Feature Articles

3 Study Abroad and Willingness to Communicate: A Case Study at Junior High School
Adrian Leis

10 Understanding Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Young Learner Teaching: A Case Study
Oliver Beddal

16 From Reading Books to Sharing Books: Going Beyond the Virtuous Circle of the Good Reader
Kunitaro Mizuno

Readers’ Forum

22 Cooperative and Collaborative Learning in the Language Classroom
Yoshitaka Kato, Francesco Bolstad, and Horinori Watari

My Share Special

26 Classroom ideas from Brett Davies, Chieri Noda, Jim Chapman, David H. Faulhaber, Tetsuko Fukawa, Andy Hockersmith, Tim Knight, David O’Flaherty, Tamatha Roman, Simon Thomas, Matthew Wilson, and Michelle Wong

Book Review

40 Brad Perks reviews Any Questions?

TLT Wired

43 Internet Search Tools and Resources for EFL
Gary Henscheid

Conference News

60 Steve Cornwell presents feedback on last year’s JALT2014 conference
In this month’s issue . . .

In this month’s issue, we are pleased to introduce a wide selection of articles and ideas that embody the spirit of excellence in teaching and research which has been the driving force behind many successful JALT events. As you well know, it is also the start of a new academic year, and perhaps a change of location or position for some. We would like to wish you luck and success with your endeavors, whether it be improving on the past or making a bold, fresh start.

Here, at The Language Teacher, we are welcoming in the new academic year with twelve of our most exceptional My Share articles, spanning a wide variety topics and levels. We start off as Brett Davies illustrates a method of using the time before and after study abroad to reflect and help prepare others for similar experiences, Chieri Noda proposes a way for learners to practice quickly locating information in research articles by building familiarity with their format and the relationships between ideas, Jim Chapman takes up the challenge of large classes and introduces an activity designed to invigorate large groups of students, and David H. Faulhaber offers us the novel idea of reformulative audio feedback as a compelling alternative to common revision practices. Next, Tetsuko Fukawa suggests a way to improve learners’ use of /r/ and /l/ based on pronunciation pyramids, Andy Hockersmith introduces a project designed to boost students’ spoken English output, and Tim Knight highlights how smartphones can be used to augment the first classes of the term. Then, David O’Flaherty explains how infomercials can aid presentations and group work, Tamatha Roman encourages learners to discuss environmental issues by examining their school’s facilities, Simon Thomas introduces ways to use video as a catalyst for presentations, Matthew Wilson brings our attention to TV commercials and their potential to stimulate both receptive and productive language skills, and finally Michelle Wong rounds off this innovative bunch with a fun group activity employing puppet theatre.

Also in this issue are three excellent Feature Articles. Study Abroad and Willingness to Communicate: A Case Study at Junior High School, by Adrian Leis, focuses on the interplay between a student’s interpersonal relationships and their experiences abroad. Understanding Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Young Learner Teaching: A Case Study, by Oliver Beddal, looks at
how best practices may be established for teaching young learners in ELT management. Finally, From Reading Books to Sharing Books: Going Beyond the Virtuous Circle of the Good Reader, by Kunitaro Mizuno, proposes a focus on dialogue between learners in an extensive reading program. In Readers’ Forum, Cooperative and Collaborative Learning in the Language Classroom, by Yoshitaka Kato, Francesco Bolstad, and Horinori Watarai, draws our attention to the importance of working together. And last but not least, in Book Reviews Brad Perks gives us the scoop on Any Questions?

Jonathan Reingold, My Share Editor
Glenn Magee, TLT Associate Editor
(former My Share co-editor)

Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)
A nonprofit organization

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) is a nonprofit professional organization dedicated to the improvement of language teaching and learning in Japan. It provides a forum for the exchange of new ideas and techniques and a means of keeping informed about developments in the rapidly changing field of second and foreign language education.

JALT Board of Directors, 2015

President ................. Caroline Lloyd
Vice President ............ Richmond Stroupe
Director of Membership ...... Fred Carruth
Director of Program .......... Steve Cornwell
Director of Public Relations .. Ted O’Neill
Director of Records .......... Nathaniel French
Director of Treasury .......... Kevin Ryan
Auditor ..................... Aleda Krause

Contact
To contact any officer, chapter, or Special Interest Group (SIG), please use the contact page on our website: <jalt.org>.

Submitting material to The Language Teacher
Guidelines

The editors welcome submissions of materials concerned with all aspects of language education, particularly with relevance to Japan.

Submitting online
To submit articles online, please visit:

<jalt-publications.org/access>

To contact the editors, please use the contact form on our website, or through the email addresses listed in this issue of TLT.

<jalt-publications.org/contact>
Study Abroad and Willingness to Communicate: A Case Study at Junior High School

Adrian Leis
Miyagi University of Education

The goal of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding of whether a short study abroad program is effective in increasing its participants’ willingness to communicate in a second language. Using a questionnaire designed by Yashima (2002), a pre-post design study was used to examine a sample of 80 Japanese junior high school students who participated in a ten-day study abroad program to Sydney, Australia. The results indicate that although there were no statistically significant differences seen in the second language learning motivation of the students participating in the study abroad program, there were salient decreases observed in the anxiety students felt towards speaking English. Furthermore, as clear differences were seen in international posture, joining the study abroad program also meant that students felt more a part of the global community. Based on these results, the author concludes that traveling abroad for the purposes of study is indeed effective for adolescent learners of English, helping them feel more comfortable using the language as a tool for communication.

It is a common belief of many foreign language students, their parents and even their teachers, that simply participating in a study abroad (SA) program will open the floodgates of language, making those who participate confident and fluent in the tongue of the country that they visit. Those who travel abroad are provided with opportunities to experience the culture and language of a foreign country in a way that cannot be felt in regular language classes or even in immersion programs. There is no doubt that with the increasing awareness of the importance of globalization in modern society, the realization of being a member of the international community is vital for young students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This is especially true for Japan, an island nation with few chances for young learners to experience English on a daily basis.

However, despite the obvious importance of studying abroad, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) announced that in recent years there has been a decrease in the number of Japanese students studying abroad (2013). The number of Japanese citizens studying overseas peaked at 82,945 in 2004 and has since seen a steady decline to 58,060 in 2010. On the other hand, the number of schools who take their students abroad on their school trip, commonly known as the "shuugakuryokou" in Japanese, has gradually increased since 2004 to a total of 827 high schools and 110 junior high schools in 2011 (Educational Tour Institute, 2012).

