

The Language Teacher

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JALT2005 Already?!

Our milestone 30th conference has come and gone. We hope that you came away from this year's event invigorated, refreshed, and optimistic about your language teaching.

Starting with this December issue of *TLT*, we are running a monthly Conference Column to keep you better informed about the 2005 JALT conference. With so much going on at our conferences, it is often difficult to keep track of what is happening, or to participate in what is of personal interest. To keep you updated about the many events on offer at our next JALT conference, this column will highlight different aspects so that you may benefit more from the events. The happier you are, the more satisfied we (as conference volunteers) are.

So when is the conference next year? Unfortunately, there are no *Happy Mondays* in November. With an uncooperative calendar and our desire to bring you a full 3-day event, JALT2005 will be held on October 7-10.

For the 31st annual conference we will be returning to *Granship: Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center* in Shizuoka City. Under the watchful eye of Mt. Fuji we look forward to welcoming you all to another fantastic event. The theme for JALT2005 is *Sharing Our Stories*, and we are very fortunate to have two well-respected and renowned educators as our conference co-chairs: Marc Helgesen and Rob Waring. Proposals for presentations are now being accepted and we hope that you feel inclined to share your knowledge, skills, and insights with other educators at next year's conference.

Please read through the *JALT2005 Call for Papers* included with this issue of *TLT*, or visit the conference website at conferences.jalt.org/2005/.

We look forward to *Sharing Our Stories* with you at JALT2005.

Andrew Zitzmann, JALT Director of Program <programs@jalt.org>

Foreword

Special Issue: 4 Skills

Teachers continuously make decisions on which of the 4 skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) to emphasize when designing course and lesson content. These judgments require a thorough investigation of the multifaceted nature of our students and their changing language learning requirements. It is the aim of this special issue to present ways the 4 skills can be utilized through numerous classroom-based examples, current classroom research, integrated skill assessment, and 4 skills textbook design.



Roger Nunn, Darren Lingley, and **Marcus Otłowski** start us off with their multi-skills approach to curriculum design. **Janet Higgins** illustrates the creative use of narratives in enhancing an integrated approach in Japanese high schools. Then **Mark Cunningham** balances multi-skills and sustained content for

US-bound Japanese students.

Classroom research by **Atsushi Asai** explores the development and effects of reading materials for short lessons and **Jane Harland** describes various activities that incorporate reading strategies to encourage student confidence.

Cecilia Ikeguchi then shares her classroom research experience of integrated instruction and assessment, followed by **Judith Johnson's** experience designing and publishing multi-leveled textbooks suited to the special content needs of her students.

Also included in this issue are three My Share lessons. First, **Brad Deacon** illustrates the use of 4 skill mind mapping for class closure. **Andrew Boon** demonstrates the use of song lyrics to assist students' reading comprehension through monitoring thought processes. Finally, **Justine Ross** exhibits an effective use of popular music for improving motivation and language skills.

Additionally, in the book reviews column **Robert Taferner** examines listening and speaking materials used with 1st-year university students, while **James Cassidy** describes his experience utilizing a college writing textbook.

(Continued overleaf)

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I would like to thank the *TLT* editorial staff and Lyle Allison for their help in coordinating this issue, and the authors for their hard work and commitment to this project. In addition, I hope the JALT community finds this issue provocative and useful in providing further insight into improving our work in the classroom.

Robert Taferner
Special 4 Skills Issue Editor

教師は科目概要や授業内容を立案するとき、4技能（スピーキング、リスニング、リーディング、ライティング）のどの技能に重点を置くかということに常に考えています。その適切な判断のためには、広範囲にわたる生徒の特質や変化する言語学習条件を徹底的に調べなければなりません。今月号では、教室での多くの実践例、最新の授業研究、総合的技能の評価、そして4技能を使用させる教科書作成を通じて、4技能を活用する方法を特集します。

なお、本特集号を刊行するに当たって、TLTの編集スタッフとLyle Allison氏に大変お世話になりました。心より感謝を申し上げます。また、プロジェクトに参加して下さった寄稿者にも感謝の念を表します。JALT会員諸氏にとって、この特集号が授業改善の一助になることを願ってやみません。

Correction

The *Table of Contents* on page 1 of the *JALT Journal* fall issue (26:2) contained a small number of page numbering errors. Please use the index on the cover for reference purposes. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Malcolm Swanson
Pukeko Graphics

TLT / Job Information Centre Policy on Discrimination

The editors oppose discriminatory language, policies, and employment practices, in accordance with Japanese and international law. Exclusions or requirements concerning gender, age, race, religion, or country of origin should be avoided in announcements in the JIC Positions column, unless there are legal requirements or other compelling reasons for such discrimination, and these reasons are clearly explained in the job announcement. The editors reserve the right to edit ads for clarity, and to return ads for rewriting if they do not comply with this policy.

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Coordinated intensity: A multi-skills approach to curriculum design

Roger Nunn
Darren Lingley
Marcus Otlowski
Kochi University

要旨 言語能力という包括的概念を扱うためには全四技能の統合が不可欠である。四技能をまとめて教授するには、授業の目的、教材、評価といった点から調整をする必要がある。本稿では、カリキュラムの工夫によって、中級レベルの学習者が学業遂行能力を向上させることができる例として、大学レベルの新科目"EPIC"「国際英語コミュニケーションプログラム」を、集中性と技能統合という点を中心に紹介する。まず、EPICの鍵となる特徴について論じ、続いて異なる技能間で文法と語彙の再利用が漸進的に生じていくことを示す事例を2例詳述する。

A common feature of English language textbooks is the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, but in Japanese universities, courses often seem to focus more on individual skills. Similarly, there seems to have been a hidden curriculum assumption that native teachers will normally focus on spoken language only. Although it may sometimes be convenient to separate skills for curriculum design, language testing, and instructional purposes, language abilities are not independent of each other and real life language use often requires a combination of skills. Weir (1990) suggests that “on the grounds of authenticity, or approximations to it, integrated tasks demand consideration” (p. 84). It is not uncommon to be involved in spoken interaction at the same time as reading

and note taking, hence requiring a combination of all four skills used simultaneously, such as when, for example, people are comparing travel brochures in order to select a holiday.

Clearly more could be done to teach the four skills as an integrated set contributing to a more inclusive notion of overall language competence. Teaching the language skills independently makes it difficult to coordinate across skills in terms of content aims, and does not sufficiently allow for the much needed progressive recycling of grammar and vocabulary at different times in different courses. We saw this, and the accompanying need for a greater degree of intensity in language study at our university, as a rationale for implementing a new programme to meet such needs. Along with these essential features of skills integration and intensity, the new EPIC programme (English Programme for International Communication) also sought to remedy what we perceived to be poor coordination between classes for level, content, materials, and assessment.

Programme Description & Organization

EPIC was designed as a six-course “package programme” run over one semester. Limited to 24 motivated language learners, it requires a strong commitment from students in that they are expected to devote a full one-quarter of their first semester timetable to an intensive

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intermediate level programme focusing on core micro-linguistic ability (grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary), language skills (reading, writing and spoken language), and applied activities and projects (cross-cultural studies and media studies). Because EPIC is taught in English by three native speaker teachers with a great deal of emphasis placed on listening in all courses, a course specifically geared toward listening skills was not included. However, the Cross-cultural Studies course does include a full five-class unit on assisting students with lecture listening skills.

The course was designed to meet the needs of upper-intermediate students who had demonstrated ability and motivation to learn English as first-year students in general education. Among our group of students in the inaugural EPIC programme were students who had grown up abroad, students who had spent a year of high school in an English speaking country, students who had attended international schools here in Japan, and others who had graduated from special English courses in their Japanese high schools (two of which were later designated as “Super English Language High Schools”). Until this year, these students would not have had a multi-skill intensive programme to suit their needs and would have been placed in classes with students with poor ability and/or low motivation to learn English.

It should be noted, however, that even a group of upper-intermediate level students with strong motivation has specific language needs that are best addressed with an integrated skills approach fortified with an acceptable level of intensity. In fact, the idea of recycling language cannot occur without a reasonable degree of intensity. While six classes per week might not be regarded as intensive in an international context, it was considered a substantial improvement on

the standard twice-weekly classes taught in our university. Though all students enrolled in EPIC are reasonably comfortable and successful oral communicators, certain areas were perceived to be lacking. One example was incorrect (and very often omitted) article usage, especially in oral production. This can easily pass unnoticed when spoken communication is the focus, because articles rarely carry prominent tonic stress. Language-focused exercises aimed at proper article use in the core grammar unit were later targeted for revision in the reading, writing, and spoken English units by each of the EPIC teachers in varying course contexts. Such progressive recycling and revision of targeted weaknesses could only be addressed with “coordinated intensity.”

The six courses that make up EPIC can be divided in two parts: four core classes focusing on skills, and two applied classes which attempt to integrate skills in a more sophisticated manner. Each of these 15-class courses is then broken down into three five-class units. Courses can be team-taught in the sense that, in one teacher’s time slot, units from three different courses can be covered according to specializations. Of the 18 five-class units students receive, the three teachers are responsible for six units each.

Course description

Core Courses

- *English Core* (micro-linguistic ability: vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.)
- *Spoken English* (conversation, debate, and speech making)
- *Project Writing* (genre study, academic and journal writing, simple research reports)
- *Reading* (extensive and intensive reading)

Table 1. Course schedule

Course	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Spoken English	Small Group	Presentation	Debate
English Core	Grammar	Vocabulary	Grammar
Reading	Critical Reading I	Intensive Reading	Critical Reading II
Project Writing	Genre Writing	Journal Writing	Academic Writing
Media Studies	Sitcom Humour	Internet News	Current events
Cross-cultural Studies	Intro. Lectures	Case Studies	Culture in Film

Applied Courses

- *Media Study* (analysing video and Internet news reports, studying films)
- *Cross-cultural studies* (lectures, applied activities in comp. culture and I.C. comm.)

Progressive Recycling: Modality

If we consider language in terms of discourse, a multi-skills curriculum allows recycling of the same language area in different contexts using different text genres and skills. All of these are then contributing to a more unitary notion of competence. Let us consider “modality” as an example. In terms of discourse, “modality” can be the means of expressing an attitude about an event. This goes beyond the use of modal verbs such as “may” or “might”, which are revised in an early grammar unit. In a spoken exercise in our course, a spoken debate between drivers about the cause of a traffic accident highlights the function of making judgments about past events, possibly using expressions with a modal verb and past infinitive, such as “he should have stopped completely at the stop sign before moving into the intersection.” A reading text about, for example, Scott’s failure to beat Amundsen to the South Pole, recycles this function in sentences such as “Scott might have left sooner, but he didn’t know Amundsen was trying to get there first.” The function of modality is then further developed using both spoken and written news reports in a mini-research project for the applied Media Studies course. Fowler (1986) defines modality as “the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth of the propositions they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to” (pp. 131-2). Our media project uses this notion to compare news reports in terms of modality with a view to finding out what different reporters say they know about the truth of their story, in utterances such as “*News is coming in suggesting that up to 3,000 people may have been killed...*” This more sophisticated use of modality, one in which students are encouraged to assess the truth or accuracy of media reports based on how factuality is manipulated by the writer or presenter, is best introduced only after the foundations have been laid, exploiting a variety of skills.

Integrating the Skills: Specialized Vocabulary Building

Vocabulary is another micro-linguistic skill in need of a more integrated recycling approach in different skills contexts. While the EPIC programme does not focus on English for Academic Purposes, many of the students enrolled in the course are interested in writing their undergraduate theses in English, so academic vocabulary was viewed as an important micro-skill to enhance. A language-focused exercise in a Core vocabulary unit drew upon Coxhead’s (1998) list of frequently used academic words to help students determine verbs and reporting phrases that authors use for describing others’ findings. In a reading exercise (the meaning-focused input stage), students were each asked to select a different piece of academic writing in the field of comparative culture/inter-cultural communication/language teaching for which they were asked to prepare a brief written abstract (meaning-focused output). Back issues of *The Language Teacher* were used because of its focus on these fields and because the average length of articles is manageable for students. This output stage also provides an opportunity for students to become more familiar with the issue of plagiarism and the academic writing unit is supplemented by an activity suggested by MacGregor (2002), which also addresses ways to help students summarize another writer’s ideas. An additional meaning-focused output oral activity required students to do a class survey to gather information from each other about what various authors in the field have written about. These integrated recycling methods of vocabulary learning through reading, writing, and speaking activities replicate Nation’s (2001) suggestions for successful academic vocabulary learning and help the learner to become more familiar with a specialized vocabulary using all four skills.

While setting up an integrated multi-skills intensive course requires financial, administrative, and academic commitment, our experience in teaching the EPIC course supports the view that serious consideration given to intensity and skills integration leads to improved academic performance. Students who gather information for an assignment from a variety of spoken and written sources and activities not only learn to structure their own learning but also make rapid progress in both spoken and written production skills.

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Exploiting narrative text from an integrated skills perspective

Janet M.D. Higgins

Okinawa University

ナラティブ(語り・物語)は、力強いスピーチ形式であり、経験を分かち合い、文化価値を教える方法であるばかりではなく、日常会話のいたるところにあるものでもある。教育の観点からみると、ナラティブは、教室で数々のスキルを統合するためのすばらしい手段である。本論では、学校で使用されている教科書の中のナラティブがいかに様々なスキルに基づいた活動に利用することができるのかを示す。

An Example from the Japanese Junior High School Classroom

This paper will illustrate, through the use of a third year junior high school course book text, how a variety of language skills can be integrated in a series of lessons. The article also serves to demonstrate how textbook material can be used creatively and efficiently.

The text that was chosen is a narrative—a short story about a frog and a toad, entitled *The Letter*. It deals with the issues of friendship and empathy. The story is approximately 460 words long, with eight charming illustrations which clearly show key points of the story. It contains the text of a short informal letter to a friend. Dialogue makes up most of the text. The story is easily broken down into a number of short scenes.

The Value of Narrative

Stories are powerful and magical speech forms: they form part of our cultural heritages; they are a means of transmitting and teaching cultural values; they are a means of sharing and learning from our experiences; they are channels for catharsis; and they are ways in which we can let our creativity and imagination explode. Stories are an integral component of everyday conversational exchanges. Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective, narratives are excellent vehicles for developing a range of language skills, and are well suited to an integrated skills approach.

Core Skills and Strategies

1. Prediction (reading/listening skills)

“The ability to predict what the writer is likely to say next is both an aid to understanding and a sign of it” (Nutall, 1982, p.120). When we predict what will happen next in a story, we demonstrate our understanding of what we have heard or read of the story so far—its developing plot and the nature of its characters. Practising predicting is important for children because it demands that they really pay attention to textual meaning as they read or listen, rather than staying at word or phrase level. Predicting requires that the logical relationships within the text are identified and understood.

When predicting, attitudes towards the story elements and characters are revealed. Thus personal

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opinions are expressed. It is important for children to be given the opportunity to do this, not only to express their own opinions, but also to share these with others. As they listen to the opinions of others, they get a glimpse of other thought processes. Such glimpses can help to enrich their own.

Predicting develops creativity since, within the constraints of the story, there is a great deal of scope for leaps of the imagination. Teachers need to be encouraging and sensitive to such leaps. These can later form the bases for parallel or divergent stories that the learners may write or tell. Encouraging creativity, as young learners wrestle with a new language, indirectly sends the message that the language itself is not the goal; rather that language is the tool through which they express, share, and create new ideas.

In using global skills to predict at a discourse level, individuals are of course constantly predicting and anticipating at word and phrase level. Predictions are made about the end of a phrase from its structure, a chosen word from its range of collocations, a phrase from the formulaic expression with which it begins, for instance. These are strategies that learners need to rehearse and master. The repetitive structure of many stories provides ample opportunities for this.

In this story, the narrative can be broken up into at least six parts or scenes:

- 1) the first picture used alone to raise interest and to encourage general prediction of the overall theme of the story,
- 2) establishing Toad's problem and setting up Frog's response,
- 3) Frog writing the letter to Toad and sending it off with his friend Snail,
- 4) Frog waiting with Toad and anticipating the arrival of the letter,
- 5) Frog telling Toad he has sent the letter and recounting the contents,
- 6) the letter finally arriving and Toad being pleased to receive it.

Each part is dealt with separately. As there will be a variety of skills work for each part, there is no need to cover more than one part per lesson.

At the end of each scene, after listening to and reading the story, the students are encouraged to predict the next part. The following will illustrate this (These illustrative sections are written in an instructional style).

First the context of the story is established (pre-listening/pre-reading phase). This can be through

initial talk about friendship (Do you have any special friends?), being sad for some reason, helping a friend who was sad (Has a friend of yours been sad for any reason? Did you help your friend? What did you do?), and so forth. Then, using the first picture of the story (in a size large enough to be seen from the front, or using multiple small copies, etc.) elicit as much information and as many ideas about the picture as possible from the learners (Where is Toad? What is he doing? How does he feel? Why? What is he thinking about?). Ask them to look carefully at the details of the picture. Encourage them to explore various ideas and be creative. This is the first exercise in prediction. Here they will be predicting the whole story to follow (What do you think is going to happen in this story?). This is the way we prepare for prediction by helping students to look carefully, notice, and then create meaning out of what they find. Students may work in small groups (people sitting next to them and behind them) or with a partner to generate ideas. Do not tell the students anything about the rest of the story at this stage. Motivation is generated as they wait to see who predicted the actual story. As you want them to respond to challenges throughout the story, you do not want them to expect an answer from you.

During this stage pick out interesting words, phrases, and keywords elicited from the students or supply them when they need them. This is the preparation for the text lexis. Write the key lexis in the vocabulary section of the board.

At the end of each part, students explore what they have heard and read as they make, justify and share their predictions.

2. Speaking skills

There is ample opportunity to tackle many speaking skills in a narrative containing plenty of dialogue, as we switch from the listening and reading phases to the listening and speaking ones. Listening is the matched pair of speaking. As students listen, help raise their awareness—or help them to "notice"—by pointing out linguistic features. When speaking, they practise these points. Intonation work is done to distinguish questions from statements and different kinds of statements from each other and to show emotion. Phrase and sentence stress express contrast, and show emotion and mood. Voice quality reveals emotion and character. Since dialogue is being worked on, the focus is on conversation. The students will, therefore, be exposed to such conversational strategies as turn taking. They will meet formulaic expressions and conversational gambits. As work continues on dialogue and the

pure narrative sections, work can be done on all these aspects. An example of this can be seen in the chosen story.

The following box contains the first few paragraphs of the story. These constitute the second of the narrative stages or scenes identified in the previous section.

Toad was sitting on his front porch.
 Frog came along and said, "What is the matter, Toad? You are looking sad."
 "Yes," said Toad. "This is my sad time of day. Every day at this time, I wait for the mail. It always makes me very unhappy."
 "Why is that?" asked Frog.
 "Because I never get any mail," said Toad.
 "Not ever?" asked Frog.
 "No, never," said Toad. "No one has ever sent me a letter. Every day the mailbox is empty. So this is a sad time for me."
 Frog and Toad sat on the porch together. They both felt sad.
 Then Frog said, "I have to go home now, Toad. There is something I must do."

Read the text slowly and with appropriate emotion in the voice. Point to the picture to link the sounds with the visual. Make the dialogue clearly dialogue. Give Toad his "voice." Read several times asking students to listen to the way Toad speaks (How does he feel? How can you tell?). Do the same for Frog and elicit how they can tell he feels sympathy for Toad. The students then look at their text and read along silently, or begin to shadow. Do this several times.

Focus on the dialogue, making sure to indicate the stressed words, show the reductions and assimilations of sounds, and the changes of pitch. Demonstrate how to make the voices sound sad and so forth. Ask the students to choose a voice for their toad and their frog. Get them to practise saying the dialogue out loud. Practise for as long as is necessary without boring them. Then move to pair work. They should work with a partner who checks pronunciation and emotion and gives advice. Monitor the activity. As this is the first time the students are speaking dialogue, it is important to spend quite a lot of time establishing the correct procedure and working hard on phonology. Take the time to work on difficult sounds if they arise. Focussed training at this stage will pay off. This should be a fun activity with students trying out various voices. It is important that they are encouraged to experiment, exaggerate and to be "over the top." This is drama!

An optional stage is for the partners to then speak together, with one reading the actual dialogue and the other reading the "said Toad" parts. Make sure that they read the latter parts with the correct lower pitch with falling intonation, and more quietly than the dialogue. Monitor this. Optionally, several pairs can be put together to act out the dialogue. Or several pairs can be invited to perform for the whole class.

Finally, read the whole section again with all the students joining in with the dialogue parts. Ensure they use their Toad and Frog "voices."

These speaking activities continue for each part of the story.

As expansion activities, the students can act out the parts as mini-dramas, using an actual letter (see point 3 below) in parts 3 and 6.

