletter] [ Forum at the JALT national conference, annual mini-conference/retreat, printed anthology of Japan-based action research projects] [

The LD SIG is planning a new publication, *Developing Learner Autonomy: Practices and Reflections in Context*, consisting of articles by teachers on practices they use to help their students become more autonomous. Initial proposals are due 31 Mar 2009. For details, access the SIG homepage <[ld-sig.org/](http://ld-sig.org/)> or contact editors Alison Stewart <[stewart\\_al@hotmail.com](mailto:stewart_al@hotmail.com)> or Kay Irie <[kayirie@mac.com](mailto:kayirie@mac.com)>. For other queries, get in touch with the SIG coordinator, Hugh Nicoll <[hnicoll@gmail.com](mailto:hnicoll@gmail.com)>.

## Lifelong Language Learning

[ lifelong learning, older adult learners, fulfillment] [ *Told You So!*—3x year (online)] [ Pan-SIG, teaching contest, national & mini-conferences] [] [

The increasing number of people of retirement age, plus the internationalization of Japanese society, has greatly increased the number of people eager to study English as part of their lifelong learning. The LLL SIG provides resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners. We run a website, online forum, listserv, and SIG publication (see <[jalt.org/lifelong/](http://jalt.org/lifelong/)>). For more information or to join the mailing list, contact Yoko Wakui

<[ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp](mailto:ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp)> or Eric M. Skier <[skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp](mailto:skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp)>.

生涯語学学習研究部会は来る高齢化社会に向けて高齢者を含む成人の英語教育をより充実することを目指し、昨年結成した新しい分科会です。現在、日本では退職や子育て後もこれまでの経験や趣味を生かし積極的に社会に参加したいと望んでいる方が大幅に増えております。中でも外国語学習を始めたい、または継続を考えている多くの学習者に対してわれわれ語学教師が貢献出来る課題は多く、これからのお問い合わせや活動が期待されています。LLLでは日本全国の教師が情報交換、勉強会、研究成果の出版を行い共にこの新しい分野を開拓していくうと日々熱心に活動中です。現在オンライン<[jalt.org/lifelong/](http://jalt.org/lifelong/)>上でもフォーラムやメールリスト、ニュースレター配信を活発に行っております。高齢者の語学教育に携わっていらっしゃる方はもちろん、将来の英語教育動向に関心のある方まで、興味のある方はどなたでも大歓迎です。日本人教師も数多く参加していますのでどうぞお気軽にご入会ください。お問い合わせは涌井陽子<[ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp](mailto:ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp)>。または Eric M. Skier <[skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp](mailto:skier@ps.toyaku.ac.jp)>までご連絡ください。

## Materials Writers

[ materials development, textbook writing, publishers and publishing, self-publication, technology] [ *Between the Keys*—3x year] [ JALT national conference events] [] [

The MW SIG shares information on ways to create better language learning materials, covering a wide range of issues from practical advice on style to copyright law and publishing practices, including self-publication. On certain conditions we also provide free ISBNs. Our newsletter *Between the Keys* is published three to four times a year and we have a discussion forum and mailing list <[groups.yahoo.com/group/jaltnwsg/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jaltnwsg/)>. Our website is <[uk.geocities.com/materialwritersig/](http://uk.geocities.com/materialwritersig/)>. To contact us, email <[mw@jalt.org](mailto:mw@jalt.org)>.

## Other Language Educators

[ FLL beyond mother tongue, L3, multilingualism, second foreign language] [ *OLE Newsletter*—4-5x year] [ Network with other FL groups, presence at conventions, provide information to companies, support job searches and research]

OLE has issued NL 49 with information on PanSIG 2009; JALT2009, for which proposals are already being accepted (especially for an OLE action research workshop for which submissions are being accepted until 30 Mar); the coordinator's report for 2007/08; and Spanish and German convention information. Teachers of languages other than English or Japanese who are interested in presenting at JALT2009 should contact the coordinator <[reinelt@iec.ehime-u.ac.jp](mailto:reinelt@iec.ehime-u.ac.jp)> (subject: J09OLE) as early as possible.

## Pragmatics

[💡 appropriate communication, co-construction of meaning, interaction, pragmatic strategies, social context] [📖 *Pragmatic Matters* (語用論事情) —3x year] [🗣 Pan-SIG and JALT conferences, Temple University Applied Linguistics Colloquium, seminars on pragmatics-related topics, other publications] [🌐]

Pragmatics is the study of how people *use* language. As teachers we help students learn to communicate appropriately, and as researchers we study language in use. This is clearly an area of study to which many JALT members can contribute. If you have a practical classroom technique or a research project related to Pragmatics, please send an article to our newsletter, *Pragmatic Matters*. Send submissions to <[sarmstro@kansaigaidai.ac.jp](mailto:sarmstro@kansaigaidai.ac.jp)>. Also see <[www.pragsig.org/index.html](http://www.pragsig.org/index.html)>.

## Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

The PALE SIG welcomes new members, officers, volunteers, and submissions of articles for our journal or newsletter. To read current and past issues of our journal, visit <[www.debito.org/PALE](http://www.debito.org/PALE)>. Also, anyone may join our listserv <[groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE\\_Group](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE_Group)>. For information on events, visit <[www.jalt.org/groups/PALE](http://www.jalt.org/groups/PALE)>.

## Study Abroad (forming)

[💡 study abroad, pre-departure curriculum, setting up, receiving students, returnees] [📖 *Ryugaku*—3-4x year] [🗣 Pan-SIG, national and mini-conference in 2009] [🌐]

The Study Abroad SIG is a new and upcoming group interested in all that is Study Abroad. We aim to provide a supportive place for discussion of areas of interest, and we hope that our members will collaborate to improve the somewhat sparse research into Study Abroad. We welcome submissions for our newsletter, *Ryugaku*, and we are still in need of officers. Contact Andrew Atkins or Todd Thorpe <[studyabroadsig@gmail.com](mailto:studyabroadsig@gmail.com)> for further information.