The effect of studying abroad has received much interest in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) with various results. Some researchers (e.g., Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004; Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide, 2008) suggest that studying abroad brings about positive linguistic outcomes with students being more willing to communicate in English upon returning to their home country. Freed (1990) and Sasaki (2011) reported that studying abroad resulted in an increase in the motivation of participants, but only after a period of at least one university semester (i.e., three months). In recent studies of the effects of an SA program on the motivation of junior and senior high school students by Leis (2013, 2014a), it was reported that an SA program much shorter than the minimum period recommended by Freed (1990) and Sasaki (2011) can in fact be beneficial for participants, but only with teachers’ guidance through language classes and assessment in the months after returning from abroad. In my previous studies (Leis, 2013, 2014a, 2014b), motivation was measured using Dörnyei’s (2005) Second Language (L2) Motivational Self
The aim of the present study is to answer the following questions:

1. Is a short SA program effective in increasing the motivation of students to study English?
2. Is a short SA program effective in decreasing the amount of anxiety students feel in their ability to communicate in English?
3. Does a short SA program have a positive effect on the international posture of participants?

These three categories, in addition to L2 proficiency, are the factors that make up the L2 Communication Model that Yashima (2002) designates to be an accurate indicator of students' WTC in an L2.

Method

Participants

A sample of 80 third-year students attending a junior high school at a combined junior-senior high school in northeast Japan participated in this study. The data from five students were excluded from the analysis, as they were either absent when one of the questionnaires was conducted, or did not complete the questionnaires correctly. Of the 75 students whose data were used for this research, 52 were female and 23 were male. Although no proficiency test was conducted in this study, as English education is compulsory from the first year of junior high school, the students had had three years of official English education, suggesting they had low-intermediate English proficiency. From the sample of 75 students, 12 (16%) indicated they had had experience traveling abroad with three of those (4% of the entire sample for analysis) having visited an English speaking country.

Materials

A questionnaire (see Yashima, 2009) was used for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire included a total of 88 items consisting of statements related to students' motivational intensity (e.g., I feel that I study more than my classmates), students' desire to learn English (e.g., If possible, I would like the amount of time we study English at school to increase), intercultural friendship orientation (e.g., I want to make friends with people from foreign countries), ethnocentrism (e.g., I find it difficult to cooperate with people who do not share the same beliefs as I do), interest in foreign affairs (e.g., I often read about and watch news related to foreign affairs), intergroup approach avoidance tendencies (e.g., If there were an exchange student at my school, I would try to initiate conversations with him/her), and interest in international activities (e.g., In the future, I would like to work in an international organization such as the United Nations). Participants were asked to use Likert scales from one (That is completely untrue) to seven (That is completely true) to indicate the degree to which each statement described their feelings. In addition to these categories, participants were asked to show on a percentage scale from zero to 100 their communication anxiety when speaking English in certain situations (e.g., Holding a conversation with someone you do not know), communication compe-
sentence when speaking English in certain situations (e.g., *Giving a speech in front of a group of people you know*) and willingness to communicate in English in certain situations (e.g., *Expressing your opinion during a meeting*). The questionnaire was conducted in Japanese.

**Procedure**

Questionnaires were conducted in a pre-post design, with the first being completed one week before departure at the end of a three-hour intensive English conversation class. The students then participated in a ten-day trip to Sydney, Australia. As this trip was part of their school curriculum, it was compulsory for students to join this program. While in Australia, students stayed with local families and participated in English conversation classes and cultural activities, including a cultural exchange with Australian students of a similar age. The second questionnaire was conducted one week after students returned from abroad, at the end of a two-hour lecture, in which students discussed their SA experiences. The results were entered into an Excel file and then analyzed using SPSS Version 20 to find salient differences in students’ willingness to communicate in an L2 before and after traveling abroad.

**Results and Discussion**

**L2 Learning Motivation**

The first research question in this study looks at the effects a short study abroad program has on participants’ motivation to study English. A Cronbach’s Reliability Analysis was conducted with the results indicating the data in the categories of Motivational Intensity (MI) (α = .923) and Desire to Learn English (DLE) (α = .867) were suitable for analysis. Data were analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), 95% Confidence Interval (95%CI) and Eta Partial Square (η²) analyses. Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for the categories of L2 Learning Motivation in Yashima’s (2002) model of WTC, before and after the students had participated in their SA program. Neither MI, F (1, 148) = .368, p = .545, η² = .002, nor DLE, F (1, 148) = .021, p = .885, η² = .000, showed any significant difference after returning from abroad, suggesting that traveling abroad for a short time has no impact on participants’ motivation to learn a L2.

Showing similar results to previous research, (Freed, 1990; Sasaki, 2011; Leis, 2013, 2014a), it seems that a ten-day SA program is not long enough to see any salient increase in the L2 learning motivation of its participants. The reason for this could have been that the students were traveling as a group, not as individuals. The students in this study traveled as a group of 80. Therefore, the number of situations where they had to use English without relying on their classmates to help them may have been limited. Because of this, students may have had few experiences where they could not make themselves understood in English, even if they only used single words without any sentence structure. As a result, students may have been satisfied with their English proficiency at the time, thus their motivation to learn English more did not increase significantly. Furthermore, the size of the group may have meant that students used Japanese with their peers more than speaking English with native speakers. This reflects the findings of Trentment (2013), who suggested that students studying in a group abroad tend to use their mother tongue more than the language of the country they are visiting. Conducting longitudinal studies, looking at the L2 learning motivational changes of students who participate in individual SA programs and for longer periods, may bring different results to the current findings.

**L2 Communication Confidence**

The second research question in the current study looks at changes in participants’ L2 communication confidence after returning from abroad. It was predicted by the author that after experiencing a situation in which they were able to successfully...
communicate in English in an authentic all-English environment without having to be concerned with the grammatical accuracy of their utterances, the communication anxiety (CA) of students would decrease significantly, while an increase in perceived communicative competence in English (PC) would also be observed. This hypothesis was based on similar previous research by the author (Leis, 2014a) in which students remarked, “Through this experience, I have learned the enjoyment of communicating with people from other countries,” suggesting that the experience in an all-English environment was enjoyable and gave students confidence in being able to converse in English.

A Cronbach’s Reliability Analysis was conducted with the results indicating the data was suitable to be analyzed in both categories of CA ($\alpha = .901$) and PC ($\alpha = .915$). Data were analyzed to find significant increases or decreases comparing before and after the SA program by a one-way ANOVA, 95%CI, and Eta Partial Square ($\eta^2$) analyses. Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for the categories of L2 Communication Confidence in Yashima’s (2002) model of WTC, prior to and after the students had participated in their SA program. As had been hypothesized before the study, results showed a statistically significant decrease in CA, $F(1, 148) = 6.11, p = .015, \eta^2 = .040$ with medium effect size. However, the experience did not show any significant increase in how students perceived their communication competence in English, $F(1, 148) = 1.73, p = .191, \eta^2 = .012$.

