THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

IN THIS ISSUE

JALT 2009 Shizuoka

Granship, Shizuoka, Japan

21 - 23 November 2009

【Presentation Schedule】

Saturday, 21 November

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Plenary

Seven ways of looking at grammar: One way of looking at grammar– as "Grammar McNuggets"

Scott Thornbury
Associate Professor of English Language Studies, the New School (New York)

Let's Talk Online

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Let's Talk Online, e-learning for speaking

Ben Porter
Real English Broadband Co., Ltd.

13:05 - 14:05

Speaking to learn

Scott Thornbury
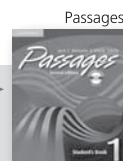Associate Professor of English Language Studies, the New School (New York)

Conversation: From Description to Pedagogy

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大正大学　西蔭 浩子

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Developing presentation skills: A process approach

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Hokkai Gakuen University

Present Yourself

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「マーフィーのケンブリッジ英文法」 – コミュニケーション活動に有効な アメリカ英語文法の学習

横浜国立大学　渡辺 雅仁

マーフィーの
ケンブリッジ英文法

Scott Thornbury Tour 24 & 25 November, 2009

Tuesday, 24 November at Osaka Shoin Women's University	18:30 - 19:30	Workshop: *My ten favourite grammar lessons*
	19:30 - 20:00	Reception

Place: Osaka Shoin Women's University Kosaka Campus, 4-2-26 Hishiyanishi, Higashi Osaka-shi, OSAKA

Wednesday, 25 November at Meijo University	17:30 - 19:00	Workshop: *Grammar or speaking? Or both?*
	19:00 - 20:00	Reception

Place: Meijo University Mei-Eki Satellite Office (MSAT), Nagoyaekimae SIA Bldg 13F, 3-26-8 Meieki, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya-shi, AICHI

Scott Thornbury is Associate Professor on the MA TESOL program at the New School in New York, and has an MA (TEFL) from the University of Reading. He has taught and trained in a wide range of contexts, including the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. He has written extensively on areas of language and methodology, his most recent books being Conversation: From Description to Pedagogy (with Diana Slade, CUP) and The CELTA Course (with Peter Watkins, CUP) . He is currently the series editor of the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers (CUP). He divides his time between New York and Barcelona.

Due to limited space, we request that you pre-register to *japanelt@cambridge.org* with "Scott Thornbury Osaka " or "Scott Thornbury Nagoya" in the subject line. Please include your name and school name.

CONTENTS

Interested in joining the *TLT* staff? Contact the editors at the back of this issue.

In this month's issue . . .

WITH November comes the annual JALT Conference, to be held in Shizuoka this year. As an annual event it's important not just for the excellent presentations and the networking opportunities, but also because it presents the once-yearly opportunity for JALT members to meet one another face to face. Every year it's a time of transition, as new officers assume their responsibilities throughout the organization. This year personally that proves true—after two years at *TLT* Coeditor I will be stepping down from my responsibilities. It's been a pleasure serving the membership as editor of *TLT*, and the experience has proved extremely rewarding personally and professionally. I would like to take this space to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you and JALT in my role as *TLT* Coeditor. My successor, Damian Rivers, should help to keep *TLT* relevant and vital going into the future.

In this issue, in the Feature **Okon Effiong** shares an analysis of a speaking interview test administered in a junior high school in Japan. In Readers' Forum, **Tim Stewart** proffers a critique of the prospects for the 2013 English curriculum for Japan and **George Higginbotham** writes about the positive benefits of incorporating public events into an English curriculum.

In My Share, **Steven Silsbee** shows us how to get students creating their own fairy tales. After that, **William Collins** and **Dawn Michele Ruhl** give us a new approach to using YouTube in the classroom. In book reviews, **Daniel Dunkley** reviews *Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL® Test: iBT 2nd Ed.* There is, of course, the usual wealth of information in our other regular columns.

See you at the conference!

Theron Muller
TLT Coeditor

JALT2009

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

TLT Coeditors: Theron Muller & Jerry Talandis Jr.

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Advertiser Index

– Important message –
TnT Special Guest Workshop at JALT2009

The date and time of the special guest lecture by Garr Reynolds for the TnT workshops at JALT2009 is
Friday, November 20,
from **17:00-18:00**.

[This is a correction of the date that appeared on p.11 of the *JALT2009 Conference Preview*.

11 月になれば、静岡での年次大会がやって来ます。素晴らしいプレゼンテーションやネットワーキングの機会としてだけではなく、JALTのメンバーが年に一度、お互いに顔を合わせる機会としても重要な例年行事です。また毎年、JALTの様々な役員達が新しい役職に就く時期でもあります。今年は個人的に、私に該当する事柄でもあります。TLTの共同編集長として2年勤め上げて参りましたが、私はこの度辞任致します。TLTの編集長としての任務は私の喜びであり、その経験は個人的にも専門家としても大変価値あるものと認識しております。この場をお借りして、JALT *TLT* の共同編集長として協力させていただけましたことを感謝したいと思います。後任の Damian Rivers も未来のTLTをより適切で活気のあるものとしてくれることでしょう。

今月号のFeature で、Okon Effiong は日本の中学校におけるスピーキングテストの導入について分析しています。Readers' Forum では、Tim Stewart が2013年の新学習指導要領に関する批評を寄せ、George Higginbotham は英語のカリキュラムに公的なイベントを取り入れる利点について述べています。

My Share では、Steven Silsbee が学生にオリジナルな童話を書かせる方法を提示し、また、William Collins と Dawn Michael Ruhl がYouTube をクラスで使用する新しい方法を提案します。Book Reviews では、Daniel Dunkley が Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL® Test: iBT 2nd Ed の書評を寄せています。もちろん、いつものコラムでも豊富な情報が掲載されています。
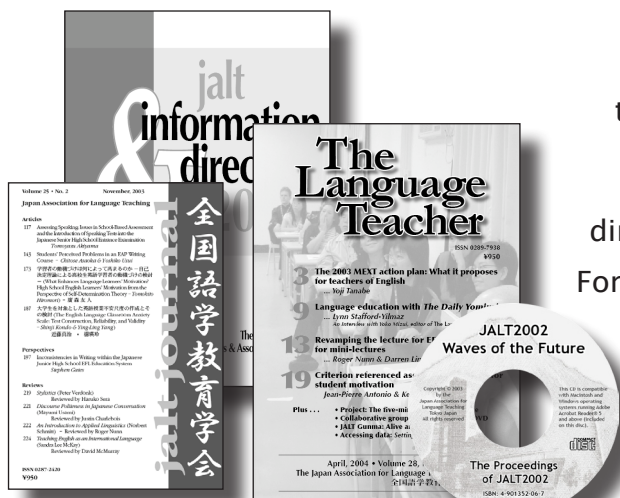
それでは皆さん、年次大会会場でお会いしましょう。

Theron Muller
TLT Coeditor

Testing a test: A near-native speaker's attempt

Okon Effiong
Southampton University

Keywords

JTE (Japanese Teacher of English), near-native, oral proficiency, test, testee, feedback mechanisms and fluency

An oral proficiency interview (OPI) and a listening test were administered by a near-native English speaker to first grade students in a junior high school in Takatsuki, Japan to determine the nature or relationship between listening and speaking skills, and to evaluate the effect of the interview on the subsequent use of English as a communication tool. Data collected from both the listening test and oral interview were subjected to statistical analysis to establish the validity and reliability of the test. There was a low correlation between listening and speaking and the test was found to be both valid and reliable. The oral interview was also found to be an effective assessment tool for both teaching and learning. It increased learner willingness to take risks with the target language in subsequent class activities, indicating a positive washback on learning. This paper therefore lends weight to the argument for the incorporation of oral interviews into regular school tests in junior high schools in Japan. The study also shows that non-native English speakers can effectively administer oral interviews.

ネイティブに近い英語話者によって、オーラル習熟度テスト(OPI)とリスニングテストを高槻市の中学1年生を対象に行い、リスニングとスピーキングの間に関係があるかどうかを、また、テスト受験後にコミュニケーションツールとして英語を使用するに当たり、そのテストの影響を調査した。データは両方のテストから集められ、統計学的分析によりテストの有効性や信頼性が検討された。リスニングとスピーキングの間にはわずかな相関性が見受けられ、テストは妥当で信頼性があると判断された。また、オーラルテストは教える側と学ぶ側双方にとって効果的な評価ツールであるとみなされた。学習者はテスト受験後のクラスにおいて英語に対して意欲を増進させ、学びそのものにポジティブになった。本論では、これらの結果を踏まえて、日本の中学校の定期テストにオーラルテストを組み入れる議論を浮き彫りにしたい。本研究では、英語を母語としない話者も効果的にオーラルテストを行えることを提示する。

ɪɴ Japan, getting students to speak English in the classroom is a major challenge and opportunities to use English in natural communication are at a premium. The highly structure language classroom does not afford learners enough practice to advance their second language acquisition. Tsui (2001) observes that many teachers find it difficult in teacher-fronted settings to engage students in interaction, and Japanese learners, according to McVeigh (2002), are consigned to listening, absorbing, and retaining information. Willis and Willis also commented that "there is something seriously wrong with the way languages are taught in many classrooms" (2009, p. 3). This issue is not peculiar to the Japanese EFL context because Buckingham (2009) adds that getting students to speak is a problem that language teachers around the world face on a day-to-day basis. In this study, I, a near-native English speaker of Nigerian origin, explore the possibilities of Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) becoming increasingly engaged in communication with learners in regular lessons and in testing situations. The study aims to raise the awareness of JTEs as to the opportunities for learners to use English, and to reaffirm that being an English speaker is not an exclusive preserve of native English speakers. I further argue that if JTEs fail to become more involved in direct communication with students, then non-native EFL teachers will increasingly be stereotyped as being either incompetent or lacking the self-confidence necessary to implement the new guidelines of the Ministry of Education which emphasize the need for JTEs to use English to teach English.

Tests as feedback mechanisms and language acquisition tools

My review of the literature did not produce any studies related to middle school teachers in Japan evaluating how assessment and evaluation tools impact language development and acquisition. Nunan (1992) suggests that, "many teachers who are interested in exploring processes of teaching and learning in their own context are either unable, for practical reasons, or unwilling for personal reasons, to do collaborative research" (p. 18). It is common practice for teachers to teach to test requirements because English language tests in Japanese junior

high schools is oriented towards high school placement tests. According to Leung and Lewkowicz (2006), teaching to test requirements may have an educationally undesirable effect on the learning process, but the effect will be positive if a particular testing exercise leads to teaching practices that promote and broaden learning.

Thus it may prove beneficial to incorporate oral tests into examinations to promote such broadened learning, although the contents of those tests must be carefully designed. For example, in order to elicit rich language samples, tasks presented in any oral test must be authentic, contextualised, and reflect learner-centred properties (Chalhoub-Deville, 2001). However, Ellis (2003) disagrees and argues that tasks do not provide a measure of the language ability of the testee; rather, they elicit a performance which then needs to be assessed. Furthermore, Ellis (2003) suggests that the validity of a test could be in doubt if it is not based on observing testee performance of real-world tasks. Lazaraton (2001) suggests that "as we learn more about how people behave in real life and how this behaviour is encoded in speech…we will be in a better position to teach and design materials based on authentic language and communication patterns" (p. 112). Teachers therefore need to develop the sort of tasks which, according to Foster (1999), can provide learners with "an environment which best promotes the natural language learning process and stretches the development of the learners' interlanguage system" (p. 69).

Learners are routinely exposed to language samples via classroom comprehension exercises, but Morley (2001) points out that "listening comprehension lessons are a vehicle for teaching elements of grammatical structures" and that they do "not require students to make use of the information for any real communicative purpose beyond answering questions" (pp. 70-71).

I argue that second language tests be stripped of any judiciary role they purportedly play. The L2 testing need not limit itself to adjudicating a student's academic competence; rather, it could also seek to promote the testee's social and interpersonal growth and development. I maintain that a test that provides learners with opportunities to explore language beyond the confines of test requirements may, in addition to facilitating language acquisition, have the potential of making the learning process a pleasurable experience.

Statement of Purpose

Action research is often carried out in the hope that its results will effect change in the school system.

This study seeks to encourage JTEs to capitalise on their familiarity with the learners and learning contexts to more frequently use oral interviews. Oral interviews can offer students the opportunity to exploit their growing verbal repertoire to accomplish a task. Interviews may also establish a relationship between listening and speaking. The findings of this study can serve to inform the design of test items leading to a positive washback on the teaching and learning process. Finally, this study advocates the incorporation of oral interviews as an assessment tool in junior high schools in Japan.

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

- Is oral proficiency interviewing a valid and reliable assessment tool for beginner learners?
- Does the possession of satisfactory listening skills enhance production?
- Does incorporating oral proficiency interviewing into the school assessment programme facilitate greater use of English by EFL learners in the classroom?

Methods
Participants
The test was designed for first year students in a Junior High School in Takatsuki, Osaka, and administered January, 2008. The total school enrolment was 139 and the sample size was a single class of 36 students.

Measures
The language skills tested were listening comprehension and speaking ability such as responding to interrogatives and initiating a conversation using a top-down approach. The listening test which lasted twenty minutes consisted of a recorded dialogue and monologue, each followed by questions to test students' comprehension (see Appendix A). The oral test required participants, in addition to responding to interrogatives, to use various items displayed on a table to initiate a conversation (see Appendix B). The interviews were primarily between two and four minutes, except for one that lasted more than fifteen minutes.