Further expansion activities include:

- students improvising their own simple dialogues
- groups performing the story as a short drama

3. Writing skills/Reading skills

This story is a perfect vehicle for introducing the format and writing style of the short informal letter. The story action revolves around the wishing for, writing of, waiting for, and receiving of a letter. And the narrative contains a model letter content. We can capitalise on this in several ways:

- Students predict what Frog will write and with the teacher's help write this out following a model format provided by the teacher (board, worksheet).
- Students write out Frog's actual letter to Toad using the correct format, make an envelope and "post" it in the classroom. These letters can then be used in drama reenactments of scenes from the story.
- With the teacher, students can write Toad's response to Frog's letter.
- As an expansion activity, students write their own message to Toad in the correct format and style and "post it."
- As an expansion activity, students write a letter to a friend, writing simple positive things.

Once students are writing their own letters, they can be used for further reading practice. Students exchange letters or "post" them to their classmates. Students then write responses and "post" these. These are authentic communicative activities, demonstrating that English is a tool for social interchange.

4. Discussion skills

At this level, extensive discussion in English cannot be expected, but students need to be able to discuss their reactions to the story, characters, and plot and to identify the moral and main theme of the story. Some form of discussion is needed after the final part is worked on to pull the whole story together and to prepare for further extension activities. If students do this mainly in L1, this can be augmented by the teacher introducing simple phrases in English for expressing an opinion or giving a reason or justification (*I think...; Toad is sad because...*).

5. Vocabulary development

As the students work with the story they recycle the key words in their written and spoken forms. As they predict and improvise they will be asking for, and then using and reusing related lexical items. As they work with partners they will be peer-teaching and peer-learning new vocabulary.

Teacher Preparation

To work with a narrative text in the way suggested here, the teacher needs

- to be fully acquainted with the story, its basic plot, character elements, key dramatic points, and key vocabulary. It may be necessary to change some words to make the story more appropriate to the level or the culture of the students.
- to have thoroughly prepared reading the story out loud; using the voice to show the sadness of the toad and the sympathy from the frog, the excitement of the frog as it has its idea, the suspense as it waits for the letter to arrive, the frustration when it doesn't, and the urgency to get the toad to wait longer. The characters should have well-defined voices. The drama needs emphasis at each story break when prediction takes place. There needs to be the hint of mystery.
- to have prepared the basic visuals needed: pictures or stuffed toys for the toad, frog, snail and a real, or picture of a, letter in an envelope; and key vocabulary flashcards, though these can gradually be built up after each activity once you know what the students need.
- to have prepared any additional materials for the expansion activities: letter worksheets, etc.

Summary

Narratives are powerful forms of discourse which

we experience every day of our lives as tellers and audience. They are excellent vehicles for introducing, practising, and developing a range of language skills in the classroom. They are, furthermore, excellent means by which skills work can be integrated in a natural way.

A summary of the skills and expansion activities involved in the integrated work described above are featured in the following box.

Summary of skills, strategies, and expansion activities

Core skills:

- Reading/listening skills: predicting what comes next in a narrative; abstracting the core point or moral of the story; identifying characters' feelings and emotions.
- Reading/writing skills: recognising and using the format of a short story; recognising and using the format for representing dialogue in a story; recognising and using the format of a very short informal letter; recognising and selecting informal writing style for writing to a friend.
- Speaking skills: using correct stress, pitch changes, sound reductions, and assimilations; using the voice to convey emotion; using the voice to highlight the dramatic high points of the story; controlled reading aloud while acting out the text as a drama; expressing and sharing simple opinions; discussing story development.
- Conversational strategies: basics of turn taking, feedback mechanisms.
- Vocabulary: lexical sets related to the story theme; collocations; formulaic expressions; typical ways we express sympathy and empathy.

Expansion activities:

- Writing activities: building a short/summary narrative using word or picture clues; writing a parallel narrative about humans.
- Speaking/listening activities: acting out the text as a short drama; improvising dialogue in a short drama.
- Reading activities: reading classmates' short letters; reading classmates' parallel short narratives.

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Integrating the four skills with tasks and content in EAP

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In many EAP settings, Content-Based Instruction (CBI) uses authentic materials to help students acquire language skills needed to succeed in English-medium university classes while familiarizing them with academic work and the culture of the university. For the teacher, the question of whether content or task is more effective as an organizing principle in EAP is hard to avoid and affects curriculum planning, materials selection, and student motivation. Carson, Taylor, and Fredella (1997) and others see the role of EAP teachers as first identifying tasks required in academic work and then providing content that engages students in the language of those tasks. Thus, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which focuses on frequent assumptions in EAP programs that

teachers can promote and students understand, also generates and maintains interest in well-selected and well-presented content.

The EAP student's "real world" tasks derive from those of the university content class looming only a few semesters away. Successful students must be able to follow syllabi and understand the required readings and lectures, write on research or in exams, and take part in spoken interaction in the form of discussions, classroom questions, or professors' office hours. Giving students practice with the language they need to do this is the "aim" of tasks in EAP; their "outcome" may simulate real-world academic tasks, but "...it is the cognitive and linguistic processes that matter" (Ellis, 2003, p. 8).

Authentic materials are generally thought to be those designed for native speakers and not specifically for language learners. How clear and how important is this distinction if tasks determine content selection? Does it matter if learners view their reading as authentic as long as it keeps them engaged and they see the tasks as helping them acquire the language they need? Why not "concentrate instead on the use and interpretation of texts, which alone can make them authentic"? (Taylor, 1994).

Considerations in choosing content area textbooks include readability, age-appropriateness, and teachers' familiarity and degree of comfort with the area (Brown, 2004). Assigning shorter readings for language

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learning in depth can also mean using only part of a textbook—a problem when textbooks are expensive and teachers expect students to mark or write in them while studying.

History might seem at first glance to be a good example of content that, while authentic, is unlikely to engage learners, a reminder to students of boring required classes that merely presented irrelevant and outdated information. History writing, however, with its sequences and interrelationships of ideas and events and a vocabulary that attempts to describe the whole of human experience, can be a rich source of language.

Four Skills Workout: The Erie Canal

For an intermediate (400–450 TOEFL range) integrated skills EAP class for Japanese students preparing to take American university classes, a low-intermediate level reading text with a sustained theme or story line, recycled vocabulary, and exercises was used for developing vocabulary and structures, and for its repeated, easy-to-use format. After experimenting with a “cultural reader” with loosely associated readings, *American Roots* (Blanchard and Root, 2001) was settled on as a core text, together with a composition book and a grammar book for reference and self-study.

American Roots uses “adapted” authentic readings, but here the question of whether adapting and selecting material for younger native speakers compromises authenticity presents itself again. Accepting an expanded view of authentic texts, a purpose-made ESL text of “inauthentic” readings can still be exploited for more integration of skills, and is indeed a good choice for learners who would be overwhelmed by a more demanding text.

While unable to offer the impressive color graphics, supplementary materials, and web connections of hard-cover US secondary school textbooks (an alternative which was rejected due to cost), *American Roots* does an excellent job of reproducing the layout of such a text in black and white, with introductory paragraphs, timelines, map activities, sidebars, and writing and discussion questions. “History-maker” mini-biographies are perfect for sequencing activities.

Exercises were generally assigned from *American Roots* for self-study and little class time was spent on them. Readings were “worked up” by the teacher. The following is one set of activities worked up from a short (four-paragraph) reading on the opening of the Erie Canal in New York State in 1825.

Pre-Reading Task

In general, more pre-reading was done in terms of new vocabulary, structures, and content-specific terms. Tasks were often begun with spelling dictations of new vocabulary, brief definitions, and assistance with idioms. Then students would work in pairs, asking each other sets of about ten questions, using vocabulary from the reading, and taking notes as they answered. The instructor moved about the room monitoring and helping when needed. Students were free to get up and examine any of the several large wall maps in the classroom. Dictionary use was allowed at this point. Typical questions included the following:

- Can you name some famous canals? What do they link or join?
- What has cut travel time to Tokyo? How much did it cut travel time?
- What are some businesses that have boomed in Japan recently?

First Reading

When pairs had practiced both asking and answering questions, they shared their notes and wrote complete answers in groups. They were then asked to survey the reading, looking at illustrations, titles, and headings, and reflect on the reading. They then read the passage. Students were then instructed to close their books. The highlighted vocabulary from the questions was written on a whiteboard in the sequence it occurred in the reading and then students were tasked to recite the story to their partners.

Get up on your feet: Meaningful tasks for Kinesthetic Learners

Students were then asked to find places mentioned in the reading on wall maps in the classroom. Usually, one student acted as a “reader,” reading and often spelling names for group members. Groups were then asked to go to large erasable wall maps in another part of the classroom and label geographical and political features, again with just one student acting as a reader. Students then reread the passage and scanned it for geographical terms.

It is important to get students used to group routines in which they rotate roles as questioners, listeners, confirmer, note-taker, and so on. Rotating roles while moving through a repertoire of class tasks addresses different learning styles and helps motivation.

Thinking more about the reading and some work on form

Students were often asked to read several statements for partners and note their answers. For each question, a partner was asked to decide about events in the reading in relation to the canal's opening. Language practice results when a partner answers by repeating the first clause together with the second:

- Travel from the East and West was very slow....BEFORE THE CANAL OPENED.
- New York City benefited from the increase in trade....AFTER THE CANAL OPENED.

These interactions ensured that one person was reading, thinking about the answer, and recording and confirming a partner's response. At the end of the activity, students re-read the passage to confirm their ideas.

Recycling through group work

Next, groups went to whiteboards (there are several around the classroom). Under columns labeled "before" and "after," they listed as many events or trends related to the Erie Canal as they could remember. They could consult wall maps, but not their texts. After five minutes, groups could circulate and check each others' work. Students were then asked to reread the passage and confirm their lists.

Write about it

Groups were then asked to brainstorm on the topic of "engineering wonders" that link parts of Japan and then individually write timed paragraphs on the topic. For error correction, students first highlighted anything they felt might be errors in their own writing, without making corrections. They were then asked to discuss their paragraphs with a partner and make repairs. This got students used to writing with more fluency and identifying errors in a self-editing step of the writing process.

Follow-up

Further activities for recycling could include students doing mini-poster sessions with a drawing of their "engineering wonder," practice reading tests, timed readings, or mini-lectures (see Nunn, 2004) for note-taking practice, or dictogloss exercises to focus further attention on grammatical features encountered in the reading. All these "pedagogical" tasks combine or alternate the four skills in some way. Students are usually given multiple readings of the same

text at different points. The emphasis among skills reflects a fairly common set of priorities in EAP programs: Reading, listening, writing, and finally speaking, with perhaps writing moving up in priority for more advanced students.

Several classroom factors may affect skills integration: Instructional time to allow using all the skills in a series of tasks was crucial—something that may be a luxury in some programs. This class met for fifteen hours per week, in blocked daily sessions. More research needs to be done on the amount and structure of instructional time.

Classroom space and layout, and having support equipment always on hand, are important. Also, two things are important in these classes: The instructor sits down and the students get up. Students came to associate their instructor standing with specific places and activities in the classroom, such as eliciting the results of task completion, outlining or giving mini-lectures, timing activities, or taking care of class business. For other activities, the instructor moved around, helping individual students with writing, informally monitoring groups working on tasks, and in particular checking to see if students were having problems with tasks the researcher had designed. This kind of unobtrusive monitoring is particularly important: Joining a group at the group's physical level also allows learners to ask questions in the stress-reduced environment of a supportive group. An instructor can "collect" and later answer such questions for the entire class.

One final note: When trying tasks for the first time, what seems like the most brilliantly designed tasks can be communicative flops, with procedures too complicated, language resources inappropriate, or goals unclear. Keep on experimenting. You will work out an approach to task planning and teaching that works for you.

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Advert: Thomson

Quick reading and material preparation

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本研究は、速読練習の効果について検証する。日本人大学生の一般的な読解スタイルは、今もなお文法訳読方式である。しかし、このような慎重な解釈方法では、現代の情報社会における高速読解の要求に対応することは難しい。本研究では、一年間毎週短い読解タスクを課した。結果として、文章の難易度を学生のレベルに合わせて、初級レベルの大学1年生は一分間に133語の速さで英語の文章を正確に読むことができるようになった。特に、下位レベルの学生は、上位レベルの学生よりも読解力を向上させた。このことから、学生のレベルに応じて読解授業に使われる文章の難易度を調整することが大切であることを再確認することができた。

weblink: www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2004/12/asai

This short article reports on a practical study on the development and effects of short reading lessons. It describes the importance of adjusting the difficulty level of passages to the proficiency level of learners.

Background

Reading has been the most emphasized English language skill in the subject area in the Japanese education system: As a matter of fact, 44% of freshmen in a four-year university responded that reading was the strongest of their four basic language skills. Japanese college students learn English as a foreign language for at least six years before entering college. However, their performance on the whole is not satisfactory. Many Japanese learners of English tend to read a passage over

and over again in order to interpret the content within the Japanese grammatical system while depending on an English-Japanese dictionary. If a second language (L2) reader is able to correct such problems as regressive reading, word-for-word reading, and low concentration, they can increase their rate of reading and level of comprehension by 20% (Yoshida, 2001). EFL learners are indeed expected to develop skills for reading quickly in this information age.

Method

The participants in this study were 177 freshmen learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at a four-year college in Japan. An experimental group of 107 worked on nine-minute reading lessons in every class for one academic year. A control group of 70 received the traditional grammar-translation reading lessons with different materials in the same lesson time period. The standard length of a passage, 300 words in the first semester and 400 in the second semester, was based on the assumption that a reading rate of 60 to 80 words per minute (wpm) is necessary for EFL readers to graduate high school (Shiozawa, 1978). The 2nd-stage of the Eiken (STEP) 2nd grade examination requires a reading rate of 90 to 133 wpm. Hirai (1999) reported that English majors could read an English passage at a rate of about 140 wpm. Anderson (2003) defines a fluent reader as one who can read at a rate of 200 wpm. In this study,

the experimental group was given instructions to read a whole passage sequentially within the first three minutes, or in other words at 100 wpm for a 300-word passage and at 133 wpm for a 400-word passage.

The next factor considered for material preparation was the difficulty level of the passages. The mean Flesch-Kincaid grade level (Flesch level, hereafter) for passages in the reading lessons was 2.0. This difficulty level is approximately equal to that of passages in the first section of a textbook for second-year Japanese junior high school students or in the Eiken 4th grade examination. The average Eiken level among the participants was 3rd to 4th grade.

Results and Discussion

The average score of on reading proficiency tests in these intensive reading lessons for all of the participants was about 60%. Their reading proficiency was measured at the beginning and the end of the year. The mean (standard deviations) of the pre-test for the experimental group and the reference group were 35.0 (19.8) and 46.7 (25.5), respectively. The Flesch level of the pre-test was 2.8, and that of the post-test was 3.1. After difficulty-level correction (Asai and Konishi, 2004), the mean (SDs) of the post-test for the experimental group and the reference group were 37.6 (22.6) and 38.3 (22.7), respectively. For detailed discussion, the participants were divided into three subgroups based on the scale of the pre-test scores. The resultant mean scores by subgroups are shown in Figure 1.

From a t-test, the lower-level subgroup in the experimental group showed a significant difference ($F[2,38]=6.90, p<.005$) between the two proficiency tests. The subgroup increased in proficiency. On the other hand, the upper-level subgroup in the reference group showed a significant decrease ($F[2,29]=2.84, p<.001$). This suggests that a passage slightly below the reader's level of proficiency is best for quick reading, even after the larger potential for development in lower-level learners is taken into account (Kern, 1989). The reliability and validity of the proficiency measurement were confirmed with the Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient and parallel tests for both pre-test and post-test. The large standard deviation was mainly due to the test being restricted to 12 minutes.

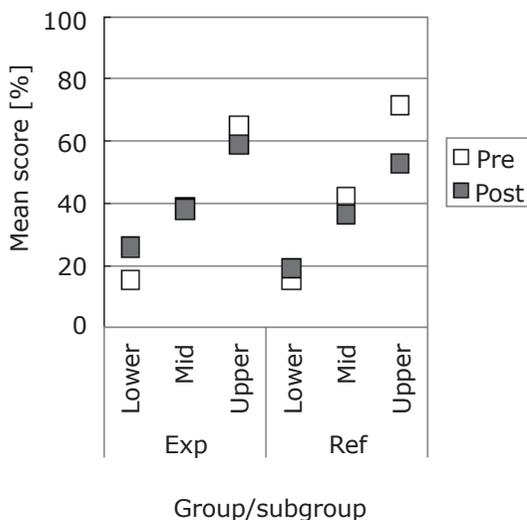
The result of a questionnaire about how and what they felt about the lessons showed that lower-level participants, or late developers, did not feel the passages and questions were more difficult than did their upper- and intermediate-level counterparts. Paired comparison analysis showed how difficult they thought the reading passages were. This was not seen as influencing improvement in the proficiency test scores. This suggests that students cannot accurately judge the level of difficulty of materials by themselves.

Reading quickly is a demanding skill. Many false beginners in college cannot maintain concentration for a full 90-minute class; however, they can work on short tasks. Some teachers try to organize their lessons by combining different styles of tasks. A short reading lesson is an appropriate choice. The Flesch level is an indicator by which we can quickly determine the level of difficulty of a passage. In foreign language learning, it has been said for a long time that materials should be set at a level of difficulty just a little higher level than the proficiency of the learner. This "i+1" theory should be modified into "i-1" for quick reading.

Conclusion

With quick reading lessons over a one-year period of time, Japanese college students at high-beginning level read English passages with a 2-point Flesch-Kincaid grade level at a rate of up to 133 wpm. As a result of proficiency-level analysis, the lower-level subgroup increased their comprehension, but the upper-level subgroup did not show such improvement. This shows the importance of adjusting the difficulty level of passages in reading lessons to the proficiency level of the learners. When a reading lesson is

Figure 1. Mean Scores



carefully designed in light of the level of difficulty, it can function effectively and efficiently in the EFL classroom today.

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Improving student confidence and ability in reading activities

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One major problem I soon recognised when I started teaching in Japan was that Japanese students have a strong desire to understand the chosen article or text one hundred percent. When faced with a word or phrase that they did not understand, many students would focus on that word or phrase. This would effectively act as a stumbling block, preventing further progress. The class soon deteriorated into a room full of students busily thumbing through dictionaries, or pushing buttons on an electronic dictionary.

The source of the problem appears to be an inherent need to fully understand the text. This problem could be due to a number of factors, or a combination of factors, for example, as a result of the students' experience of a translation based approach to

English whilst at school which, rather than aiming at understanding the whole picture, focused attention on each small detail in turn. Also, many Japanese tend to feel uncomfortable in unknown situations, as they have no experience or knowledge of how they are expected to react. I believe that this way of thinking is carried into the classroom and, once an unknown word or phrase appears, the student's safety blanket suddenly vanishes. The student is left desperately scrambling in search of something they are familiar with, and hence, safety. Unfortunately, in many cases the dictionary, whilst providing a safety net and preventing students falling into the depths of the great unknown, also provides many options for the students to choose from, so inevitably errors are made.

I decided my students should try to overcome this idea of having to fully understand everything if the class was going to progress smoothly. In order to do this I decided to get my students used to the idea of skimming for key data. Students were given a selection of articles starting with a level that they could easily comprehend and getting progressively more difficult, with the final article being above the students' level. An A4 sized worksheet of the table shown in Table 1 was also handed out:

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Table 1. Worksheet for confidence building reading exercise

	Who?	What?	Where?	When?	Other
Article 1					
Article 2					
Article 3					

Students were told to write a word or short phrase when completing the table. I went through the first article together with the students to give them an idea of what was required. The students quickly skimmed through the text and picked out the appropriate key words to complete the table. The answers were then checked by calling on individual students. Students were then asked to skim through the text again in search of keywords that gave important information, for example, the age of the person involved, which could be entered under the name in the “Who?” column. This second skimming for data resulted in some discussion as different students selected slightly different keywords—provided the keywords chosen were relevant, all given answers were accepted. Due to the level of the chosen article, this task was easily accomplished by all of the students. I wanted to boost confidence levels and enable the students to feel a sense of achievement before progressing on to articles of a higher level.

The second text was at a more suitable level and contained several words I thought would be unknown to the students. A time limit was set and the students were allowed to do the task individually, searching first for the main keywords, comparing answers in small groups, and then searching for other important keywords. A few students made individual errors, but within each group most of the keywords had been discovered. Some students were still worried about unknown vocabulary, although one more confident student had chosen an unknown word as being important to the story content. Obviously the students wanted to know the meaning of this “unknown” word. Not wanting to distract from the lesson at this stage by having all students searching for the word in dictionaries, I merely provided the Japanese translation. I could have chosen to explain that the unknown word was unimportant, but chose to give the translation because I did not want the students worrying about the word’s

meaning whilst working on the next article.

The third text was purposely chosen to be slightly above the students’ level. The same approach was used: an initial scan for key data before comparing answers in small groups. A representative from each group wrote one of the answers on the board. Some groups did not get all the main keywords, but the majority of keywords were found. Students skimmed through the article again and came up with a few more important keywords—several of these were unknown, though chosen for logical reasons, for example, they appeared in a headline. I did not worry about explaining the meanings of all unknown words, as I felt that the lesson objective of skimming through articles of various levels, which included unknown information and selecting keywords had been achieved. I made a point of informing my students not to worry about the final article, and telling them that it was, in fact, above their level, and that the class would be studying articles at a similar level to the second one—this produced a huge sigh of relief!