In their English education at school, where grammatical accuracy is often focused upon, students may feel some anxiety towards speaking due to the fear of making mistakes and being embarrassed in front of their peers. Covington (1992, 1998) suggests that school is the place where students’ ability is judged by teachers and their peers, and where they feel the most pressure to perform well. This is supported by the relatively high anxiety (i.e., 63.59) shown by students in the sample before traveling abroad. Few participants had had experience visiting an English speaking country, therefore it can be concluded that the main reasons for the anxiety felt by students were expectations of their teachers and peers at school. This supports the findings of Kondo and Yang (2003), who claimed anxiety in an EFL classroom could be related to three primary components: low proficiency, speaking activities, and the fear of receiving negative feedback from their peers.

However, participating in the SA program helped ease some of that anxiety. Having opportunities to ‘try out’ their English with native speakers in an English-only environment may have resulted in students feeling that English does not necessarily always need to be spoken with perfect grammatical accuracy, and even if they do make some mistakes, they are still able to convey their message. On the other hand, students may have also realized that they lacked the vocabulary bank and listening skills to be competent in communicating successfully in English. This is strengthened by previous research (Leis, 2014a), in which I concluded that an SA program was effective in increasing participants’ awareness of the importance of expanding their vocabulary bank for successful communication.

### International Posture

Finally, the third research question in the current study looks at changes in participants’ International Posture, and whether this short time abroad had an impact on their feelings as members of the global community. The author predicted that, based on the age of the participants along with the experience of staying with Australian families and interacting with Australian school children of a similar age, although Intercultural Friendship Orientation (IFO) and Intergroup Approach Avoidance Tendency (AAT) would see a significant increase after returning to Japan, their experiences in Australia would not be sufficient to make any significant increases or decreases in the students’ Interest in International Activities (IVA), or Interest in Foreign Affairs (IFA). Once again, a Cronbach’s Reliability

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Communication Confidence in the Current Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>63.59</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>-0.644</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>[59.15, 68.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>55.57</td>
<td>20.45</td>
<td>-0.170</td>
<td>-0.640</td>
<td>[50.86, 60.27]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>35.31</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>-0.325</td>
<td>[31.60, 39.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>38.93</td>
<td>17.53</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>-0.138</td>
<td>[34.40, 42.97]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 75$; CA: Communication Anxiety in L2; PC: Perceived Communication Competence in English; Max. = 100; Min. = 0; * $p < .05$. 

[http://jalt-publications.org/ltt>
Analysis was conducted with the results indicating the data in the categories of IFO (α = .878), AAT (α = .884) and IVA (α = .759) to be suitable for analysis. However, the reliability of the fourth measure, IFA (α = .242), was deemed to be too low and therefore will not be analyzed further in this paper.

The three variables of IFO, AAT and IVA were analyzed to find significant increases or decreases comparing before and after the SA program using a one-way ANOVA, 95%CI and Eta Partial Square (η²) effect size analyses. Table 3 displays descriptive statistics for the categories of International Posture in Yashima’s (2002) model of WTC, prior to and after the students had participated in their SA program. As had been hypothesized before the study, the results showed a statistically significant increase in IFO, F(1, 148) = 8.79, p = .004, η² = .056 with medium effect size and AAT, F(1, 148) = 4.57, p = .034, η² = .030 with weak to medium effect size. Furthermore, the experience did not seem long enough, or give participants enough opportunities to show any salient development in students’ interest in international or vocational activities, with no significant increase being seen in this variable, F(1, 148) = 1.12, p = .292, η² = .008.

As expected, due to the type of communication experienced by students on their SA program and reflecting the ease on communication anxiety as discussed in the previous section, students felt more comfortable in making friends and, to a lesser degree, felt more confident to converse in an English-speaking environment. Communication with host families and Australian students of a similar age did not result in a significant increase in subjects’ IVA. This could be due to the insufficient English proficiency level and lack of vocabulary of the students in this sample to participate in conversations related to IVA. Subjects who have a level of English proficiency advanced enough to understand and participate in conversations or read news related to international issues may show more significant increases in this area.

### Conclusion

This paper has discussed the effects participating in a short SA program has on the WTC in a L2 of adolescent EFL learners. In similar results to previous research, ten days seems too short to have any statistically significant effect on the L2 learning motivation of participants. However, even a short trip such as the one described in this paper has clear advantages for those who join it. First, the experience of getting their message across in English seems to help reduce the amount of anxiety they feel with the language. The data suggest that this anxiety may be due to a focus on grammatical accuracy in their regular EFL classes at school. As the participants in this study had had very little or no experience living in an all-English speaking environment, the author has concluded that the anxiety students felt was due to pressure related to classroom tests and academic achievement. The Japanese English education system has been described by several authors (e.g., Eckstein & Noah, 1989; Amano, 1990; Gorsuch, 2000; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004; Nishino, 2006) as one that focuses on improving students’ grammatical accuracy and ability to get through college and university entrance exams, an approach in Japan that is believed to be “an essential element of instructional guidance” (Cohen & Spillane, 1992, p. 15). Hashimoto (2002) argued that anxiety resulted in students having negative feelings towards their perceived language competence, and in turn their WTC in the L2 also declined. With a significant reduction in the anxiety felt by students in this study, it can be concluded that an SA program is effective in opening opportunities for students to feel more confident in speaking English.

### Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for International Posture in the Current Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>95%CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFO</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
<td>[4.12, 4.73]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>5.07**</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>-0.675</td>
<td>0.300</td>
<td>[4.76, 5.37]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAT</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-0.166</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>[3.87, 4.44]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.57*</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>-0.325</td>
<td>-0.158</td>
<td>[4.31, 4.84]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>Before</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>-0.575</td>
<td>[3.93, 4.51]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td>-0.557</td>
<td>[4.16, 4.72]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 75; IFO: Intercultural Friendship Orientation; AAT: Intergroup Approach Avoidance Tendency; IVA: Interest in International/Vocation Activities; Max. = 7; Min. = 1; * p < .05; ** p < .01.
without having to worry about the grammatical accuracy of their utterances.

Second, reflecting on the decreased anxiety felt by students, they showed significantly more confidence as members of the international community. Although there was no significant increase in interest in international activities by the participants, perhaps due to their age or English proficiency, there was a salient increase in the desire students had to communicate with native speakers of English. Further research through a third questionnaire, conducted about six months after students have returned from abroad, may provide an insight as to whether this enthusiasm to communicate with native speakers of English has an effect on the quality and quantity of students’ study time, and whether these effects are lasting.

The lack of a third questionnaire to discover whether the effects of studying abroad are permanent even after returning to Japan is, admittedly, a weakness of the current research. In previous studies, I (Leis 2013, 2014b) argued that when teachers were able to incorporate the experiences students had abroad into their regular classes and assessment, the effects of the SA program strengthened further two months after returning to Japan. Furthermore, without a control group, in which the researcher could have conducted the questionnaires with students who did not study abroad, the current paper lacks concrete evidence that the changes in students’ L2 anxiety and international posture were in fact purely due to an experience in an all-English environment, not some other factor. In future projects, the researcher will include a control group to strengthen the argument that studying abroad, even for less than two weeks, is beneficial for the participants.