## Teacher Education

[💡 action research, peer support, reflection and teacher development] [📖 *Explorations in Teacher Education*—4x year] [🗣 library, annual retreat or mini-conference, Pan-SIG sponsorship, sponsorship of speaker at the JALT national conference] [🌐] [🗣]

The Teacher Education SIG is a network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping others teach more effectively. Our members teach at universities, schools, and language centres, both in Japan and other countries.

We share a wide variety of research interests, and support and organize a number of events throughout Japan every year. We also have an online discussion group. Contact <[ted@jalt.org](mailto:ted@jalt.org)> or visit our website <[jaltesig.terapad.com/](http://jaltesig.terapad.com/)>.

## Teachers Helping Teachers (forming)

[💡 teacher training, international education programs, language training, international outreach] [📖 *THT Journal*—1x year, *THT Newsletter*—4x year] [🗣 teacher training conferences/seminars in Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines, AGM at JALT national] [🌐]

## Teaching Children

[💡 children, elementary school, kindergarten, early childhood, play] [📖 *Teachers Learning with Children*, bilingual—4x year] [🗣 JALT Junior at national conference, regional bilingual 1-day conferences] [🌐] [🗣]

The Teaching Children SIG is for all teachers of children. We publish a bilingual newsletter four times a year, with columns by leading teachers in our field. There is a mailing list for teachers of children who want to share teaching ideas or questions <[groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/)>. We are always looking for new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, we particularly hope to appeal to Japanese teachers. We hope you can join us for one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit <[www.tcsig.jalt.org](http://www.tcsig.jalt.org)>.

児童教育部会は、子どもに英語(外国語)を教える先生方を対象にした部会です。当部会は、年4回会報を発行しています。会報は英語と日本語で提供しており、この分野で活躍している教師が担当するコラムもあります。また、指導上のアイデアや質問を交換する場として、メーリングリスト<[groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tcsig/)>を運営しています。活発な部会を維持していくために常に新会員を募集しています。特に日本人の先生方の参加を歓迎します。部会で開催するイベントに是非ご参加ください。詳細については<[www.tcsig.jalt.org](http://www.tcsig.jalt.org)>をご覧下さい。

## Testing & Evaluation

[💡 research, information, database on testing] [📖 *Shiken*—3x year] [🗣 Pan-SIG, JALT National] [🌐] [🗣]

The TEVAL SIG is concerned with language testing and assessment, and welcomes both experienced teachers and those who are new to this area and wish to learn more about it. Our newsletter, published three times a year, contains a variety of testing-related articles, including discussions of the ethical implications of testing, interviews with prominent authors and researchers, book reviews, and reader-friendly explanations of some of the statistical techniques used in test analysis. Visit <[www.jalt.org/test](http://www.jalt.org/test)>.

## ...with Ben Lehtinen

<chap-events@jalt-publications.org>



Each of JALT's 36 active chapters sponsors from 5 to 12 events every year. All JALT members may attend events at any chapter at member rates—usually free. Chapters, don't forget to add your event to the JALT calendar or send the details to the editor by email or t/f: 048-787-3342.



### CHAPTER EVENTS ONLINE

You can access all of JALT's events online at:  
[<www.jalt.org/calendar>](http://www.jalt.org/calendar).

If you have a QRcode-capable mobile phone, use the image on the left.

**A**NOTHER academic year comes to a close as the first signs of spring emerge from winter hiding. Maybe this is the time for you to come out of hiding by getting involved with your local chapter, whether it be attending an event or proposing one. This time of year is also the time for moving so, if you are taking wing and moving nest, be sure to contact your new local chapter to find out what's going on. Chapter events are the lifeblood of JALT. They provide participants a great chance to connect with fellow language teachers and get new ideas for the classroom. Take a chance and get involved!

**Gifu—Exploring self-reflection in the EFL classroom** by Brent Simmonds and Paul Crawshaw. In this experiential approach to professional development, the presenters will focus on teachers' self-reflection. Participants will explore the benefits of pair work, problems concerning overcorrection, and the proper dosage of using games with adult learners. Vocabulary building activities will serve to help engage discussion on the individual approaches educators have toward teaching. In addition, benefits of classroom observation and discussing ways to build student confidence will round out this hands-on workshop. *Sat 21 Mar 19:00-21:00; Gifu JR Station—Heartful Square 2nd floor; Non-members ¥1000.*

**Hiroshima—Teaching children English mini-conference** by various. If you teach children, then this mini-conference will be perfect for you! You will get lots of ideas from the innovative presenta-

tions as well as from the other teachers you will be sure to meet there. There will also be book displays and teaching materials for sale. Check out <jalt.org/events> for more details. *Sun 8 Mar; YMCA (Red Brick Building), 7-11 Hatchobori, Naka-ku, Hiroshima; Non-members ¥500.*

### Kitakyushu—Japanese culture presentations

by Dave Pite. Learn more about Japan from your students while stimulating meaningful communication in apparently fluent English. (Teacher tweaks the video with iMovie software.) This presentation will explain how first-year high school students are encouraged to plan, organize, and present some coherent and entertaining descriptions of Japanese culture, with examples of selected videos shown. *Sat 14 Mar 18:00-20:00; Kitakyushu International Centre, 3F; Non-members ¥ 1000.*

### Nagoya—Drama for understanding

by Miho Moody. Drama is a useful tool in the communicative language classroom; it focuses on the meaning of language rather than the form. It is useful for understanding literature and can help students to appreciate how even simple intercultural communication can lead to misunderstandings. This workshop will explore how this can be done. *Sun 15 Mar 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2; One-day members ¥1000.*

### Omiya—On defining “good” language learners

and University listening classes: less product, more process by Joe Siegel. The first part of the workshop will examine the notion of “good” language learners (GLLs) in terms of learner characteristics from second language acquisition literature as well as ideas on how learners can become “better.” The second part of the workshop will describe listening classes taught at a public university in Japan with a description of how direct listening strategy training was incorporated in an effort to teach the process of listening. *Sun 8 Mar 14:00-16:45; Sakuragi Kominkan 5F; Non-members ¥1000.*