Whilst I did not expect my students to change overnight from wanting full understanding to feeling comfortable skimming through articles, I felt I had laid an important stepping stone and also made the students feel more confident about approaching reading tasks in English.

The students became more proficient at selecting keywords and began worrying less about achieving one hundred percent understanding. However I wanted to try and cut down on the amount of dictionary use in class, especially since students were using English-Japanese dictionaries. I introduced the “Baseball Rule”—“three strikes” method (Ellis, Helgesen, Browne, Gorsuch, & Schwab, 1996, p 74):

- The first time you see or hear a new word, skip it (just continue).

- The second time you see or hear that word, make a guess.
- The third time you see or hear that word, if you still aren't sure, look it up.

This was only partially successful, because it depended on students' honesty. Some students still had a tendency to dive for the dictionary. As a response to this, I started to produce vocabulary-matching exercises for each article. Initially these consisted of a list of words on the left hand side and a list of definitions on the right hand side. Students matched the words with the definitions they thought were suitable. The words were underlined in the text so students did not waste time hunting for them. Also, the definitions were carefully written to avoid using unknown vocabulary. The students read through the article for homework and then matched the words and definitions. The matching exercise was checked in class the following week and, in some cases, I would ask students why they had chosen the definition (for both correct and incorrect choices). Answers varied widely, from wild guesses to a more logical approach. Those students who explained the reasons for what, to them, appeared to be a logical choice of answer, helped other students realise there were many different approaches to choosing the definition. In some cases the student's logic was sound, although the chosen definition was incorrect. The article was then worked through paragraph by paragraph to explain grammatical or cultural points. The students still produced a few unknown words during this stage, in which case the sentence was usually reworded.

In conclusion, whilst some problems can be anticipated by the teacher, or discovered along the way, and appropriate activities to overcome or minimize such problems can be introduced in class, the teacher must be prepared for the unexpected. It is important to appreciate the fact that although some problems are widely encountered, different classes will present different problems and a variety of solutions must be used, each suitable to the class in question. It is important to take things a step at a time and introduce new approaches gradually, especially if the students are slightly older. The teacher must realise that it takes time for students to feel comfortable with new ideas, and the length of time required for this will vary from student to student.

This method of teaching students that sometimes skimming, rather than full

comprehension, is sufficient is of use for learners in a variety of fields. The ability to skim an article or passage is important whether students are studying English conversation, studying for the TOEIC test, or studying English for Special Purposes. It is important that students learn to recognize when it is necessary to understand the majority of an article, and when skimming and highlighting key words is sufficient. I believe that it will take time for students to modify their learning approach, and that in subsequent classes teachers play an important role in asking students whether the target is skimming or full comprehension, and pointing them in the right direction when they seem to be diverting from the chosen task.

Finally, perhaps the most important thing for the teacher to remember is that, like your students, you need to experiment and learn from your mistakes. Sticking to safe, well-tried approaches is easy to do, but the teacher and students are likely to become stale. It is essential not only to try out new ideas and activities, but also to know when to abandon them if they do not work out, or how to change them to suit a particular class. It is important to bear in mind the level of the students, avoid using complicated grammatical structures, and keep articles to a suitable length when writing or editing articles for use in class. It is very convenient to just photocopy an article and vocabulary exercises you have used with previous classes, but first you should ask yourself whether any revisions, for example, to improve the quality or to up-date information, are required. Writing or choosing articles suitable for your class inevitably means more preparation time is required from the teacher. However, in my experience, if the teacher makes the effort of tailoring the material to suit a given class, the students will make more of an effort in class.

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Jane Harland received her MA in Advanced Japanese Studies through Sheffield University, England. Her research interests include materials writing. She is also interested in *taiko*.

Advert: Seido

Assessment and integrated instruction

Integrated vs segregated skills instruction

What is skills integration in ESL instruction? What is the value of integrated skills over segregated skill instruction?

Language tests were traditionally designed to measure the four language skills separately. Given recent trends in language teaching toward more authentic communication in the learning process, teachers have turned to instruction that combines two or more skills. The goal of language learning is to provide maximum practice for language use in real life and to prepare students for communication outside the classroom. Integration of language skills takes place when communication practice occurs in the classroom, and when practice

with any one of the skills strengthens the other skills. Language testing and assessment therefore came to reflect these changes in instructional approaches.

Integrating instruction with assessment has been proposed as an alternative to separating the skills areas in the classroom. Those that argue for the teaching of two or more, or all the four skills simultaneously say that the merits outweigh the demerits. Several advantages of skills integration in the classroom have been proposed, and some of them will be mentioned here.

First, learners get a true picture of the richness and complexity of the language used for communication. Also, integration allows mutually supportive growth in all the main and subsidiary skills; at the same time, language becomes a real means of interaction, not just an object for learning. In a more practical sense, teachers can keep track of students' progress in multiple skills simultaneously (Oxford, 2001).

Teaching the different skills in an integrated setting has been done in various combinations. For instance, speaking has often been taught side by side with listening, and its subsidiary skills of pronunciation, accent, and the like. Similarly, reading and writing have often been integrated with vocabulary and grammar, and found to yield more effective results rather than learning vocabulary words separately. Still others suggest (Schmidt, 1993), a combination of listening and

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本論は、授業研究に統合インストラクションとコミュニケーションスキルの評価を取り入れることを目的とする。まず、統合を応用教授技術として定義する。次に、評価がいかに統合インストラクションの中で行われるのか、そして、行われるべきなのか、その概略を述べる。最後に、付随するスキルの評価のほかに、学習者の聴理解や言語産出に対するフィードバックのための評価活動を提示する。

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reading, particularly in the early stage of ESL development, reflecting the view that listening while reading in the target language enhances subsidiary pronunciation skills as well as increasing reading comprehension.

What then is the best combination for integrating language skills teaching in the classroom? Integrated skills instruction can be either partial or total integration (Scarcella, 1992). There is no best combination offered, but research in the past has suggested the strengths of two forms of integrated-skills instruction: theme-based instruction and task-based instruction (Oxford, 2001). The rationale for the theme-based integration is that students need to encounter classroom language in situations that heighten their motivation and engage their interest. The rationale for the task-based type of integration is that students should be prepared to encounter real-life communication situations by engaging in real-life language tasks inside the classroom.

Task-based vs. Theme-based Integration: An Overview

Content-based instruction
Integration in content-based instruction means the students learn content areas such as science, social studies and mathematics (Brinton, Snow, and Wesche, 1989) while engaging in activities that use specific language skills. Mohan (1986) first argued that content learning and language learning should be inter-related in such a way that language is used as the medium of learning, and the role of context in communication is given a high priority. The goal of content-based instruction is to use language skills effectively in various real-life settings for social and academic purposes, presupposing the integration of the four language skills and the subsidiary skills. Three general models of content-based language instruction have been identified by Scarcella and Oxford (1992): theme-based, adjunct, and sheltered. (For details, readers are referred to Scarcella and Oxford, 1992.)

The next question that comes to mind is: When should skills integration take place in content-based instruction? At what level of language proficiency should students be before integration with content-based instruction takes place? Collier (1989) recommends that although content-based language instruction is valuable at all levels of proficiency, integrated academic skills instruction should take place in the beginning of language learning. This will prepare students for the more demanding tasks ahead that build upon simple

tasks at the early stage of study. As the academic content of study becomes more complex, and with increased time spent on the subject, students progress in their language development as well. Based on the teacher's knowledge of student readiness, or what students can do at different stages of ESL proficiency (Ikeguchi, 1998), a range of classroom activities can be planned, from those involving basic interpersonal skills to those requiring highly complex academic skills (see appendix). Examples of favorite topics in the content area of social studies that can be used for language skills integration range from "Travel" at the beginning level to "International Marriages" at the advance level. In science, examples of topics that lend themselves well to integrated instruction and learning include "Animal Life" for beginners and "Wildlife Preservation" for advanced learners. A long list of similar classroom activities can be found in internet web pages, and will not be discussed here.

Task-based instruction

Nunan (1995) advocates task-based instruction as involving learning activities that require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language. Attention is given primarily to meaning rather than form. Scarcella and Oxford (1992) developed the Tapestry approach which focuses on communicative competence by merging task-based and theme-based instruction, described as two powerful modes of skill integration. Task-based instruction activities range from basic pair work or group work to academic classroom situations that involve communication problems. Talbott and Oxford (1991), for instance, described a task-based course that demonstrated high integration of communicative language skills while students wrote, produced, choreographed, and acted out their own television programs. Just like content-based learning, task-based teaching is relevant at all levels of competences. The nature of the tasks varies from one level to another, and becomes increasingly complex and multifaceted at higher levels of skill development.

Testing in Integrated Instruction

How can testing be conducted in integrated instruction? A diversity of opinion has been expressed with regard to what makes a good test. There are as many tests as there are teaching approaches. Some teachers, for example those who adhere to the audio-lingual approach, think that a language test is a longer and more

varied form of the transformation drill. Others, especially more recently, talk about task-based testing assessment, and the like. On the other hand, testing experts have their own definitions and criteria for what constitutes a good test in accordance with their psychometric and statistical background.

From my years of experience in teaching ESL students, I agree with Brown's (1998) suggestion that the most appropriate strategy for developing a test is to tailor it to each situation. It should be situation-specific. One test can be very effective in one situation with a particular group of students, but will not work out well with another group of students. Each teacher has his own testing story to tell from a classroom perspective, that has helped measure the learning of a particular group of students.

I will describe below an assessment activity that has proven successful in my ESL classes (Ikeguchi, 1998). While being an assessment activity, it is an integrated skills instruction that provides a way of observing students' performances which in turn provides scores or other information about the effectiveness of the technique. Feedback is very essential because it becomes a powerful teacher tool to find out how much the students are learning.

An assessment activity may have one or more unique characteristics. For example, it may be predominantly one type, such as teacher assessing students, and yet involve other assessment activities like peer and self assessment (Norris, 1996). Furthermore, some assessment activities measure not only the type of skills they purport to measure, but simultaneously provide some feedback on subsidiary skills, like pronunciation and listening skills. For more strategies on assessment testing, the readers are advised to refer to Brown (1998).

An Integrated Language Skills Assessment Activity

Films have become a useful tool in ESL instruction. More often than not, teachers forget the fact that students are not just there to sit down and enjoy what they watch. Studies show that without proper guidance, students remember only 20% of what they watch. The activity discussed here maximizes the benefits of film viewing for communication purposes, using it as an instructional tool in an integrated task-based instruction with the end goal of staging a TV talk show in the classroom.

Pre-viewing activities

The teacher selects a movie according to its suitability, interest level and difficulty level. The film may be cut into two or three parts depending on its length and on the length of each class period.

The teacher explains the goal of the activity, and divides the class into groups of 3-4 students, depending on class size and the number of tasks assigned. Some of the common groupings and task assignments are: (1) one group assigned to report-or talk-about the plot of the story; (2) one group assigned to talk characterization; (3) one group assigned to report on language of the movie; (4) still another group may be assigned to talk about other features of the film. The teacher may assign other tasks he/she sees as necessary or relevant for a particular class.

Viewing session

The teacher should make sure that not all of the class time is spent on movie watching alone. Allow the last 20 minutes of each class time for group discussion where students go back to their group and discuss common understanding of the tasks assigned to them, and check their individual understanding of the film. The students are instructed to take notes while watching the movie.

Post-viewing activities

Spend another two or three class periods to complete viewing the film. After the class watches the last section of the movie, the last group discussion is held to re-confirm individual understanding and check for completion of the task assigned. In this stage, students are instructed to make an outline of their presentation. If there is enough time, students take home their work to practice for their presentation.

The final stage is the presentation stage, where students simulate a TV talk show, with each student in a group having to report something on their assigned topic. Each group is given 15-20 minutes for the presentation time. During the talk show, other class members are encouraged to take notes, evaluate the presenters, and ask questions.

What Are the Merits of this Activity? (1) Focused listening and productive communication

Unlike the traditional tests in paper and pencil format, this activity is based on the changing language practice in different ESL situations around the world in favor of communicative

teaching. The activity has a variety of purposes aside from increasing awareness and/or retention of what is seen and heard on screen. It aims to check listening comprehension while encouraging lively discussion by simulating a radio or a TV program in the classroom. In so doing it assesses students' communicative and fluency skills without using a time-consuming one-to-one interview and/or Q&A session.

Although the end-goal of the activity is to produce the language, the process of film viewing requires a good deal of focused listening and note taking. It helps students recognize key words and locate main ideas and essential detail, as well as make inferences from the language in the video. More importantly, it promotes students' awareness of their listening strategies, abilities, and needs (O'Malley & Valdez, 1996).

Prior to the main event, which is the "Small Talk," students engage in small discussion activities. This time is used primarily to give students a chance to check their notes against those of other members as well as to re-confirm their understanding of the film. Thus, this assessment activity can be called performance assessment because it allows the teacher to assess students in authentic language use while students actually perform a variety of meaningful tasks that are authentic (Brown, 1998).

(2) Writing skills

Note taking and outlining, two very essential writing skills, are also developed and assessed. The students have to take notes while watching the movie, and organize them in outline form as a pre-requisite for reporting.

(3) Group scoring and feedback

More importantly, group work assessment is used (Mendelsohn, 1992). Many ESL teachers have experimented with group oral tests by pair and group work assessment to assess students' written and oral skills without using time-consuming one-to-one interviews. Group work assessment is an observation or scoring of student performance while they are working in groups, whether the group work was assigned specifically for assessment or for some pedagogical purpose. Not without their own disadvantages, pair and group work are useful and have become popular as classroom assessment techniques. They promote actual language production and they match the pedagogical activities in the classroom. They are useful because students are less threatened when being evaluated in groups;

and more importantly, they are time efficient (Brown, 1998). For example, whereas an oral test or an interview can be both intimidating for the student and time consuming for the teacher, this assessment activity is thoroughly integrated into the language teaching and learning process in a non-interruptive and non-threatening manner.

Some Practical Concerns

1. A set of questions associated with this kind of activity involves first of all problems that may arise out of personality factors. Some students may not speak out as much as others. As a result, they do not produce enough language for the teacher to give them feedback. This can be dealt with by making clear to the students from the start that their scores will be based on their active participation.
2. Still another problem is that the activity would seem to take a lot of time. Actually, this concern is more apparent than real. Although the end-goal is assessment, and student activities are formed for assessment purposes, the activities occur naturally with other pedagogical activities. Unlike other testing situations, for instance the administration of standardized tests where a great deal of time is allotted for the testing itself, this assessment activity goes side by side with instruction. The problem of test administration time is solved in part because the assessment activity itself is integrated right into the class time.
3. As a form of group assessment, there is the question of scoring and feedback tends to be subjective. This can be minimized by getting multiple ratings for each student or by getting ratings from multiple perspectives (Brown, 1998). This means doing peer rating, making sure the teacher explains scoring guidelines, self-rating, and a combination of these.

Summary and Conclusion

The methods of teaching integrated skills are many and varied; so are the ways of assessing them. Testing and assessment of integrated skills, however, are less wide-ranging as classroom activities. The integrated assessment activity presented in this paper allows the teacher to assess students in a context that simulates authentic language use. At the same time, it assesses the same language points or skills that students learn in regular classes. As a form of group assessment activity, it compensates for the negative effects of paper-and-pencil tests. By

creating an assessment activity that is situation-specific, the individual language teacher can suit an assessment technique to the needs of a specific group of students without disregarding theoretical and objective criteria of testing and assessment.

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Appendix 1

Classroom Tasks for Oral Communication Arranged by Proficiency Level *

		Fluency Activities	
		Quadrant One: SPEAKING	Quadrant Two: LISTENING
Beginner ↑ ↓ Advanced	↑ Beginner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practicing pattern drills * Singing in whole class settings * Rehearsing dialogues * Completing information gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating comprehension through gestures and actions (such as TPR) Matching pictures with aural input Guessing meaning of high frequency words with the aid of realia
	↓ Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> : Role playing : Interviewing classmates : Problem solving in small groups : Discussing content materials in small groups : Discussing topical issues in small groups • Speaking to inform • Making oral report in front of the class • Participating on formal debates • Speaking to entertain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking notes during mini lectures Identifying attitude of a speaker/ lecturer Inferring situations, purposes, goal settings literal and implied meanings, etc. Predicting topic development Listening in order to synthesize, analyze and Listening for pleasure and entertainment

* Based on Murphy`s Framework of the Components of Oral Communication Skills

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Comprehensive English: Four skills plus

Judith Ann Johnson

**Yamaguchi
University, Faculty
of Engineering**

世界の人々と交流ができるような学習者を育てるために、4技能や認知的スキルを取り入れたアカデミックな内容の外国語教材が、近年、日本では非常に必要とされている。本論では、このような教材を開発する上で教師の助けとなる4技能を使ったコミュニケーション・ベースのComprehensive Englishシリーズの内容を説明する。このテキストは、英語学習者のためにレベル分けがしてあり、自分の考えをまとめ、それを効率的に英語で伝える力を養うことを目的としている。加えて、この教材は学習者の批判的・創造的思考能力を発達させることにも役立つ。学習者は、日常生活に関わる興味のあることや難しいことを教材の学習を通して、倫理観、世界観、世界の人々について知識を広げる。トピックには科学技術、男女平等、健康と教育などがある。

The Japanese Ministry of Education has directed foreign language (FL) learning to move from traditional grammar-translation and rote memorization methods towards a communicative approach. Moreover, many companies and professional organizations such as JABEE (Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education) are requesting universities to be more accountable for the courses they offer, in terms of content and students' actual language skills and abilities. To meet these requirements, language skills must be taught in connection with other skills (such as critical thinking and social skills), and previous learning. Content must be relevant to students' current and future personal and societal needs and the need to communicate must be genuine.

In addition, new FL courses must also meet the academic needs of students *and* fit into the semester-based university system. Many schools have a regulation prohibiting the use of the same textbook in a course that is offered both semesters. Therefore, two different books of the same level are required for the academic year.

In 2000, the author and a colleague were asked to develop an academically oriented, multi-level, four skills textbook series for *Comprehensive English* courses which would fulfill the requirements described above. The specific goals were to help students:

- develop the ability to organize and communicate their ideas in English
- develop the ability to think creatively and critically
- increase their reading speeds
- demonstrate their communication ability through both recognized objective tests (TOEIC, TOEFL) and subjective assessments at globally-accepted high levels

The development, and the pilot testing of the materials by native and non-native speakers of English, were carried out over a period of 2 1/2 years in the different faculties of Yamaguchi University. Two courses, *Comprehensive English*

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Fundamental and Comprehensive English, Lower-Intermediate have been developed. Two versions are available for each level. The books are semester-based. The *Fundamental* course is designed for students with a TOEIC score of 375-450. The four modules are: Survival English; Technology; Communications & Human Relations; and the Environment. The *Lower-Intermediate* course is designed for students with a TOEIC score of 425-500. The four modules are: Education, Health, & Income; Gender Equality & Education; Agriculture & Technology; and Recycling, Our Health, & the Environment.

Each module contains interrelated sections on Reading/Grammar, Listening, Writing, Speaking, and Thinking. The main areas of development were organization, content, instructional method, and evaluation. A discussion of these areas follows.

Content

Course content was selected based on relevancy to students' current and future needs and student responses on pilot course surveys. Students learn about Japanese society and cultures around the globe and relate the content to themselves and the local, national, and international communities. Therefore, students study universal values and apply them as guidelines for ethical human behavior. Identifying and understanding relationships and unifying thought and behavior are fundamental aspects of the content.

There are two special content-related features: *Focal Concept* and *Quotation for Memorization*. Each Module is organized under a *Focal Concept*, such as "Relationship," or "Cause and Effect," to help students learn how to classify and organize data and ideas. The *Quotation for Memorization* is intended to help students understand and appreciate theme-related words of wisdom and reflect on their meaning.

Figure 1. Example content-related features

- **Module Four Fundamental Book A: Environment**
- Focal Concept: *Cause and Effect*
- Quotation for Memorization:
- "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens." -Bahá'u'lláh

The *Pre-reading* section activates students' vocabulary, ideas, and experience related to the

theme. Different topics related to the theme are introduced in the *Reading* section in the form of essays, newspaper articles, conversations, charts and graphs. Reading texts are followed by a variety of comprehension exercises. *Listening* also is a medium for introducing new content. This section contains exercises not only for overall comprehension and listening for details, but also for note-taking strategies such as listening for key words, mind mapping, and outlining. The *Grammar Focus* and *Lifesavers* portions of the module include expressions and grammar structures that help students discuss the theme more clearly. In the *Writing* section, students learn the basics of writing paragraphs, making summaries, and writing short essays. *Speaking* gives students the opportunity to synthesize and share ideas and opinions with classmates. The *Writing* and *Speaking* sections also provide students the opportunity to use previously-learned and new vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures to communicate their ideas. Special attention is given to pronunciation in order to help students hear, distinguish, and pronounce the basic sounds that make up the English language. Students use the Sound Approach (Higgins & Higgins, 2001) method to learn 'sound-spelling' and how to divide words into syllables. *Sound Approach* Charts, Pronunciation Lists, and Vocabulary Lists are included in the Appendices of the textbooks. The integration of communication skills provides reinforcement of each skill and helps students understand the supportive relationships that exist among the skills. Furthermore, all the components are aids to the development of students' critical and creative thinking, and organizational skills.