Despite these weaknesses, this paper has given statistical evidence that studying abroad is a valuable experience for those who participate, regardless of its length. Such an experience brings participants to feel more relaxed in conversing in English, as well as increase the willingness they feel to join conversations with native speakers of English. With further research to show the benefits of an SA program, it is hoped more young Japanese EFL students will take the opportunity to travel to environments that help make them feel more comfortable and confident communicating in their chosen language.

Acknowledgements

This paper was supported in part by Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists B (N.o. 25770200). Much appreciation goes to Mineyoshi Aoyama for his support throughout this study. The author wishes to thank Tomoko Yashima for granting permission to use the questionnaire for this study and comments on a previous version of this paper. I would also like to show my gratitude to the TLT Editor and anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. All remaining errors are the responsibility of the author.

References


Adrian Leis is an associate professor in the English Education Department at Miyagi University of Education. His research interests center on L2 learning motivation and CALL/MALL. He conducts flipped classrooms through his YouTube channel and posts thoughts about language learning and motivation on Twitter. He has more than 15 years experience teaching English in Japan. He can be contacted at <adrian@staff.miyakyo-u.ac.jp>.

People choose to join JALT because they have made a commitment to professional growth.

JALT’s publications offer advertisers direct access to these motivated people.

For more information on advertising with JALT, please contact the JALT Central Office <jco@jalt.org>, or visit our website at <jalt-publications.org/advertising>.
Understanding Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Young Learner Teaching: A Case Study

Oliver Beddall
British Council

This paper reports on a case study examining teachers’ feelings about teaching young learners (YLs) in the British Council Tokyo teaching centre. A literature review is presented, outlining desirable qualities for YL teachers. Qualitative and quantitative research—involving an online questionnaire, attitude survey and interviews—investigates teachers’ feelings about a variety of YL-related issues and finds three “groups” within the staffroom, each with a different profile and differing attitudes towards YL teaching. By identifying and analysing prevalent concerns amongst staff, recommendations for ELT managers are made to encourage effective professional development, thereby empowering less experienced teachers and promoting good practice for schools running YL programmes.

Young Learners (YLs), defined in this paper as children of 6–17 years old, are the fastest-growing segment of the ELT market (CUP Annual Report, 2014). Language teaching organisations worldwide are adapting their operations to meet this demand, and teachers are increasingly being expected to teach classes of children, despite the fact that the majority of TEFL qualifications focus on adults.

The British Council (BC) Tokyo runs a large number of English language courses both in-house and off-site. In addition to a plethora of adult courses, YL courses have also been delivered in elementary, junior, and senior high schools for many years, albeit by a specialist group of YL teachers. At the time of writing, however, the BC was preparing to offer its own in-house YL classes for the first time. How the wider staffroom would react to teaching YLs was unknown, as there was a general lack of YL teaching experience amongst the existing body of teachers.

Faced with this unique situation, this research sets out to better understand teacher attitudes towards teaching YLs and to understand how such innovations can be best supported from a managerial perspective.

Literature Review
I will begin by discussing the theory underpinning the measurement of attitudes, which forms the basis of this study.

Measuring Attitudes
In any educational institution it is the teachers who are charged with delivering the curriculum to the students. Understanding teachers’ attitudes towards their work is therefore of key importance in understanding and improving the quality of education provision (van Aalderen-Smeets & van der Molen, 2013). It is well-known that teachers’ attitudes can impact directly on teaching and learning in the classroom and this has been demonstrated in numerous studies which have found links between teacher attitudes and characteristics such as confidence levels, beliefs about self-efficacy, and different approaches to pedagogy (Weinburgh, 2007).

Consequently, with any pedagogical innovation, there needs to be an accompanying change in attitudes on the part of those involved (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). An understanding of teachers’ attitudes can be used to help manage innovation and develop an appropriate provision for in-service teacher development (Breen, 1991).

Tools used to measure attitudes are commonly referred to as inventories, surveys, instruments, or measurement scales. Of the many that have been employed, Likert scales are the most common method of collecting data (Lovelace & Brickman, 2013). Respondents indicate the extent of their agreement or otherwise with a given statement on a numerical scale that usually spans five points. This, in turn, allows for quantitative analysis of the data.

In one of the few existing studies of teacher attitudes within the field of ELT, Karavas-Doukas
describes the analysis of the data from Likert scales and the creation of attitude scores:

Depending on the respondent’s endorsement of each statement, a particular score is rendered. The total score, which is calculated by adding up the scores for each item, places the respondent on a continuum from least favourable to most favourable. Usually, the higher the score, the more favourable the respondent’s attitude. (1996, p. 190)

Thus, with a combination of judiciously-chosen attitude statements, a picture of teacher attitudes towards a particular phenomenon can be created.

The field of measuring attitudes is not without its challenges, however, and existing studies in other fields have been criticised for a failure to properly define attitude and to distinguish it from related concepts such as opinion or drive, resulting in difficulty interpreting and generalising from the results (Ajzen, 2001).

Having discussed the measurement of attitudes, I will now present the research methodology.

Methodology

Case Study

A case study approach was adopted for this research—the study and detailed description of one particular aspect of a case (Richards, 2003). Through this I will offer a detailed investigation of the individuals in the specific context of this study, an approach considered preferable to theoretical generalisations applied to a specific situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Participants

The participants in the study were 26 full-time and 11 part-time teachers at the BC Tokyo, aged between 27-48. Their teaching experience varied widely, ranging from two years post-certificate qualification to those who held both a diploma and master’s qualification in addition to many years of service. Of all participants, fewer than one third had any recent experience of teaching YLs.

Procedure

Attitude Statements

In planning the study, I took as my inspiration the Karavas-Doukas paper (1996) cited in the literature review, in which attitude scales were used to collect data from participants in a questionnaire.

The first step was to generate a set of attitude statements capable of gauging teachers’ attitudes to YL teaching.

Initial Survey

To generate the statements, a survey was first set up using surveymonkey.com (Appendix A), trialled and sent to all teaching staff by email. Teachers were asked to provide one simple piece of information: whether they would be happy to teach YLs and, most importantly, why.

Attitude Statements and Questionnaire

Opinions given in the survey were analysed using a process of inductive coding (Burns 2009), where full responses were scanned multiple times looking for emerging categories. These categories were distilled further into individual attitude statements that were representative of the opinions put forward in the survey. Likert scales were used as the measurement scale, whereby each response was assigned a numerical value (strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 5), which were then used to calculate an attitude score for individual teachers. A mix of positive and negative statements (10 of each) was included to control for bias, and each statement was worded in such a way that was demonstrably either positive or negative so that statistical analysis would reliably reflect the intention of the respondent.