### Sendai—My share: Starting off the new school year

by various local members. Come and share some of your ideas or activities for getting the year started on the right foot and in the right direction. If you're interested in making a short presentation, please contact Simon Cooke <cookesd@yahoo.com>. *Sun 29 Mar 14:00-17:00; Mediatheque building on Jozenji-dori, Sendai; Non-members ¥1000.*

**Shinshu—Intercultural team teaching: The good, the bad, and the beautiful!** by Sean Mehmet. This interactive presentation will begin with a brief overview of some of the more widely-recognized theories and paradigms of intercultural communication. These will serve as a theoretical springboard to examine more prevalent and recurring intercultural workplace differences between Japanese

Teachers of English (JTEs) and Assistant English Teachers (AETs) or Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs). The final discussion will focus on the practical issues of information dissemination, privacy, and different conceptions of professional conduct. *Sat 14 Mar 14:00-16:30; The Ueda City Chuo Community Center; Non-members ¥1000.*

## COLUMN • CHAPTER REPORTS

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### ...with Troy Miller

<chap-reports@jalt-publications.org>



The Chapter Reports column is a forum for sharing with the *TLT* readership synopses of presentations held at JALT chapters around Japan. For more information on these speakers, please contact the chapter officers in the JALT Contacts section of this issue. For guidelines on contributions, see the Submissions page at the back of each issue.

**Gifu: November—The Pecha Kucha group share from JALT National** by various speakers. Following JALT National this year, Gifu JALT indulged in its first Pecha Kucha-styled meeting. **John Gunning, Kim Horne, Corazon Kato, Mark Kuleck, Mike Stockwell and Steve Quasha** reported information, inspirations, and their impressions of the 2008 conference. Working with a limited number of slides and a set amount of time for their presentation, each presenter gave a summary of the sessions they had attended and shared the wealth of knowledge that they had gained. The speakers all took a different approach to their task, resulting in a broad variety of styles and subjects being broached that directly relate to language teaching. The Pecha Kucha format (or meeting) demonstrated an effective way of challenging speakers to stick to a topic and to be as succinct as possible in their presentations, as well as proving to be an exciting information-filled evening for all involved.

*Reported by Jon Catanzariti*

**Gunma: September—Becoming bilingual in Asia by Jason Good.** Good offered an intriguing glimpse into the state of English bilingual education programs in Thailand, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. These countries have experienced a veritable explosion in

the number of schools offering bilingual programs (in Bangkok alone, for example, there are over 150 registered schools). As a US textbook sales representative, Jason described his experience in working with bilingual education schools and explored the factors driving the thirst for EFL education and differing roles of governments and the private sector in their development. Although there are a number of bilingual schools in Japan that have operated for more than 10 years, in light of the scale and intensity of growth in neighboring countries, Japan already is in danger of being left far behind. This presentation is a sobering eye-opener about the challenges facing Japan's EFL education.

*Reported by Barry Keith*

**Hamamatsu: December—My Share.** Our chapter had its third annual December My Share meeting. Each member shared an experience or impression that was memorable from their teaching in 2008. One junior high school ALT talked about how he tries to help students understand the pronunciation of difficult consonants, using word pairs such as "white rabbit" because the letter "r" begins with a "w" position. Another member, who has his own school, explained how Kim Horne's presentation in September 2008 had made him reflect on how he relates to students and that the simple act of good eye contact makes an important difference. Another teacher, who teaches at a university, said Atsuko Takase's presentation on extensive reading in June 2008 had helped him a great deal in his work. He has been using extensive reading for a while, but until hearing Takase's talk he had never heard of actual research results on that type of learning method. Other members shared their impromptu experiences and questions about how to improve their teaching. After the meeting, most of the members went to a restaurant together for a bite to eat. It was an enjoyable and fitting end to 2008 for the Hamamatsu JALT chapter.

*Reported by Dan Frost*

**Nagoya: December—*My Share.*** (1) *iPods in the classroom and beyond* by Robert Gee. Gee recommends designing videos to teach features such as liaison (connected speech), which makes listening difficult for learners. With his liaison-focused cloze exercises, students realize how important the context and meanings are to understanding how the words link. Movies, TV programs, and videos from YouTube can be used for information gap tasks, to promote analytical thinking, and for reviewing grammar. Gee gave a hands-on example of an activity by showing a movie and asking the participants to complete the story by filling in the blanks with the correct prepositions. (2) *Report from JALT 2008* by Yoshimi Nagano. Nagano reported on the workshop *ABC Card Seminar* and explained two games that were presented. One was a guessing game with students giving hints about an image, and the other a team competition with each group trying to make as many words as possible in two minutes, using the letters in a long word. (3) *English lessons using Computer U2 Universal* by Rich Porter. Porter demonstrated a cloze exercise listening activity from a U2 song. Porter explained that not only do students have a chance to practice their listening skills, they are also likely to be more motivated to use computers.

*Reported by Kayoko Kato*

**Niigata: December—*A review of the Japan Writers' Conference*** by Sue Sullivan. This was the third meeting of our reformed chapter. Sullivan gave us a brief overview of her attendance at the Japan Writers' Conference held in Nagoya at the end November, 2008. After giving us a review of the sessions which had made the strongest impression on her, she led a discussion on the topic of teaching EFL writing in Japan. Many of the audience joined in a lively discussion of their creative methods. These included the importance of peer editing for high-level students, the use of blogs such as <21publish.com>, the practicalities of process writing (multiple-draft assignments; peer responses; non-graded assessment; teacher-student consultation; etc.)

One interesting idea that Sue related to us was the use of an umbrella metaphor in writing. In this 2-D metaphor, the handle of the umbrella divides the canopy into 2 equal portions. Pros can be written in one half of the umbrella, and cons in the other half. In this way, students can be reminded that every topic has a for and an against position, all contained under one heading.