Procedure
The task included listening to a recorded speech that was played twice over the public address system and answering some questions. To collect data on listening comprehension, four envelopes

containing the test scripts for each of the classes were placed face down on a table, and a colleague was asked to randomly choose one. The oral interview data of the chosen class was subsequently used for the current study. Scores from both the listening and oral tests were collated and subjected to statistical analysis.

Results and Discussion

The results of the investigation appear to support three primary conclusions: first, oral proficiency interviewing is a valid and reliable assessment tool. Second, the possession of satisfactory listening skills does not necessarily enhance language production. Third, the use of an oral proficiency interview as part of the school assessment programme facilitates greater use of English by the students investigated. Prior to initiating this study, students had exposure to authentic listening materials during regular lessons, generally in the form of a CD-ROM accompanying the teachers' workbook, with little or no opportunities for language production. The low correlation coefficient ($r = .17$) value obtained indicates there may be little relationship between students' speaking and listening skills. This would seem to be a result of the fact that up until the time of this research the two skills had not been practised in tandem. The low correlation coefficient and a low overlapping variance ($r^2 = .03$)—the extent to which two variables measure the same thing—for both tests suggest the subtests are measuring different things. The findings tend to confirm Morley's (2001) assertion that listening comprehension serves no further purpose other than answering task questions.

It seems that the interview can serve as an icebreaker for some students who are unable or unwilling to make contributions in class. Prior to the interview, I found some students' participation in class was low even when called upon. But after the interview, these students became more involved in group activities, volunteering responses and showing greater willingness to answer questions in class. Therefore the interview apparently contributed to greater learner participation in the weeks following the task.

In the classroom, the learners experienced pedagogic language laden with unnatural exchanges derived from their textbooks. It is also not uncommon for the JTE to do most of the speaking, and the students are often limited to providing choral responses to drills. Interviews, on the other hand, create a participatory atmosphere in which both the teacher and student make contributions to the process. The oral interview is beneficial because it

heralds the use of succinct natural language forms that go beyond the formal structures the textbook offers. A typical classroom exchange would be: *How old are you? I am twelve years old. Where do you live? I live in Osaka.* In natural conversation, whether in L1 or L2, the exchange may be more like the one from this study:

> Interlocutor: *School is finished.*
> Student: *Yes, I am happy.*
> Interlocutor: *Are you going home now?*
> Student: *No.*
> Interlocutor: *What time will you go home today?*
> Student: *It is 4.30.*

Oral interviewing not only promotes natural language use, but also provides a forum for students to discover the confluence of two language cultures. Learners can see the JTE not only as a teacher of the language, but as someone who knows the target language culture as well as the learners' culture. Many native English speakers are monolingual, but listening to dialogues such as the one between the near-native AET and the JTE in Appendix A and hearing informal conversations between the AET and JTE both in and outside the classroom indicate to students that JTEs are bilingual and not just grammar translators.

The Japanese EFL learners are not averse to interacting with English speakers, but simply lack the confidence to use the limited English vocabulary that they possess. Take for instance this exchange between me and a student which shows the student's willingness to initiate and take turns in a conversation:

> Student: *Hey Okon, where do you live?*
> Interlocutor: *In Kyoto with my wife.*
> Student: *Kyoto is very far.*
> Interlocutor: *Not really, it is only one hour from Takatsuki.*

A lot of writing (with little or no speaking) goes on in the language classrooms at the school where the research took place, as exemplified by many students who could only manage a single question such as *Do you like sports/music? What did you eat last night? What colour do you like?* during the free talk. It seems that the more the students focus on writing accurate sentences, the greater the likelihood that they will abstain from speaking English because of risk aversion. This reflects the language

learning culture and has the potential to influence the learning strategy preferences of beginner learners. During the interview students used different communicative strategies to get meaning across when they did not have access to the correct language. Consider the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1. Telephone chat with a native English speaker

Student: *The day before yesterday, I listen... I listen... I went to English class... juku eh eh.*

Interlocutor: *The teacher?*

Student: *Eh eh*

Interlocutor: *Somebody came?*

Student: *Wait a minute.*

Interlocutor: *OK, I'm waiting.*

Student: *Eh... mmm eto... in English classroom, eto...Wednesday, English classroom...sound.*

Interlocutor: *There was a sound?*

Student: *Telephone.*

Interlocutor: *Oh! The telephone rang.*

Student: *Yes, ring, rang, speak, foreigner speak English.*

Interlocutor: *With you?*

Student: *Yes.*

Interlocutor: *Good practice. Which school?*

Excerpt 2. Smelly *natto*

Student: *I don't like natto. Natto is bad...* (fanning his nose with one hand).

Interlocutor: *Natto has bad smell.*

Student: *Bad smell*

Excerpt 3. Loud voice

Student: *Okon's voice is number one.*

Interlocutor: *What do you mean? I don't understand.*

Student: *(Bellows).*

Interlocutor: *Oh! You mean loud voice, big voice.*

Student: *Yes, yes. Okon's voice is big voice.*

On seeking clarification the student in Excerpt 3 was able to create meaning without necessarily possessing the correct form. In Excerpt 1 the student used many turns to arrive at the message she was trying to convey. A simple gesture was enough for the student in Excerpt 2 to make himself understood. The interview thus revealed the learn-ing strategy preferences of my students and I could use this information to remodel my teaching style to match their learning styles.

Data collected on the subtests was subjected to statistical analysis. Standard deviations (S) of 3.12 (listening) and 1.19 (speaking) and means (M) of 14.94 (listening) and 4.28 (speaking) were within the acceptable range. Cronbach's alpha (α) (Bailey, 1998) was used to determine intra-rater reliability (.94), which shows consistency in the oral interview scores. The r value of .17 is not strong enough to support a strong conclusion, and a low overlapping variance (r^2) of .03 appears to confirm that the subtests are measuring different language skills (Bailey, 1998). The dialogue, which was structured to reflect a slightly higher proficiency level, and to take into account students who had acquired English language skills beyond the classroom (Appendix C), had an average item discrimination (ID) value of .23. Items 1 through 4 yielded enough variance to show reliable discrimination between high and low scorers. When the same listening subtest was administered a week later, the students' scores improved slightly. This improved score and a high rater reliability index are indicators of test reliability. There may be no reason to change any question in a replicated test because even item 2 with low item facility (IF) of .31 has an ID value of .40 which is within the acceptable range. The small sample size used in the study means that the sample mean may not truly reflect the population mean. Hence, caution is needed if generalisations and inferences are to be made from these results. (See Appendix D for descriptive figures and tables).

Implications for pedagogy

Some free conversation was included in the interview to encourage the participants to draw on their interlanguage to make and negotiate meaning and dissuade them from memorising language features for the interaction. The range of items on display adds to the apparent authenticity of the exchange.

During the post-test period, students showed a marked increase in their willingness to make verbal contributions in the classroom; however, this increase in motivation needs to be harnessed before it is lost. The increased participation by learners who were previously non-committal indicates that oral interviews have the potential to lower psychological barriers and create a positive washback on learning.

The interview also reveals students who possess a lot more vocabulary than the class average (See Appendix C). These students were likely bored by the regular classroom activities and consequently

would often resort to inattentive and disruptive behaviour or sleep through the lesson. The interviews may provide evidence for teachers about which students could benefit from higher-order language tasks that challenge them and minimise undesirable classroom behaviour. Rather than offer uniform tasks from the textbook, which some students find either too difficult or easy, a mix-and-match approach in the design of lesson materials could cater to the different abilities of the learners in the class.

Although it may be desirable for a native speaker to be the interlocutor, the JTE can be a better role model and motivate learners more than a native English speaker. This is illustrated by the following anecdote, not directly related to this study. After showing *The Last Samurai* to third grade students, out of 148 students, 140 said they were impressed with Ken Watanabe's spoken English. There were 132 who indicated they want to speak English like Ken Watanabe, and none mentioned Tom Cruise, Watanabe's co-star. This response is a testimony to the suitability of the JTE as a role model to Japanese language learners.

JTEs owe it to their students to resist the temptation of teaching according to the teaching methods they (the JTE) studied under, since our understanding of SLA and best practice has come a long way in the past few decades. Current realities dictate a fresh approach to teaching English to beginners, an approach that avoids risk-averse classrooms. Silence does not always mean students do not know the correct forms. When students laugh at a class member who produces a faulty sentence, it means that those laughing (even when they do not volunteer it) know the accurate form. If oral interviews were routine, learners would accept that making mistakes and amending utterances is part of spoken discourse. Awareness of this and student-friendly error correction on the part of the JTEs will endow the students with the confidence to risk embarrassment and interact in a variety of contexts.

If the teacher only engages a few individuals in an exchange during the lesson, the general level of understanding may not be obvious, because the teacher-student exchange does not cover a cross section of the class, and choral responses often drown out whatever phonological, grammatical, or lexical deficiencies some learners may have. Table 1 serves as an example of an assessment tool for the teacher. Teachers can revisit a particular lesson or redress faulty application of a linguistic feature revealed in the oral interview. The grid not only allows the teacher to provide individual feedback and support to those who need it, but it also reveals error trends in the class as a whole.

Conclusion

The ability, resources, and opportunities JTEs have to promote speaking are vast and their skills and creativity can be harnessed to bring about a change in learner attitudes to spoken English. When speaking L2 with a non-native interlocutor, learners worry less about making mistakes and are less likely to be anxious about their phonological flaws. This translates into greater fluency, and the more fluent a learner becomes, the fewer the phonological errors that learner is likely to exhibit. This study indicates that it is possible for a non-native foreign language teacher to design and implement oral interviews. The test used in this study was valid and reliable because it measured what it was designed to measure and had a positive washback on learning.

The participants in this study had only one interview and the use of closed questions limited production. Open questions would have allowed for lengthier responses and as such, future studies may want to employ open questions and offer more interactional opportunities. Participants should ideally be able to repeat the oral interview several times. Furthermore, having a control group would help to determine if skills learnt during task repetition can be transferred to similar but new situations. The more frequently learners are engaged in oral tasks the more natural it should seem to them to use the language communicatively. This could have a positive influence on motivation, and possibly change learner perception of foreign language learning in schools.

Acknowledgement

Table 1. Feedback grid.

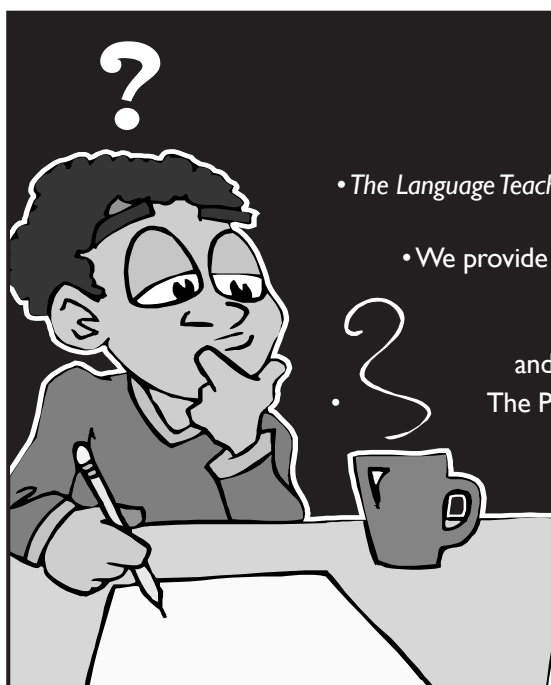| Class No	Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Free talk	Score	Comment
1	Fine Student	+	+	-	+	-	2	5	rising tone on *wh-* question

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Appendices

The appendices for this article are available online at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/resources/2009/0911a.pdf>

Okon Effiong is currently a doctoral student at Southampton University, U K. In the four and a half years he lived in Japan, Okon taught in five junior high schools in Osaka as an Assistant English Teacher (AET), and most recently was teaching English at Ritsumeikan University, Kusatsu Campus and Kogakkan University, Nabari and Ise campuses. He also ran a small private language school (KE-House) where he taught English to children with autistic spectrum disorders (kantanenglish.com). His current research interest is identifying performance-enhancing strategies that can promote fluency among EFL learners.

Will the New English Curriculum for 2013 work?

Tim Stewart
Kyoto University

MANY JALT members were no doubt surprised to learn at the end of 2008 that Japanese government officials expect English classes to be taught in English (MEXT, 2008a). In fact, the curriculum document calls for even more radical changes beginning in 2013. In this paper, I will consider briefly the potential for success of the new curriculum guidelines. My intention is to stir the pot and ignite broader discussion on this important topic.

With a deep sense of pessimism, *The Japan Times* labeled the new curriculum for 2013 to be "too little too late."

This conversion from traditional methods to a more active and communicative approach is decades behind the rest of the world. As China, Vietnam and South Korea have moved ahead, Japan's English education policies have languished. It may be a case of too little too late. Japan's position in the future internationalized world will be determined by the nation's English ability. ("English taught in English," 2009)

Similarly, Clark (2009) concludes: "Despite six years of middle and high school study, many Japanese are still unable to speak English well (...) the bureaucrats plan to solve this problem by giving us more of what caused the problem." Such comments sum up the frustration regarding Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) policy directives over the years. While the bureaucrats in Tokyo set the curriculum guidelines, classroom teachers are left with the difficult chore of interpreting them at the chalkface. MEXT does deserve a large share of the blame for deficiencies in the education system in Japan, but the story is surely more complex than that.