For example, respondents who answered strongly agree to a positively-worded statement would earn five points, whereas answering strongly agree to a negatively-worded statement would result in the loss of five points. Respondents with a high final score could therefore be said to have strong positive attitude towards teaching YLs, whilst the opposite would be true of respondents with a low or negative score.

The finished attitude statements were then randomised and fashioned into the final questionnaire (Appendix B). The completed anonymous attitude survey was trialled and distributed to teachers.

Triangulation

Results from the questionnaire were triangulated by a series of semi-structured interviews (Burns, 2009) with three volunteers from amongst the respondents. In these interviews, teachers were asked for their opinions on issues emerging from the research, in order to provide a deeper insight into the significance of results.
Results and Analysis
I will now give a summary of results from the questionnaire, followed by a discussion of findings.

Questionnaire
The questionnaires received a response rate of 73% and complete responses can be found in Appendix C.

The Group
Overall, there were a relatively small number of attitude statements that elicited negative responses. However, some negativity was evident (see Figure 1), and this included, most notably, 74% of teachers who believed that YL teaching can be stressful and 56% who expressed concern about dealing with demotivated children. A minority of 30% of teachers were not confident about classroom discipline and further 30% would not welcome YL classes on their teaching schedule.

There was a certain amount of unanimity in opinion amongst teachers on certain points. A high number of teachers (85%), for example, believed that YL teaching can be very rewarding and many also saw everyday classroom interaction with YLs as enjoyable. A similarly high number had an interest in pedagogy outside linguistics and saw themselves as suitable for YL teaching. Despite these positives, there was nevertheless consensus amongst teachers (74%) that YL teaching can be stressful.

There was no agreement on the benefits of YL teaching experience to job security, perhaps surprisingly given the upward trend worldwide in YL teaching.

Individual Teachers
In the revealing graph of individual teachers’ attitude scores shown in Appendix D it can be seen that most individuals were positive about YL teaching. What is striking, however, in direct contrast to the general positivity, is the small but acutely negative cluster of responses from a number of teachers, which I will discuss later.

Having developed a snapshot of teachers’ general orientation towards teaching YLs, a comparison of individual teachers’ responses was made in order to identify any groups amongst the respondents. The analysis indicated that teachers fell into three camps.

Group 1. The Typical Teacher
Teachers in this group each gave very similar responses to one another in the attitude survey. This included almost half of all respondents (44%), and for this reason I labelled teachers in this group as the “typical teacher” (see Appendix E). They were...
positive about YL teaching. They viewed it as interesting and rewarding, felt it would add a nice variety to their schedule and were motivated by the greater job security that may come with the experience.

They liked children and enjoyed YL classroom interaction. Some had an interest in pedagogy related to areas outside linguistics and most were confident with discipline in the classroom. Their major concerns were with demotivated learners and stress surrounding YL teaching.

As one teacher commented in an interview:

“I don’t know, I just prefer teaching kids to adults. They’re more honest, you know? It’s not that it isn’t stressful—it is, and sometimes it’s a real pain, especially when they can’t be bothered, and I have trouble dealing with those kinds of kids sometimes—but on the whole I love it.”

Group 2
Teachers in the second group (33% of respondents, 9 teachers) were found to differ from the “typical teacher” on a number of points. While the typical teachers thought largely alike, the defining characteristic of Group 2 was that they did not. Teachers in this group each had their own unique mix of concerns, namely dealing with demotivated children, classroom management, discipline, stress, and dealing with parents. Despite these varied concerns, however, it is noticeable that 89% of respondents in this group believed that YL teaching could be very rewarding.

Group 3
The third group made up 23% of the staff room (6 teachers). The overwhelming characteristic of this group was that no teachers had any interest in teaching YLs and 83% said that this feeling would not change even with sufficient training. 67% claimed to be put off by issues surrounding discipline in the classroom and even more dismissive of the variety it could add to their schedule.

It is a complex picture, however, with significant variation in opinion within the group. For example, some teachers claimed to like children (33%) and even believed that YL teaching can be rewarding (50%). Although none of them saw YL teaching as linked to job security, 67% believed that relevant experience would improve their career prospects.

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion
The above analysis of teacher attitudes towards teaching YLs in this staffroom leads to a number of interesting interpretations, not least of which is the emergence of three groups of teachers. It should be noted first and foremost that it was encouraging to see the existence of Group 1, who were wholly positive about YL teaching. The fact that this group still had concerns over stress and discipline in the classroom (the two of which may well be related) in spite of their positive orientation, points to a potential area of focus for any teacher training initiatives.

The existence of Group 3, with no interest in YL teaching, was perhaps to be expected in a staffroom of this size. However, the intensity of their feelings was something of a surprise, stating for instance that they would not want to teach YLs even with the provision of appropriate training. The emotion behind these feelings was evident in the following comment from one teacher in an interview:

“Look, some people just really, really don’t want to teach kids—and they shouldn’t have to. They’re not suitable. The ‘A’ in CELTA stands for Adults! They never signed up to teach kids.”

With such apparent resistance, the inevitable question for managers is whether it would ever be advantageous to oblige teachers to teach YLs. The implication for students, parents and the reputation of the organisation of placing disinterested teachers in the YL classroom hardly need spelling out.
Sat in-between the positivity of Group 1 and the negativity of Group 3 was the second group, whose mixed feelings may prove to be the most interesting of all. Teachers in Group 2 harboured a number of concerns around some of the more fundamental aspects of YL teaching (e.g., classroom management, motivation), most likely due to a lack of experience. They are, in other words, novice YL teachers, which is to be expected in any organisation where YL teaching is not the primary offer.

However, despite their concerns, it is important to note the positive orientation of the group. Whereas those in Group 3 had displayed resistance to professional development in the YL arena, the positivity of Group 2 strongly suggests that they would react well to training. With all things being equal, fears and concerns will inevitably be foregrounded in teachers minds, but this insight into the natural positivity of Group 2 is significant because it presents management with an opportunity to address training gaps and empower enthusiastic YL teachers in waiting.

This is perhaps best summed up by the following comment in interview:

“We’re all up for it [YL teaching], you know. I don’t think that’s an issue. But for me personally, I just haven’t really done much of it before and that kind of makes me a bit nervous.”

This need for basic training should not be underestimated. When considered in the context of the wider TEFL industry, where certificate and diploma courses are targeted almost exclusively at adult teaching, it stands to reason that teachers such as those in Group 2 will have concerns about being sent into the YL classroom—concerns which, if not properly addressed, may ultimately manifest themselves in resistance. Furthermore, it is conceivable that the feelings of stress reported by all participants, even the most positive, and as highlighted by Verity (2000), might be somewhat alleviated with training.