*Reported by David Coulson*

**Okayama: December—(1) *Teaching writing to multileveled students*** by Kumiko Miyamoto. After outlining her teaching context (low level, unstreamed Japanese, Chinese, and Korean university students), Miyamoto explained that her initial approach, aimed at improving oral English competence, had been unsatisfactory, as students were reluctant to speak. Over time, she developed a paragraph writing approach based on a simple, teacher-selected topic. Students write an introduction sentence, followed by three short paragraphs, each detailing a relevant point, then end with a conclusion sentence. This approach's benefits were examined and a group discussion generated suggestions on improving this method. (2) *Investigating communication strategy use in an immersion setting* by Jason Williams. Williams began by defining the term communicative strategy (CS) and justifying the inclusion of CS in EFL classes. He identified problems associated with CS instruction. Chiefly, a range of taxonomies containing 8 to 40+ separate CS makes it difficult for teachers to select which to reinforce. Research conducted with 27 students of a Korean immersion school showed that they employ approximation, circumlocution, appeal for assistance, and pantomime/gesture strategies when communicating in Korean. Thus it was proposed that instruction in using these CS could most benefit students during their EFL classes.

*Reported by Paul Moritoshi*

**Osaka: December—*Zen and the art of statistics*** by Greg Sholdt. This workshop for novices was well attended by both the Osaka and Kobe chapters. Sholdt took the unusual approach of connecting Zen koans with statistical reasoning, ensuring a great turnout. He also took time to explain some basic concepts, allowing us to scrutinize SLA research articles more closely. The meeting was followed by a joint Osaka and Kobe bonenkai at a restaurant in Kobe.

*Reported by Douglas Meyer*

**Sendai: December—*Integrating music into EFL materials*** by Jim Smiley and Brian Cullen. Starting out with survey results on why some teachers don't use music in EFL, Smiley and Cullen proceeded to offer a strong case for considering what songs can bring to our language classrooms and students in terms of language exposure, motivation, and constructive engagement in learning activities. Employing an engaging, conversational approach, interspersed with musical performance (guitar, recorder, and voice), Smiley and Cullen led us to consider: (a) commonalities in music and verbal

language, (b) theoretical bases for the use of song in language education, and (c) particular advantages of song in terms of motivation and learning. They followed this up with a wealth of specific ideas and models for using song in the classroom (with a wide range of skills and activity types) and provided participants with the opportunity to brainstorm together and share ideas for a sequence of activities based on popular songs of their choice.

*Reported by Ken Schmidt*

**Shinshu: October—Function rather than form as a basis for teaching** by Trevor Keith Landles. Landles began his presentation by discussing how certain functions dealt with in EFL material, course books, and syllabi are often based on various structures and modal verbs. This workshop explored how to look at how lessons, syllabi, and material

can be based primarily on various functions such as arranging ideas, expressing regrets or telling anecdotes. It examined how this approach can make things easier for both teacher and student and how lessons can be more empowering and communicative. For example, with advance planning to focus on a particular grammar structure, teachers of all levels can begin to immediately empower their students with a functional usage of the language with a specific goal as opposed to memorizing grammar forms and/or rules. The workshop was informative and exciting, and all who attended learned from real experience. Landles switched to Italian and the non-Italian speakers quickly gained proficiency with little comprehension of the underlying—and untaught—grammar.

*Reported by David Ockert*

## COLUMN • JOB INFORMATION CENTER

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# Five things to consider before starting a language school

Ben Shearon  
Cambridge English

There seem to be few options available to English speakers looking for work in Japan. Apart from specialists and those literate in Japanese, most people seem to end up teaching. Short-term contracts are common, and the employment dance has been well documented (McCrostie and Spiri, 2008). Faced with the uncertainties involved, being your own boss seems like a great option, so many teachers think of starting their own schools.

I'd like to draw from my own experience of starting and running a language school, even though it's probably not typical. I hope you will find it cautionary or at least interesting! I was fortunate in that my wife is also an English teacher, and we run the school together. We've been operating for almost five years now, and have grown slowly to our present size of around seventy students (we started with five). I've never stopped working elsewhere to supplement our family income. Running a school

## ...with James McCrostie

<job-info@jalt-publications.org>

To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please submit online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/> or email James McCrostie, Job Information Center Editor, <job-info@jalt-publications.org>. Online submission is preferred. Please place your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and should contain the following information: location, name of institution, title of position, whether full- or part-time, qualifications, duties, salary and benefits, application materials, deadline, and contact information. Be sure to refer to *TLT*'s policy on discrimination. Any job advertisement that discriminates on the basis of gender, race, age, or nationality must be modified or will not be included in the JIC column. All advertisements may be edited for length or content.

### Job Information Center Online

Recent job listings and links to other job-related websites can be viewed at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/>



is extremely rewarding, but can also be incredibly stressful and frustrating. Here are my five points to consider before starting your own school:

1. Anyone thinking about opening their own school should join ETJ (English Teachers in Japan), and specifically the Owners email group. You can sign up for both at: <[www.eltnews.com/ETJ](http://www.eltnews.com/ETJ)>. The archive going back several years is probably the best available collection of information related to running small language schools in Japan, and the group itself is made up of some fantastic people. Don't even think of opening a school without reading the archives and asking questions there.
2. Think hard about whether you can do this by yourself. I believe having a Japanese partner is almost essential, to deal with customers and officialdom.
3. Starting slowly is much safer. If you can start your school while working full or part-time somewhere else, you can slowly build your student base without gambling your rent on it. If you can start by teaching at home or in a community centre, you will save the substantial start-up costs that come with renting commercial property.
4. It's very hard to get students. Most of ours came by word of mouth, and the more students you have, the easier it is to get more. Conversely, if you don't have many, it's much harder to attract new ones. It took us three years to get to thirty students, and then one to go from thirty to sixty.

5. Having a business is very different to being a teacher. Doing the right thing pedagogically is not always the best thing to do from a commercial point of view. For example, we spend far too much money on materials for the school.

Of course, this is our way of doing things. For other approaches and points of view, come along to the ETJ Owners group. If you have any questions, please drop me an email at <[sendaiben@gmail.com](mailto:sendaiben@gmail.com)>.

## References

McCrostie, J. and Spiri, J. (2008, December 30) Foreign faculty face annual round of 'musical jobs'. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20081230zg.html>

## Job Openings

The Job Information Center lists only brief summaries of open positions in *TLT*. Full details of each position are available on the JALT website. Please visit <[www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/](http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/)> to view the most up-to-date list of job postings.