Critiques of past plans

It is useful to first look back before considering the proposed curriculum changes. In 1989, the Ministry of Education issued a new *Course of Study* influenced by communicative language teaching (CLT) and the concept of communicative competence (MEXT, 1989). The communicative goals of the 1989 curriculum were broadened in the 2003 follow-up plan around the slogan of *Japanese with English abilities*. Instruction is to emphasize acquisition of basic and practical communication

Keywords

education policy, MEXT, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), Language Across the Curriculum (LAC)

The Ministry of Education's revised curriculum for 2013 details system-wide changes aimed at improving the content and delivery of English education. The proposed changes mark an attempt at designing curricula that are integrated from elementary school upwards. Central to the new curriculum guidelines is the concept of *gengo-ryoku* (language ability), implying a coordinated focus on expression in Japanese across the curriculum. It is assumed that skills learned in the first language will transfer more easily to foreign language instruction. This article examines the new Course of Study for senior high school following a brief review of previous curriculum documents. The key concern is whether the new ambitious English curriculum can succeed. A number of issues surrounding this question are raised that point to the need for a fundamental shift in thinking about teaching, learning and educational policy in general.

2013年実施の新学習指導要領では、英語教育の内容や方法に影響を与えることを目的とし、システム全体の変更を詳述している。小学校以上の英語カリキュラムを統合するような新しいカリキュラムを作る試みが提案されているが、新学習指導要領の中心となるのは、日本語表現に重点を置くことを示唆した、言語力の概念である。第一言語で学習したスキルは、より容易に外国語にも移行するものと推察される。本論では、従来の学習指導要領も概観しながら、高等学校における新学習指導要領を検討する。主要な関心事は、この新しい意欲的な英語カリキュラムが成功するかどうかである。この点に関連する多くの論点が掲げられ、教授、学習、教育方針に関しての根本的な考え方の転換の必要性が指摘されている。

abilities so that the entire public can conduct daily conversation and exchange information in English (MEXT, 2003). A cornerstone of the new communicative orientation in English education is the Oral Communication II course, centering on discussion and debate. Unfortunately nobody has adopted this curriculum, according to Yoshida (2009). Avoidance was also the overwhelming reaction to the groundbreaking communicative courses initiated in 1989, Oral Communication A (conversation) and Oral Communication C (public speaking) (Browne & Wada, 1998).

The 2003 MEXT Action Plan has a strong emphasis on practical English skills. High school graduates should have the ability to communicate in English, while the exit target for university graduates is the ability to use English in their work (MEXT, 2003).

Gains in communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) obviously take a good deal of time. A major criticism of the 2003 Action Plan is that proficiency goals are not realistic given the limited time allocated to English study (Hato, 2005). More to the point, Hato claims that the ministry's narrow exam-oriented definition of goals could actually sabotage its primary aim of evaluating the communicative abilities of Japanese English language learners more appropriately. So, rather than put a much stronger emphasis on improving teacher education and materials, the ministry decided to keep relying on testing to motivate students to improve their proficiency in the English language (Hato, 2005).

The MEXT slogan *Japanese with English abilities* implies communicative ability, while *juken eigo* (English for entrance exams) remains entrenched. In spite of a curricular emphasis on communicative English since 1989, the entrance tests continue to set the standards for English study in Japan. It is no secret that university entrance exams typically test translation, reading comprehension and grammar with many questions and answers written in Japanese (Kikuchi, 2006). Some private universities are experimenting with new types of entrance tests. However, most students currently need not display much communicative ability on the high-stakes public university entrance exams. The result is that despite the growing emphasis on oral communication in curricula, high school instruction still largely focuses on reading and writing (Butler & Iino, 2005, p. 29).

Such critiques invite the question: What does communicative use of the language mean in English classes where nearly all instruction is done in Japanese? The apparent paradox led some observers to attribute buzzword qualities to the term *communication* as it has been used in English language education in Japan for over twenty years (e.g., Chiba

& Matsuura, n.d.). The 2013 curriculum reform aims to change this situation at last.

Central policy and local dynamics

In Japan's centralized system, policy comes down from MEXT bureaucrats to local school administrators and teachers. Put simply, officials at the Ministry of Education in Tokyo set the agenda, thereby attempting to shape educational values in the system (McVeigh 2005, 2006; Stewart, 2008; Tamamoto, 2009). This power relationship dominates the education environment in Japan.

While the highly centralized power in the Japanese system hampers the effective implementation of educational reform policies, the Ministry of Education does not hold all of the cards. State policy may on the surface possess official authority, but can lack authenticity in terms of enactment (e.g., Sato, 2002). From the perspective of many classroom teachers it appears that new initiatives from MEXT can be interpreted as less than helpful. The focus of current state policy in foreign language teaching in Japan is on *communicative English*, but evidence suggests that many teachers value content coverage and entrance test preparation above adhering to central policy directives (Wada, 2002). Thus, central bureaucratic goals are not necessarily interpreted as national goals. Teachers must deal directly with students, school administrators and parents who have their own agendas regarding education. This interaction filters each teacher's personal interpretation of the state curriculum. Tensions within the system, therefore, can result in stakeholders pulling in opposing directions.

The new Course of Study

A comprehensive pedagogical approach is advocated in the revised curriculum guidelines (MEXT, 2008a). A *Language Across the Curriculum* approach (Sudermann & Cisar, 1992) is to be employed with Japanese language at the center (*gengo ryoku*). This means that in all subjects, language skills will be emphasized in order to elevate literacy, reasoning ability and communication skills (MEXT, 2008b). The expectation is that students will be able to transfer skills practiced in their first language to foreign language classes (Yoshida, 2009).

The proposed new *Course of Study* for senior high school English emphasizes nurturing communicative ability in English amongst students through the integration of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. More attention will be given to speaking and listening, marking a notable shift from the traditional grammar-translation approach (MEXT,

2008a). This change aligns the new curriculum guidelines with the current trend in the field of teaching English as a foreign language toward using tasks requiring an integrated skills approach (Rogers, 2004; Stewart, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2009). Underlying the new MEXT curriculum is the belief that grammatical knowledge is not the ultimate goal of language study. Students need to fluently understand, speak, write, and read both Japanese and English. In other words, structure cannot be separated from meaningful usage.

A glance at the course goals for high school English study reveals an ambitious proposal resembling an English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) curriculum. In the English Communication II course for instance, students should reach and discuss conclusions about reading and listening material, and then write coherently about this information (Yoshida, 2009). In English Expression I students should develop impromptu speaking and oral presentation skills, and based on what was heard and read, sort and arrange similarities and differences from other opinions and combine them with original ideas (Yoshida). The follow-up course, English Expression II, aims to have students sort and arrange content, speak rationally, write in various genres, exchange arguments, persuade others and consider various points of view in order to determine resolutions (Yoshida). However, many Japanese university students cannot even do this in Japanese.

This is a comprehensive plan covering English teaching from elementary school through university. The Japanese government wants to make universities here more international and aims for 300,000 foreign students on campuses. In this regard, funding is now available through MEXT for the development of select degree programs in English (i.e., Global 30). This new *kokusaika* (internationalization) for the elite institutions in Japanese higher education is likely motivated by both economic and status concerns. Since the Japanese government began reducing state subsidies to universities, many have struggled ("Education in crisis," 2009), making an increase in enrollment by foreign students attractive. There is also evidence that top high school graduates in Japan look upon institutions like the University of Tokyo as inferior to universities abroad (Yoshida, 2009).

Weighing the prospects

The Japanese government wants a world class education system but appears unwilling to fund it adequately. With public spending on education in Japan at only 3.4 percent of GDP, the lowest amongst industrialized countries, strains in the system are increasingly evident and could end up harming the weakest in society ("Education in crisis," 2009). In Japan today, education quality and attainment level are rapidly becoming social class issues as those students whose families can afford it receive the best education. This suggests it might be time for the government to start funding the system more fully.

What about the entrance examinations? Certainly MEXT has made a strenuous effort in this area by introducing the Center Test, but this simply forces students to prepare for and write yet one more test. Since funding has been cut and enrollment in some schools is falling, institutional testing is a cash cow that must be milked. There is a huge testing industry in Japan that depends on the continuation of 'examination hell' even now with more places in universities than applicants. To reduce the number of tests, MEXT could offer substantial funds to institutions that adopt the Center Test as their sole admissions examination. But the reality of the situation illustrates the relative powerlessness of the government in this regard. The existence of institutional entrance exams, many of which place little or no emphasis on oral communication, significantly impacts the junior and senior high school curricula and how they are taught.

How can MEXT officials try to change the pattern of schools and teachers substituting the official curriculum with test preparation lessons? It is essential that language policy goals are realistic, consistent, and accurately reflect student needs and teacher capabilities. High school students and teachers place a high value on entrance test results. Indeed, passing the entrance test for a particular university is why many students study English. The new curriculum guidelines do not appear to alter this situation. One hope may be that the EGAP focus of the new high school English curriculum will inspire entrance test writers to move beyond testing English skills through translation, reading comprehension and grammar (Kikuchi, 2006). But such a shift is likely to be a long, slow process.

Are subject teachers prepared to teach their classes through a coordinated Language Across the Curriculum approach? This concern suggests matters related to materials, teacher preparation, training, and ability. How many teachers currently in the system are actually able to teach English in English? And will the government-approved textbooks be appropriately designed for a communicative EGAP curriculum? Once again, the central government needs to show teachers the money. But most importantly, MEXT needs to work with stakeholders to

shape the system in ways that cultivate motivation in students and teachers beyond schooling and testing and toward education. This truly would be an uphill battle given the powerful hold that statistics related to testing have on the system.

The emphasis of schooling over education is certainly not confined to Japan. For example, internationally respected scholars are livid about the U.S. No Child Left Behind Act (Cummins, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009). As in Japan, American public school teachers feel obliged to teach to the test.

The fetish for test statistics can be traced to the triumph of business values and competitive practices over more humanistic educational goals (Hargreaves, 2009). In Japanese universities, of course, the corporate agenda is all too evident in the ubiquitous job search activities of (absent) third- and fourth-year students. However, the staffing needs of Japanese transnational corporations for workers with highly proficient language skills could actually serve as a catalyst for drawing broad support for the 2013 MEXT curriculum.

The new curriculum, based on *gengo ryoku* (language ability) in Japanese, is certainly comprehensive in scope. Whether it translates into effective change in the system will require a fundamental shift of thinking about both teaching and learning. All educators in Japan should closely observe how the groundwork is laid between now and April 2013 for such a significant change.

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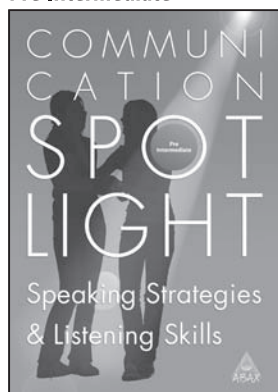
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Event-based learning: The benefits of positive pressure

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The benefits of integrating public events into an English curriculum are discussed with reference to a case study: carol singing in Hiroshima Peace Park. Event-based learning is distinguished as being different to task-based learning. It is argued that event-based learning can be enjoyable and lead to deep processing of the language used due to the positive pressure such events create.

公的な行事が英語のカリキュラムに組み込まれて行く利点について、広島平和公園での聖歌合唱を事例研究として参照し、討議する。イベントに基づく学習はタスクに基づく学習とは全く異なるものである。本論では、イベントに基づく学習は楽しめるものであり、またイベントが生み出すポジティブな影響によって、学習者の英語理解の深まりをより助長すると述べている。

NERVOUSLY clutching song sheets as the sun sank on Hiroshima Peace Park on a cool December evening, a group of college students wearing Santa hats broke the calm with a faltering rendition of *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. Emboldened by the encouraging reaction of passers by and the warm glow of the illuminations that had just been switched on, the group then launched enthusiastically into the second song they had spent the last few weeks practicing in class.

What is event-based learning?

Over the last 15 years or so, task-based learning (TBL) has established itself as an attractive approach to language instruction, one that has finally gained recognition in Japan (Little & Fieldsend, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2009). The focus of TBL is the completion of a central task, with the language studied being determined by what happens as the students complete it. Proponents of this approach (Nunan, 1989; Robinson, 2001; Willis & Willis, 2007) argue that it increases student motivation because it allows students to creatively apply previously acquired knowledge to different contexts. Recent studies into TBL have underlined its effectiveness in language learning. A study comparing TBL with traditional communicative methodology (De Ridder, Van Gehutchten & Gomez, 2007) showed that students following the TBL approach significantly outperformed other groups in terms of social adequacy, grammatical, and lexical knowledge. Since the underlying concept of what I call *event-based learning* (EBL) is similar to TBL, it is possible to view it as an extension of the task-based approach. With EBL, however, while much of the task preparation is done in the classroom, there is also some sort of main event or performance which is open to the public. This is in contrast to TBL, where the completion of tasks takes place solely within the safety of the classroom. The need to prepare for this final event helps make EBL tasks more intrinsically motivating for the students. Since highly motivated students achieve greater proficiency in their language studies (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003),

it is hoped that an event such as public carol singing will spark interest in the language and the culture in which it is embedded, provide positive pressure to practice, and thus lead to increased proficiency.

The Christmas carol singing event

In December 2007, about 100 college students wearing Santa hats sang five popular Christmas songs at different locations around Hiroshima Peace Park for about 30 minutes. Preparation for this event involved a lesson on winter festivals towards the end of November, and 20 minute rehearsals at the end of each class in December, which included activities to focus students' attention on the meaning of the lyrics. For example, students listened to various versions of each song to give them an idea of what kind of performance was expected. To encourage autonomous study, CDs of the songs were passed around among the students.