Garton, Copland, and Burns (2011, p. 20) echo this point thus:

“The needs of in-service teachers are particularly acute, given that many did not start their careers as teachers of English or as teachers of young learners”.

The question that produced the biggest mix of responses was #20: ‘YL classes would add a nice variety to my schedule’. Although this is clearly an issue specific to this particular context, it is nonetheless likely that that teachers working in similar ELT organisations may face similar issues. One teacher commented in interview:

“I quite enjoy teaching kids from time to time, but I just don’t want to be labelled as a kids’ teacher . . . I don’t want a schedule of only kids.”

This suggests that further investigation is warranted into perceived implications of YL teaching in regards to teacher allocation and class scheduling. Teachers may, for example, welcome YL teaching providing it does not dominate their schedule. Should this feeling be widespread, managers in ELT organisations might be well advised to be open and transparent about their scheduling policies and maintain a dialogue with teachers about this.

Limitations

The anonymous nature of the questionnaires comes with inherent limitations, such as the lack of biographical data, which may have offered insight into responses. For this reason it was also not possible to compare the responses of experienced and inexperienced YL teachers, which would have made for an interesting comparison.

Recommendations

Considering the opportunities suggested in the above analysis, I would suggest the following steps to be taken by an ELT organisation wishing to promote best practice in YL teaching:

1. Teacher induction should cover YL teaching and theory. “Core” theoretical content might include child developmental stages, Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development, L1 literacy, and the language curriculum in the local education system.
2. Practical qualifications such as the CELTA YL Extension or CiSELT should be actively encouraged and financially supported where possible.

3. A regular programme of in-service training should be established to cover YL teaching issues.

4. Peer-observation should be promoted as an effective way to support teacher development and reflection.

Conclusion
This research has shown that the staffroom in this organisation was made up largely of teachers with a positive orientation toward teaching YLs. Despite feelings at both ends of the spectrum, there was a significant body of teachers in the middle who, in spite of some insecurities, were willing to take on YL classes. Their concerns were representative of a predictable training gap comprising perennial issues such as classroom management and discipline, and there appears to be a good chance that targeted in-service training could empower these teachers into becoming confident and enthusiastic YL practitioners.

From a management perspective, a willingness to engage with and understand teachers’ attitudes towards YLs may help those working in similar contexts to identify such issues in the staffroom, and potentially uncover training opportunities with the potential to make a lasting impact on the enthusiasm and skillset of YL teachers.

References

Oliver Beddall is a teacher trainer and academic manager currently based at the British Council in Cairo, Egypt. He spent four years teaching in Tokyo, where this research was conducted. He has published various papers, presented at major international conferences and holds a master’s degree in TESOL from Aston University. Email: <olibeddall@gmail.com>.

Appendices
Appendix A, Initial Survey; Appendix B, Questionnaire; Appendix C, Graph of Responses; Appendix D, Teacher Attitude Score; and Appendix E, The “Typical Teacher” can all be found in the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt>.

Is your membership due for renewal?
Check the label on the envelope this TLT came in for your renewal date, then go to <jalt.org/main/membership> and follow the easy instructions to renew. Help us to help you! Renew early!
From Reading Books to Sharing Books: Going Beyond the Virtuous Circle of the Good Reader

Kunitaro Mizuno
Fukuoka Prefectural University, Japan

The "virtuous circle of the good reader" (Nuttall, 2006, p.127) is considered the key to the success of extensive reading. Teachers make efforts to create the virtuous circle in the act of reading for each student. From the point of individual reading, this works well. From the point of designing a class where students learn collaboratively, the virtuous circle needs something extra. This paper would argue that from the perspective of self-determination theory, it is indispensable to incorporate dialogue with others into the virtuous circle. To implement the idea, the IRC (Interactive Reading Community) Project has been carried out. The results of student questionnaires are analyzed using reader-response theory to see the effect that others have. Also, from the perspective of general education, how reading books in the IRC Project can foster learning culture (Dewey, 1915) is examined.

As Nuttall (2006) shows in Figure 1, if a teacher can provide appropriate books for students and help them choose what to read, they will read faster, read more, understand better, and enjoy reading. This paper will develop the cognitive cycle from the point of social aspects of reading at a Japanese university.

Small Amounts of English in Textbooks
It has long been said that although Japanese people learn English for six years from junior to senior high school, they cannot utilize English as a means of communication. This criticism has led the Education Ministry to incorporate learning English into the curriculum of elementary school education since 2011. Putting aside the arguments for and against starting to learn English before junior high school, the fact was pointed out that the amount of English provided in the authorized school textbooks for six years was very small. According to the editorial department of Modern English Education (1996), if we printed the words of the New Horizon series in a paperback book, the total number of English words read by junior high school students would be equivalent to 19 pages. Okumura (1999) also pointed out that if we printed the words of the Unicorn series in a paperback book, the English words read by high school students would be equivalent to 138 pages. As a total for six years, 157 pages were read. Since a paperback usually has about 250 pages, about 60% of one paperback is read during the six years. It means that an average of 26 pages is read every year and about 2 pages are read per month. This naturally has made teachers in Japan consciously provide students with more reading material in English in addition to the authorized school textbooks.

Figure 1. The Virtuous Circle of the Good Reader
Cognitive Approach

In the context of searching for how to increase Japanese students’ English input, the Input Hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1985) has been laid out as a theoretical foundation for extensive reading. He argued that “humans acquire language in only one way—by understanding messages, or by understanding ‘comprehensible input’” (p. 2). This view can be visualized in Figure 2 (Masamura, 2012, p. 12):

![Visual Image of the Input Hypothesis and Cognitive Approach](image)

As the image shows, the Input Hypothesis considers learning as an internalized cognitive process bound inside individual heads, which comes from the information processing model in computer science—input and output—from the 1970s (McLaughlin, 1987; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977). This view of learning a language is called the cognitive approach.

Krashen (1993) also suggested that Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) is the best way to implement the idea. Mason and Krashen (1997) conducted an experiment showing the efficacy of this method. They compared a FVR class where students read books during and outside the class and listened to stories read aloud by the teacher in class with another class which adopted the grammar-translation method. Both classes took a cloze test at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. The growth rate of the scores of the students in the grammar-translation method class was half of those of the FVR class. Mason (2006, 2011) also showed that a FVR class was effective to improve vocabulary, grammar, and writing, as well as reading, and improved the scores of the TOEIC and TOEFL tests.