**Location:** Nagano and Fukushima

**School:** Interac Japan

**Position:** Short-term intensive language programme instructors

**Start Date:** Four times a year

**Deadline:** Ongoing

## ...with David Stephan

<[conferences@jalt-publications.org](mailto:conferences@jalt-publications.org)>



New listings are welcome. Please email information (including a website address) to the column editor as early as possible, preferably by the 15th of the month, at least 3 months before a conference in Japan, or 4 months before an overseas conference. Thus, 15 March is the deadline for a June conference in Japan or a July conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions on the usefulness of this column are also most welcome.

## Upcoming Conferences

**6-8 Mar 09—Second Conference of the International Association of Performing Language**, at U. of Victoria, Canada. The agenda includes language

teaching through theater and drama. **Contact:** <[web.uvic.ca/~hnserc/IAPL/conference\\_second.php](http://web.uvic.ca/~hnserc/IAPL/conference_second.php)>

**21-24 Mar 09—AAAL 2009: Annual Conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics**, in Denver. **Contact:** <[www.aaal.org/conferences/aaalConferences.php](http://www.aaal.org/conferences/aaalConferences.php)>

**25-28 Mar 09—TESOL 2009**, in Denver. **Contact:** <[www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/index.asp](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp)>

**27 Mar 09—Fourth Newcastle Postgraduate Conference in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics**, at Newcastle U. Plenary speakers include Zoltán Dörnyei. **Contact:** <[conferences.ncl.ac.uk/pglinguistics](http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/pglinguistics)>

**31 Mar-4 Apr 09—43rd Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition**, in Cardiff. **Contact:** <[www.iatefl.org/content/conferences/index.php](http://www.iatefl.org/content/conferences/index.php)>

**6-8 Apr 09—Second International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca**, at U. of Southampton. Plenary speakers include Henry Widdowson. **Contact:** <[www.soton.ac.uk/ml/research/elf.html](http://www.soton.ac.uk/ml/research/elf.html)>

**16-19 Apr 09—CATESOL 40th Annual State Conference:** *Whole Learner, Whole Teacher*, with H. Douglas Brown as a featured speaker, in Pasadena. **Contact:** <[www.catesol2009.org/](http://www.catesol2009.org/)>

**17-18 Apr 09—2009 SLA Graduate Student Symposium:** *Second Language Acquisition in the 21st Century*, at U. of Iowa. Plenary speakers include Carol Chapelle. **Contact:** <[international.uiowa.edu/centers/flare/news/default.aspx](http://international.uiowa.edu/centers/flare/news/default.aspx)>

**20-22 Apr 09—44th RELC International Seminar:** *The Impact of Technology on Language Learning and Teaching: What, How and Why*, in Singapore. **Contact:** <[www.relc.org.sg/seminar.html](http://www.relc.org.sg/seminar.html)>

**22-24 Apr 09—Fourth International English Language Teaching Conference by PELLTA**, in Penang, Malaysia. **Contact:** <[eltcon.webs.com/index.htm](http://eltcon.webs.com/index.htm)>

**28-30 Apr 09—Sixth Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Universals, Distinctions and Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives**, in Putrajaya. **Contact:** <[www.fbmk.upm.edu.my/~micollac/](http://www.fbmk.upm.edu.my/~micollac/)>

**5-6 May 09—Fourth International Conference of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature: Language and Culture: Creating and Fostering Global Communities**, in Putrajaya, Malaysia. **Contact:** <[www.fpbahasa.ukm.my/SoLLsINTEC09/](http://www.fpbahasa.ukm.my/SoLLsINTEC09/)>

**21-24 May 09—First Conference on Second Language Processing and Parsing: State of the Science**, at Texas Tech U. **Contact:** <[www.languages.ttu.edu/L2processing/index.htm](http://www.languages.ttu.edu/L2processing/index.htm)>

**23-24 May 09—Eighth Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference**, Toyo Gakuen U., Nagareyama Campus, Chiba. **Contact:** <[www.eltcalendar.com/events/details/4173](http://www.eltcalendar.com/events/details/4173)>

**27-28 May 09—UPALS ICL 2009: Rejuvenating the Passion for Teaching and Learning of Languages**, in Penang. **Contact:** <[www.icl-2009.com/index.htm](http://www.icl-2009.com/index.htm)>

**28-30 May 09—Sixth International Conference on Language Teacher Education: Preparing Language Teachers for the 21st Century**, in Washington, DC. **Contact:** <[nclrc.org/lte2009/](http://nclrc.org/lte2009/)>

**3-5 Jun 09—Independent Learning Association Conference: Independent Learning: Building on Experience, Seeking New Perspectives**, at Hong Kong Polytechnic U. The ILA is an association for teachers and researchers interested in independent language learning. Specific areas of interest include: fostering learner autonomy through classroom practice; supporting self-directed learning; providing self-access language learning facilities; and teacher autonomy. **Contact:** <[ilac2009.elc.polyu.edu.hk/index.php/ILAC/ILAC2009](http://ilac2009.elc.polyu.edu.hk/index.php/ILAC/ILAC2009)>

**5-7 Jun 09—JALTCALL 2009**, at Toyo Gakuen U., Tokyo. Annual conference of the JALT CALL SIG. The keynote Speaker will be Mark Warschauer. **Contact:** <[jaltcall.org/news/index.php](http://jaltcall.org/news/index.php)>

**11-13 Jun 09—International Society for Language Studies Conference: Critical Language Studies: Focusing on Power**, in Orlando, FL. **Contact:** <[www.isls-inc.org/conference.htm](http://www.isls-inc.org/conference.htm)>

**17-21 Jun 09—21st International ISHS Humor Conference**, hosted at Long Beach by California State U. **Contact:** <[www.ishs2009.com/](http://www.ishs2009.com/)>

**18-20 Jun 09—LPLL 2009: Language Policy and Language Learning: New Paradigms and New Challenges**, hosted in Limerick by the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics. **Contact:** <[www.ul.ie/~lcs/lpll2009/](http://www.ul.ie/~lcs/lpll2009/)>

**30 Jun-2 Jul 09—Fifth Biennial Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing: The Roles of Writing Development in Higher Education and Beyond**, at Coventry U. **Contact:** <[www.coventry.ac.uk/eataw2009](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/eataw2009)>