Organization

The materials are divided into *Modules* in which the four language skills—reading, listening, writing, and speaking—plus thinking skills are integrated under one theme such as Technology or Communication and Human Relations.

Being able to study in a safe environment where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities for the entire group, having adequate time to learn and practice new knowledge and skills, and possessing the confidence to use the FL are key elements of successful language learning. Accordingly, *Module One* begins with the speaking section, *Survival English*, which is followed by *Lifesavers*. Survival English consists of sentences and expressions that are necessary

for basic communication in and outside the classroom. In this section, immediate practice using language they have undoubtedly heard (if not used) in the past provides students a measure of security and confidence in being able to perform the basic functions required to navigate the course. Some examples are:

- Pardon?
- No problem.
- Of course.
- Which pages should we study?
- I'm not sure, but I think . . .
- (Would you, Could you) please (give me a handout?)
- (repeat the answer?)

The writing activities are related to the speaking content. New information is presented in the reading texts, and the listening activities use contents of the three preceding sections. Therefore, Module 1 is organized thus:

- Survival English (Speaking)
- Lifesavers
- Writing
- Reading
- Listening

The organization of the sections of *Modules Two, Three* and *Four* follow the pattern, below.

- Reading
- Lifesavers and Grammar Focus
- Listening
- Writing
- Speaking
- What if...?

The rationale behind this scaffolding is that, as a result of secondary school teaching methods,

reading is generally Japanese students' strongest EFL skill. Introducing new information through reading is efficient, and serves as a foundation for the other skills. In addition to introducing new knowledge, the reading texts give students a common foundation of vocabulary and sentence structures which can be referred to and reviewed throughout the course. Life Savers and Grammar Focus sections are content-related references that students can study, when needed. Once students have read and understood the texts, and studied the vocabulary, they can better understand the listening passages. Writing gives students the opportunity to process the information presented in the reading and listening sections. Putting their ideas and opinions about what they have learned on paper reinforces use of the new vocabulary and language structures, as well as higher order thinking skills. By the time they reach the last sections, Speaking and What if . . .?, students will have the knowledge, skills, confidence and intrinsic motivation to contribute to pair and group communication activities.

Largely as a result of the use of the Japanese phonetic syllabary, *katakana*, to read and pronounce foreign words, students' pronunciation of English is frequently incorrect and sometimes unintelligible. The use of *katakana* also impedes their listening ability. To help correct this problem, pronunciation is studied in every class period. The goal is acquisition of pronunciation that can be clearly understood internationally.

The textbooks are designed to be versatile. Each book can be used for both a regular 15-week course that meets once a week for 90 minutes and for a compressed 6-week course that meets 4 times a week for 60 minutes. In the case of the compressed course, one module per week is studied. The sixth week is used for a general review and evaluations of the four skills. The Grammar Focus can be integrated into either the Listening or Reading sections.

One module takes about three weeks to complete (see Table 1).

Table 1. Study Module

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Pronunciation (20 minutes)	Pronunciation (20 minutes)	Pronunciation (20 minutes)
Reading and Grammar	Listening and Writing	Speaking

Instructional Methods

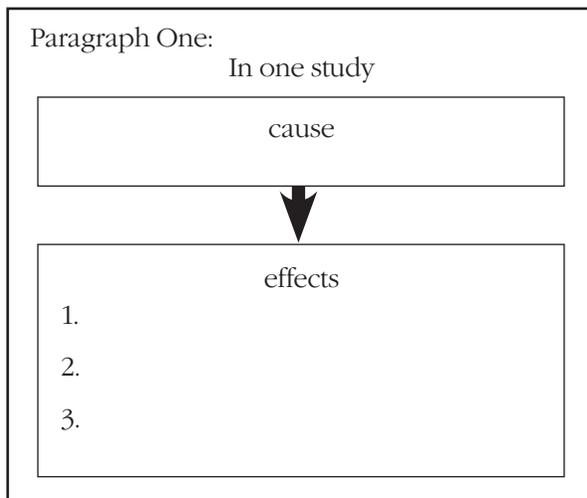
The instruction is student-centered in that students are speaking, sharing ideas, solving problems, and working together during most of the class period. They prepare for class individually at home and study cooperatively with other students in class. Students work in pairs and small groups in every class period. This instructional method makes it possible for them to spend more time using English, which means that the instructor's role becomes that of a *facilitator and monitor*. The instructor walks around the room listening to and interacting briefly with students, giving them assistance as needed. The methodology is supported by a variety of interesting and challenging activities. For example, diagramming helps students understand a text. It also gives them insight as to how data and concepts are generally organized to achieve clear communication, as in Figure 2.

The "What if . . ." activity encourages students to use their cognitive and creative thinking skills. They reflect on future events and imagine the possible results and consequences. This activity is the basis of lively, thoughtful and thought-provoking discussions. Students hone their listening and comprehension skills by taking notes not only on information provided by the teacher, but also on information and opinions given by their classmates. Because much vocabulary is acquired through reading, students learn how to read for general and specific meaning and information. They also learn how to calculate their reading speed and keep a record for self-monitoring.

Evaluation

The focus of the course is on developing and using language skills for authentic communication. Students should learn that a FL is valuable when it is used to exchange ideas, feelings, and knowledge that serve to further understanding. Therefore, in addition to individual scores, group work also receives a group score. When evaluating communication skills, the amount of English used and the degrees of accuracy and relevancy

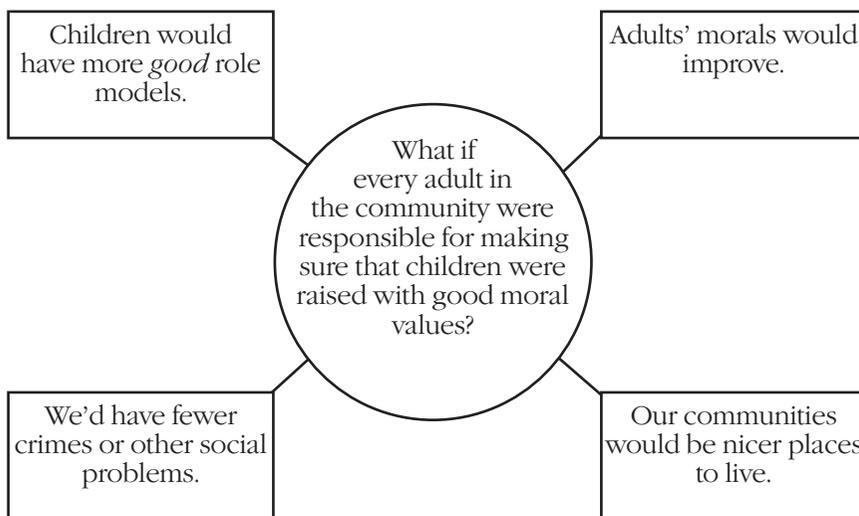
Figure 2. Diagramming facilitates student comprehension of a text



of the contribution to the conversation are clear indicators of the student's progress. The group score is based on the performance of the pair, group, or the representative, and all members receive the same score. The criteria for writing helps students understand what is expected in written communication. They learn that producing language that is shallow and lacking in coherence, depth, and clarity, is unacceptable in genuine communication.

As an aid to students, novice ESL teachers, teachers who are not accustomed to teaching English for the purpose of communication, and

Figure 3. "What if . . .?"



teachers who have little or no experience in having students do pair and group work, the necessary guidelines and instruments for carrying out the various types of evaluations that occur during the course are provided in the textbooks. This makes evaluation easier for the teacher to carry out and for the student to understand. Furthermore, the element of standardizing evaluation procedures with some flexibility that allows for differences in students' needs and abilities is a step towards ensuring that students are evaluated uniformly and fairly. The lack of standards of performance in FL education is a major problem that must be resolved by many institutions of higher learning. Excerpts from the evaluation section are given below.

Figure 4. Some examples of evaluation tools and procedures

(a) Criteria for evaluating in-class individual and group communication:

Evaluation Scale:	
	points
All English	10
Mostly English	8
50% English	5
20% English	2
No English	0

(b) Criteria for evaluating writing:

	Points
Content is accurate, meaningful*, adequate,** and logical. Structure++ is clear and accurate.	10 ↓
Content is not relevant to the topic and information is incomplete. Structure is extremely poor and understanding is very difficult or impossible.	0

* useful in understanding or explaining the topic, or useful in our life

** has enough information to support the main idea

++ sentence structure, grammar, spelling

(c) Written in-class and homework assignments:

It is suggested that most of these assignments be scored; one point given for short answers and 2-3 points for longer answers. In the case of a group assignment, up to 5 points (depending on the group performance) can be given to every group member.

Oral Evaluation Form and Criteria

Group Name:		
Student's Name:		
Good ideas or explanations (3)		
Asks/answers relevant questions (3)		
Can communicate ideas (3)		
Initiates (2)		
Uses key terms (1)		
Group score (3)		
Total score (15)		

Note that in addition to the individual score, there is a group score.

Points

Communicates ideas:
Clearly, logically and fluently 3 ↑
Starts to say something but gives up mid way 0 ↓

Group:
Members work together to discuss the topic. Listened to and responded to each other. Every member participates in and contributes something meaningful to the discussion. 3 ↑
No one is able to discuss the topic. 0 ↓

(d) Midterm and final evaluations:

- Final evaluation points equal 50% of the total possible in-class points (bonus points excluded).
- For example: Total in-class points 60+
Midterm points 40 = 100
Final Exam points = 50
- Bonus points are alive and being awarded in Japan! A student can receive up to 5 points for

exceptional performance related to a specific activity. This feature serves to motivate and reward students who make 'extra' effort or do outstanding work.

(e) Calculation of Course Score

	<u>Points</u>
• in-class	42
• midterm	30
• bonus points	9
• final exam	<u>40</u>
	$121 / 150 = 80.6\%$
Course Score =	81 / 100

Summary

Research shows that the integrated approach to language learning for genuine communication is most effective in helping young adults to develop the ability to read, write, listen, speak, and think. The study of socially relevant content that attracts the interest of students and requires them to reflect, draw relationships, and solve problems contributes to more thoughtful, ethical, and responsible attitudes and behavior.

Writing *Comprehensive English* was challenging and sometimes tedious. The materials had to be constantly reviewed, tested, and revised in order to ensure that they furthered the goals of the course, were appropriate for the needs of the students, and were integrated in ways that promoted learning. Not only was it necessary to select content that was relevant and interesting to Japanese university students, but also to combine the content with instructional methods and activities that help them become responsible and independent learners. The process of writing and testing the textbook materials was also rewarding. Much satisfaction was derived from watching students enjoy learning, and using English to express themselves—watching students go through the process of becoming researchers and problem solvers and making friends with classmates using their ESL communication skills. It is the hope of the author that the contents of this article may serve as an example to current and future textbook authors wishing to design integrated content-based FL materials that improve students' communication skills, interpersonal and higher-order thinking skills, and their knowledge of, and responsibility to, the preservation of our planet.

The use of *Comprehensive English* has proven effective in improving students' EFL communication ability, study skills, and reading speeds. It has broadened their comprehension of their relationships with both Japanese and other peoples of the world. They volunteer to participate in class discussions, ask each other questions that require thoughtful responses, and become more adept at supporting and communicating with classmates in carrying out cooperative learning activities.

Teachers who use *Comprehensive English* work closely together, sharing information and giving feedback regarding student performance, course content, and evaluation procedures. This standardized, but still flexible, approach to instruction and evaluation is valuable in placing students in appropriate courses and attaining relative equity in grading. *Comprehension English* is Yamaguchi University's answer to the challenge of achieving effective four skills, content-based, multilevel English FL instruction—Four Skills *Plus*.

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Judith Ann Johnson is an Associate Professor at Yamaguchi University where she develops and teaches technical/scientific English, Global Issues, Ethics and Teacher Education classes. As the Director of Curriculum of a not-for-profit organization—International Educational Initiatives, Inc.—she is involved in developing morally-based curricula and conducting teacher education programs in Asia, the Pacific Islands, the U.S., and Europe. Dr. Johnson is the author and co-author of numerous articles and several books related to language learning, curriculum development, and teacher education.



The first piece in this month's My Share is a lesson activity by Andrew Boon that has students read song lyrics using think-aloud techniques to enhance comprehension. Brad Deacon adds mind mapping to his tool bag and gets interesting results from students. Last, Justine Ross outlines an activity that uses songs to model conversations and augment student interaction. Submissions should be up to 1,000 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used, which can be replicated by readers, and should conform to My Share format (see any issue of *The Language Teacher*). Please send submission to <my-share@jalt-publications.org>.

Accessing students' thought processes while reading song lyrics

Andrew Boon, Takushoku University, Tokyo

<bromleycross@hotmail.com>

Quick Guide

Key words: Reading processes, reading comprehension, schema, think-aloud techniques

Learner English Level: Can be adapted for any level

Learner Maturity Level: High school and above

Preparation Time: 15–20 minutes

Activity Time: Around 60 minutes

Materials: Handout of song lyrics appropriate to the level and interests of students

Reading comprehension involves students in two simultaneous levels of processing. At the level of bottom-up processing, predictions are generated by the reader's interaction with the words, grammar, and rhetorical organization of a particular text. This interaction sets up cohesive relations that serve as "clues or signals to how the text should be read" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 26). At the level of top-down processing, the reader attempts to instantiate relevant schematic *slots*—mental constructions of the reader's previous experience or background knowledge of the world which enable him or her to fill in certain gaps left implicit in the text. A successful reader achieves understanding through an ongoing process of prediction and inference, checking for verification within the text, and making necessary corrections to modify inconsistencies before developing a final coherent interpretation of what the text means to him or her (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988). In the reading classroom, however, it is often difficult for teachers to be aware of students' cognitive processes and difficulties in activating correct schema or background knowledge to construct meaning as they interact with the words on the page. Specific processing problems which arise during a reading task often remain hidden in the mind of the individual student and may only

emerge after the teacher initiates post-reading comprehension questions.

The following activity aims to provide teachers with an insight into the processing difficulties of their students so that we develop ways of helping students trigger the instantiation of relevant schemata when reading. Song lyrics provide useful material for this activity as they often require the reader to use his or her own background knowledge to successfully process the text-based information. For example, I often use *Ironic* by Alanis Morissette (Morissette, 1995). See: <www.alanis.com/main.html>. Click on *Music*; the album title *Jagged Little Pill*; *Lyrics* and finally the song *Ironic*) as students must utilize the writer's linguistic devices while activating appropriate schemata to locate the irony in the lyrics.

Preparation

Select song lyrics suitable for the level and age of your students. Provide students with a handout of the lyrics.

Procedure

Step 1: Focus on the title of the song. Elicit reasons for songs to have titles. Ask students to try and predict the content of the song from the title.

Step 2: Allow students time to read the lyrics while writing down any initial thoughts they have.

Step 3: Put students in small groups.

Step 4: Begin with the first verse and ask students to reread the song lyrics but this time to think out loud during the reading process and discuss their individual understandings of the verse. The teacher should monitor each group and make a note of any specific processing problems that occur, such as students not having the relevant cultural knowledge to interpret the

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text, or projecting incorrect schemata to process it. When using the lyrics of *Ironic*, for example, I find students often have difficulty processing lexical terms such as Chardonnay and Death Row which then interferes with their understanding of these particular ironic situations in the song.

Step 5: From the problems that occurred in Step 4, the teacher can supply students with relevant background information to help them process the particular text and ask a series of open-ended questions to confirm comprehension has taken place.

Step 6: Repeat Steps 4 and 5 with the remaining parts of the song. The teacher should modify comprehension questions in line with the particular needs of the students and lyrics.

Step 7: In the final step of the activity, students can discuss the specific issues raised in the song lyrics. Here, the teacher can prepare discussion questions (or encourage students to make their own questions), and the students can work in groups and ask and answer the questions. For example, after reading and discussing the lyrics of *Ironic*, I ask students to come up with and share their own examples of ironic situations. This gives students an opportunity to relate their own experiences to those in the lyrics and enables the teacher to verify that students are indeed taking away from the lesson a serviceable schema for

the lexical item *irony* which they will hopefully activate the next time they encounter the word.

Conclusion

Think-aloud techniques (Barnett, 1989; Casanave, 1988) allow the teacher to glimpse the hidden processes our students go through while reading. By being in a position to observe and listen to students as they read and by asking specific questions to elicit comprehension, it is possible for the teacher to assist with processing problems as they occur and guide students in their construction of meaning from text-based information.

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Communities sharing mind maps for course closure

Brad Deacon, Nanzan University

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Quick Guide

Key Words: Group dynamics (closure), mind mapping, 4-Skills, review

Learner English Level: High beginner and above

Learner Maturity Level: High school and above

Preparation Time: Approximately 1 hour outside of class for students

Activity Time: About 45 minutes

Materials: A3 paper

Take a moment to remember a course you either taught or participated in recently. Notice in particular what happened in the final lesson to bring a sense of closure for everyone. What do you recall seeing, hearing, and feeling at that time? Hopefully, as you relive this memory now, it represents a cherished reminder of both the final moment and more broadly the entire time you

spent together; conversely, even if you somehow imagine that more could have been done to bring closure to that group I invite you to read on.

In the following article you will learn about an alternative activity to bring closure and a sense of affirmation to your courses by using mind mapping. In short, students each prepare and then share a mind map that illustrates their most memorable experiences in the course. I will describe the activity with its advantages, the steps involved in setting up and conducting the activity, and other ways to maximize this activity in your classes.

Advantages of mind mapping for course closure

For each student

Mind mapping allows students to use the four skills by first reading and consolidating their notes in order to then write their maps. Next they gain

valuable practice in speaking about personally meaningful content by sharing their own maps and listening to their peers' stories. Thus, the four skills are integrated in this activity. Students are able to practice other skills too during the production stages of mind mapping such as brainstorming, noticing connections in content, and graphically organizing their learning.

Second, mind mapping is an effective way for students to review what they have learned and to see change and development over the duration of the year or semester. Specifically, maps may include: topics covered and other course materials, strategies, stories, references to the community, and various other personally meaningful associations. The end result—students can REMEMBER better what they did in the course!

For communities of students

Students become intensely curious about others' mind maps, leading to rich discussion. These discussions are further intensified when students notice that everyone represents learning in their own unique way. Students can appreciate and celebrate what is similar and diverse in others' experiences.

Moreover, mind map sharing lets students reaffirm their perception of value of the group. After all, the maps could not exist without the community, and that sense of interdependency is captured within each student's mind map. Thus, sharing maps provides highly stimulating material for meaningful interaction and allows students to reflect, celebrate, and bring their time together to a memorable close.

Procedure

Step 1: Share examples of mind maps from groups in prior years before the last lesson (see the examples in Appendix 1). Alternatively you can draw a simple example on the board. The examples should pique interest, trigger curiosity, and serve to suggest but not limit students to potential themes for their own maps.

Step 2: Give each student an A3 piece of blank paper in order to allow ample creative drawing space. Students should use colors, pictures, and key words instead of full sentences to complete their maps.

Step 3: Students commence their drawings with an image in the center of the page that captures their impression of what learning in the class has meant to each of them. To illustrate, some students from my past classes have drawn various nature motifs such as a tree or flower. Another highly imaginative

student drew a central image of a detective gathering evidence to solve a problem. Still other metaphors for learning have included a mountain climber, a fish in a large ocean, and a treasure chest. Curious to know why? So too will be your students when they see each other's mind maps.

Step 4: Students then draw branches that represent the various ways that they categorize and remember what they learned in the course and connect each branch to their central theme. Each branch often includes sub-branches. A simple example might be a main branch with the word *topic* and then sub-branches of the various course topics possibly including sports, music, television and so on.

Step 5: Before students verbally share their mind maps you can write helpful expressions on the board such as: "Wow! That's an interesting picture"; "Tell me more about that"; "That reminds me of _____"; and "Can I tell you about my mind map now?" Students then form either pairs or small groups of 3 or 4 and have a timed conversation of approximately 4–5 minutes allotted per student. Circulate and join their conversations.

Step 6: Students repeat the cycle by having 3–4 timed conversations in different pairs or small groups.

Step 7: Photocopy (assuming you have students' permission) some of the more memorable drawings in order to share them with future classes and to also provide individual feedback to each student.

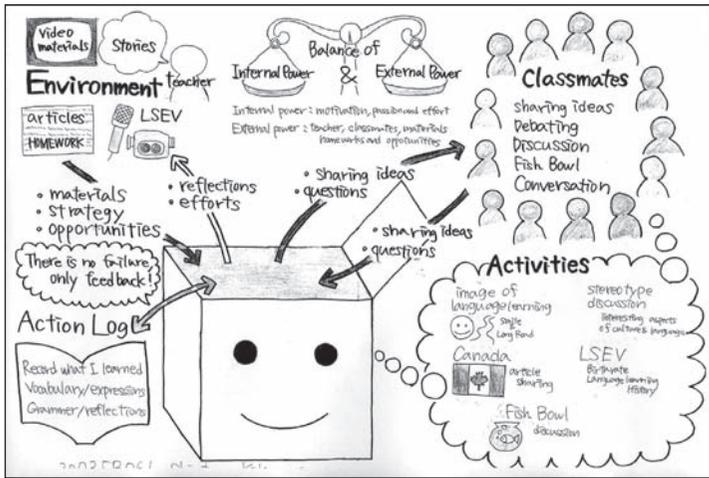
Step 8: Return the maps and invite students to use their maps as a reminder of all that they have learned in the year and to serve as a source of inspiration in their future learning.