Furthermore, to enhance the hypothesis of comprehensive input through reading books extensively, Sakai and Kanda (2005) advocated it in their book titled, *Kyōshitsu de yomu ego hyakumango: tadokujugyo no susume* [Reading 1 million words in the classroom: encouragement for extensive reading]. Their book marked the beginning of the method of extensive reading in Japan. Also, Takase (2008) implemented SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), which gives students as much time as possible for concentrating on reading during the class, and gives teachers time for giving helpful advice for students on the spot. It also includes students continuing reading inside and outside class to reach the goal of one million words. The SSR advocates like to witness, as Henry (1995) describes it, “the most beautiful silence on earth, that of students engrossed in their reading” (p. xv).

Review of the Virtuous Circle

The common factors behind the popularity and success of both FVR and SSR methods can be clearly explained in the fulfillment of the “virtuous circle of the good reader” as Nuttall (2006) shows in Figure 1.

When it comes to motivation, however, we should also examine the virtuous circle with reference to the self-determination theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (1996). They argue that as fundamental sources for humans to be motivated to learn, the following three psychological needs should be satisfied: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. There are many experimental studies which show that satisfying the three psychological needs motivated their students to learn English (e.g., Hiromori, 2006; Noels, Pelletier, Clement and Valland, 2000; Sakai & Koike, 2008).

From the perspective of the three psychological needs, the FVR and SSR methods include autonomy and competence. Students can choose what they want to read autonomously and they also feel that they are competent readers (they are able to enjoy reading English books). As for the relatedness of the self-determination theory, both the FVR and SSR methods do not consider the relationships of students as playing an important role to motivate their act of reading. It is clear that the virtuous circle in Figure 1 lacks relatedness and exclusively focuses on the cognitive process of reading.

Unlike the FVR and SSR methods, over the past 10 years, it has gradually become increasingly popular for students to be encouraged to read more by relating what they read to other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing and interacting with their classmates during the class. *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language* (Bamford & Day, 2004) and *New Ways in Teaching Reading* (Day, 2012) have collections of classroom activities for extensive reading. However, since the priority of the extensive reading class is strictly a large quantity of input from reading books, interaction with others is not regarded as an essential element in the virtuous circle of the good reader.
Interactive Reading Community Project

I would argue that relatedness, that is, interaction with others, should be incorporated into the virtuous circle to enrich students’ reading experiences and further facilitate their act of reading. In order to justify my thesis, I would like to present the Interactive Reading Community (IRC) Project, which was created and has been utilized since 1999 (Mizuno, Kawakita, Toya, & Nishino, 2011; Mizuno, Toya, Kawakita, & Nishino, 2013; Mizuno, 2013). To clarify the interactive nature of the IRC project, the whole idea of the IRC project can be visually described by the Doughnut Theory for Learning (Saeki, 1995).

The Doughnut Theory claims that there are three phases in the process of learning at school: the I-phase, the YOU-phase, and the THEY-phase (Figure 3). The I-phase signifies the learning process of a student. The YOU-phase signifies the interaction with classmates and a teacher. The THEY-phase signifies people in the outer world surrounding the world of I and YOU (WE). Figure 3 shows that when learning expands from I to YOU and from WE to THEY, the student will move through the first interface and the second interface. In the context of the IRC project, the first interface indicates a classroom where I see YOU face-to-face and introduce our favorite books to each other. The second interface indicates the IRC website <http://www.interactive-l-community.com/IRC5/Login.php> where WE can read reaction reports about books posted by THEY who are students at other universities on the IRC website, and ordinary readers who post their reviews on <amazon.co.jp> and <amazon.com>.

In 2011, questionnaires were given to 434 students who joined the IRC project from five universities. The results were analyzed from the perspective of a sociocultural approach (Mizuno et al., 2013). I will reexamine the questionnaire data focusing on how relatedness (interaction with others in the classroom and on the IRC website) could facilitate the virtuous circle and enrich their reading experiences in the IRC project.

Students’ Attitude

The existence of others at the first interface (in the classroom) and at the second interface (the IRC website) changed students’ attitude toward reading and had a positive impact on the cognitive process of reading. 98.1% of the students believed that since they had to discuss books they read with those in the classroom and on the IRC website who had not read them yet, they began to read books keeping others in mind while thinking about the story line and the details of the story. 89.6% answered that they reflected on the scenes and English expressions that made an impact on them, so they could share them with others in the classroom and on the IRC website.

Students’ First Interaction

Students read one book every week. In groups of four, they introduced the book they had read to their classmates. 81.7% found the book talk very helpful when choosing books to read. The introduction and information about the books they were given helped them read more fluently and have a better understanding. 84.3% also thought that being part of a reading community encouraged them to continue reading.

Students’ Second Interaction

As for writing reaction reports, using the Japanese language is key to making valuable shared reading experiences. As Cook (1992) insists on multicompetence, where the mother tongue always exists in the learners’ minds, it would be unnatural and sometimes inefficient for students not to use the Japanese language as a learning tool. It is their mother tongue that enables them to appreciate and think deeply about the stories and fully express their ideas and feelings. 89.1% perceived that through writing reaction reports they could better understand and discuss the books. 92.6% also thought that writing about books they had read was essential to prepare for small group classroom discussions.
The most distinct feature of the IRC website at the second interface is that the IRC version 4 contains about 100,000 reaction reports and comments that have been posted since 2010. Students can access this rich database and read reaction reports posted in the past by THEY who were students from other classes and other universities. 95.9% believed that reading several reaction reports posted for one particular book made them realize that there were many interpretations of the book. In this way, writing and reading and sharing on the IRC website at the second interface has provided cognitive and mental development for each student.

Reader-Response Theory

As the analysis of the questionnaires (Mizuno et al., 2013) indicates, students who join the IRC project will interpret as well as comprehend (read faster, read more, understand better, and enjoy reading) the text in the book better due to writing a reaction report (not a summary) about the book for other members of the IRC project. In other words, they go beyond the virtuous circle of the good reader. This situation makes a big difference between reading texts for the University English Entrance Exam and reading books as a member of the IRC project. Looking closely at the differences between the two, there is significant educational value to participating in the IRC project upon entering a university.

When we examine the act of reading and reading ability, it is essential to consider two aspects of reading: comprehension and interpretation (Urquhart, 1987). When it comes to taking an examination, however, comprehension is focused on exclusively. In order to pass the university entrance examination, high school students are entirely engaged in answering questions with only one right answer. In other words, the test giver removes the relationship between the student and the writer. High school students are only examinees and not considered autonomous readers. This situation is severely criticized by Widdowson (1979):

Comprehension questions, for example, commonly require the learner to rummage around in the text for information in a totally indiscriminate way, without regard to what purpose might be served in so doing. Learners are seldom required to use the information they acquire, either within an interaction process to facilitate access to the most salient directions towards meaning or to follow these directions into their own conceptual worlds. Reading is thus represented as an end in itself, an activity that has no relevance to real knowledge and experience and therefore no real meaning. (p. 180)

Thus, it is pedagogically essential that when Japanese students enter a university, they should learn another aspect of reading, which is to relate what they read to their own world of knowledge and experiences, and be encouraged to ask questions and give their opinions. They should also learn to consider reading as social as well as cognitive by utilizing the information and ideas in the books and doing something relevant with others after reading.