**12-17 Jul 09—11th International Pragmatics Conference: Diversity, Context, and Structure**, in Melbourne. **Contact:** <[ipra.ua.ac.be/](http://ipra.ua.ac.be/)>

**20-23 Jul 09—Fifth Corpus Linguistics Conference**, at U. of Liverpool. **Contact:** <[www.liv.ac.uk/english/CL2009](http://www.liv.ac.uk/english/CL2009)>

**13-16 Sep 09—Third Biennial International Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching: Tasks: Context, Purpose and Use**, in Lancaster, UK. **Contact:** <[www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/index.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/tblt2009/index.htm)>

**11-13 Oct 09—Language Learning in Computer Mediated Communities (LLCMC) Conference**, at University of Hawaii, Manoa. **Contact:** <[nflrc.hawaii.edu/llcmc](http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/llcmc)>

## Calls for Papers or Posters

**Deadline: 31 Mar 09 (for 3-5 Sep 09) BAAL 42nd Annual Conference: Language, Learning and Context**, in Newcastle. **Contact:** <[www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/news/conferences/BAAL2009/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/news/conferences/BAAL2009/)>

**Deadline: 24 Apr 09 (for 21-23 Nov 09)—JALT2009: 35th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning: The Teaching-Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror**, in Shizuoka. Mirrors allow us to look at a single object from many different angles. In a good teaching-learning situation, there is always another way of looking at any issue: We proceed successfully only when reflection and a variety of perspectives are involved. **Contact:** <[jalt.org/conference](http://jalt.org/conference)>

**Deadline: 15 May 09 (for 18-20 Sep 09)—15th IAICS International Conference on Cross-Cultural Communication: Intercultural Communication and Collaboration Within and Across Socio-linguistic Environments**, at Kumamoto Gakuen U. **Contact:** <[www.uri.edu/iaics/](http://www.uri.edu/iaics/)> <[iaics2009@kumagaku.ac.jp](mailto:iaics2009@kumagaku.ac.jp)>

For changes and additions, please contact the editor <[contacts@jalt-publications.org](mailto:contacts@jalt-publications.org)>. More extensive listings can be found on the JALT website <[jalt.org](http://jalt.org)>.

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日本国内での語学教育に関する投稿をお待ちしています。できるだけ電子メールにリッチ・テキスト・フォーマットの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。郵送の場合には、フロッピーディスクかCD-ROM(ラベルを張り、プリントアウトしたものと一緒に)お送り下さい。書式はアメリカ心理学会(APA)スタイルに基づき、スタッフリストページにある各コラムの編集者まで縦め切りに留意して、提出されたものにつまましては編集者に一任していただくことになります。

## Feature Articles

**English Features.** Submissions should be well-written, well-documented, and researched articles. Analysis and data can be quantitative or qualitative (or both). Manuscripts are typically screened and evaluated anonymously by members of *The Language Teacher* Editorial Advisory Board. They are evaluated for degree of scholarly research, relevance, originality of conclusions, etc. Submissions should:

- be up to 3,000 words (not including appendices)
- have pages numbered, paragraphs separated by double carriage returns (not tabbed), and subheadings (boldfaced or italic) used throughout for the convenience of readers
- have the article's title, the author's name, affiliation, contact details, and word count at the top of the first page
- be accompanied by an English abstract of up to 150 words (translated into Japanese, if possible, and submitted as a separate file)
- be accompanied by a 100-word biographical background
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

日本語論文：実証性のある研究論文を求めます。質的か、量計的か（あるいは両方）で追究された分析やデータを求めます。原稿は、匿名のJLTの査読委員により、研究水準、関連性、結果などの独創性で評価されます。8,000語（資料は除く）以内で、ページ番号を入れ、段落ごとに2行あけ、副見出し(太文字かイタリック体)を付けて下さい。最初のページの一一番上に題名、著者名、所属、連絡先および語彙表をお書き下さい。英文、和文で400語の要旨、300語の著者略歴もご提出下さい。表、図、付録も可能です。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Readers' Forum** articles are thoughtful essays on topics related to language teaching and learning in Japan. Submissions should:

- be of relevance to language teachers in Japan
- contain up to 2,500 words
- include English and Japanese abstracts, as per Features above
- include a list of up to 8 keywords for indexing
- include a short bio and a Japanese title.

Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

読者のフォーラム：日本の言語教育、及び言語学習に関する思慮的なエッセイを募集しています。日本の語学教師に関連していくて、6,000字以内で、英文・和文の要旨、短い略歴および日本語のタイトルを添えて下さい。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Interviews.** If you are interested in interviewing a well-known professional in the field of language teaching in and around Japan, please consult the editors first. Lengths range from 1,500–2,500 words. Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

インタビュー：日本国内外で言語教育の分野での「有名な」専門家にインタビューしたい場合は、編集者に最初に意見をお尋ね下さい。3,600語から6,000語の長さです。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Conference Reports.** If you have attended a conference on a topic of interest to language teachers in Asia, write a 1,500-word report summarizing the main events. Send as an email attachment to the co-editors.

学会報告：語学教師に関心のあるトピックの大会に出席された場合は、4,000語程度に要約して、報告書を書いてください。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

## Departments

**My Share.** Submissions should be original teaching

techniques or a lesson plan you have used. Readers should be able to replicate your technique or lesson plan. Submissions should:

- be up to 700 words
- have the article title, the author name, affiliation, email address, and word count at the top of the first page
- include a *Quick Guide* to the lesson plan or teaching technique
- follow My Share formatting
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files
- include copyright warnings, if appropriate.

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.マイシェア：学習活動に関する実践的なアイデアについて、テクニックや教案を読者が再利用できるように紹介するもので、1,000字以内で最初のページにタイトル、著者名、所属、電子メールアドレスと文字数をお書き下さい。表、図、付録なども含めることができますが、著作権にはお気をつけ下さい。My Share担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Book Reviews.** We invite reviews of books and other educational materials. Contact the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison <pub-review@jalt-publications.org> for material listed in the Recently Received column, and the Book Reviews editor if you wish to review unlisted material, including websites or other online resources. Review articles treating several related titles are particularly welcome. Submissions should:

- show a thorough understanding of the material reviewed in under 750 words
- reflect actual classroom usage in the case of classroom materials
- be thoroughly checked and proofread before submission.