Extended uses of mind mapping for course closure

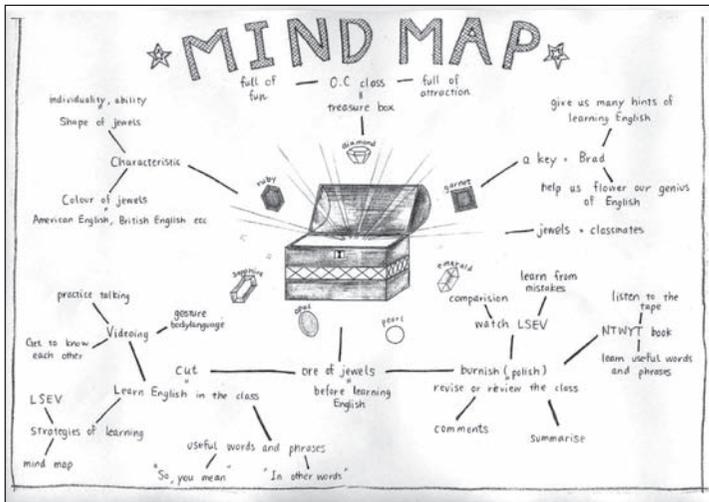
You may have noticed that students, and some teachers too, forget what they learned in the first semester over the summer break. You can stimulate recall by inviting students to re-share their first semester mind maps early in the second semester.

In addition, consider going public with your students' mind maps so that others can enjoy and admire their efforts. For example, at one school I work at, the students' mind maps were posted for an Open House and received very positive feedback from observers. The students were reticent at first but were glowing afterwards when the visitors praised their work.

Finally, although this article has focused on mind mapping past experiences it can also be



(Use with permission of Kaori Sasaki)



(Used with permission of Yuki Yamada)

a useful tool for mapping future experiences as well. Indeed, many students will be looking forward to continuing their language learning journey after your course. Communities sharing mind maps of their future language learning can stimulate ideas for alternative learning directions for everyone.

Conclusion

Having read this far you may have noticed that this activity can help to bring a sense of closure and reaffirm the progress and learning success for each student in your classes. You may have also found that constructing and sharing mind maps allows students to naturally integrate the four skills for a richer learning experience. So why not offer your groups the possibility of preserving their memories through creating and sharing their mind maps at the end of your courses. At the minimum they will gain access to a useful tool for review. On a deeper level, end of course mind maps may even provide valuable visual reminders for everyone to cherish their time spent together.

Appendix A

Two examples of student "Mind Maps."

Popular music questionnaire/listening activity

Justine Ross, Part-time university instructor in the Kansai area

< saritostjustine@yahoo.co.uk >

Quick guide

Key words: Music, pairwork, interview

Learner English level: Elementary to pre-intermediate

Learner maturity level: University students

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Activity time: No less than 40 minutes

Materials: Computer and printer, tape/CD player, recording of song, self-prepared song activity sheet for students A & B

We are always searching for ways to catch the attention of our students. One tried and proven method for achieving this is through the use of music in the classroom. I have used this lesson in Japan and Australia, and it has been well received by students. A short preparation time is required, but one need only do so once and the material can be used repeatedly with other classes. My students have enjoyed this lesson because it

entertains them and maintains their interest in class. Choose the music carefully, so that it is interesting and motivating for them—the wrong choice of music can produce a negative effect in class, too!

Through this activity, students practice basic grammatical structures needed to write questions based on missing words in the song. The carrot at the end of the stick is that students who have a low level of English competency are able to practice using English correctly without feeling that they are doing a test. Also, it is to be hoped, they will enjoy the pleasant task of listening to a song in English.

Preparation

You need to make two cloze worksheets for this lesson, each containing the English lyrics of the same popular song. Each worksheet (Student A/ Student B) will have different words missing from the same song (see Appendix 1).

Procedure

Step 1: Ask the students if they listen to English music and what kind of music they like. Talk to students about the benefits of listening to music in English, such as the learning of new vocabulary, improving their ability to speak more fluently, and then having fun singing along with the song together. (Do not worry if you are not the greatest singer on earth. Students will appreciate your effort! This, at least, has been my experience. I have tried it with songs like John Lennon's *Let it be*, *Winter Song* by Dreams Come True, and Norah Jones' *Feels Like Home*.)

Step 2: Divide students into pairs.

Step 3: Allow students 1 minute to write down as many different types of music genres that they can think of. Give students an example or two, so that they know what a genre is. After 1 minute, check which group has the most responses.

Step 4: Tell the students, "Using the same list, next to each type of music, name the different bands or singers who perform that style in English." Students are given 1 minute to write answers of their own.

Step 5: Write answers from each group on the board. Leave this on the board as stimulus for the semi-guided activity at the end of the lesson.

Step 6: Ask students to name a Japanese group that sings in English. (For example Dreams Come True). Keep asking for responses and then, if an answer is not given, tell them. Explain that this is the group that will be featured in the following activity.

Step 7: Divide the class in half.

Step 8: Give one group worksheet A and the other worksheet B (See Appendix 1). Ask them to write the correct questions that one must ask to find out the missing words in the song. A note here for the teacher: During this time, check the grammar in both groups and correct when necessary. Students can collaborate or work individually in their groups.

Step 9: Pair up each student from Group A with a student from Group B.

Step 10: The task is to fill in the blank spaces by asking their prepared questions of the other student. Write suggestions of the types of questions needed to ask for the answer to be repeated and to question their partner about the spelling, etc. Students do not show each other their worksheets (see Appendix 2).

Step 11: After the students have completed their answer sheets, listen to the song and instruct the students to check their answers. Listen to the song as many times as you think necessary based on your observation of the class. Encourage the students to sing along with the song, too.

Step 13: Explain to students that music is a common conversation topic between young native English speakers, especially when they meet for the first time or do not really know each other well. Tell your class this is a good way to get to know someone. Write a model conversation on the board (see Appendix 3).

Step 12: Depending on the class size, finish by asking students about their partner's answers and summarizing the purpose of the lesson as being the benefits of practicing listening to English at home with authentic listening materials.

Conclusion

The above benefits of learning English by listening to English songs are to be had even if, as in the material chosen below, the singer or group are not native speakers of English—provided, of course, that the lyrics are written in perfect English and sung with an acceptable English pronunciation. The choice below of a song written and performed by nonnative speakers of English who, however, use the language correctly, is a conscious one on my part for two reasons. First, Japanese students are likely to know the song and the performers (Dreams Come True, a Japanese popular rock band) and thus be highly motivated and encouraged to discuss their views and opinions in class. Secondly, such choice of musical material may help to overcome the prejudiced belief held by many Japanese,

including the students themselves, that only native speakers of English are capable of using the language correctly. As a major international language, surely English should not be regarded as the exclusive reserve of native speakers. One need only observe that nowadays many European countries are represented in the Eurovision Song Contest every year by performers from non-English speaking countries who chose to sing in English to reach a wider world audience for their music. ABBA started this musical trend when they appeared in and won the mentioned European music contest. The fact that they were a Swedish group singing in English was no hindrance to achieving success and acceptability in the record industry. Having made what is not to be viewed as a politically correct statement, I should add that the lesson plan outlined here can be adapted and work just as well by choosing a singer or group hailing from an English-speaking country.

Appendix 1: Worksheets for students A & B for *Winter Song* by Dreams Come True

Student A Copy

Write the question needed to find the missing word in the first verse of the song below.

(For copyright reasons, this song will not be quoted in full below. Only the first verse will serve as an example here.)

Winter Song by Dreams Come True

*The (1. _____) is gaining ground, lights flicker all around
And as I walk the lonely streets, the snow is falling ever faster
Looking to the sky, I wonder where you are,
The way you came into my life, filling every day with laughter*

Example:

What is gaining ground? (Sample answer: *dusk*)

Now ask Student B to tell you what word is missing above using your prepared question.

Student B Copy

Write the question needed to find the missing word in the first verse of the song below.

(For copyright reasons, this song will not be quoted in full below. Only the first verse will serve as an example here.)

Winter Song by Dreams Come True

*The dusk is gaining ground, lights flicker all around
And as I walk the lonely street, the snow is falling ever faster
Looking to the sky, I wonder where you are,
The way you came into my life, filling every day with (1. _____)*

Example:

What is every day filled with? (Sample answer: *laughter*)

Now ask Student A to tell you what word is missing above using your prepared question.

Appendix 2: Helpful classroom English

- Asking for the answer to be repeated: Excuse me, can you say that again?
- Spelling: How do you spell that?

Appendix 3

Student A: What kind of music are you listening to at the moment?

Student B: Well, I'm listening to

Student A:

1. Possible responses used to demonstrate that one knows the group or singer can be: Oh really? / Oh, yes, I know them, they're great / they're excellent / they're cool / they're not bad / etc. (If Student A also knows the group, then ask if they know another group that is similar to the group you mentioned, for example: Have you ever heard of . . . ? They are a lot like)
2. Possible responses used to demonstrate that the band is unknown to you may include: Oh, I don't know them / I've never heard of them / Who are they? / What is their latest CD called? / etc. (If Student A does not know the singer or band mentioned, Student B should give more information about the singer or band.)

Student B: Ask Student A about whom they are currently listening to. Repeat the same conversation as above using the same or new English sentences that you consider appropriate.

FOCUS

This month's *Focus* column is a little shorter than usual, but seeing as we've all just taken in 3 days of one of the best JALT conferences to date, a little rest is probably in order. The *Perspectives* section this month contains a timely and informative article. Written by Peter Ross, it covers some of the basics for chapters when filling out various chapter reports.

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.



Joseph Sheehan <jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org>

JALT Notices

Peer Support Group

The JALT Peer Support Group assists writers who wish to polish their papers so they may be published. We are now looking for JALT members interested in joining our group to help improve the quality of the papers of fellow professionals. A paper is read and commented on by two group members, and if you are not confident in your skills offering advice to fellow writers, we have a shadowing system to help you get your bearings. Please email the coordinator at <peergroup@jalt-publications.org> for further information. We do not at present have Japanese members, but that is because none have applied so far. We are also interested in receiving papers from members. Please don't hesitate to send us your paper at the address above. We look forward to hearing from and helping you.

Universal Chapter and SIG Web Access

JALT chapters and SIGs have webpages available that contain upcoming meeting information and officer contact details. These pages are linked to the main JALT website and are viewable at <jalt.org/groups/your-chapter-name>, where *your-chapter-name* is the name of the chapter or SIG you wish to contact (i.e., <jalt.org/westtokyo>; <jalt.org/CUE>). In some cases, chapters or SIGs may not have provided up-to-date information; this will be reflected on the webpages. Queries can be directed to the JALT (English) web editor, Paul Collett, <editor-e@jalt.org>.

JALT Publications Staff Recruitment

TLT査読委員募集

TLTへ投稿された論文を査読する方を若干名求めています。略歴と業績を添えて、日本語編集者<tlr-editor@jalt-publications.org>までお送り下さい。

The Language Teacher

...needs English language proof-readers immediately. Qualified applicants will be JALT members with language teaching experience, a fax, email, and a computer that can process MS Word files. The position will require several hours of concentrated work every month, mailing list subscription, and occasional online and face-to-face meetings. If more qualified candidates apply than we can accept, we will consider them in order as further vacancies appear. The supervised apprentice program of *The Language Teacher* trains proofreaders in *TLT* style, format, and operations. Apprentices begin by shadowing experienced proofreaders and then rotate from section to section of the magazine until they become

familiar with *TLL*'s operations as a whole. They then assume proofreading tasks themselves. Consequently, when annual or occasional staff vacancies arise, the best-qualified candidates tend to come from current staff, and the result is often a succession of vacancies filled and created in turn.

As a rule, *TLL* recruits publicly for proofreaders and translators, giving senior proofreaders and translators first priority as other staff positions become vacant. Please submit your curriculum vitae and cover letter to the Publications Board Chair at <pubchair@jalt.org>.

Call for Papers

Classroom Materials Publication

Due for release in mid-2005, this "My Share" style publication is intended as a practical resource for language teachers looking for supplementary materials. This fully indexed CD-ROM will feature activities tried and tested in language-learning classrooms. Many activities will also include photocopiable worksheets.

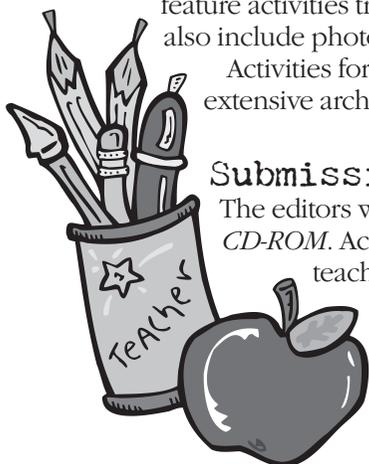
Activities for the disk will be collated from the *TLL My Share* column's extensive archives, and from submissions from JALT's SIGs and members.

Submissions

The editors would like to call for submissions for this *Classroom Materials CD-ROM*. Activities should be original, unpublished, and relevant to language teaching. We are particularly looking for activities that can be adapted to photocopiable worksheets.

For more information on the *Classroom Materials* project, including guidelines for writing and submitting articles, please visit:

<www.jalt-publications.org/materials/>



Perspectives

...with Joyce Cunningham & Mariko Miyao <perspectives@jalt-publications.org>

This month's report focuses on an area of interest to chapters. Peter Ross explains about the annual chapter president's report and the annual chapter financial report. The co-editors warmly encourage 750-word reports of chapter interest in English, Japanese, or both.



Chapter Reporting Requirements

In an effort to make sure that the right and left hands know what they are doing, JALT asks chapters and SIGs to submit a variety of annual reports. The ones that concern chapters most are the

Annual Chapter President's Report and the Annual Chapter Financial Report.

These reports cover the previous calendar year. Therefore, in theory, this year's should be filled out by the 2004 president and treasurer of your chapter. If you have just started as president of

weblink: www.jalt.org/

your chapter this year, please contact last year's president and treasurer and make sure that they submit these reports on time. If you'd like to familiarize yourself with the forms now, take a look at <jalt.org/chapreps/>.

These reports are important because they will affect your chapter's funding, voting rights at Executive Board Meetings (EBMs), and reimbursement for EBM attendance. Here's a three-point summary of what you need to do:

1) Submit your Annual Chapter President's and Financial Reports on time. The 2004 President's Report is due on February 28, 2005. The 2004 Financial Report is due on April 10, 2005.

Annual Chapter President's Report

The form may look long and involved, but it's actually much easier than it seems at first glance. The form also provides a good occasion to reflect on your chapter's health and future direction. Please note that several sections require some basic statistics. Here's a list of some of the documents you'll need:

- Chapter membership statistics
- A list of your chapter's 2004 events, including attendance figures
- Your chapter fund balance at the end of 2004

Annual Chapter Financial Report

The Annual Chapter Financial Report is part of JALT's annual audit process. Chapter treasurers are required to submit hard copies of the chapter's postal and bank account passbooks, monthly and year-end reports of income and expenses, and officer expense report forms. The report for the previous fiscal year is due April 10, and should be submitted to the JALT Central Office.

Note: The Director of Treasury will freeze the accounts of chapters whose President's and Financial Reports have not been received by April 10, and the account will remain frozen until the chapter has submitted both of its reports.

2) Post your chapter's events on the JALT Calendar Page by February 28. In particular, make

sure that all of your 2004 events are posted.

N.B.: Your chapter's status will be assessed based on the number of members, officers, and events you have each year. The information posted on the JALT Calendar Page is the definitive source of information on your chapter's events. Your chapter's events will be tallied in March. If your events are not posted here by the end of February, your chapter could be reclassified as a forming or affiliate chapter, and you would lose voting rights at EBMs and reimbursement for EBM attendance.

3) Make sure that your chapter has at least four JALT National members covering the following officer positions: President, Program Chair, Treasurer, Membership Chair, and Publicity Chair.

Please note that you need to report your officers to the <jalt.org> website and the JALT Central Office. Unfortunately, as of this writing, they are not (yet) linked up. The first deadline for this is the end of December, when the JALT Directory must be prepared for the printers. The second deadline is February 28, after which chapter status is assessed.

N.B.: Again, your chapter's status is evaluated according to how many members, officers, and events you have each year. The definitive source of information on your chapter's officers is the information in the JALT Central Office's database. Your chapter's officers will be tallied in March. If your officers fail to post their names here by the end of February, your chapter risks being reclassified as a forming or affiliate chapter, and your voting rights would be lost at EBMs as well as reimbursement for EBM attendance.

Finally, please remember to post your chapter's officers on the <jalt.org> server. Keeping the online database up to date facilitates communication both within your chapter and with other branches of JALT.

Nobody likes paperwork, but it really does all serve a purpose. Keep up the good work, and thanks for volunteering!

Peter Ross

2004 Chapter Representative Liaison

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Advert: Longman

Generating Student Motivation

Michael Rost

In most EFL teaching situations (particularly in Japan), teachers are rightly concerned with motivation. Indeed, motivation has been called “the heart of language teaching,” since without it, there is no pulse or life in the classroom.

Why is motivation such a crucial issue? To me, this seems very simple. Particularly for young adults and adults in Japan, the deck is stacked against the EFL learner. There just isn't enough input in the L2, there aren't enough opportunities for interaction with English speakers, there aren't enough strong role models promoting the learning of English, and there isn't enough widespread social acceptance for the idea of becoming proficient in English. Because of these conditions, any learner has to have *extraordinary* motivation in order to succeed at learning English!

Due to of the pervasive importance of motivation, *everything* the teacher does in the English classroom has two goals. One is to further language development, but the other is to generate and sustain motivation for learning. Unless the teacher can address both goals simultaneously, the teacher and the students are going to be frustrated. Much has been written about the causal nature of motivation: motivation affects effort, effort affects results, better results lead to an increase in ability. Therefore, we can extrapolate that motivation seems to actually increase a student's ability (Cikszentmihalyi, 1991).

How should a teacher best approach the issue of motivation? There are three layers, I think, of motivation in language learning, and to the extent that a teacher can tap into any of them, he or she is more likely to become a “motivating” teacher.

The first layer, the most central core of motivation, is what might be called “finding your

passion.” I would argue all successful learning is somehow connected to a learner's passion—her central goals in life, the things she cares about most, and the things that move her. I don't mean that a learner needs to become passionate about learning English in order to succeed. Rather, the teacher needs to find a way to connect English learning to the learner's current passion. Sometimes, this involves helping learners wake up to what their passions are, but I would argue that until this is done, it is very hard to make sustainable progress in the language classroom.

The types of learning materials that a teacher selects, the currency and relevance of topics he introduces into the classroom, the ways the teacher allows the students to introduce their own topics into the class—*all* of this—can allow the teacher to connect with learners' passions.

In a sense, the students bring their own learning material with them—their ideas, their music, their feelings—and it is the teacher's job to connect with them.

The second layer of motivation is what I call “changing your lifestyle.” Particularly in EFL settings (but this is also true in most ESL settings), learners do not receive nearly enough instruction, not nearly enough input or meaningful interaction or opportunities for serious output, in the classroom to make and sustain progress in the language. The Center for Applied

Linguistics and the Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages have both estimated that a learner needs a minimum of 4 hours a week of quality instruction in a language to make progress. Even if this is not true in all cases, it makes sense that learners need more language instruction than we can provide in our classrooms, not only for learners to make progress, but for learners to maintain a strong connection to the language and to build their own motivation for learning.

In my own language teaching and materials writing, I now consider it a major part of my job to help students find opportunities for lively language contact and motivating interaction outside the classroom. Helping learners find quality English learning websites (or building your own, as many teachers have done!), quality



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audio and video learning sources, quality multimedia sources, accessible readers and reading material is a critical part of our job as EFL teachers. Spending classroom time to set up, share, and evaluate students' out of class work with English is just as important as covering a lesson in the textbook! Helping students find motivating English "homework" outside of the classroom is one way to engender their intrinsic motivation to learn.

The third layer of motivation is what I call "connecting to learning activities." Successful teachers understand this layer of motivation intuitively, and constantly find ways to help students make language learning activities more relevant and more memorable. It is at this layer that we can evaluate the effect our learning materials and tasks have on our students. Are the activities vivid? Creative? Original? Personal? Do they allow for authentic interaction? Discovery? Self expression? These are the kinds of questions we need to ask about our teaching activities and textbooks, in addition to asking about their "linguistic value".

Much has been researched on the topic of motivation and why it is so fundamental to second language learning. Even though the underlying issues related to motivation can be overwhelming, I think we can successfully focus on these three layers and find concrete ways to bring "the heart of language teaching" into our classrooms.