Why use music in a language course?

In a fascinating book on the evolution of music and language, Steven Mithen (2005) argues that language and music are universal features of human society, developed concurrently due to a need for group cohesion and hardwired into our brains at a very early stage. His extensive review of research in a number of fields supports the view that language and music are strongly linked, with some shared cognitive areas, such as rhythm and pitch. By bringing out our students' innate musical sense in the language classroom, and by taking advantage of the links between music and language, we can support our students' language development. As Murphey (1992a) notes, since the language used in songs is often familiar, repetitive, and slow compared to normal speech, it is fairly easy for L2 users to cope with and (more importantly) enjoy.

Why sing Christmas carols?

One might argue that Christmas carols are not particularly useful examples of English to memorize, and that modern pop music is better suited for students (Murphey, 1992b). For example, the English in *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* contains infrequently used words such as *fig*, *kin,* or *merry*. In addition, the thought of a student responding to a greeting with "good tidings we bring, to you and your kin" would of course be strange. The word frequency list in Table 1 (Leech, Rayson and Wilson, 2001) confirms the rarity of these words:

Table 1. Frequency of fig, kin, and merry

	Occurrences per million words
fig	16
kin	Less than 10
merry	Less than 10

While this song clearly contains examples of rare English, it should be noted that it also contains high frequency words such as *new*, *good,* and *year*:

Table 2: Frequency of new, good, and year

	Occurrences per million words
new	1145
good	795
year	737

Much of language is acquired in chunks or clusters, in phrases such as *a happy new year* (O'Keefe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007). Over time these chunks get broken down into their component parts and can then be reformed into original constructions. Learning songs is a good way to acquire these pieces of language. The music and lyrics all get taken in as a package, and hopefully, as some of these words and phrases are met in other situations, students can begin to unwrap the package and gain deeper understanding of what these phrases mean and how they can be used.

Another reason for choosing Christmas carols rather than modern pop music is that they are regularly played on the radio, TV, and in supermarkets during the run up to Christmas. Students will likely already be familiar with the melodies and some of the lyrics. Consequently, when learning these songs, students are not starting from scratch. The biggest drawback of most pop songs is their short popularity life span. Christmas carols, on the other hand, have survived the test of time. Like kimonos or beer, they never seem to go out of fashion. As a result, effort spent learning carols is time well spent.

Does event-based learning work?

An end of semester Likert-scale questionnaire, given one month after the caroling event, was filled out by 69 students in an attempt to collect data on whether they enjoyed the event and had acquired some language as a result.
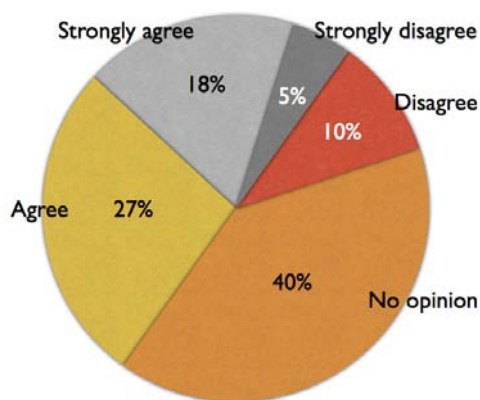
Figure 1. *I enjoyed the carol singing event*

Some students didn't enjoy themselves (15%), 40% expressed no strong opinion, and 45% responded positively. The number of positive responses thus indicated that many students viewed the event as a fun element within the curriculum.
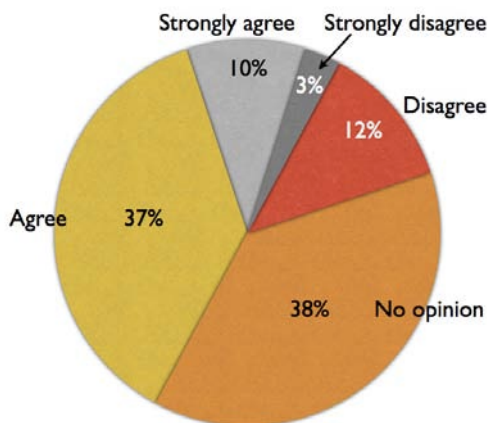

Figure 2. *I remember some of the songs from the carol singing*

Figure 2 shows how much language students felt they had retained one month after the event. Encouragingly, a large proportion (47%) felt positive about this, while only a few (15%) indicated they did not remember the songs. Given research showing how quickly memory of newly learned vocabulary can fade (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Waring, 2003), what could account for the high retention rates of the Christmas song lyrics?

Perhaps one reason these songs were not forgotten so quickly was due to the pressure students felt when they knew they would have to perform in public. This pressure forced students to practice together in groups during their spare time in the weeks leading

up to the performance. It seems that the event served as a source of extrinsic motivation that led students to work harder and process the language more deeply than normal, thus improving their retention.

Developing the event

Given the general positive reaction, this event was included in the 2008 curriculum and followed the same basic format. This time, we decided to look into the idea that such events actually lead to long term language acquisition. To accomplish this, we included some carol-specific vocabulary on a portion of the students' final exam to evaluate whether they had picked up and retained these items from the singing event. This part of the test contained two of the carols used during the event with the following words removed: *bright, silent, tender, calm* and *infant*. These items were chosen because they were not taught on the course and were unlikely to have been covered in other English courses. If students could retain these words, then it would give a good indication that the event and lead up to it had directly resulted in their acquisition.

Of the 80 students who took part in the event, retention scores for the carol-specific vocabulary averaged 18.75%. While seemingly low at first glance, it should be noted that as with the 2007 survey, this test was given about a month after the event. The scores therefore reflect vocabulary most probably retained within long term memory. If the test had been given a day after the event, the results would have probably been far higher, but this would have merely been a measure of short-term retention. This test shows retention of a few previously unknown low frequency words. What it does not show is the recycling of previously known high frequency words, which we can assume is also occurring. While not directly tested for, recycling is important for increasing depth of word knowledge.

One problem with the test was that only a very limited number of items were tested (five words). Another was that students were not asked to demonstrate any deep knowledge of these words but merely whether they had remembered the forms. While the results cannot be viewed as conclusive evidence of language acquisition, they do support the claims made by 47% of students in the 2007 questionnaire that some parts of the songs were remembered. Clearly these initial findings warrant more rigorous empirical study.

What other events could be used?

Carol singing is one example of EBL. There are, however, many other events that could be inte-

grated into an English curriculum, depending on the maturity and ability of the students. One example is a speech contest, where students seek writing advice from teachers and practice in the weeks leading up to the event. Student generated poster sessions (Kirschenmann, 2007) could also lend themselves to such a public event. Poster sessions tend to be less stressful since students would be addressing their talk to only one or two people at a time as opposed to a large audience. A more ambitious project would be a short play or pantomime that could be used as part of a school or local cultural event. Written work could also be made into an event by having students publish a piece of original writing. Inclusion in a monthly English newspaper or magazine could bring similar benefits in terms of depth of language processing if it were published outside of the classroom.

Conclusions

Using an event as a way to focus our students' studies is nothing new; schools the world over regularly hold sports days, plays, concerts, competitions, pantomimes, and singing events. Since the dawn of education, teachers have intuitively realized that the positive pressure such public events generate can be utilized to encourage students to practice hard and perform at their best. Not only do students gain a great deal of satisfaction from having successfully been a part of one of these events, but they also learn something in the build up to it. The challenge for us as English teachers is to recognize what events in our area we could utilize or start up in order to harness this powerful motivational force for the benefit of our students.

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George Higginbotham is currently lecturing at Hiroshima International Gakuin University and has taught at all levels within the Japanese education system since arriving in the country over 10 years ago. His academic interests are in vocabulary acquisition, and as a member of the Swansea University VARG group he is pursuing a PhD in that field.

Visited TLT's website recently?

…with Mark de Boer & Dax Thomas

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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>.

MY SHARE ONLINE

A linked index of My Share articles can be found at:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/ myshare/>

If you are in search of a fairytale classroom, look no further than our first contribution, in which Steven Silsbee shows us how to get students creating their own fairytales. After that, William Collins and Dawn Michele Ruhl give us a new approach to using YouTube in the classroom, with a video messaging activity.

Classroom fairytales: Improving storytelling skills

Steven Silsbee

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Quick guide

Key words: Creative thinking, impromptu speaking, storytelling, oral presentation, teamwork

Learner English level: Upper intermediate to advanced

Learner maturity: All

Preparation time: 2 hours, but can vary depending on desired cue cards

Activity time: 30 to 45 minutes

Materials: Prepared cue cards, each with an element from a fairytale or story-ending sentence (see Appendix for some examples)

This activity has been adapted from the card game *Once Upon a Time*, published by Atlas Games. The object of the game is for a group of students to create a fairytale using their cue cards. Working together, players try to create a fairytale using all of their cards.

Preparation

Prepare cue cards for students to use (see Appendix). Card size depends on personal preference, although business-sized cards have proven to be easy to manage. The cue cards need only consist of words stating elements or endings inspired by fairytales (e.g., an evil prince, the queen left the kingdom forever, etc.) However, drawings or pictures may be added to cards to make the game more enjoyable. There should be enough cards so that each group of four students receives 20-25 element cards and five to seven story-ending cards. There should be no identical cards within one group of students.

Procedure

Step 1: Since the game concept might be difficult for students to grasp, teachers can begin by eliciting or listing at least five fairytale elements and one or two story-ending sentences on the board. Check to make sure students understand the vocabulary and concepts.

Step 2: Begin by telling a story using the words on the board. Each time one of the elements is used, cross it off on the board. Continue telling the story until all elements have been used. Conclude the story using one of the story-ending sentences. Be sure that the story follows a logical storyline.

Step 3: Distribute the 20-25 element cards and five to seven story-ending cards to groups of four or five students. Have students place these cards face up in the middle of the group.

Step 4: Explain that students are to work together to create an original fairytale using the cards. Each group chooses one person to write the story as it is told. This student can participate in the game, or focus only on writing down the fairytale.

Step 5: One student begins by saying, "Once upon a time…" and continues by incorporating one of the story element cards. Students may speak and build on the story until one of the element cards has been

used. The student removes that card from the group and places it in front of him. Play then continues to the left. Each student contributes to the story one card at a time. If a student is unable to think of something after a set period of time (e.g., 10 seconds) he can pass to the next person. For example:

- **S1:** Once upon a time there was a king. (S1 removes the card labeled "king" from the group of cards and places it in front of him.)

- **S2:** He had a magic sword. (S2 removes the card labeled "sword" from the group of cards and places it in front of him.)

- **S3:** (long pause) Pass.

- **S4**: One day, a young boy went to the king's castle. He wanted the magic sword. The king became angry and put the boy in prison. (S3 removes either the card labeled "castle" or "prison" from the group of cards and places it in front of him.)

This continues until all the element cards have been used, or until a logical ending can be achieved using one of the story-ending cards. Instructors may wish to set a minimum number of cards to be used in each story.

Step 6: The student writing the story reads the story aloud to the group.

Step 7: Groups read their stories aloud to the entire class.

Conclusion

Students often have problems when it comes to telling stories or answering simple questions such as "What did you do last weekend?" This activity helps students to become more creative in their storytelling and facilitates descriptive speaking.

Increasing students' oral communication through class video message boards

William Collins and Dawn Michele Ruhl

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Quick guide:Key words: Speaking and listening skills, video and audio messaging, feedback

Learner English level: Beginner and above
Learner maturity: High school, university and adult
Preparation time: 2 hours

Appendix

Element cards		Ending cards
apple	poison	And nobody ever went into the forest again
beautiful	prince/princess	And she never told a lie again
boy/girl	prison	And the townspeople became very rich and happy
castle	ring	But they never saw it again
crown	run	That's why the dragon hated the townspeople
die	sad	The evil king left the castle and was never seen again
dragon	sleep	The ring fit perfectly
fight	small	
forest	sword	
happy	thief	
home	tower	
jewel	town	
king/queen	witch	

Activity time: Indefinite

Materials: Computer room, web camera, or a headphone with microphones.

In university-level English classes, limited class time often makes it difficult to ensure that students get enough practice speaking and listening to each other in English. With inexpensive video or audio recording tools and an easily created class webpage, teachers can increase opportunities for students to speak and listen to each other in English. Using the popular YouTube website, this activity allows teachers to create a video message board where students can access teacher or student-created video, and where both teacher and students may give and receive either text or video feedback. Over time, teachers can build an archive of student speaking videos.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a short talk on a given topic with broad appeal (e.g., a great memory, a member of my family, a time I took on a big challenge, etc.) The talk can be a solo talk or a pair conversation with an English-speaking coworker.

Step 2: Using the video capture function on a web camera, or the microphone on your headphones, record the talk/conversation and save it to your computer.

Step 3: (Optional) Use editing software (for example, Windows Movie Maker) to add English subtitles.

Step 4: Create a YouTube account for your teacher videos and upload them.

Procedure

Step 1: Show one of your videos to your class.

Step 2: For homework, give students a choice of topics and ask them to prepare a short talk (at least 1 minute).

Step 3: Encourage students to practice their talk until they can say it without reading. Students may be allowed to make and use a short list of keywords.

Step 4: In the computer room, students record their talks, either on web cameras, on their cell phones, or using the microphone on their headphones. After recording, students save the video/audio file to their computers.

Step 4: (for audio) If no web cameras are available, students may choose a set of pictures, either their own photos or pictures from the Internet that they would like to go with their story. Using editing soft-

ware, they can open their audio recording picture files and create a timeline of photos to accompany their audio talk/story.