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews editor.

**書評：**本や教材の書評です。書評編集者<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>に問い合わせ、最近出版されたリストからお選びいただき、もしwebサイトなどのリストがない場合には書評編集者と連絡をとってください。複数の関連するタイトルを扱うものを特に歓迎します。書評は、本の内容紹介、教室活動や教材としての使用法に触れて書評編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**JALT Focus.** Submissions should be directly related to recent or upcoming developments within JALT, preferably on an organization-wide scale. Submissions should:

- be no more than 750 words
- be relevant to the JALT membership as whole
- encourage readers to participate more actively in JALT on both a micro and macro level.

Deadline: 15th of the month, 1½ months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JALT Focus editor.

**JALT フォーカス：**JALT内の進展を会員の皆様にお伝えするものです。どのJALT会員にもふさわしい内容で、JALTに、より活動的に参加するように働きかけるのです。1,600字程度で、毎月15日までにお送り下さい。掲載は1月半後になります。JALTフォーカス編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**JALT Notices.** Submissions should be of general relevance to language learners and teachers in Japan. JALT Notices can be accessed at <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/>. Calls for papers or research projects will be accepted; however, announcements of conferences, colloquia, or seminars should be submitted to the Conference Calendar. Submissions:

- should be no more than 150 words
- should be submitted as far in advance as is possible
- will be removed from the website when the announcement becomes outdated.

Submissions can be sent through the JALT Notices online submissions form.

**掲示板：**日本での論文募集や研究計画は、オンライン<www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/focus/>で見ることができます。できるだけ前もって掲載いたしますが、終了次第、消去いたします。掲示板オンライン・サブミッション形式に従い、400字以内で投稿して下さい。なお、会議、セミナーは Conference Calendar で扱います。

**SIG News.** JALT's Special Interest Groups may use this column to report on news or events happening within their group. This might include mini-conferences, presentations, publications, calls for papers or presenters, or general SIG information. Deadline: 15th of month, 6 weeks prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the SIG News editor.

**SIGニュース：**SIGはニュースやイベントの報告にこのコラムを使用できます。会議、プレゼンテーション、出版物、論文募集、連絡代表者などの情報を記入下さい。締め切りは出版の2か月前の15日までに、SIG委員長に電子メールの添付ファイルで送ってください。

**Chapter Events.** Chapters are invited to submit upcoming events. Submissions should follow the precise format used in every issue of *TLT* (topic, speaker, date, time, place, fee, and other information in order, followed by a 60-word description of the event).

Meetings scheduled for early in the month should be published in the previous month's issue. Maps of new locations can be printed upon consultation with the column editor. Deadline: 15th of the month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Events editor.

**支部イベント：**近づいている支部のイベントの案内情報です。トピック、発表者、日時、時間、場所、料金をこの順序で掲載いたします。締め切りは、毎月15日で、2ヶ月前までに、支部イベント編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Chapter Reports.** This column is a forum for sharing synopses of presentations given at JALT chapters around Japan. Submissions must therefore reflect the nature of the column and be written clearly and concisely. Chapters are limited to one report per month. Submissions should:

- be interesting and not contain extraneous information
- be in well-written, concise, informative prose
- be made by email only – faxed and/or postal submissions are not acceptable
- be approximately 200 words in order to explore the content in sufficient detail
- be structured as follows: Chapter name; Event date; Event title; Name of presenter(s); Synopsis; Reporter's name.

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports editor.

**支部会報告：**JALT地域支部会の研究会報告です。有益な情報をお提供下さい。600文字程度で簡潔にお書き下さい。支部名、日時、イベント名、発表者名、要旨、報告者名を、この順序でお書き下さい。支部会報告編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。ファックスや郵便は受理いたしませんので、注意下さい。

**Job Information Center.** *TLT* encourages all prospective employers to use this free service to locate the most qualified language teachers in Japan. The notice should:

- contain the following information: City and prefecture, Name of institution, Title of position, Whether full- or part-time, Qualifications, Duties, Salary & benefits, Application materials, Deadline, Contact information
- not be positions wanted. (It is JALT policy that they will not be printed.)

Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the JIC editor.

**求人欄：**語学教育の求人募集を無料でサービス提供します。県と都市名、機関名、職名、専任か非常勤かの区別、資格、仕事内容、給料、締め切りや連絡先を発行2ヶ月前の15日までにお知らせ下さい。特別の書式はありません。JIC担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

**Conference Calendar.** Announcements of conferences and their calls for papers as well as for colloquia, symposiums, and seminars may be posted in this column. The announcement should be up to 150 words. Deadline: 15th of month, at least 3 months prior to the conference date for conferences in Japan and 4 months prior for overseas conferences. Send within an email message to the Conference Calendar editor.

**催し：**コロキウム、シンポジウム、セミナー、会議のお知らせと、論文募集の案内です。Conference Calendar編集者に400語程度で電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。締め切りは毎月15日で、日本、および海外の会議で3ヶ月前までの情報を掲載します。

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### The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

- a professional organization formed in 1976  
-1976年に設立された学術学会
- working to improve language learning and teaching, particularly in a Japanese context  
-語学の学習と教育の向上を図ることを目的としています
- over 3,000 members in Japan and overseas  
-国内外で約3,000名の会員がいます

Annual international conference 年次国際大会

- 1,500 to 2,000 participants  
-毎年1,500名から2,000名が参加します
- hundreds of workshops and presentations  
-多数のワークショップや発表があります
- publishers' exhibition  
-出版社による教材展があります
- Job Information Centre  
-就職情報センターが設けられます

JALT publications include:

- *The Language Teacher*—our monthly publication  
-を毎月発行します
- *JALT Journal*—biannual research journal  
-を年2回発行します
- Annual Conference Proceedings  
-年次国際大会の研究発表記録集を発行します
- SIG and chapter newsletters, anthologies, and conference proceedings  
-分野別研究部会や支部も会報、アンソロジー、研究会発表記録集を発行します