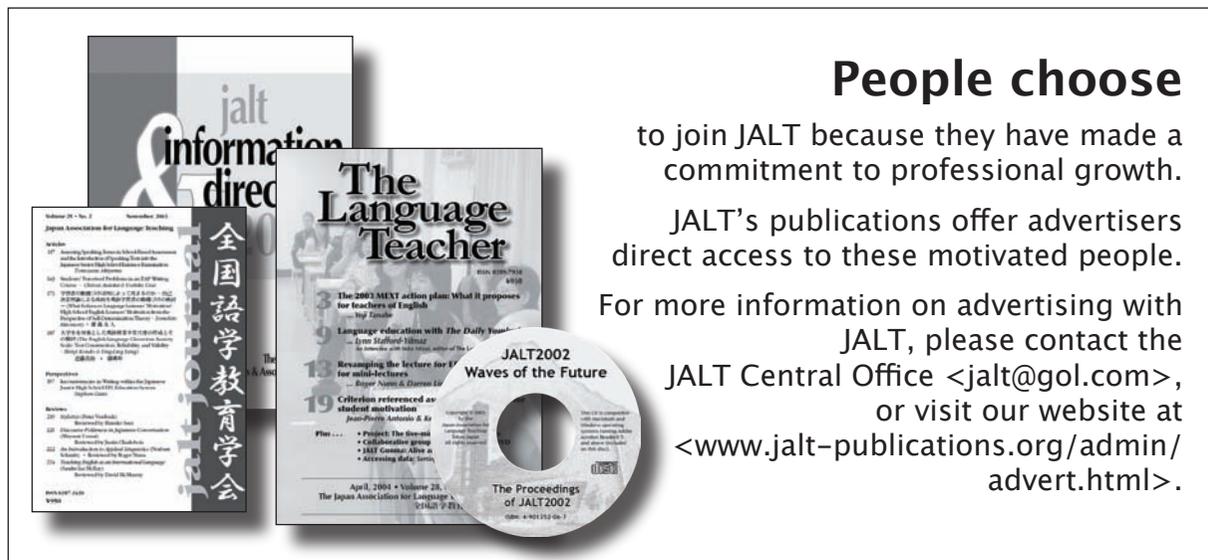
Michael Rost is series editor of *WorldView*, the new 4-level adult series from Longman. He is also principal author of the multimedia course *Longman English Interactive*, and the developmental editor of the successful *English Firsthand* series, also from Longman.

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Book Reviews

...with Robert Taferner <reviews@jalt-publications.org>

For this Special 4 Skills Feature we look at two book reviews that focus on developing skills in the communicative classroom. First, we have *Sound Bytes 1: Listening for Today's World*, a student textbook and accompanying teacher's manual, which emphasize listening skills. James Cassidy then describes his experience using *Success with College Writing*, an easily accessible graded textbook.

If you are interested in writing a book review for this column, please see 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.



Sound Bytes 1: Listening for Today's World

[Steven Gershon and Chris Mares. Hong Kong: Longman, 2001. pp. viii + 136. ¥2,070, and with self-access pack ¥3,000. ISBN: 962-00-5248-X. Teacher's Manual: Nicholas Lambert and Steven Gershon. Singapore: Prentice Hall ELT, 1999. pp. vi + 129. ¥4,180. ISBN: 0-13-096644-4.]

Reviewed by Robert Taferner, Okinawa University

Sound Bytes 1 is the first of two topic-based textbooks for EFL students ranging from false beginners through pre-intermediate level. The content and structure of *Sound Bytes 1* target the interests and learning needs of young adults to increase language skills for the purposes of improving listening strategies, cross-cultural communication, and critical thinking, and further developing student confidence in communicating personal opinions on a range of pertinent topics in English.

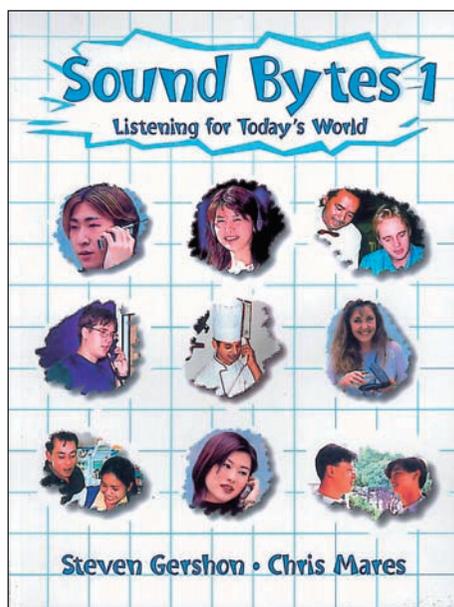
Sound Bytes 1 is comprised of 24 units of EFL-focused content and travel English. Units 1 to 8 start the textbook with personal information, friends, family, and weekly schedules; Units 9 to 16: essential travel English and romance; and Units 17 to 24: feelings, health, memories, the home, food and restaurants, winding up with celebrations and the final radio review. Each regular lesson is divided into five sections: Getting Started (warm-up), Listeners (situational listening input), The Professor (listening for content and vocabulary enrichment), Listening Tips (extension exercises based on the Listeners), and Over to You (speaking activity). These lessons follow the presentation, practice, and production sequence of activities with

optional speaking and homework suggestions in the teacher's manual. Every fourth lesson provides a Radio Review that includes five listening sections recycling thematic content and grammatical structures of the previous three lessons. And at the end of the textbook is a Glossary of vocabulary from each unit. The authors indicate that the text should allow for 24-36 classroom hours of material. However, from

my experience, if given the freedom to design and modify lesson plans, a teacher can expand the textbook easily to fill a full year's syllabus when used as a component of a conversation or multi-skills course.

The teacher's manual gives detailed guidance for each unit, including optional supplementary extension activities incorporating multi-skills, significant cultural information, complete transcriptions for all of the listening material, answer keys, and two photocopiable listening tests.

I used *Sound Bytes 1* in my large 1st-year university multi-level listening and speaking class. Generally my students enjoyed using the textbook, though they always had some difficulty with many of the listening tasks. In particular, they frequently had trouble



weblink: www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/reviews/

understanding details in the Listenings section, but with continued practice they progressed satisfactorily during the term. Also, implicit information and attitudes of the speakers in the conversations needed further explanation, and continually remained an engaging challenge throughout the course. The Listening Tips section, which addresses stress, intonation, and pronunciation, was useful in helping students with natural spoken English and potentially relevant to students studying for tests such as TOEIC and TOEFL. What proved to be very useful was that all of the listening sections were available on three CDs, which accompany the textbook. Taking advantage of this, I asked students to do pre- and post-lesson listening tasks that improved listening receptivity as indicated through periodic testing.

While this textbook is very supportive with self-study student CDs for home study, the *Keypals* (Internet penpal) <www.efcafe.com> site is limited. Initially, I thought the possibility of connecting with other students around the world using the same textbook was potentially enriching. However, I found that my students

rarely received responses from their keypals and this left many of them disappointed. Not to be discouraged, I found an equivalent Keypal site: <www.teaching.com/keypals>, which students navigated through quite easily to find interesting and more responsive keypals throughout the world.

Sound Bytes 1: Listening for Today's World was a successful component of my multi-level 1st-year university speaking and listening class that allowed for creativity to emerge, fostering critical thinking, sound pedagogy, and affect in learning. Although numerous factors contributed to the success of my class, this textbook and manual certainly helped create the classroom dynamics that I needed for my teaching. It can be easily adapted to a large-sized classroom of 30 students or more as the main textbook, used effectively in a language laboratory as supplementary material, or taken home for independent study. I strongly recommend this listening textbook if you are solely interested in the improvement of listening skills or envision using it as part of an integrated 4 skills course. *Sounds Bytes 1* will be helpful.

Success with College Writing

[Dorothy E. Zemach and Lisa A. Rumisek. Tokyo: Macmillan Languagehouse, 2003. pp. v + 108. ¥2,000. ISBN: 4-89585-444-2.]

Reviewed by James G. Cassidy, Osaka Women's University

For college instructors who teach writing classes, the pressures of preparing lessons, correcting homework, and giving feedback on various incarnations of students' efforts can be time consuming and burdensome. It is important, therefore, for teachers to choose a textbook that will help them to easily manage their workload while, at the same time, providing students with valid materials that are easy to understand and motivating. Choosing an appropriate textbook is difficult since there are many varieties of writing textbooks on the market. Certain textbooks are inappropriate for the busy teacher as they contain poor diagrams, unclear instructions, and large chunks of text that have to be deciphered and categorized in terms of their relevance and usefulness. Other textbooks are difficult to use because their aims get somewhat lost in a haze

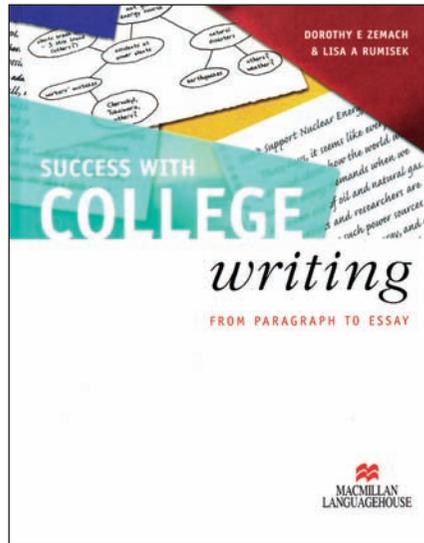
of long reading activities or grammar exercises. To educators who are in the process of choosing a suitable writing book, or who want to replace their existing textbooks with a more manageable, time-efficient textbook that teaches valuable writing skills, I highly recommend *Success with College Writing*.

Success with College Writing is primarily geared towards intermediate college students. It is divided into 12 colourful and beautifully illustrated chapters. Each chapter introduces students to a number of learning points, which are practised and tested by a variety of interactive and individually assigned activities. The first four chapters explain how to choose and develop topics and guide the reader through the process of creating well-structured paragraphs with appropriate transition signals and content.

The next four chapters explore the different functions of paragraphs such as giving opinions, comparing, contrasting, and stating problems, as well as coming up with solutions. The final four chapters explain how to outline and compose complete essays that are well formed in terms of their overall structure and in terms of unity and coherence. The last chapter introduces strategies for writing essays for examinations. This is a particularly welcome chapter for teachers of TOEFL who wish to prepare students for the Test of Written English. Each chapter concludes with a review section which provides fun and interesting activities aimed at checking students' comprehension of key points. The review section provides a powerful diagnostic tool for teachers, and it orientates students to revisit areas that they have not fully understood. A useful appendix of additional materials is also included to add more variety to class and homework activities.

One of the main attributes of this textbook is that it is clear and easy to use. This is a particular advantage for both students and teachers alike. The instructions are succinct and well explained, so students are not faced with the prospect of having to wade through large chunks of text in order to complete an exercise. Students are therefore freed up to work on their writing skills and, as a result, can get more out of their time spent in class. The textbook contains an abundance of subheadings, clear instructions, and intelligently designed graphics, which efficiently guide the student through each learning point. The graphics include colourful pictures, cartoons, and text on pastel-coloured backgrounds, which have been designed to look like script on

writing paper. Every teaching point is readily identifiable, clearly described, and easy to follow, which makes the teacher's task of planning and executing lessons so much easier.



Although *Success with College Writing* is clearly written and easy to use, the last four chapters introduce much more textual content in the form of example essays. However, by the time students reach these chapters, they have already mastered many of the basic skills for composing essays and experience few problems with the sudden exposure to large amounts of text. In addition, the textbook does not provide a correction key for teacher and peer

editing. Many teachers who prefer to use their own correction keys may welcome this omission.

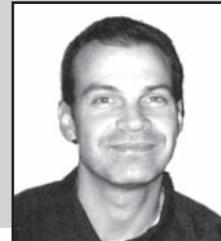
On the whole, *Success with College Writing* is a wonderfully composed textbook. It is extremely accessible for both students and teachers, and the activities and tasks are interesting and well graded. The textbook is very easy to navigate and it truly lives up to its name, as it has been successful in getting my students to significantly improve their writing skills.



Recently Received

...compiled by Scott Gardner <pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

The following items are available for review. Asterisks indicate first notice; exclamation marks indicate final notice. All final notice items will be removed December 31. Reviewers of classroom-related books must adequately test materials in the classroom. If materials are requested by more than one reviewer, they will go to the reviewer with the most expertise. Please state your qualifications when requesting materials. We welcome resources and materials both for students and for teachers. Publishers should contact the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison before sending materials (email address above). Check out our listing on the TLT website.



Books for Students (reviewed in TLT)

Contact: Scott Gardner
<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

**Breakthrough Japanese: 20 Mini Lessons for Better Conversation*. Hirayama, H. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004.

Cross the TOEIC Bridge. Stafford-Yilmaz, L. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004. [incl. CDs].

**Enjinia no tame no eikaiwa chou kokufuku tekisuto: Jissen! Tekunikaru mittingu [Engineers' Power English for Technical Meetings—The Way it Really Happens]*. Hirai, M., & Kurdyla, F. J. Tokyo: Ohmsha, 2004.

Japanese in MangaLand: Basic Japanese Course Using Manga. Bernabe, M. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003.

!*Study Skills for Speakers of English as a Second Language*. Lewis, M., & Reinders, H. New York: Palgrave, 2003.

**Top-up Listening (Levels 1, 2, 3)*. Cleary, C., Cooney, T., & Holden, B. Tokyo: ABAX, 2003. [incl. CDs].

What About You? (Book 2). Biegel, K. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Books for Teachers (reviewed in JALT Journal)

Contact: Yuriko Kite
<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>

New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms. Fotos, S., & Browne, C. M. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

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On request, the JALT Central Office will provide photocopies of past or current articles from *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*. Please include as much bibliographic information as possible: author name, article title, year, issue number, and pages.

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Back issues of *The Language Teacher*, *JALT Journal*, *JALT Applied Materials*, and *Conference Proceedings* are also available. Please inquire by fax or email whether the publication is in stock before ordering.

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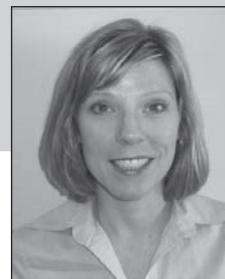
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Recently Received

Special Interest Group News

...with Mary Hughes <sig-news@jalt-publications.org>

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



Bilingualism—Our group has two broad aims: to support families who regularly communicate in more than one language and to further research on bilingualism in Japanese contexts. See our website at <www.bsig.org> for more information.

当研究会は複数言語で生活する家族および日本で行うバイリンガルリズム研究の応援を目的としています。ホームページの<www.bsig.org>をアクセスして下さい。

College and University Educators—

Information about what is going on with CUE can be found at <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>. Please check for regular updates on the 15th of each month.

Gender Awareness in Language

Education—The purpose of the GALE SIG is to research gender and its implications for language learning, teaching, and training. We welcome submissions for our newsletter (published three times a year: spring, summer, and fall) on both theoretical and practical topics related to the SIG's aims. Book reviews, lesson plans, think pieces, poetry—basically anything related to gender and language teaching—are welcomed. To see past newsletters, please visit our website at <www.tokyoprogressive.org.uk/gale>. You can submit a piece by sending it to one of our coordinators: Steve Cornwell <stevec@gol.com> or Andrea Simon-Maeda <andy@nagoya-ku.ac.jp>. To join GALE, please use the form in the back of this *TLT* or contact the Membership Chair, Diane Nagatomo <dianenagatomo@m2.pbc.ne.jp>.

Global Issues in Language Education—

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!

The GILE website is located at <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>. For further information, please contact the Coordinator, Kip Cates <kcates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>.

Junior and Senior High School—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. In addition, we are also intensely interested in curriculum innovation. The employment of native speaker instructors on a large scale is a recent innovation and one which has yet to be thoroughly studied or evaluated. JALT members who are involved with junior or senior high school EFL are cordially invited to join us for dialogue and professional development opportunities.

Learner Development—The Learner Development SIG is concerned with ways of empowering learners to take control of their own learning inside and outside the classroom. We are a vibrant, friendly, and welcoming group. Recent events have included a day conference in Umeda and a forum at the Nara JALT conference, *Empowering Learners for the Classroom and Beyond*. Our plans for next year include working together towards a second anthology of collaborative research relating to learner development in Japan and beyond. If you haven't seen the first anthology, check out the link to the anthology on the SIG website <http://coyote.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/learnerdev/> or contact Ellen Head <ellen@andrew.ac.jp> or Denise Boyd <db4post@hotmail.com>.

Pragmatics—The Pragmatics SIG will co-sponsor the Temple University Applied Linguistics Colloquium 2005 to be held on Sunday, February 13. We invite interested

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applied linguists to submit proposals for 20-minute presentations. The deadline for submissions is December 20, 2004. For details, please contact Megumi Kawate-Mierzejewska <mierze@tuj.ac.jp>.

Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education—The PALE SIG welcomes new members, officers, volunteers, and submissions of articles for our journal or our newsletter. To read current and past issues of our journal, visit <www.jaltpale.org/>. Also, anyone may join our listserv at <groups.yahoo.com/group/PALE_Group/>. For information on events, visit <www.jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

Pronunciation—The Pronunciation SIG is seeking new members. This SIG is regrouping, with the intent to discuss, share, and promote ideas, processes, and up-to-date research regarding pronunciation teaching and learning. If you are interested in joining, or would like further information, please contact Susan Gould <gould@lc.chubu.ac.jp> or <suzytalk@yahoo.com>.

Teaching Children—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 at <tcsig@yahoogroups.com>. We are always looking for new people to keep the SIG dynamic. With our bilingual newsletter, we particularly hope to appeal to Japanese teachers. Hope you can join us for one of our upcoming events. For more information, visit <www.tcsigjalt.org>.

児童教育部会は子どもに英語（外国語）を教える全ての教師を対象にした部会です。当部会では、この分野で著名な教師が担当するコラムを含む会報を年4回発行しております。また、子どもに英語を指導するアイデアや疑問を交換する場としてメーリングリスト<tcsig@yahoogroups.com>を運営しています。活発な部会を維持していくためにも新会員を常に募集しております。会報を英語と日本語で提供しており日本人の先生方の参加も大歓迎です。今後開催される部会の催し物へぜひご参加ください。部会に関する詳細は<www.tcsigjalt.org>をご覧ください。

Teaching Older Learners—An increase in the number of people of retirement age, combined with the internationalization of Japanese society, is increasing the number of people who are eager to study English as part of lifelong learning. As such, this SIG is needed to provide resources and information for teachers who teach English to older learners. For more information on this SIG, or to join the SIG mailing list, please contact the coordinator, Tadashi Ishida <papion_tadashi@nifty.ne.jp>.

SIG Contacts

Bilingualism—Tim Greer; Tim Greer; t: 078-803-7683; <tim@kobe-u.ac.jp>; <www.bsig.org>

College and University Educators—Philip McCasland (Coordinator) <mccaslandpl@rocketmail.com> t: 0463-58-1211 ext. 4587(w), 0463-69-5523(h) <allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE/>

Computer-Assisted Language Learning—Timothy Gutierrez (Coordinator) <sig-coordinator@jaltcall.org>; Newsletter Editorial Team <sig-newsletter@jaltcall.org>; Annette Karseras (Program Chair); t:090-7021-4811; <sig-program@jaltcall.org>; <jaltcall.org>

Gender Awareness in Language Education—Steve Cornwell; <stevec@gol.com>; <www.tokyoprogressive.org.uk/gale/>

Global Issues in Language Education—Kip A. Cates; t/f: 0857-31-5650(w); <kates@fed.tottori-u.ac.jp>; <www.jalt.org/global/sig/>

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Teaching Children—Alison Miyake;
t/f: 0834-27-0078; <mbi@joy.ocn.ne.jp>;
<www.tcsigjalt.org/>

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<01jhubbell@jcom.home.ne.jp>;
<www.jalt.org/test>

Forming SIGs

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<gould@lc.chubu.ac.jp>

Teaching Older Learners—Tadashi Ishida;
t/f: 03-3844-3104; <papion_tadashi@nifty.ne.jp>

Chapter Reports

...with Heather Sparrow <chap-reports@jalt-publications.org>

The Chapter Reports column is a forum for sharing synopses of presentations held at JALT Chapters around Japan with the TLT readership. For guidelines on contributions, see the Submissions page at the back of each issue.



Akita: September—*Using Short Texts for Integrated Skills Practice in Language* by **Christopher Hoskins**. Hoskins introduced the *Rummel Sequence*—seven activities using a short text about 230 words in length at a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level 9. The sequence can be used for any reading level and can be adapted to any group's level. Participants acting as students tried the following activities: (1) *Listening Scan*—students listen for the answers to set questions; (2) *Listening Cloze*—a cloze style preferred by the teacher may be used; (3) *Reading Cloze*—created from a passage from the text; (4) *Dictation*—a passage is read three times, for understanding the main ideas, sentence by sentence for dictation, and again to check; (5) *Dictagloss*—students are asked to take notes on a short passage and in pairs or groups, reconstruct the passage from their combined notes. At this point, the full text is given to the students. (6) *Reading Scan*—a group activity utilizing the questions from the first activity. (7) *Short Essay Answer Writing*—Students provide short written answers in the final activity.

Reported by Jarrett D. Ragan Jr.