Step 5: The teacher creates a YouTube account for student videos. There can be one account for all classes, or separate accounts for each class. The teacher tells students the user ID and password for the account.

Step 6: Students upload their videos to the class video page.

Extension activities

Students can view the teacher's videos. Viewing while reading the subtitles gives the students some support and allows them to connect in real time listening, reading, and visual aspects of communication like the teacher's gestures or facial expressions.

Students leave feedback for the teacher using "active listening strategies." These can include (a) general comments like, "Skiing sounds really fun"; (b) a follow-up question; (c) a similar experience of the student; or (d) speculative comments such as "I bet that was…/I guess you…"

Students can watch each other's videos and either leave text feedback or send a video response to their partner.

Students can view their videos and add English subtitles using editing software.

The teacher can listen to student videos and record video comments on students' talk, as well as video feedback on pronunciation or word-choice errors.

Privacy

To ensure that only the teacher and classmates may view their videos, students can click "edit video" on their video and, under "broadcasting and sharing" options, click "private".

Conclusion

To help students become more comfortable speaking English, teachers need to find ways students can have fun using their voices to communicate with each other. With video and audio messaging, students can talk and listen to each other and the teacher in English.

…with Robert Taferner

<reviews@jalt-publications.org>

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.

BOOK REVIEWS ONLINE

A linked index of Book Reviews can be found at:

<jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/>

THIS month's column features Daniel Dunkley's evaluation of the Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL® Test: iBT.

Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL® Test: iBT 2nd Ed.

[Deborah Phillips. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2007. pp. xxxii + 672. ¥4,935 (incl. Student book with answer key and CD ROM). ISBN: 978-0-13-205690-8.]

## Reviewed by Daniel Dunkley, Aichi Gakuin University

It may seem strange that a state of the art web-based examination with no paper and pencil work should need a heavy old-fashioned textbook. However, this book claims to prepare students to successfully attempt the new TOEFL web-based test.

The TOEFL test (see <www.ets.org>), used by U.S. colleges to determine whether non-native applicants have an adequate command of English to enter their institution, is not simply a general proficiency test but specifically a test of academic English.

In contrast to the paper-based TOEFL, candidates take the iBT seated at Internet-connected comput-

ers. Furthermore, there are several innovations in question types. First, there is a speaking section, in which the student makes a brief speech which is recorded by the computer. For some of the background to this section, see McNamara (2001), and for pedagogic questions Hefferman (2003). Then, there are several integrated tasks in which receptive and productive skills are mixed. For example, in the speaking integrated task the candidate reads a passage, then listens to a related passage, and finally speaks about how the ideas in the two passages are related.

The book consists of six main parts: four parts on each of the four sections of the test, then eight mini–tests, and two complete tests. The body of the text is preceded by an introduction and followed by four appendixes: on grammar, a diagnosis section, the recording script, and a full answer key. The CD-ROM contains different material from the text.
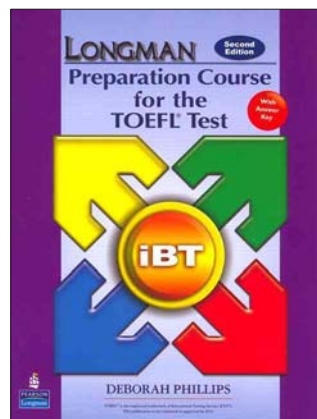
This text has many virtues. It is an accurate reflection of the test contents, in terms of themes, difficulty, and question types. Students get plenty of practice, both of each specific item type and of the variety of item types as they appear on the real test. Test-taking strategy is emphasized throughout, and screen images are printed to simulate what appears on the computer. Full audio-scripts and answers are provided, giving not just the multiple-choice answers but also sample essay and speech answers. The CD-ROM gives real-time practice with the software, which is a vital skill, just as is fast and accurate typing for the writing sections. *Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL* is thus comprehensive.

When I used the textbook in the classroom, several weaknesses became evident. It is not made sufficiently clear what the author means by a *skill*. In fact, the meaning is different according to the section. In the reading section it is clear that the skills are in fact question types. For example, reading skill 2, *recognizing referents,* is one of ten different question types. On the other hand, in the writing section the skills are strategies or procedures, such as *plan, write each section,* and *edit*.

One aspect of the book that caused difficulty was the layout of the independent writing task. The ex-

amples of the four skills are spread over 14 pages, so that students are not able to see a clear plan followed by a complete essay. In addition, there is some inconsistency in the answer key. While in the writing and speaking sections sample answers are given for the integrated questions, they are absent for the independent tasks. Naturally, in a sense there are no right answers, since everyone has their own point of view, but well-made examples would be very instructive. The CD-ROM provided useful practice, but it would have been helpful if the disc contained at least some of the material from the text. In this way the students could practice and master in real time procedures such as writing answers for integrated questions, which are presented in many small steps in the text.

Finally, a word of caution to teachers: this is not so much an introductory text as a real-life sample text. The campus life topics are manageable, but while some of the academic topics are fairly accessible, such as *Wrigley's Chewing Gum*, many of them are very difficult, such as *Aquatic schools* or *the Filibuster*. In addition, many of the passages on American culture, politics, and history, while replicating U.S. college topics, are difficult for cultural outsiders.

In short, although there are some shortcomings, this is a thorough and well-designed text which will adequately prepare students for the TOEFL iBT test.

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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 up-to-date index of books available for review can be found at: <jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews>

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

Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)
Contact: Bill Perry
<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

* *Global English Teaching and Teacher Education: Praxis and Possibility*. Dogancay-Aktuna, S., & Hardman, J. (Eds.). Alexandria, VA: TESOL, 2008.
* *Global Englishes in Asian Contexts: Current and Future Debates*. Murata, K,. & Jenkins, J. (Eds.). Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)
Contact: Greg Rouault
<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

! *A Good Read*. Islam, C., & Steenburgh, C. Singapore: CENGAGE Learning Asia, 2009. [3-level reading coursebook focused on strategies and lexical development incl. class audio CD and teacher's guide].
! *Academic Listening Encounters*. Kanaoka, Y., & Wharton, J. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. [4-level content-based series w/ 2 books on academic listening, discussion, reading, writing, and study skills incl. student CD, class audio CD, teacher's manual, listening scripts, photocopiable quizzes, and answers].
! *An A-Z of Common English Errors for Japanese Learners.* Barker, D. Nagoya: BTB Press, 2008. [English grammar and usage guide w/Japanese explanations].
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! *Vital Signs*. Morooka, V., & Sugiura, T. Tokyo: NAN'UN-DO, 2009. [English for healthcare incl. audio CD].

24 RESOURCES • TLT WIRED

…with Paul Daniels & Ted O'Neill

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In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face.

As well as our feature columns, we would also like to answer reader queries. If you have a question, problem, or idea you would like discussed in this column, please contact us.

We also invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editors before submitting.

Take corpus linguistics into your own hands with the Compleat Lexical Tutor

Peter Parise
Higashi Katsushika High School/ Matsudo High School

WITH corpus linguistics, most of the advances are in the development of dictionaries and textbooks, but in the literature regarding the use of corpora in the classroom, the picture does not seem so rosy. "Data-driven" learning, advocated by Tim Johns, is an inductive rather than deductive process where students learn the target language though analysis of examples, such as concordance lines derived from corpora. Johns comments that this is valuable for students, and that "research is too serious to be left to the researcher" (Johns, 1991). The hesitancy to embrace such a teaching approach may be two-pronged. First, Groom comments that teachers' hesitation to embrace data-driven learning stems also from concern over the students' response to using corpus tools in the classroom (2009). Second, Zhang (2008) states that the technical aspects such as terminology and software are unfamiliar to EFL teachers, making them reluctant to use corpora in their teaching practice.

The Compleat Lexical Tutor, or *Lextutor,* created by Tom Cobb of the University of Montreal, Quebec, is dedicated to "data-driven learning on the web" (Cobb, 1997) and makes these practices accessible. The site also emphasizes the primacy of vocabulary by providing applications for testing, improving, and researching vocabulary learning.

The site provides resources not only for teaching English, but also French and Spanish. The welcome page presents three categories for use: a section for students called *tutorial*, an area for *research*, and *tools for teachers*. See Figure 1, below.

For students

The student section is devoted to offering tutorials, and data-driven tasks for students. The Corpus Grammar tool offers students the ability to check their "grammar intuition" (Cobb, 1997) with actual corpus findings. Near the top the student
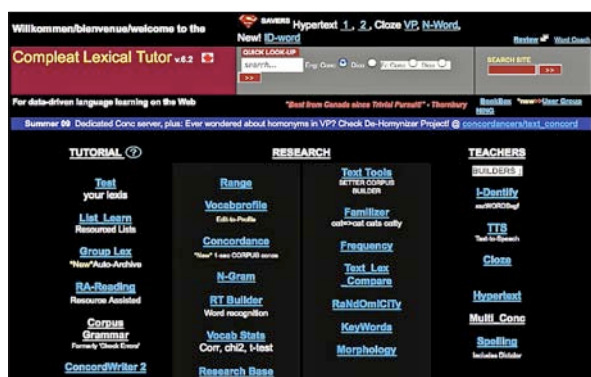
Figure 1. Main page of the Compleat Lexical Tutor <lextutor.ca>

can choose a specific grammar problem in which to practice. The task is to evaluate sentence errors with the use of concordances and determine the correct usage based on the data. Students enter the correction which is checked by the site. Through this process, the student is encouraged to think inductively about how words are used based on the examples provided.

Tools for teachers

In the applications located here, the teacher supplies the texts and with these tools can create interactive activities for the students. One such tool is the *I-D Word identification quiz* which can develop vocabulary learning. In order to use this quiz, the

teacher selects the needed word lists provided or inputs vocabulary relevant to students needs. The quiz presents a jumbled set of letters and at the bottom the student is presented with concordance lines with the missing word deleted. The student has to select the correct word out of the jumble which fits the meaning of the concordances (see Figure 3). The teacher has the ability to save a quiz on the site, which can be accessed by the student through a link.

The word lists available include a corpus taken from graded readers for the first 1,000 words and another for the second 1,000. An academic word list is also included, taken from the Brown corpus and the University Word List.

Other features in the *Teachers* section include a text-to-speech tool, in which the computer reads a text for the student, and the cloze builder, which can aid in creating cloze tests based on frequency lists.

Tools for researchers

The tools in this section are useful not only for conducting corpus-based research, but also in providing a resource for teachers. The concordancing program is valuable for teaching and research practice, because it provides access to corpora such as the British National Corpus, the Brown Corpus, and others. This is to cross-reference prescriptive grammar with actual usage in either written or

Figure 2. Corpus Grammar Page

Figure 3. I-D Word Identification Quiz

spoken registers, particularly useful when I asked about the appropriate usage of a certain grammar point or vocabulary word. It is also a good way to find samples of actual language use rather than contrived examples. The concordancer is also noteworthy for other corpora such as a corpus of US TV and radio language, which can be used for investigating spoken registers. Other corpora which are quite handy are learner corpora, one of which is a corpus from Japanese learners using English.

This article only presents a glimpse of what is available, so please visit the Compleat Lexical Tutor at <lextutor.ca> and experiment with each section to get a feel for the tools available. The reality is that corpus-based teaching is not as remote as it seems. It just means taking corpus linguistics into your own hands.

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Peter Parise teaches at three high schools in Chiba. His research interests include practical applications of learner corpora, and building corpora for research. You can follow his activities by visiting <www.tesolpeter.wordpress.com>.

…with Marcos Benevides

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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/>

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.

▶ 21 - 23 Nov – JALT2009 "The Teaching Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror" will be held at Granship Shizuoka. See <jalt.org/conference> for more information.

JALT Focus
Behind the scenes at JALT2009

As you probably know, the JALT conference is the largest international conference for language teachers in Asia. What you may not have considered is the massive year-round effort that goes on behind the scenes. Before the doors even open in Shizuoka on November 21st, dozens of volunteer organizers—your colleagues—will have collectively spent tens of thousands of hours preparing schedules, vetting presentation proposals, liaising with sponsors, organizing social events, creating and implementing a publicity strategy, and more. Every detail you can imagine will have been discussed and arranged, from who will chaperone the VIP speakers to where to house the student interns; from arranging the floor plan of the materials expo to assigning appropriate rooms for presentations; from creating ads to go in the Daily Yomiuri to distributing name tags and conference bags. These efforts are mostly hidden and, as a result, most conference participants will never truly appreciate the complexity and magnitude of running such a large conference.

To illustrate the scale involved, let's focus on just one aspect of conference organization, choosing the venue. One often hears complaints that the venue is not adequate for one reason or another. For instance, that the site is inconveniently located in relation to hotels and shops, or that the components of the conference are too spread out in too many different buildings, or that the presentation rooms are too small/large/difficult to find, or even that the conference should be held in more varied locations from year to year. Unfortunately, the hard truth is this: The number of sites capable of accommodating a conference the size of ours, on a schedule we can work with, in a location that is easy for teachers around Japan to access, *and* all at a price we can afford to pay, is very limited.

Most university campuses are out of the question, because we would essentially need to commandeer a medium-sized campus completely, including its gymnasium, cafeterias, classrooms and seminar halls, for three days while classes are ongoing. Large hotels and conference centers have everything we need, but are either prohibitively expensive or inconveniently located. Locations outside of Honshu would lead to far higher costs for everyone involved, which in turn would lead to a severe drop in attendance. Even sites which do fulfill our needs

aren't always entirely ideal. The last two conferences in Tokyo, for example, suffered somewhat from being spread out over three or four separate buildings, as well as from many restrictions on commercial transactions onsite. If you were wondering, it was for this latter reason that we did not hold the popular International Food Fair.