Meetings and conferences sponsored by local chapters and special interest groups (SIGs) are held throughout Japan. Presentation and research areas include:

- Bilingualism
- CALL
- College and university education
- Cooperative learning
- Gender awareness in language education
- Global issues in language education
- Japanese as a second language
- Learner autonomy
- Pragmatics, pronunciation, second language acquisition
- Teaching children
- Lifelong language learning

Use attached *furikae* form at Post Offices ONLY. When payment is made through a bank using the *furikae*, the JALT Central Office receives only a name and the cash amount that was transferred. The lack of information (mailing address, chapter designation, etc.) prevents the JCO from successfully processing your membership application. Members are strongly encouraged to use the secure online signup page located at <<https://jalt.org/joining/>>

- Testing and evaluation
- Materials development

支部及び分野別研究部会による例会や研究会は日本各地で開催され、以下の分野での発表や研究報告が行われます。バイリンガリズム、CALL、大学外国語教育、共同学習、ジェンダーと語学学習、グローバル問題、日本語教育、自主的学習、語用論・発音・第二言語習得、児童語学教育、生涯語学教育研究部会、試験と評価、教材開発。

JALT cooperates with domestic and international partners, including [JALTは以下の国内外の学会と提携しています]:

- IATEFL—International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
- JACET—the Japan Association of College English Teachers
- PAC—the Pan Asian Conference consortium
- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

### Membership Categories 会員と会費

All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. 会員は *The Language Teacher* や *JALT Journal* 等の出版物を購読出来、又例会や大会にも割引価格で参加出来ます。

- Regular 一般会員: ¥10,000
- Student rate (undergraduate/graduate in Japan) 学生会員(日本にある大学、大学院の学生): ¥6,000
- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員(同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部): ¥17,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥6,500/person—one set of publications for each five members 団体会員(5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名につき1部: 1名6,500円)

For more information please consult our website <[jalt.org](http://jalt.org)>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT Central Office.

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...by Scott Gardner

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**Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf behowls the moon;  
Whilst the heavy ploughman  
snores,  
All with weary task fordone.**  
*(A Midsummer Night's Dream)*



“making them talk.” Unlike BLT or TLT, Task Based Language Teaching has a definite advantage in that it does not require any specially-equipped “language extraction chambers.” TBLT instead has more conventional goals in mind, goals that lie within relatively easy physical or cognitive reach. (Example: “Pull my finger.”)

The glorified image of the task based language learning course is that of a classroom full of students, working together in small groups, diligently using English to accomplish an objective. Like doing my taxes. And why not?

The Latin root of *tax* is after all identical to that of *task*. I usually have each group working on a different deduction. The advanced students get to try working out a way to make a loss at the local boat races look like a donation to charity.

One of the most common TBLT activities is the *information gap* exercise, in which partners must share ideas about a certain concept in order to correlate incomplete sets of information. Of course some of the most rudimentary information gap tasks occur naturally among students without need

**T**ASK Based Language Teaching, or TBLT as it is called, should not be confused with BLT (Bondage in Language Teaching), nor with TLT (Torture in Language Teaching), which both share the same basic ideals, although TLT maintains as its primary focus

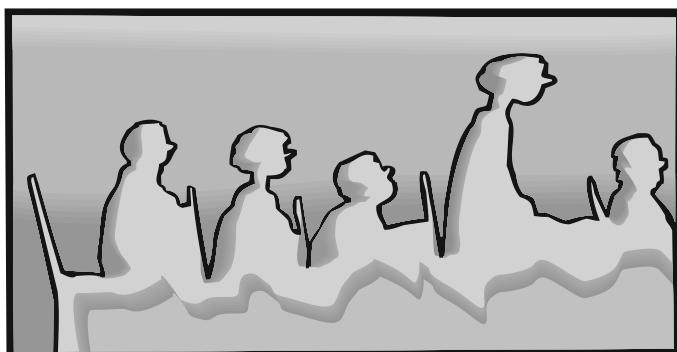
of teacher guidance at all: “What page did he say?” “80.” “80? Are we that far?” “Maybe it was 18.” “That girl’s on page 20.” “She’s Student B. You’re Student A.” “Oh.”

Using the target language to share meaningful messages is one of the cornerstones of TBLT, but I can’t help thinking that some tasks given students to complete are unnecessarily artificial and far removed from their own experience. (“Ask your partner the color of Giuseppe Garibaldi’s shirt. Discuss other historical freedom fighters and plan an armed uprising of your own.”) A lot of teachers make their info gap tasks more relevant by creating situations in which students must exchange information that is more personal and important to them. A resourceful teacher, rather than simply having students indicate their blood type and personality traits, might instead walk into the classroom with a somber look and say: “Students, I have to cancel class next week for some experimental and dangerous surgery. Oh, by the way, could a few of you go around the class and compile a list of everyone’s blood type? My doctors suggest that I take up a collection. In English, please.”

In TBLT one must remember to keep priorities straight. The primary purpose of such activities is supposed to be language use rather than task completion. Forcing your students to prepare an order of 100,000 pairs of basketball shoes for export is missing the point. In short, activities should be “task based,” not “base tasks.” On the other hand, in some situations completion of the task seems logically to outweigh any language factors involved: “I don’t care if it’s an emergency,

Taro, you’re not allowed to use the restroom until you pronounce *gastroenteritis* correctly!”

Those who have mastered TBLT (taskmasters, as they are called) claim to have statistical proof of its effectiveness. They say classrooms using TBLT have more orderly desks and chairs than those that don’t, and the windows are up to 30% cleaner. There may also be evidence that students speak more target language as well, but I’ll leave discussion of that data up to someone else. That wasn’t part of my assignment.



# VALT 2009

THE TEACHING LEARNING DIALOGUE

対話：多様な鏡像



教育と学習の対話・多様な鏡像



THE TEACHING LEARNING DIALOGUE: AN ACTIVE MIRROR  
教育と学習の対話：多様な鏡像

NOVEMBER 21 -23, 2009 - GRANSHIP SHIZUOKA

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