Gunma: September—*English Language Cooperative* by **Kenneth Biegel**. Looking to give students more opportunities to use English outside the classroom? Consider adopting Biegel's idea of an *English Language Cooperative* (ELC). Too often teachers are asked by students, "How can I practice more English?" Most often they are told to watch DVDs, listen to English songs, read newspapers or magazines, or look at the many free sites on the Internet where students can practice listening skills, grammar, or reading. While excellent in their own right, there is one problem with traditional electronic media from the student's point of view—they are passive ways of learning, devoid of any real interaction with other speakers. The English Language Cooperative gives students and teachers a venue to explore English outside the classroom. The facilitator creates a homepage on the Internet which serves as a type of virtual meeting place. However, the ELC goes beyond being a bulletin board. Participants decide when to meet and which topic to discuss during a regular cooperative meeting. Biegel

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discussed traditional forms of electronic media, the increasing use of the Internet, how ELC has worked in his experience, and introduced many helpful sites for students and teachers.

Reported by Barry Keith

Kobe: September—Getting Students to Speak in Class, Even in Large Groups: The Immediate Method in High Schools by **Bruno Vannieuwenhuysse** and **John Brewer**. While students in the West typically answer “I don’t know” when unable to answer immediately, the Japanese student feels bound to search deeply for an answer if it is not readily available—thinking deeply for a long time, checking through a book, or asking neighboring students. A quick and simple “I don’t know” may be seen as showing disrespect because there has been no attempt to reach the elusive answer. As many of us can testify, these silent periods can cause frustration. To combat this, the presenters explain this cultural difference to their students and introduce a *10-second rule*; simply, students must answer within 10 seconds. If they are unable to, they can say “I don’t know” and it will be considered a valid answer. Other useful meta-communication phrases, such as “What is...in English?” are also taught. These steps are the first lesson in the *Immediate Method*. This method has three characteristics: (1) intensive use of meta-communication; (2) content based on everyday life topics (no role-playing, students speak as themselves); and (3) frequent oral tests. Lessons are divided into presentation of new material (typically one new question/answer pattern and some vocabulary) and testing. Depending on class size, students will be tested every class or every other class. Testing is usually done with two students at a time using a *question/answer/feedback* structure. Students are responsible for keeping their own assessment card used by the teacher who marks their scores on one-minute tests. For the teacher, this approach requires intense work in the classroom, but little preparation outside. For the student, there is a lot of free time, but frequent opportunities to speak face-to-face with the teacher, and a clear assessment system to track their own progress. Materials for junior high school classes should be completed in November.

Reported by David Heywood.

Shinshu: September—TOEIC Test Taking Techniques by **Kenichi Fukuzawa**. Fukuzawa, who has taken the TOEIC exam 24 times since 1994, looked at how to improve TOEIC and general English study skills, and investigated the relationship between TOEIC and English language ability. Test takers must understand grammar more precisely and deeply. The more nonnative speakers understand English grammar, the higher their TOEIC scores will be.

There is a proportional relationship between TOEIC English and general English. *Juken* English (English for university entrance examinations), which specializes in reading and grammar, is useful to get a clear understanding of English language structures. Test takers must build their business and travel-related English vocabulary daily by reading an English newspaper, because TOEIC uses vocabulary from a wide variety of settings. It is more effective to study for small periods of time on a regular basis; for example, 30 to 60 minutes per day, every day. Both general English study and focused TOEIC preparation are valuable. As for listening, quantity is key—LISTEN A LOT. Create an English environment whenever or wherever possible with CDs, radio, etc. Fukuzawa’s method of studying English involves a great deal of time spent reading aloud and listening.

TOEIC test takers must answer questions very quickly. Speed is essential, even at the cost of one or two mistakes. Keep a close eye on time, particularly during the reading section. It is very important to finish ALL the questions within the time limit, despite the cost of a few mistakes.

Reported by Tami Kaneko with Fred Carruth

Know About IATEFL?

You can join the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL), as well as any number of IATEFL SIGs, through JALT. Check the postal cash transfer form at the back of this issue for more information!

Chapter Events

...with Aleda Krause <chap-events@jalt-publications.org>

The season of *bonenkai* is upon us! Join others in your chapter for a great end-of-the-year party and meet new friends or get reacquainted with old friends, for a truly silver and gold festive season! Remember, as a JALT member you may attend any chapter meeting at JALT member rates—usually free. And chapters, don't forget to let everyone know what you're doing. Add your event to the JALT calendar at <jalt.org/calendar/> or send the details to the editor by email or t/f: 048-787-3342.



Chiba—Monster Classes by **Charles Kowalski**.

This workshop will explore strategies for teaching “monster classes”—large, required classes with widely varying levels of proficiency and motivation. Topics to be addressed include: “setting the stage,” lesson and activity design, dealing with written work, generating and sustaining motivation, and assessment. Participants' ideas and insights will also be most welcome. *Sunday December 19, 14:00-16:30; SATY Bunka Hall, Room 3 (4th F), 1-min. walk from Inage Station east exit on JR Sobu Line; one-day members ¥1000.*

Hamamatsu—Review Meeting of the Nara Conference by various speakers. Attendees of the JALT2004 Conference will give a review of the workshops and talks in Nara. This is a great opportunity for people who could not attend the conference to get a cheap, timesaving synopsis of the latest in the language teaching field. After the meeting there will be a Christmas lunch. *Sunday December 12, 10:00-12:00; Hamamatsu, ZAZA City Bldg. Palette, 5th F, Meeting Room A; one-day members ¥1000 (1st visit free).*

Ibaraki—Content-Based Instruction for English Activities in Elementary Schools by **Tom Merner** (Japan College of Foreign Languages and Reitaku University). Many teachers conducting English activities are expressing the difficulty of conducting effective lessons for upper grade students. The presenter will introduce several activities that have been designed and used in elementary school classrooms. (*Bonenkai* following meeting.) *Sunday December 12, 13:00-17:00; Chuu-Kouzashitsu No. 1 of Kennan Shougai Gakushuu Center (5th F of Ularu Bldg., across from Tsuchiura Station); one-day members ¥500.*

Kagoshima—Christmas Activities by **Damian Hill**, Kooka Kids English House.

Damian will introduce some Christmas activities for kids, to be used either at your Christmas party or in the classroom. For bookings or more info: t: 099-216-8800. *Sunday December 5, 15:00-17:00; Kosha Biru (same bldg. as Jelly Beans); one-day members ¥800.*

Kitakyushu—The Lesson Clinic moderated by **Margaret Orleans**. Participants are invited to bring along that nearly perfect lesson plan that somehow fell flat on its face, in order to get advice from the rest of the group on how it might be doctored back to health. *Saturday December 11, 18:30-20:30; Kitakyushu International Conference Center, Room 31; one-day members ¥1000.*

Kobe—Reading Attitudes and Habits, Potpourri Meeting, & Bonenkai by **Brent Jones**.

Preliminary results of an ongoing action research project involving adult learners and university EFL students in Japan are reported together with ideas and activities for promoting constructive EFL reading habits and attitudes. Practical ideas for including extensive reading will be introduced. (If we have no other speakers, the meeting will be over around 7 and our *Bonenkai* will start.) *Saturday December 11, 18:00-20:00; Kobe YMCA (2-7-15 Kano-cho, Chuo-ku, Kobe/078-241-7204); one-day members ¥1000.*

Kyoto—Teacher Talk, Student Comprehension, and Training for Elementary School English Teachers by **Emiko Yukawa**, Kyoto Notre Dame University. This presentation will focus on teacher talk strategies in elementary school English classrooms and student comprehension of the teacher's English. What do/should teachers do while speaking English to elementary school children who know almost

weblink: www.jalt.org/calendar/

no English? What do students do in order to comprehend as much as they can? Implications for teacher training will be discussed. *Friday December 10, 19:00-21:00; Kyoto Kyoiku Bunka Center; see <www.kyotojalt.org> for details.*

Matsuyama—“Virtual” Intercultural Experiences via Videoconferencing by **Linda Kadota**, Shinonome College. The presenter will discuss setting up a videoconference project. Various kinds of videoconferencing hardware and software will be introduced and the protocol for and pitfalls of a successful virtual intercultural interaction delineated. Collaborative activities conducted through email prior to the videoconference provide students at both institutions the opportunity for intercultural learning while simultaneously helping to foster building relationships. *Sunday December 12, 14:15-16:15; Shinonome High School Kinenkan 4th F; one-day members ¥1000.*

Nagasaki—Plans for 2005. We don't have a meeting scheduled for this month, but please contact us for any late changes. We are now welcoming any ideas or offers for presentations, workshops, demonstrations, and more through much of 2005. Our next scheduled meeting will feature Ronald Schmidt-Fajlik on Sunday, February 13. More information about this event will soon be available on our homepage (see Contacts).

Nagoya Chapter—Inter-City My Share Live: Nagoya and Toyohashi with **Brian Cullen** (Nagoya Institute of Technology) in Nagoya. (See Toyohashi announcement.) *Sunday December 12, 13:30-16:00; Usual place.*

Okayama—Bias and Balance in EFL Content on Controversial Issues by **Trevor Sargent** (Tottori University). A disturbing trend toward the teaching of biased views of controversial global issues in EFL classrooms, with excuses for not offering balanced approaches, has been gathering momentum under JALT auspices. This presentation looks at specific instances of this, points out the dangers for students, and offers solutions based on current academic practice and mainstream global education. *Saturday December 11, 15:00-17:00; Okayama Sankaku building near Omotecho in Okayama city; one-day members ¥1000; students ¥500.*

Okinawa—End-of-Year Party. Okinawa JALT's *Bonenkai*. For up-to-date information, please visit our online calendar at <www.okinawateacher.com>. *Sunday December 19, 14:00-17:00; Location TBA; one-day members ¥1000.*

Omiya—My Share by JALT Omiya members and guests. Give your fellow teachers a year-end gift of a My Share Swap. Please bring 25 photocopies of an interesting lesson, technique, organizer, game, or other resource to exchange. Don't worry about planning a formal presentation, but get ready to talk about teaching ideas with your peers. Target age or level is not important: kids through adults, beginners to advanced. *Sunday December 12, 14:00-17:00; Sakuragi Kominkan (near Omiya Station, west exit); one-day members ¥1000.*

Sendai—Second Language Acquisition by **Neal Snape**. The presenter is currently studying Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in the UK. He will report on new research and findings. *Sunday December 19, 14:00-17:00; venue TBA; one-day members ¥1000; student non-members—free for their first attendance, then ¥500.*

Shinshu—Window on the World and End of Year Party by **Tamao Hoshina**. At this event at Tami-san's home, enjoy snacks and listen to Tamao Hoshina talk about her experiences in Cambodia for the Japanese volunteer organization JAICA. Tamao then became involved in special needs education. Currently she works at Hanada Yogo Gakko and is interested in *shikiji kyoiku*, the education of recognizing words. Come enjoy what looks to be a fascinating talk. *Sunday December 12, 14:00-17:00; Suwa; one-day members ¥500.*

Shizuoka—Christmas Party. Details TBA. *Sunday December 19, 11:30-13:30; venue TBA; everyone pay for what you have.*

Tokushima—Chapter Meeting and Year-End Get Together. Contact: Noriko Tojo. *Sunday December 12, 17:30-19:30; Tokushima Catholic Church (in front of Jyoto High School); one-day members ¥1000.*

Toyohashi—*Inter-City My Share Live: Nagoya and Toyohashi* with **Anthony Robins** (Aichi University of Education). The use of a computer camera combined with chat software allows students to interact economically with visitors over the Internet. In this session, the JALT chapters of Nagoya and Toyohashi will link together in an exciting practical demonstration of the possibilities of this technology. After the technology is explained, participants of both chapters will engage together in *My Share Live*. Presenters and participants will use computer cameras to share one of their own teaching ideas with participants in the other chapter. *Sunday December 12, 13:30-16:00; Aichi University Bldg. 5, Room 53A; one-day members ¥1000.*

West Tokyo—will co-sponsor *The JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2005* along with the GALE, Pragmatics, TE, TC, TOL, and TEVAL SIGs, and the Tokyo Chapter. The featured speaker will be **Curtis Kelly** (Osaka Gakuin University) on adult teaching methods, learning contracts, needs assessment, and learning theories. For more information, visit <www.jalt.org/pansig/2005/> or contact <pansig2005@yahoo.com>. Call for Papers deadline is February 20, 2005. *Saturday May 14–Sunday May 15, 2005; Tokyo Keizai University.*

Yamagata—*California in Terms of its History, Culture, Education, Language, etc.* by **Chris Douthit**. The presenter is to talk about the above-mentioned topic focusing on the English language as a means of global communication in the 21st century. *Saturday December 4, 13:30-15:30; Yamagata Seibu Kominkan (t: 023-645-1223); one-day members ¥800.*

Yokohama—*Top-Up Communication* by **Alastair Graham-Marr**. Graham-Marr highlights the importance of both top-down and bottom-up processing skills to help students develop their communicative abilities. He shows how to break up the skills of speaking and listening into sets of sub-skills, which can then be a focus of classroom activities for monitoring achievement. *Sunday December 12, 14:00-16:30; Ginou Bunka Kaikan (Skills & Culture Center) near JR Kannai & Yokohama Subway Isezakichojamachi, Room 801, 8th F (see webpage for details & map links); one-day members ¥1000.*

Chapter Contacts

If you want to get in touch with a chapter for information or assistance, please use the following contacts. Chapters who want to change their contact should send it the editor: Aleda Krause; t/f: 048-787-3342; <chap-events@jalt-publications.org>.

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"Wow, that was such a great lesson, I really want others to try it!"

「すばらしい授業！、これを他の人にも試してもらいたい！」



Every teacher has run a lesson which just "worked." So, why not share it around? The **My Share** Column is seeking material from creative, enthusiastic teachers for possible publication.

全ての教師は授業の実践者です。この貴重な経験をみんなで分かち合おうではありませんか。My Share Columnは創造的で、熱心な教師からの実践方法、マテリアルの投稿をお待ちしています。

For more information, please contact the editor.

詳しくは、ご連絡ください。

<my-share@jalt-publications.org>

Job Information Center

...with John D. Smith <job-info@jalt-publications.org>

To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please email <job-info@jalt-publications.org> or fax (089-924-5745) John D. Smith, Job Information Center. Email is preferred. Please type your ad in the body of the email. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, 2 months before publication, and contain the following information: city and prefecture, 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 sex, race, age, or nationality either must be modified or will not be included in the JIC column.



Shiga-ken—The English Department of the Faculty of Education at Shiga University in Otsu is seeking two part-time native English speakers for required freshman oral English classes starting April 2005. The campus is a 10–15 minute bus ride from JR Ishiyama Station. **Qualifications:** Native English speakers with an MA in a language related field and experience at the university/adult level given first priority. Other MAs with relevant experience considered. You must present evidence of completing your MA. No In Progress or ABDs will be considered. Basic Japanese would be useful in dealing with the office staff. **Duties:** Each position is two consecutive classes on Fridays: second, third, or fourth periods. While there is some flexibility in the choice of periods, the day cannot be changed. The classes are 90 minutes each, with approximately 25–35 students per class. **Salary & Benefits:** The salary depends on age: from ¥7,000 to ¥10,400 per class per week with paid transportation. **Application Materials:** Cover letter and resume including DOB and photograph, a copy of your diploma, three letters of reference at least one of which must be from someone in Japan (with email addresses for those outside Japan, and telephone numbers and email addresses for those in Japan), and evidence of a proper visa. Send materials to the contact address below; email applications will not be considered. Only successful applicants will be contacted. Application materials will not be returned unless accompanied by SASE. **Deadline:** Ongoing. **Contact:** Michael Wolf, English Department, Shiga University, 2-5-1 Hiratsu, Otsu, Shiga 520-0862; <mwolf@sue.shiga-u.ac.jp>; <www.shiga-u.ac.jp>.

Tokyo-to—The British Education College in Tokyo has recently been established as a division of the British Education Office, to provide English upgrading and foundation programmes in collaboration with the Northern Consortium, to enable Japanese students to succeed in undergraduate and postgraduate study in Britain. Throughout the year we run ongoing recruitment for the following positions: Qualified Part-time EFL Teachers (¥3,000–¥4,500 per hour); Qualified Part-time Management, Social Science or Art Teachers (¥3,000–¥5,000 per hour); Writers, Material Editors, Web Editors. **Application Materials:** To apply, please fax/email us your CV in English with a covering letter addressing why you are appropriate for the job. **Deadline:** Ongoing. **Contact:** f: 03-3368-6605; <recruitment@beo.jp>; <www.beo.jp/recruitment.html>

Tokyo-to—The Waseda University School of Letters, Arts and Sciences is accepting applications for possible openings for part-time teachers for 2005–2006. **Qualifications:** Master's degree in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, Literature, or related field and at least 2 years of teaching experience at a Japanese university. **Duties:** Teach English for General Communication, English for Academic Purposes, or English for Professional Purposes classes. **Salary & Benefits:** According to Waseda University regulations. **Application Materials:** Cover letter and resume in either English or Japanese with a list of related publications, if any. **Deadline:** Ongoing. **Contact:** Send application materials to Part-time English Teaching, Waseda University School of Letters, Arts and Sciences, 1-24-1 Toyama, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-8644. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

weblink: www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/

Job Info Web Corner

You can view the job listings on JALT's homepage (address below). Here are a variety of sites with information relevant to teaching in Japan:

1. EFL, ESL, and Other Teaching Jobs in Japan at <www.jobsinjapan.com>
2. Information for those seeking university positions (not a job list) at <www.debito.org/univquestions.html>
3. ELT News at <www.eltnews.com/jobsinjapan.shtml>
4. JALT Jobs and Career Enhancement links at <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/jobs/>
5. Teaching English in Japan: A Guide to Getting a Job at <www.wizweb.com/~susan/japan/>
6. ESL Cafe's Job Center at <www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/jobcenter.html>
7. Ohayo Sensei at <www.ohayosensei.com>
8. NACSIS (National Center for Science Information Systems' Japanese site) career information at <jrecin.jst.go.jp>
9. The Digital Education Information Network Job Centre at <www.edufind.com/index.cfm>
10. EFL in Asia at <www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Flats/7947/eflasia.htm>
11. Jobs in Japan at <www.englishresource.com/index.html>
12. Job information at <www.ESLworldwide.com>
13. World English Jobs <www.englishjobmaze.com>
14. Hokkaido Insider: A subscription service for news and jobs <www.ne.jp/asahi/hokkaido/kenhartmann/>

Conference Calendar

...with Hayo Reinders <conferences@jalt-publications.org>

New listings are welcome. Please submit information to the editor by the 15th of the month at <conferences@jalt-publications.org>, at least 3 months ahead (4 months for overseas conferences). Thus December 15 is the deadline for a March conference in Japan or an April conference overseas.



Upcoming Conferences

December 1–3, 2004—*The Pacific Asia Computer Assisted Language Learning Conference*, at the National University of Singapore. Invited speakers: Carol Chapelle (Iowa State University), Anna Uhl Chamot (George Washington University), Mayumi Usami (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), Thomas Robb (Kyoto Sangyo University), Stephen Carey (University of British Columbia, Columbia), David Hiple (University of Hawai'i), Peter Liddell (University of Victoria, Canada), and others. Contact: Hayo Reinders, <hayo@hayo.nl>. <pacall.org/PacCALL2004.html>

January 20–22, 2005—

The 25th Annual Thailand TESOL International Conference: Surfing the Waves of Change in ELT, at

the Imperial Queen's Park Bangkok, Thailand. Contact: Maneepen Apibalsri, <mapibal@ccs.sut.ac.th>. <thaitesol.org>

March 12, 2005—*The first CamTESOL*

conference on English language teaching, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This is a conference for professionals in the field of English Language Teaching and related issues. This conference will be the first of an annual CamTESOL conference series. Contact: <info@camtesol.org>. <camtesol.org>

weblink: www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/confcal/

April 18–20, 2005—40th RELC International Seminar: New Dimensions in the Teaching of Oral Communication, at the Regional English Language Centre, Singapore. The role of oral skills in the learning of a language has been an area of theoretical discussion over the years, with some suggesting that the oral language must come first. There has also been controversy over the need for the oral skills, especially in foreign language situations where the main aim is examination preparation rather than communication with speakers/writers of the target language. Contact: RELC Secretariat, <admin@relc.org.sg>. <relc.org.sg/sem_frame.htm>

May 26–28, 2005—The 18th TESL Canada Conference: Building a Profession, Building a Nation, at the Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Canada. The conference will include a research symposium, many workshops, a technology fair, keynote addresses by Karen E. Johnson and Elana Shohamy, a learners' conference, and much more! Contact: <teslca2005@yahoo.ca>. <www.tesl.ca>

July 24–29, 2005—The 14th World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Presentations at the World Congress will bring together applied linguists from diverse communities and from varied intellectual traditions to explore the future. The theme of the conference is *The Future is Now*—a future where language is a means to express ideas that were unthinkable, to cross boundaries that seemed to be unbridgeable, and to share our local realities with people who live continents away. Contact: Richard Young, <rfyoung@wisc.edu>. <aila2005.org>

August 24–27, 2005—Eurocall Conference: CALL, WELL, and TELL, Fostering Autonomy, at Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland. The theme aims to focus attention on the changing concepts and practices concerning autonomy in learning and teaching brought about by technological developments. It aims to actively promote the awareness, availability, and practical benefits of autonomous learning using CALL, WELL, & TELL at all levels of education, with a view to enhancing educational effectiveness, as

measured by student success, both academically and personally. Contact: <info@eurocall-languages.org.pl>. <www.eurocall-languages.org.pl>

Calls for Papers/Posters

Deadline: January 31, 2005 (for June 3–5, 2005)—The JALTCALL 2005 Conference: Glocalization through CALL: Bringing People Together, at Tokyo Keizai University. The conference focuses on the social dimension of CALL at local and global levels, as represented by the term glocalization. The conference organising committee is specifically seeking submissions in the following areas: using CALL to encourage communication between learners at the local level, using CALL to encourage communication between learners globally, collaborative CALL research projects, collaborative CALL learning projects, and local-scale CALL projects with international objectives. Plenary speakers include Ushi Felix (Monash University, Australia), Hayo Reinders (University of Auckland, New Zealand), and Yukio Takefuta (Bunkyo Gakuin University, Japan). Contact: <submissions@jaltcall.org>. <www.jaltcall.org/>

Deadline: February 20, 2005 (for May 14–15, 2005)—The JALT Pan-SIG Conference 2005, at Tokyo Keizai University. Sponsored by the JALT Gender Awareness in Language Teaching, Pragmatics, Teacher Education, Teaching Children, Teaching Older Learners, and Testing & Evaluation SIGs, and the West & Central Tokyo Chapters. The featured speaker will be Curtis Kelly of Osaka Gakuin University on adult teaching methods, learning contracts, needs assessment, and learning theories. Contact: <pansig2005@yahoo.com>. <www.jalt.org/pansig/2005/>

WIRED

...with Malcolm Swanson & Paul Daniels
<tlwired@jalt-publications.org>



Studying Abroad: Searching the Web for Programs

By Derek Di Matteo

In our capacity as teachers, we are sometimes called upon to guide a student in choosing a study abroad program. Some of the schools we work at have established relationships with certain programs and have information booklets to hand to inquisitive students. But where does a teacher turn when no such booklet or established program exists, or the student wants something different? In the absence of a database of vetted programs available for teachers, we must search for study abroad programs ourselves.

of found sites, and a list of sites to start your search. However, effective searches first require preparation.