Granship Shizuoka, where this year's conference will be held, is perhaps the best space we've ever used: It's centrally located in Japan near Tokyo, and right on the shinkansen line. It also boasts top of the line facilities, an all-in-one location in a single building, a fantastic main hall for the materials expo, convenient and abundant breakout spaces, an excellent location for the IFF, and even a modern coat check. On the other hand, the area immediately surrounding the venue is limited in amenities such as hotels, convenience stores, and restaurants, meaning that everything is a train stop away. Still, despite this one minor inconvenience, the choice was clear.

The unsung heroes

But of course, the conference committee is not only charged with choosing the venue. In fact, that's amongst our *easier* tasks. Having been a committee member for 2 years, I have observed firsthand the amount of volunteer work that it takes to plan the JALT conference each year. My own contribution has been tiny in comparison: I've made most of the conference fliers and ads you've seen—a couple of hours a week, tops. But my efforts are truly put to shame by the sheer dedication of Conference Chairs Deryn Verity and Steve Cornwell, JALT Director of Programs Phil McCasland, Conference Manager Sarah Louisa Birchley, Site Manager Masahiko Goshi, JALT VP Cynthia Keith, Publicity Co-chair Steven Herder, AM Liaison Andrew Zitzmann, Website Administrator Paul Collett, JALT Office Manager Junko Fujio, and easily two dozen others whose names I literally cannot mention because I'd run out of space. I mention these particular names only because they are seared into my mind from unrelenting exposure via committee emails—at least one per day, every day, for the past several months.

So, when you run into any of the many conference organizers in Shizuoka in November, take a moment to say thank you. They won't hear you, because they'll be dashing off to begin work on JALT2010, but do go on. It'll be good for your karma.

…with Jason Peppard

<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.

IN this month's Member's Profile, Paul Dickinson reflects on his experiences teaching young learners in Japan.

MEMBER'S PROFILE

Paul Dickinson

With the implementation of English activities into the Japanese elementary school curriculum, we can expect a greater focus on teaching young learners. I would like to share some of my own experiences teaching English to young Japanese learners over the past 7 years and reflect on how those experiences have shaped my professional development.

I must admit that I found teaching children very difficult at first. My previous 3 years experience teaching adult EFL and ESL learners in Australia and Japan counted for little when confronted with the multitude of differences involved in teaching young learners. I have learned a lot since those days in various ways and from various people. Most of all, I have learned from my learners. The theme of JALT 2009, "The Teaching Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror", has reminded me of just how much my younger learners have taught me. When it comes to teaching children, the teaching learning dialogue can be a very active mirror indeed!

The differences between teaching children and teaching adults are vast, yet not always appreciated. The teaching of languages to young learners has been undervalued in many countries, including here in Japan. It has always intrigued me to see new, often completely untrained teachers thrown into children's classes from day one, reflecting an attitude that teaching children is somehow less important and less intellectually demanding than teaching adults. If anything, I have found the reverse to be true.

A major difference between teaching children and teaching adults is that feedback from young learners is usually immediate and very direct. From this I learned that getting and maintaining learner interest was the rock on which any teaching and learning success was built. Unfortunately, there is no one magic way of doing this and it sometimes takes a long time to find out exactly what "clicks" with some students and classes. I learned that having a variety of approaches and activities is necessary to cater for the various personalities and learning styles that exist in any one group of children.

The importance of preparation and being organized is another thing I have learned. Of course, this applies to any teaching context, but I have found its importance to be magnified many times over with young learners. Children need the structure, direction, and support that can only come from adequate preparation. If they don't know what they are expected to do, they will soon find something else—usually much more disruptive—to do.

However, having a well-prepared lesson does not mean having a teacher-centered lesson. Experience has taught me that child-centered approaches ultimately lead to more successful learning outcomes. It is also important never to underestimate what children are capable of and to take on board what younger learners have to offer. For example, many of the games I use today have evolved because one child or another found more exciting ways to play them.

Reflecting on games from a child's perspective has also taught me that they are an integral part of the learning process, not just a reward for good behaviour or something to do for fun at the end of a lesson. I have seen games used in both these ways, but with little or no actual learning taking place. Implemented effectively, there is no reason why language learning shouldn't be fun in itself.

Another thing I have learned from teaching young learners is that there are many reasons for discipline problems. Children bring all sorts of

emotional baggage with them to the classroom and sometimes they are just plain tired. Misbehaviour can also be due to a child not understanding something and needing some help, but lacking the linguistic means to ask for it. Or it could be that the lesson just isn't interesting or challenging enough. The knowledge gained from getting to know my learners, seeing things from their perspective, and reflecting on my own practice, has enabled me to prevent or, at the very least, lessen the impact of disruptive disciplinary problems.

My journey from being a teacher who often felt out of depth teaching young learners is far from over, but I have learned many valuable lessons along the way. These lessons have helped me realize that while not every class will run as smoothly as I would like, there are many things I can do that will help make things run as smoothly as they can.

Paul Dickinson teaches adults and young learners in Yamagata. His research interests include formulaic language and the application of corpus linguistics to issues in language learning and discourse analysis. He can be contacted at <paul.dickinson01@gmail.com>.

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30   JALT FOCUS • GRASSROOTS

…with Joyce Cunningham and Mariko Miyao

<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.

IN the first report, you will learn about JALT Junior's presence at this month's National Conference. In the second report, you will find the answer to the following question: There are so many acronyms in language teaching organizations, so who exactly is AJET, and what do they do?

JALT Junior: Not just for children's teachers anymore

by Lesley Ito, BIG BOW English Lab

JALT Junior not only continues to meet the ever-changing needs of children's EFL teachers; it is also expanding its horizons to include other kinds of teachers who can benefit from its unique status!

In 1996, the Teaching Children SIG was created, to accommodate the large numbers of children's EFL teachers in Japan who wanted to meet each other, share ideas, and further their professional development. It was soon realized that these teachers had different needs from other participants in the JALT National Conference: Most of them had to pay conference expenses out-of-pocket and they wanted reassurance that there would be many presentations and panel discussions that related to teaching children. Five years later, the first JALT Junior was held at the PAC3 in Kitakyushu, with 36 presentations. JALT Junior participants were pleased to be able to pay a lower conference rate so they could attend presentations only in the field of children's EFL. Over the years, it has become increasingly successful; last year, there were 47 presentations over 2 days!

From the beginning, JALT Junior has always made a commitment to creating a conference that is bilingual, so as to attract more Japanese members. Many presentations are given in both English and Japanese and translations of presentation titles and summaries are provided. Last year's panel discussion was in Japanese, with English support, and was very successful, attracting over 200 participants. On Sat Nov 21, 16:00-17:35, we will also have a panel discussion in Japanese, where we will hear from teachers about successful EFL programs already in place in Japanese public elementary schools. With EFL becoming a compulsory subject in elementary schools from 2011, JALT Junior is in a position to lead the way.

Now, JALT Junior is entering a new phase by

bringing under its umbrella presentations on teaching at junior and senior high schools, after it was realized that many of those teachers had the same financial concerns regarding attending a national conference. As JALT Junior has helped encourage many teachers of children over the years and has contributed to the growth of the TC SIG, we hope this new partnership can also benefit the JSH SIG.

もはやJALT Juniorは、児童英語の先生だけのものではありません

JALT Juniorは児童向けELT教師の常に変化しているニーズに応えるだけにとどまってはいません。今年度はさらに発展を遂げ、そのユニークな形態を活用できる先生方の種類を増やしています。

1996年に、TC SIGは日本で英語を子どもたちに教えている多くの先生たちが、お互いの指導技術の向上や、意見交換などができる場として発足いたしました。TC SIGの会員のニーズは通常のＪＡＬＴ大会への出席者とは少し異なり、多くの先生方は参加費も自腹で支払い、このような大会に出席しています。だからこそそれに見合った、先生たちが実際に求めている児童英語教育のプレゼンテーションやパネルディスカッションが当然必要不可欠であることが判明しました。発足５年後にはじめてのJALT Juniorが３６件のプレゼンテーションを企画して北九州のＰＡＣ３にて行われました。このJALT Juniorに参加した先生方は、児童のためのEFL分野のプレゼンテーションだけに参加する場合、参加費もリーズナブルになったことで満足していただいたことと思います。その後、みなさまのおかげでJALT Juniorも回を重ねるごとに充実したものになってきており、昨年には、２日間で４７件のプレゼンテーションが行われ大成功といえる大会となってきております。

JALT Juniorは発足当初より、より多くの日本人に気軽に参加していただけるよう二ヶ国語で行われています。多くのプレゼンテーションは英語と日本語で行われ、また、タイトルや要約も日本語に訳されたものを用意させていただいております。また、昨年行われたパネルディスカッションは、日本語に英語訳のサポートをつけた形で行われ、２００名を超える参加者があり、すばらしい成功を収めることができました。今年のパネルディスカッションは、１１月２１日（土）16:00〜17:35に行います。皆様もご承知のように２０１１年には日本の公立小学校で英語が教科として正式に加わることになります。これに先駆けてJALT Juniorでは既に公立小学校で英語を教えている先生をお招きして成功例などを交えてパネルディスカッションを予定しております。

今JALT Junior は新しい幕開けとして、中学生、高校生に教えている先生方を迎え入れて、有用なプレゼンテーションなどを企画して行くことで、TC SIGの会としての幅を広げ、より充実した発展ができることを望んでおります。また同時にJALT全国大会参加に要する参加者の方の参加費を抑えることで少しでも多くの方に御参加いただくと同時に、JSH SIGとの間は、新しい友好関係を築き上げることで、お互いに多くを得て、英語教育の今後の発展を強く望む所存であります。

For further information, please contact Lesley Ito at <lesleyhiroyuki@kxa.biglobe.ne.jp>.

Continuing to build relationships with the Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching

by Rick Bales, Domestic Affairs Chair, and Sarah Louisa Birchley, Conference Program Chair 2009

"What kind of shoes should I wear in class?" "I already have an MA—can I become a university teacher after JET?" "What do I do if I make a mistake when I'm teaching grammar?" These were some of the questions posed by new ALTs to JALT presenters at this year's Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program orientation in Tokyo. These types of question represent the diverse set of new ALTs working in the Japanese public school system—all of whom can and should be supported by JALT. Those with previous teaching experience and qualifications are looking for opportunities to present and to do research. Those for whom this is the first experience in a classroom need support, encouragement, **and training. Thanks to the As**sociation for Japan Exchange and Teaching (AJET), JALT continues to play an important role in providing training and resources for ALTs at critical points during their time in Japan.

AJET is an independent, self-supporting volunteer organization that promotes and supports exchange and teaching in Japan in cooperation with the JET Program. AJET's primary purpose is to facilitate a successful working relationship between JET programme sponsors and participants. It promotes peer support and fellowship, sponsors special projects, assists in the organization of conferences, and carries out other activities, to achieve this purpose. It is AJET that coordinates the JALT presentations at JET orientations, while members of the AJET national council represent JET at the JALT na-

tional conference, often through presentations, an information table, or as panelists on the Domestic Forum.

This year, JALT has been extremely fortunate to work with an excellent AJET team, particularly AJET Chair Jen C. Park who, for a number of years, has been extremely supportive of AJET's relationship with JALT; and Education Liaison, Ian Matthews, who is keen to address the different experience levels and training needs of ALTs.

AJET is in a unique position in that it holds a bian-nual opinion exchange meeting with the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations and three government ministries to discuss issues relating to the JET programme and the working lives of ALTs.

This year, AJET produced reports to CLAIR and MEXT on the use of *eigo no–to* (English Notebook—an elementary school textbook currently piloted as part of the 2011 English curriculum reforms for 5th and 6th graders), the general activities of ALTs, and the training and development needs of ALTs working at multiple schools. With the extension of JET contracts potentially to 5 years and the increase in the number of ALTs working solely in elementary schools, there is a greater need to provide ALTs with more specific training relating to TESOL. With regard to elementary school, the AJET report concluded that, in order to improve team teaching, and for ALTs to provide better assistance to JTEs, a greater effort is needed to help ALTs better understand the goals and structure of the new curriculum. Increas-

ing ALTs' awareness of, and participation in, JALT Junior events is one way to assist these new teachers. The extension of JALT Junior at JALT2009 to include teachers in junior and senior high schools will hopefully also encourage more ALTs and their JTEs to attend the conference together.

Rick Bales, Domestic Affairs Chair, **has been work-**ing hard to build a better grassroots relationship with AJET, by connecting the regional AJET blocks with local JALT chapters. This year JALT will also provide information and seminars for developing graded reading programs in junior and senior high schools.

Finally, huge thanks must go to Rick Bales, Decha Hongthong, Colin Graham, **and Andy Boon, for giv-**ing such well-received presentations at the 2009 JET Tokyo Orientations and to Nathan Furuya for his support on the JALT information desk.

Watch for new JET members at your chapter events and give them a big JALT welcome to the language teaching community. Also, drop by the AJET information desk in the EME at JALT2009 to talk to AJET representatives, or go to the Domestic Affairs Forum on Sat 21 Nov, 4pm, room 1101, to join the discussion on a new three member team-teaching system being applied in grade five and six elementary school English classes by many city boards of education. For further information about how to reach out to JETs in your area, please contact Rick Bales, Domestic Affairs Chair, at <rickbales@hotmail.com>.

32   JALT FOCUS • OUTREACH

…with David McMurray

<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.

"**Thousand** Island, please," responded Shizuka Obaru to her host mother Lynn Graham's question about which salad dressing she would like to try. During her summer vacation away from university in Kagoshima, Shizuka studied ESL for two weeks at the Quest Language School in Toronto and enjoyed another week at a cottage in Ontario. It was Shizuka's first meaningful international experience, although she traveled with Mikiko Tawaraida, a university classmate who had previously studied for one-year as an exchange student in Brazil.

Study abroad at a Canadian island school

Should university study abroad programs be focused on language learning, cultural understanding, making the world a better place, career-relevant

skills, **or country specific knowledge? While univer**sity administrators grapple with this difficult question, more and more Japanese students are packing their suitcases and heading overseas.

Japanese students who study abroad in Toronto often enter a language study center. Known as island programs, the Japanese students usually sit

in class alongside other Japanese students and take English courses at a basic level, especially designed for Asian students. The centers register students aged 16 and older and assess their levels of speaking with an interview test and writing with a paper test. Shizuka entered a basic class with other Japanese students, whereas Mikiko joined a mid-level class with students from Korea, Taiwan, and China. Courses include a foundations grammar class, writing class, conversation class, communications and discussion class, and a self-study language laboratory. These 1-hour classes can be taken each morning for up to 16 weeks during the summer or 44 weeks during **1 year. Every Monday, new students are al**lowed to enter ongoing classes. Students could have as many as four teachers. Teachers in the study centers may have worked in Japan or Korea and are trained to teach ESL to Asian students. Teachers use textbooks selected by the language centers and encourage students to discuss common themes such as self-introductions, family, movies, and sports. Afternoons are left free for students to go sightseeing by themselves. Weekend activities organized by the centers include participation in street festivals, trips to Algonquin Park, and watching films.

Another study abroad model is the direct placement experience that places students in a host high school or university, where they sit beside host country students in class and take the same curriculum as host country students. This immersion model is a greater challenge, requires students to have a minimum TOEFL score of 550, and places more emphasis on student involvement. Mikiko

studied math, science, and history using the Portuguese language when she studied at a high school in Rio de Janeiro. In Canada, the University of Prince Edward Island offers immersion programs to students from universities with exchange agreements, but students with lower abilities in English are encouraged to register in non-credit bearing ESL and EAP programs, similar to the island language center model.

Country-specific knowledge and cultural understanding are often left for students to pick up from homestays and outside the classroom experiences. Students can live in culturally rich environments, such as with host families or in international living centers, or live with other Japanese students in rented apartments or residence halls. More than half the residents of Toronto were not born in Canada, meaning a homestay placement could be with a family from Mexico or Italy. The Italian community in Toronto numbers 400,000, and Hispanics make up the fastest-growing segment of the multicultural city. A former ESL teacher at King George International College in Toronto, Lindsay Pexleplace met Shizuka during dinner at a homestay experience. "From day one until the end of the course, I was always worried about embarrassing my students in front of their classmates," she revealed to Shizuka during dinner. "When I hugged a Korean student who gave me a going-away present, he almost died from shock." Although the teacher attempted to

lessen the culture shock faced by her students, the experience of disequilibrium in the context of international travel can help students learn about culture. Removing the commonality of Asian culture from the classroom and homestay experience can challenge the visiting students to rethink their own behaviors, political and religious attitudes, and especially their feelings of self-confidence and independence.

Almost everything Shizuka and Mikiko encountered in Canada was new and presented a challenging opportunity for them to learn. They navigated new customs and table manners, ordered breakfasts and dinners, paid for goods and services, and maintained a budget. Communicating with and trying to understand the many people they met while studying abroad were stimuli requiring fresh adaptation. Interacting with a new environment and changing the way they thought about learning helped the students to better interpret what they observed. Shizuka relied on what she knew about people based on her experiences in Japan in a pluralistic manner. Mikiko seemed able to accommodate new experiences by thinking in a multiple number of ways about what she had learned in Brazil and Japan. They both hope to return to Canada for a full year, perhaps on the Working Holiday Program offered by the governments of Canada and Japan. Up to 10,000 young people take part in this program that allows them to work temporarily for a year. 2010 will be especially popular because of the demand for unskilled foreign workers at the Olympic Games. Many hope that mastering English will change their lifestyle and make it easier to find a job back in Japan. Even the most basic job can offer career-related skills when it is challenged in a foreign language and requires a change in cultural behavior. When Mikiko returned to university class, she was motivated to begin writing a seminar report comparing the diversity of people in Canadian, Brazilian, and Japanese cities. Shizuka was ready to make two presentations on salads. Her first would be a comparison of foods, explaining that the key ingredients in the pink-colored Thousand Island salad dressing are mayonnaise and chili sauce, which is made of peppers and tomatoes. In summer, the 1,000 islands are popular spots for fishermen, tourists, and increasing numbers of ESL students from Japan. Thousand Island dressing is named for the Thousand Island region of the St. Lawrence Seaway and Lake Ontario located between the USA and Canada. Her second presentation would explain a salad as a metaphor for the results of the immigration model she observed in Toronto, where more than 50 percent of residents are visible minorities.

34 | COLUMN • SIG NEWS

…with James Hobbs

<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>

JALT currently has 17 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and 4 forming 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, childraising, identity] [📖 *Bilingual Japan*—3x year, Journal—1x year] [📣 forums, panels] [✉]

Bilingualism is pleased to sponsor the *Bilingual Family Event: Raising Children in Two Languages and Two Cultures* featuring plenary speaker **Aya Matsuda** at JALT2009. This event is also open to the general public. Bilingualism is also hosting a panel discussion on *Biliteracy: Early Childhood Thru Elementary School.*

　バイリンガリズムがJALT2009年度大会『バイリンガル家族イベント』を提供する。このイベントの演説者が松田あや研究者。このイベントで一般人も参加ができます。バイリンガルズムがパネルディスカッションを提供する。今年の主題は『幼児から小学生までのバイリテラシ』。

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 provides support, information, networking, and publishing opportunities for interested persons. If you are interested in serving as an officer and/or member of the 2010 Conference Team, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to meeting and hearing from persons interested in the expanding world of CALL. See <www.jaltcall.org>.

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> 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>.

Framework & Language Portfolio (forming)

[💡 curriculum-planning, assessment, language education reform, Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), European Language Portfolio (ELP)] [📖 newsletter] [📣 seminar, workshops, materials development] [💬]

This SIG wants to discuss the CEFR and ELP, and other similar frameworks and their relevance for Japan. There is an emphasis on developing materials to support educators who would like to use these pedagogic tools; the bilingual Language Portfolio for Japanese University is now available online. The SIG holds periodical seminars and is present at many conferences. See <forums.jalt.org/index.php/topic,456.0.html> or contact <flpsig@gmail.com> for more information.

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] [📧] [💬]

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. We also network and collaborate with other JALT groups and the community at large to promote pedagogical and professional practices, language teaching materials, and research inclusive of gender and gender-related topics. Visit our website at <www.gale-sig.org> or contact us for more details.

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 Global Issues in Language Education 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>. For further information, contact Kip Cates <kcates@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] [📧]

　論文・記事大募集。JALT日本語教育論集を2010年に発行。論文、研究報告、評論、小論、手紙など募集。日本語研究者、指導者、学習者の 皆様応募お願いします。ホームページをご覧ください<www.jalt.org/jsl>。

Call for Papers: JALT Journal of Japanese Language Education. JSL researchers, teachers, and learners are invited to contribute articles, research reports, essays, and reviews. Publication date is 2010. Visit our website <www.jalt.org/jsl>.

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 Learner Development SIG is interested in making connections between our experience of learning and teaching. The **LD SIG Forum** on **Identity Snapshots** with MC **Steve Brown** will be held 22 Nov at JALT2009, exploring teachers' representations of their students, and students' representations of their teachers. Through presentations, activities, and discussion, we will explore how perception of ourselves and others shapes our learning experience. Information about the forum, contacts, and information about the SIG is at <ld-sig.org>.

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 of English to older learners. We run a website, online forum, listserv, and SIG publication (see <jalt.org/lifelong>). For more information or to join the mailing list, contact Yoko Wakui <ywakui@bu.iij4u.or.jp> or Eric M. Skier <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、これからの研究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こうと日々熱心に活動中です。現在オンライン< 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> 。または Eric M. Skier <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/jaltmwsig>. Our website is <uk.geocities.com/materialwritersig>. To contact us, email <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]

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] [📝]

The Pragmatics Forum at JALT2009 is titled *Planning and Teaching Pragmatics to EFL Students*. The panelists include **Nicholas Jungheim**, **Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska**, **Donna Tatsuki**, and **Sayoko Yamashita**. It is scheduled for 21 Nov 16:00-17:40. The Pragmatics SIG annual business meeting will then be held in the same room (Room 909) 18:00-19:00. Don't miss all the other pragmatics-related presentations at the conference. See you there!

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>. Also, anyone may join our listserv <groups.yahoo.com/group/

PALE_Group>. For information on events, visit <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> 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> or visit our website <jalttesig.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>. 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>.

　児童語学教育研究部会　　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>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>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>.

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

…with Michi Saki

<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>.

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

NOVEMBER is an exciting month with this year's JALT National Conference in Shizuoka, as well as many chapter events happening all around Japan. If you can't attend the National Conference this year, be sure to participate in an event or presentation in your local chapter. If your local chapter is not listed, or for more details, go to the National event calendar online—there's sure to be something to strike your interest!

Gifu—*Pecha Kucha presentations from the JALT National Conference*. Didn't attend the JALT National Conference in Shizuoka? Not a problem. Come join some of the Gifu chapter members for a group share from this big event. Six presenters will utilize the Pecha Kucha method of using 20 slides for 20 seconds per slide to demonstrate which presentations stood out to them. Discussions will follow all six presentations. This will provide teachers with an excellent way to pick up some great ideas in less than 2 hours. *Sat 28 Nov 19:00-21:00; Gifu JR Station, Heartful Square, 2F East Wing; One-day members ¥1000.*

Gunma—*Seigakuin radio podcast* by **David Gann** and **Mehran Sabet**. These two speakers will present on how they produced a podcast from their university. Their talk will detail how they first conceptualized the podcast; on what basis they drafted the material; how they produced the program; how they followed up later in class to assess learner comprehension; and finally new directions and future plans. *Sun 8 Nov 14:00-16:30; Kyoai Gakuen College; One-day members ¥1000.*

Himeji—*Organizing events and language learning* by **Balsamo Asian Scholar**, **Amihan April Mella-Alcazar**. The presenter will begin with a video presentation of her involvement in organizing Teachers Helping Teachers in the Philippines and future plans to expand the program. She will also discuss her involvement as Conference Organizer of the Asian Youth Forum, to be held in Manila in December 2009. She will then proceed to give a PowerPoint presentation on the utilization of Contextual Learning Theory and the Functional Literacy Approach in the study of EFL. We will end with a question and answer session. *Sun 29 Nov 14:00; Hyogo University, Shinzaikei Campus, Himeji; One-day members ¥1000.*

Hiroshima—*Teachers Helping Teachers in the Philippines and related topics* by **Amihan April Mella-Alcazar** from Manila's **Asian Institute of Management**. The presenter, who will be a featured speaker at the JALT National Conference this year, will give a special talk in Hiroshima on three topics related to English education in the Philippines and in Japan: the Teachers Helping Teachers program, the Asian Youth Forum, and Contextual Learning Theory. *Mon 16 Nov 18:30-20:00; Bluestone, 3-8 Hatchobori (5F above Poplar, across the street from Cusco Cafe); One-day members ¥500.*

Nagasaki—*Functional Literacy Theory and Contextual Learning Theory applied to English language learning* by **Amihan April Mella-Alcazar**, the **2009 Balsamo Asian Scholar** and Four Corners National Tour Guest Presenter. For our ninth meeting of the year, we are very pleased to welcome Amihan April Mella-Alcazar. She is the Teachers Helping Teachers co-ordinator in the Philippines, and is Adjunct Professor at the Asian Institute of Management. For more information on her topic, please see our chapter websites and Facebook Group site, or see her article in the July *TLT* (pp. 32-34) and her profile in the September *TLT* (pp. 28-29). Nagasaki JALT has contributed to the funding for her tour. Postscript: We are holding chapter executive elections for 2010 from 8-18 Nov, and winners will be announced at this Wednesday evening meeting. All welcome! *Wed 18 Nov 18:30-20:30; Dejima Koryu Kaikan, 4F; One-day members ¥1000.*

Okayama—*Functional Literacy Theory and Contextual Learning Theory applied to English language learning* by **Amihan April Mella-Alcazar**. The presenter, the **2009 Balsamo Asian Scholar**, will kick off her participation in the Four

Corners Tour by discussing these theories with reference to her own language learning (English and Japanese) as well as her work advocating better English language teaching in her native Philippines. This will be followed by two short presentations by local speakers. *Sun 15 Nov 14:00-16:00; Tenjinyama Bunka Plaza <http://www.tenplaza.info/introduction/access.html>; One-day members ¥500.*

Sendai—*Mind maps and materials creation* by **Miles Craven**. Miles Craven, interested in student motivation in Japan, has used mind maps to engage and stimulate students to achieve. This workshop is for teachers who know little about mind maps, but are keen to learn the basics and explore ways mind maps can help language learners of all ages and abilities. Participants will prepare their own mind maps and learn various communicative exercises to use with students across all four main skills. *Sun 29 Nov 14:00-17:00; AER 6F, Special Conference Room <www.siip.city.sendai.jp/netu/english.html>; One-day members ¥1000.*

West Tokyo—*Micro-Conference #9: A Day with Sandra Savignon*. West Tokyo Chapter is pleased to announce our ninth micro-conference, devoted to the work of Sandra Savignon, who will give presentations on Communicative Competence—Theory vs. Practice; Second Language Acquisition Research and Teaching Strategic Competence; and Learner Attitudes and Interests. *Sat 7 Nov 10:30-17:00; Tokyo Keizai University. Check the website at <jwt.homestead.com/home.html> for details.*

Yamagata—*Expressing politeness in Japanese and English* by **Akira Kuwamura**. People express their politeness in their speech differently across cultures. Language learners need to learn to demonstrate politeness appropriately in the target language or common language. Akira Kuwamura is the Director of Internationalization at Yamagata University. *Sat 7 Nov 13:30-15:30; Yamagata-Shi Seibu Kominkan, 2-23 Kagota 1-Chome, Yamagata-shi; t: 0236-45-1223; for more information, contact Fumio Sugawara, t: 0238-85-2468.*

COLUMN • CHAPTER REPORTS 39

…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.