Preparing to Search

Before you jump in the driver's seat and start revving your browser, stop and take note of what exactly you are looking for. Simply searching for *study abroad* results in over 3 million hits on Google, so having a clear set of criteria is the key to making your search give good results.



The Web is a natural place to search for study abroad programs, and you should feel comfortable using this resource. The three most frequently asked questions are:

- How do I search for these programs?
- How do I know if the site is legitimate?
- Can you suggest some places to start looking?

This article answers these questions by presenting techniques for effective web searching, a checklist for assessing the legitimacy

Some guiding questions:

- *Who are you researching this information for?* Yourself, a high school student, a college student, or a working professional?
- *What are that person's needs?* For example, as a teacher you might be searching for a wide variety of programs in order to create a library of links for future students; however, if you are researching for a particular student, your criteria will be different. Does that individual want just a cultural exchange, or

weblink: www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/wired/

a serious study program that can bring the student to the next level of proficiency?

- *What is the desired length of time?* For example: a 2-week intensive course, a 1–3 month homestay, or a semester or year abroad at a university.

Knowing the answers to these questions is just the starting point. Find out as much as you can about your student and his or her goals for studying abroad. The more accurate the picture, the better the advice you can give, and the better you can search for the answer online.

Search Tips

Okay, so you are ready to begin looking for a program. For best results, use terms that are as specific as possible. If you want to study abroad in a particular country (e.g., the United States of America), then you should include that country's name in your search string (e.g., *study abroad USA* or *study abroad America*). Are you looking for a particular length program? Try including that in your search as well (e.g., *2-week intensive English program, Australia*).

The more specific you get, the more relevant your search results will be. Simply searching for *study abroad* on Google returns over 3 million results, which contain a mix of corporate, university, service programs, and junk websites. By contrast, searching for:

2-week intensive English program, Australia

results in 101,000 hits. However, this can be narrowed down even further by adding quotation marks around the term *2 weeks*:

"2-week" intensive English program, Australia

which narrows the results down to 1,880 web sites, with a clear focus.

While looking for schools, you might notice that the majority of programs are designed for college students who desire to spend a semester or two (or a summer) overseas. These are often geared for Americans or students from other Western countries who wish to study languages other than English. If you are searching for an English language program, then you should include terms such as *ESL* or *EFL* to ensure more relevant results.

For example, searching for:

"study abroad" "High School" ESL Canada

on <www.google.co.jp> returns a manageable 11,600 hits. Adding the term *summer* reduces that to 5,870 topical pages.

Advanced Searches

Not fancy enough? Increase the accuracy of your searches by using Google's advanced search features; i.e., use operators such as *OR*, *~*, and *site:* to fine-tune your keywords. (For more, see <www.google.com/help/refinerearch.html>.)

The logical *OR* operator will give results containing either word A or word B (e.g., *"study abroad" Australia OR England* will return results containing either country's name, instead of pages that contain both names).

Use the tilde (*~*) operator to search for your chosen terms as well as synonyms (e.g., results for *~study abroad* will include pages with the terms *learning* and *studies*. Using this will dramatically increase the number of results, which may not be what you want.

You can also use domain restricting to filter the results even further. To do so, enter what you're looking for followed by the word "site" and a colon (i.e., *site:*) followed by the domain name (e.g., entering *"study abroad" Canada site:.edu* would give you results from school websites only).

Combining Operators and Troubleshooting the Query

Here is an example of an advanced search query that combines several of the operators explained previously:

*~study abroad OR overseas America
OR Canada ESL site:.edu OR .org*

This query string resulted in 43,200 hits and included a link to <www.globaldaigaku.com> on the first page, which was the first time I'd seen that site in the results for any of my searches. It also demonstrates that the results you expect are not always what you'll get: Notice that I tried to restrict my search to only *.edu* or *.org* web sites by combining the *site:* operator and the *OR* operator; however, I also received *.com* websites

in my results, so I know the query has an error. Removing the *OR* between *.edu* and *.org* resulted in 9,050 very different results, this time with no *.com* websites, but also no *.org* sites. This is because the *site:* operator deals only with the first domain qualifier that comes after it and gets confused by what follows that. To get the original desired result (only sites from *.edu* and *.org* domains), the correct way to write the query is *site:.org OR site:.edu.*, which returns 23,500 results from only *.edu* and *.org* websites.

Evaluating a Website

How can you tell if a website is legitimate? This is a difficult question. One way to eliminate the pretenders is to look at the claims the site makes and the design of the site itself. If it looks like it hasn't been updated in a long time, or if it has broken images, or if the quality of the site design and its frequent spelling errors make you wonder if it was created by a 3-year old, then it is probably not legitimate. In addition, if the site feels like it is simply a collection of links and contains a lot of advertising for obscure-sounding programs, it is probably not a highly credible or trustworthy source.

If you would like to move beyond gut feeling and into a more systematic evaluation, I recommend the following seven points from the UC Berkeley website evaluation checklist (Barker, 2004):

- What can the URL tell you?
- Who wrote the page? Is he, she, or the authoring institution a qualified authority?
- Is it dated? Current, timely?
- Is information cited authentic?
- Does the page have overall integrity and reliability as a source?
- What's the bias?
- If you have questions or reservations, how can you satisfy them?

In our case, some sites might contain listings of a variety of programs and institutions, in which case we would want to know the criteria for including the information listed on the site, and also how the site and its list compares to related sites. I highly recommend that you visit the UC Berkeley checklist webpage for detailed

explanations and usage examples of each item on the list (see <www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>).

Ultimately, if you are unsure, then just say no and leave that website. But if you want confirmation, the best thing to do is look for contact information and request printed material or talk to someone by phone. A large organization will often have printed brochures or large catalogs to mail out and give away at conferences and fairs.

Conclusion

From preparing targeted search criteria, shaping your search query, and assessing the legitimacy of the programs you find, this article has given you the techniques you need to harness the power of the Web in your quest to provide better answers to student queries about study abroad options. The final section contains some websites to help get you started.

However, some of you may still be questioning the need for teachers to conduct such searches themselves. It is easy to imagine university and high school instructors scattered across Japan, each conducting their own searches independently, duplicating one another's efforts. Shouldn't there be a trusted source of information about study abroad programs to refer to? The absence of a database of vetted study abroad programs leaves a hole in the toolbox of language teachers here in Japan. This is especially worrisome when one considers that study abroad is an important component of L2 acquisition and the experience of the student on such programs often has a large impact on that student's level of motivation to continue studying the language (Blanche, 2002).

JALT is in a strong position to engage the membership in a distributed research project to establish a database of vetted study abroad programs and institutions. This would be a valuable resource to use when advising students and parents. There is potential for a web-accessible database with a printed version updated yearly. It might be of interest as a resource for JALT members, other teachers, our students, as well as independent learners in Japan, and thus saleable at bookstores. JALT is a body of authority and should take on the responsibility of creating a *JALT Guide to English Study Abroad Programs*.

Suggested Websites

For searching, I recommend <www.google.com> and <www.google.co.jp>.

Web Directories

- Google Directory: <directory.google.com/Top/Reference/Education/International/Study_Abroad/?il=1>
- The Open Directory: <dmoz.org/Reference/Education/International/>
- Yahoo! Directory: <dir.yahoo.com/Education/Programs/Study_Abroad/>

Organizations and Online Catalogs

- GlobalDaigaku.com <www.globaldaigaku.com> is an education training and service provider in Japan, with information about many study abroad programs. Their site is available in Japanese and English; default is Japanese.
- StudyAbroad.com <english.studyabroad.com> contains over 1,700 ESL program listings from over 1,550 Program Providers (criteria for inclusion is unclear).
- Education First, Ltd. <www.ef.com> is an agency that publishes a catalog of study abroad programs. It caters to high school students, young adults, and professional learners of English.

- English Schools Worldwide <www.esl-guide.com> provides information about English language schools and ESL programs. A Japanese version is available.
- Ryugaku <ryugaku.co.jp> is an agency that publishes a monthly guide to college programs in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, and New Zealand. Their focus is on students who wish to pursue long-term study (1–4 years) on college campuses.
- JTB-YES <www.yes-j.com> is part of the JTB family, and publishes a regular magazine dedicated to short-term study abroad (less than 90 days). These seem mostly like holidays with some language learning classes on top.

References

- Barker, J. (2004). Evaluating web pages: Techniques to apply & questions to ask. UC Berkely—Teaching Library Internet Workshops. Retrieved September 30, 2004, from <www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>.
- Blanche, P. (2002). What should be known in Japan about short-term English study abroad. *The Language Teacher*, 26 (12). Retrieved September 30, 2004 from <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2002/12/blanche/>.
- Google.com. (2004). Advanced search made easy. Retrieved September 30, 2004, from <www.google.com/help/refinesearch.html>.

JALT Central Office Research Services

Photocopy Service

On request, the JALT Central Office will provide photocopies of past or current articles from *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*. Please include as much bibliographic information as possible: author name, article title, year, issue number, and pages.

Library Search Service

JALT Central Office will also search for *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal* articles in the JALT library. Provide keywords, approximate date, author, title, or other information in as much detail as possible.

Back Issues

Back issues of *The Language Teacher*, *JALT Journal*, *JALT Applied Materials*, and *Conference Proceedings* are also available. Please inquire by fax or email whether the publication is in stock before ordering.

Payment

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up to 10 pages	¥500 per article
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Submissions

The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan. If accepted, the editors reserve the right to edit all copy for length, style, and clarity, without prior notification to authors. Materials in English should be sent in Rich Text Format by either email (preferred) or post. Postal submissions must include a clearly labeled floppy disk or CD-ROM and one printed copy. Manuscripts should follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style as it appears in *The Language Teacher*. Please submit materials to the contact editor indicated for each column. Deadlines are indicated below.

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

Feature Articles

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the Co-Editors.

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the Co-Editors.

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

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

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

Readers' Views. Responses to articles or other items in *TLT* are invited. Submissions should be sent to the editor and time allowed for a response to appear in the same issue, if appropriate. *TLT* will not publish anonymous correspondence. Send as an email attachment to the Co-Editors.

読者の意見: TLTに掲載された記事へ意見をお寄せ下さい。編集者が適切だと判断した場合には、著者の考えと並べて掲載したいと思えます。実名記載になります。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

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

学会報告: 語学教師に関心のあるトピックの大会に出席された場合は、4000語程度に要約して、報告書を書いてください。共同編集者まで電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

Departments

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

- be up to 1,000 words
- have the article title, the author name, affiliation, email address, and word count at the top of the first page
- include a *Quick Guide* to the lesson plan or teaching technique
- follow My Share formatting
- have tables, figures, appendices, etc. attached as separate files
- include copyright warnings, if appropriate.

Send as an email attachment to the My Share editor.

マイシェア: 学習活動に関する実践的なアイデアについて、テクニックや教案を読者が再利用できるように紹介するものです。1,600字以内で最初のページにタイトル、著者名、所属、電子メールアドレスと文字数をお書き下さい。表、図、付録なども含めることができますが、著作権にはお気を付け下さい。My Share 担当編集者に電子メールの添付ファイルでお送り下さい。

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

- be no more than 750 words
- be relevant to the JALT membership as whole
- encourage readers to participate more actively in JALT on both a micro and macro level
- Deadline: 15th of the month, 1½ months prior to publication.

Send as an email attachment to the JALT Focus editor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send as an email attachment to the Book Reviews Editor.

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

SIG News. JALT's Special Interest Groups may use this column to report on news or events happening within their group. This might include mini-conferences, presentations, publications, calls for papers or presenters, or general SIG information. Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication. Send as an email attachment to the SIG News Editor.

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

Chapter Reports. The column is a forum for sharing presentation synopses held at JALT Chapters around Japan. Submissions must therefore reflect the nature of the column and be written clearly and concisely. Submissions should:

- be interesting and not contain extraneous information
- be in well-written, concise, informative prose
- be made by email only. Faxed and/or postal submissions are not acceptable
- be approximately 300 words in order to explore the content in sufficient detail
- be structured as follows: Chapter name; Event date; Event title; Name of presenter(s); Synopsis: Reporter's name.

Send as an email attachment to the Chapter Reports Editor.

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

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

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

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

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

- contain the following information: City and prefecture, Name of institution, Title of position, Whether full- or part-time, Qualifications, Duties, Salary & benefits, Application materials, Deadline, Contact information
- not be positions wanted. (It is JALT policy that they will not be printed)
- Deadline: 15th of month, 2 months prior to publication.

Send as an email attachment to the JIC editor.

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

Conference Calendar. Announcements of conferences and their calls for papers as well as for colloquia, symposiums, and seminars may be posted in this column. The announcement should:

- be up to 150 words.
- Deadline: 15th of month, at least 3 months prior to the conference date for conferences in Japan and 4 months prior for overseas conferences.

Send as an email attachment to the Conference Calendar editor.

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

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Membership Information

JALT is a professional organization dedicated to the improvement of language learning and teaching in Japan, a vehicle for the exchange of new ideas and techniques, and a means of keeping abreast of new developments in a rapidly changing field. JALT, formed in 1976, has an international membership of some 3,000. There are currently 39 JALT chapters and 1 affiliate chapter throughout Japan (listed below). It is the Japan affiliate of International TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and a branch of IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language).

Publications — JALT publishes *The Language Teacher*, a monthly magazine of articles and announcements on professional concerns; the semi-annual *JALT Journal*; *JALT Conference Proceedings* (annual); and *JALT Applied Materials* (a monograph series).

Meetings and Conferences — The JALT International Conference on Language Teaching/Learning attracts some 2,000 participants annually. The program consists of over 300 papers, workshops, colloquia, and poster sessions, a publishers' exhibition of some 1,000m², an employment center, and social events. Local chapter meetings are held on a monthly or bi-monthly basis in each JALT chapter; and Special Interest Groups, SIGs, disseminate information on areas of special interest. JALT also sponsors special events, such as conferences on testing and other themes.

Chapters — Akita, Chiba, Fukui, Fukuoka, Gifu, Gunma, Hamamatsu, Himeji, Hiroshima, Hokkaido, Ibaraki, Iwate, Kagawa, Kagoshima, Kanazawa, Kitakyushu, Kobe, Kumamoto, Kyoto, Matsuyama, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Nagoya, Nara, Niigata, Okayama, Okinawa, Omiya, Osaka, Sendai, Shinshu, Shizuoka, Tochigi, Tokushima, Tokyo, Toyohashi, West Tokyo, Yamagata, Yamaguchi, Yokohama.

SIGs — Bilingualism; College and University Educators; Computer-Assisted Language Learning; Gender Awareness in Language Education; Global Issues in Language Education; Japanese as a Second Language; Jr./Sr. High School; Learner Development; Materials Writers; Pragmatics; Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education; Teacher Education; Teaching Children; Testing and Evaluation; Other Language Educators (affiliate); Eikaiwa (forming); Pronunciation (forming); Teaching Older Learners (forming). JALT members can join as many SIGs as they wish for a fee of ¥1,500 per SIG.

Awards for Research Grants and Development — Awarded annually. Applications must be made to the JALT Research Grants Committee Chair. Awards are announced at the annual conference.

Membership — All membership includes subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal* and membership in a local chapter. **Regular membership** (¥10,000). **Student membership** (¥6,000) - available to students of undergraduate/graduate universities and colleges in Japan. **Joint membership** (¥17,000) - available to two individuals who can register with the same mailing address; only one copy of each JALT publication for two members. **Group membership** (¥6,500/person) — available to five or more people who can register with the same mailing address; one copy of each publication for every five members or fraction thereof. Applications may be made at any JALT meeting or by using the postal money transfer form (*yubin furikae*) found in every issue of *The Language Teacher*. Joint and Group members must apply, renew, and pay membership fees together with the other members of their group. From overseas, application may be made by sending an International Postal Order to the JALT Central Office or by transferring the fee through Citibank. For details please contact the Central Office.

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Join or renew

JALT (全国語学教育学会) について

JALTは最新の言語理論に基づくよりよい教授法を提供し、日本における語学学習の向上と発展を図ることを目的とする学術団体です。1976年に設立されたJALTは、海外も含めて3,000名以上の会員を擁しています。現在日本全国に40の支部（下記参照）を持ち、TESOL（英語教師協会）の加盟団体、およびIATEFL（国際英語教育学会）の日本支部でもあります。

出版物: JALTは、語学教育の専門分野に関する記事、お知らせを掲載した月刊誌 *The Language Teacher*、年2回発行の *JALT Journal*、*JALT Applied Materials*（モノグラフィーズ）、およびJALT年次大会会報を発行しています。

例会と大会: JALTの語学教育・語学学習に関する国際年次大会には、毎年2,000人が集まります。年次大会のプログラムは300の論文、ワークショップ、コロキウム、ポスターセッション、出版社による展示、就職情報センター、そして懇親会で構成されています。支部例会は、各JALTの支部で毎月もしくは隔月に1回行われています。分野別研究部会、SIGは、分野別の情報の普及活動を行っています。JALTはまた、テストングや他のテーマについての研究会などの特別な行事を支援しています。

支部: 現在、全国に39の支部と1つの準支部があります。（秋田、千葉、福井、福岡、岐阜、群馬、浜松、姫路、広島、北海道、茨城、岩手、香川、鹿児島、金沢、北九州、神戸、熊本、京都、松山、宮崎、長崎、名古屋、奈良、新潟、岡山、沖縄、大宮、大阪、仙台、信州、静岡、栃木、徳島、東京、豊橋、西東京、山形、山口、横浜）

分野別研究部会: バイリンガリズム、大学外国語教育、コンピュータ利用語学学習、ジェンダーと語学教育、グローバル問題、日本語教育、中学・高校外国語教育、学習者ディベロップメント、教材開発、語用論、外国語教育政策とプロフェッショナルイズム、教師教育、児童教育、試験と評価、他言語教育（準分野別研究部会）、英会話(forming)、発音(forming)、中高年学教育(forming)。JALTの会員は一つにつき1,500円の会費で、複数の分野別研究会に参加することができます。

研究助成金: 研究助成金についての応募は、8月16日までに、JALT語学教育学習研究助成金委員長まで申し出てください。研究助成金については、年次大会で発表をします。

会員及び会費: 会員及び年会費: 年会費にはJALT出版物の購読料及び支部の会費も含まれています。個人会員(10,000円)。学生会員(6,000円) - 日本にある大学・大学院・専門学校に在籍する学生を対象。ジョイント会員(17,000円) - 同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部。団体会員(6,500円/人) - 同じ住所で登録する5名以上を対象とし、JALT出版物は5名毎に1部。入会・更新申込みは、例会で行うか、*The Language Teacher*に綴じこまれている郵便振替用紙を利用してください。ジョイント及びグループ会員は、全員まとめて入会又は更新の申込みをして下さい。海外からは国際郵便を替へてJALT事務局に送るか、又はCitibankより送金してください。詳しくはJALT事務局に問合わせてください。

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