Nagoya: August—*Linguistic phonics for EFL* and ***My top 10 classroom resources*** by **Sean Gallagher**. Used actively, phonics can give children confidence to explore the world of English with a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes. Active phonics involves a lot of games but should not include the students' native L1 in written form. Gallagher presented his top 10 classroom resources, which included some of the following: classroom arranged in a U-shape; bells used to draw attention to bingo markers for class activities; timers used in games to encourage students to concentrate; stamps for homework; noise-makers to let students

know when they are wrong; the use of charts, cards, and posters for students to find right answers; and reading rods and story cards. According to Gallagher, the secret ingredient is "You, the teacher" and success is up to the teacher.

Reported by Kayoko Kato

Omiya: September—*Successful use of peer feedback in the L2 writing and speaking class* and ***How to set up a news English class: Resources and arrangements*** by **Fuyuhiko Sekido** and **Kazushige Cho**. The presenters first overviewed speaking and writing projects and step-by-step lesson procedures, then showed video clips of students' work, and then explained evaluation methods and reflections. They aim to have their students feel their ability is being challenged, enjoy working with peers, and accomplish their tasks. In the second session, there were two workshops and some hands-on teaching materials were introduced. The first workshop was on making TOEIC questions from the textbook; the second focused on summarizing and making short speeches using newspapers. The presenters focused on the importance of cooperative learning, including sharing opinions and building a rapport with fellow students through learning. They stressed that students' needs, such as choosing their own interesting news topic,

should be carefully considered. We enjoyed the presenters' delivery style and the useful activities. It is likely that everyone can adapt these projects and informative lesson procedures to their own classroom settings.

Reported by Masa Tsuneyasu

Sendai: July—*Making ideas matter: Active skills for critical thinking* by **Chuck Sandy**. Sandy began by presenting his conception of critical thinking and the role of critical thinking in language learning activities. Adapting Bloom's taxonomy (hierarchy) of thinking skills, Sandy shared with us his vision for helping students to move up the scale toward higher-level thinking and more engaging, personally meaningful experiences with language and language use. While sharing stories of how this has been working out with his own students, he enlisted our help in analyzing and setting his teaching goals for the coming year. This activity was a good example of the way Sandy tries to turn many classroom activities into opportunities for meaningful analysis and evaluation. Finally, Sandy gave us an overview of his new textbook series co-authored with Curtis Kelly, and and emphasized how critical thinking affected its content and design.

Reported by Ken Schmidt

…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>

The JALT2009 International Conference:

A unique opportunity for job recruiters and seekers

Douglas Meyer, JIC Coordinator

GREETINGS to all job seekers, new and old! My name is Douglas Meyer, and I am the new Job Information Center (JIC) coordinator for the JALT Conference, taking over from veteran Kent Hill. Yes, it's true, I have big shoes to fill, what with the conference just around the corner. And with so many professionals together in one spot from November 21st to 23rd, all focused on improving language teaching and learning in Japan, the conference is sure to be a hit. From a career standpoint, with over 2,000 language professionals coming together, the JALT conference is unquestionably the number one networking and recruiting opportunity in Asia.

For schools, the JIC provides facilities to post job openings, review candidate résumés, and hold interviews at the conference. Occasionally, schools ask their full-time foreign staff to headhunt for them. Headhunting is recruiting, and if you've been asked by your school to help out, the task of "recruiter" has just been added to your job profile. Just email me, Douglas Meyer, at <jic.coordinator@gmail.com> right away. I will send you some paperwork to fill out and get the job posted.

Moreover, the number of job postings in the JIC has been growing. Several years ago, many teachers didn't have computers at home, and so the JIC would collect and display job info of possible interest found at different Internet sites. This was discontinued, so now the JIC only posts job ads directly received from recruiters and schools. This is good for recruiters, and good for job seekers too: Recruiters get featured exposure, and seekers will only find posts meant for them.

This being said, seekers need to know that the main recruiting time in Japan has never been in the fall. For those seeking a full-time, tenured university position, only a few remain open. At this time of the year, the most common posts you'll find are those considered "stepping stones", the limited-term contracts for adjunct or part-time positions, and there are plenty of these.

A note to jobseekers: Be sure to bring copies of your CV/résumé with you. (If you also bring these on a USB key, even better). Though it is true that you would ideally want to adjust your résumé and cover letter for each job, there's no time for that at the conference. Instead, you get a face-to-face opportunity that can't be beat. Even if you don't get the job, the contact and experience of talking with the recruiters, formally and informally, is well worth it.

I look forward to seeing you at the Job Information Center room at the upcoming JALT conference.

Douglas Meyer,
Conference JIC coordinator

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/> to view the most up-to-date list of job postings.

Location: Tokyo, Hachioji
School: Chuo University (Tama Campus)
Position: Part-time instructors
Start Date: April 2010
Deadline: 15 November 2009

Location: Aichi, Nagoya
School: Toyota Technological Institute
Position: Full-time Professor
Start Date: 1 July 2010 or earlier
Deadline: 10 December 2009

Location: Nagano, Komagane
School: Interac Japan
Position: Short-term intensive language programme instructors
Start Date: January 2010
Deadline: 15 December 2009

COLUMN • CONFERENCE CALENDAR   41

…with David Stephan

<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 November is the deadline for a February 2010 conference in Japan or a March 2010 conference overseas. Feedback or suggestions on the usefulness of this column are also most welcome.

Upcoming Conferences

21-23 Nov 09—JALT2009: 35th Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning: *The Teaching-Learning Dialogue: An Active Mirror*, 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>

26-28 Nov 09—14th English in South East Asia (ESEA) Conference: *English Changing: Implications for Policy, Teaching, and Research*, Ateneo de Manila U., Philippines. Keynote speakers include: Vaidehi Ramanathan (USA), Brian Morgan (Canada), and Edilberto C. de Jesus (Philippines). **Contact**: <ateneo.edu/index.php?p=2487>

29 Nov 09—Kansai English Teachers in Japan Expo, Osaka, Seifu Gakuen. **Contact**: <eltcalendar.com/events/details/4518>

2-4 Dec 09—ALANZ and ALAA Joint Applied Linguistics Conference: *Participation and Acquisition: Exploring These Metaphors in Applied Linguistics*, AUT U., Auckland. Keynote speakers will be: Lourdes Ortega (U. of Hawaii), Cathie Elder and Tim McNamara (U. of Melbourne), and Gary Barkhuizen (U. of Auckland). **Contact**: <confer.co.nz/alanzalaaconf09>

6 Dec 09—Kyushu English Teachers in Japan Expo, Fukuoka, Seinan Gakuin U. **Contact**: <eltcalendar.com/events/details/4528>

8-10 Dec 09—56th TEFLIN International Conference: *Responding to Global Challenges through Quality English Language Teaching*, Malang, East-Java, Indonesia. **Contact**: <teflin.humaniora-uinmalang.com>

8-11 Dec 09—Globalization and Localization in Computer-Assisted Language Learning (GLoCALL) Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Plenary speakers will be: Carla Meskill (USA), Lance Knowles (DynEd International), Thomas Robb (Kyoto Sangyo U.), and Thanomporn Laohajaratsang (Thailand). **Contact**: <glocall.org>

19 Feb 10—Fourth International Wireless Ready Symposium: *Digital Asia—Language, Technology, and Community*, Nagoya U. of Commerce and Business. Keynote speakers will be Hayo Reinders and Insung Jung. **Contact**: <wirelessready.nucba.ac.jp>

27-28 Feb 10—Sixth CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching: *One World—World Englishes*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Plenary speakers will be Andy Kirkpatrick (Hong Kong Inst. of Ed.) and Joan Kang Shin (U. of Maryland). **Contact**: <camtesol.org/2010conference/2010_Conference.html>

12-14 Mar 10—TESOL Spain 33rd Annual Convention: *Building Bridges: New Competences in the EFL Classroom*, U. de Lleida. **Contact**: <tesol-spain.org/convention2010>

24-27 Mar 10—44th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit, Boston. **Contact**: <tesol.org/s_tesol/convention2010>

7-11 Apr 10—IATEFL Annual Conference and Exhibition, Harrogate, UK. Plenary speakers will be Tessa Woodward, Kieran Egan, Ema Ushioda, and Jan Blake. **Contact**: <iatefl.org/harrogate-2010/44th-annual-conference-harrogate-2010>

Calls for Papers or Posters

Deadline: 12 Nov 09 (for 7-10 July 10)—Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) International TESOL Conference, Gold Coast, Queensland. **Contact**: <astmanagement.com.au/acta10/Default.htm>

Deadline: 01 Dec 09 (for 25-29 May 10)—uCALL '10, Aegina, Greece. 25 participants will be chosen for this unique conference centering on the problems of adult language learners. An anthology will be published soon after the Symposium. **Contact**: <sites.google.com/site/ucallsymposium>

Deadline: 25 Dec 09 (for 5-7 May 10)—Third International ELT Conference: *Telling Tales Out Of School*, Famagusta, North Cyprus. Plenary speakers will be Leo van Lier, Tom Cobb, and Angi Malderez. **Contact**: <elt-emu.org/index.html>

Deadline: 30 Dec 09 (for 27-28 Nov 10)—2010 International Conference on Applied Linguistics (ICAL): *Diverse Languages for Diverse Audiences*, National Chiayi U., Taiwan. **Contact**: <sites.google.com/site/ical2010/Home>

Deadline: 15 Jan 10 (for 16-19 Jul 10)—18th International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning, Kobe U. Proposals for papers (20 min. presentation, 10 min. discussion) are welcome on topics such as L2 talk and text, developmental L2 pragmatics, pragmatics in language education, assessment, computer-mediated communication, and theory and methodology in pragmatics. **Contact**: <pragsig.org/pll/>

Deadline: 01 Feb 10 (for 29 May 10)—The Second Annual North East Asian Region (NEAR) Language Education Conference: *Learning and Teaching Languages in the North-East Asian Regional Context—Sharing and Applying*, U. of Niigata. **Contact:** <iuj.ac.jp/language/conference/near/>

Deadline: 28 Feb 10 (for 23-28 Aug 11)—16th World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA2011) *Harmony in Diversity: Language, Culture, Society*, Beijing. **Contact**: <aila2011.org/en/newsdetails.asp?icntno=92662>

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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
- 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

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For more information please consult our website <jalt.org>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT Central Office.

JALT Central Office

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JALT 2009 Presentations Supported by Oxford

Saturday, Nov 21st

11.10 - 12.10
Grant Trew
Natural Language Usage: A key element for TOEIC®

13.05-14.05
Angela Buckingham
Renewing Students' Passports to Survival English

13.05-14.05
David Kluge
Your First Choice is a Smart Choice

16.00-17.00
Andy Boon
Motivating Students and Making Headway in our Classes

Sunday, Nov 22nd

11.10-12.40
Grant Trew
*Featured Speaker Workshop
Business English and TOEIC: Similar goals, similar methodologies*

11.10-12.40
Angela Buckingham
*Featured Speaker Workshop
Building Students' Confidence through Simple, Step-by-step Activities*

13.05-14.05
Grant Trew
Practical business English for low-level learners

15.10-16-50
The Oxford Teacher's Forum: Debate with the Experts
Grant Trew, Angela Buckingham, Junko Yamanaka, Joseph Shaules, Roger Barnard

16.35-17.35
Raymond Wong & Robert Higgins
Getting University Students Lecture Ready!

Monday, Nov 23rd

9.20-10.20
Erik Gundersen
Creating Communicatively Competent Speakers

11.40-12.40
Angela Buckingham
Tried and Tested: Reaching Low-Level Learners

11.40-12.40
Carolyn Graham
The Creative Classroom: Jazz Chants, Music & Poetry

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**Friday, 18.00-20.00
Dai Hall Foyer, 3F**
JALT 2009 Welcome Reception
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**Sunday, 17.30-18.30
Dai Hall Foyer, 3F**
Book Signing with James P. Lantolf
(JALT plenary speaker)
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Oxford University Press Display at EME in JALT 2008

Oxford Featured Speakers

Angela Buckingham
Co-Author, *Passport 2e*

PASSPORT 1 — New Edition
PASSPORT 2

Grant Trew
Series Advisor, *Business Venture 3e*

BUSINESS VENTURE — New Edition
BUSINESS VENTURE 2

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