Needless to say, interpreting and evaluating text differs from person to person (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988). This interactive approach to reading follows the reader-response theory. Hirvela (1996) succinctly describes the notion of the reader-response theory:

A reader’s response to a text is a ‘story of reading,’ and that in discussing it the reader will ‘tell a story of reading.’ That is, the reader’s interpretation of the text describes not the text itself but how the reader re-created it while reading it. It is, then, the reader and his or her reading process that we encounter when an interpretation of a text is supplied. (p. 128)

Telling a story of reading is exactly what the students in the IRC project learn to do both in the book talk during the class and in writing a reaction report. According to the results of the questionnaires, the existence of “others” in the classroom and on the IRC website played an important role. Since they needed to explain books to others and wanted to entice them to read their favorite books, inevitably they were motivated and their understanding of the text was significantly deepened. To promote the books they enjoyed, they were more thoughtful when writing their reaction reports.

Conclusion

Contrary to the visual image of the cognitive approach in Figure 2, the approach taken by the IRC project is called the sociocultural approach, which considers learning as a mediated process where individuals increase their cognitive development interacting with cultural tools such as language and artifacts (Mizuno et al, 2013). This view of learning can be visualized in Figure 4 (Masamura, 2012, p. 396):
The Language Teacher • Feature Article

The straws are tools (IRC website, Japanese language, and English language) which mediate between the two people and enable them to share the contents of the glass (books) with each other. Clearly, the best characteristic of the sociocultural approach is sharing, making the IRC project special compared with the cognitive-based FVR and SSR methods.

Finally, what must not be forgotten is that most extensive reading classes in Japan are offered to freshmen and sophomores as part of the general education curriculum. From the perspective of general education where students learn culture, including humanities, natural science, social science, health science, and language, the IRC project should be examined to see how it makes a contribution to learning culture.

Dewey (1915) defines culture as the “growth of the imagination in flexibility, in scope, and in sympathy” (p. 56). Culture etymologically means the tilling of land. To learn culture can be interpreted as cultivating our minds and hearts in an educational context. Putting Dewey’s idea about culture and the etymological meaning of culture at the center of general education, a reading class can create an environment where students can cultivate their minds and hearts through reading experiences, allowing their imaginations to grow. To this end, students should not only read alone but also should have interaction with others helping them cultivate their minds and hearts and see the world from multiple perspectives. In this respect, the IRC project has been designed and practiced to have cultivated students’ reading experiences collaboratively and produced positive results as the analysis of the questionnaires (Mizuno et al., 2013) distinctly show. The IRC project will continue cultivating students’ minds and hearts through not only having them read books in the virtuous circle but also through interactions with others utilizing the Japanese language to deepen their understanding of the contents of books and each other.

Endnotes
1. Figure 2 and Figure 4 are each originally an image of the words account and share. in An illustrated dictionary of English words. (Masamura, 2012).

References

Figure 4. Visual Image of the Sociocultural Approach to Learning a Language

Never had an article published before? Lacking confidence, or just unsure of what to do? TLT’s Peer Support Group can help. <jalt-publications.org/psg/> Learn to write with the help of our experienced collaborative writing team.
Mizuno: From Reading Books to Sharing Books: Going Beyond the Virtuous Circle of the Good Reader


Kunitaro Mizuno is an associate professor at Fukuoka Prefectural University. His research interests are creating a learning community utilizing ICT, data-driven learning, learner’s dictionary, and pedagogical grammar.
Cooperative and Collaborative Learning in the Language Classroom

Yoshitaka Kato  
Kyoto University

Francesco Bolstad  
Kyoto University

Hironori Watari  
Waseda University

Cooperative learning and collaborative learning are two of the central approaches that utilize pair or group activities in the language learning classroom. However, despite the fact that these approaches have been developed under different historical backgrounds and thus have different pedagogical aims to be pursued, a tendency to use the two terms interchangeably has obscured their respective merits in foreign language education. This paper therefore attempts to differentiate them through an extensive review of the relevant literature. It reveals that cooperative learning, which emphasizes the necessity of developing learners’ social skills, tends to be described as a more structured and teacher-centered approach than collaborative learning, which presupposes the learners’ autonomy to a greater extent. This paper, rather than arguing any primacy of one of the two approaches, introduces some issues to assist practitioners and researchers to identify which approach would be most beneficial for their individual teaching and research goals.

Since the 1980s, the emergence of constructivism has shifted much of the discussion on effective language teaching, from a focus on knowledge-transmission to knowledge-building frameworks of learning (Brown, 2000; Crandall, 1999). This paradigm shift has coincided with the prevalence of a wide variety of small group activities in the language-learning classroom. Two well-known approaches within the new paradigm of knowledge building are cooperative learning and collaborative learning. In recent years, these approaches have enjoyed increased attention among researchers and practitioners in foreign language education both within Japan and abroad (e.g., Erikawa, 2012; Kamimura, 2006; McCafferty, Jacobs, & DaSilva Iddings, 2006; Storch, 2013).

While both of these approaches show potential in improving language education, a growing concern is that many practitioners tend to use these two terms (i.e., cooperative learning and collaborative learning) interchangeably.¹ The ambiguity needs to be clarified because these two approaches have been developed under different historical backgrounds and thus pursue different pedagogical aims. Bruffee (1995) states:

...describing cooperative and collaborative learning as complementary understates some important differences between the two. Some of what collaborative-learning pedagogy recommends that teachers do tends in fact to undercut some of what cooperative learning might hope to accomplish, and vice versa. (p. 16)

Unless language teachers understand the roots and aims behind the two, it is unlikely that they can fully utilize peer activities in their classroom. This paper therefore attempts to clarify the differences through an extensive review of the relevant literature. After describing cooperative learning and collaborative learning respectively, it will summarize the distinctions between the two approaches. Rather than insisting on any primacy of one of the two approaches, this paper introduces some issues to assist practitioners and researchers to identify which approach would be most beneficial.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning was originally developed in the field of general pedagogy, and it is often contrasted with competitive or individualistic learning. Its roots are said to lie in the democratic view of
education advocated by John Dewey (see Sugie, 2011, p. 17). Although the term itself connotes various teaching techniques, such as Learning Together (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), Student Teams Achievement Divisions (Slavin, 1978), Jigsaw (Aranson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978) (see Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000 for a summary of techniques), a frequently cited definition in the field of foreign language education would be that of Johnson and Johnson (1999). They define it as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (p. 5).

Cooperative learning is often characterized by its well-defined structure of activities, aiming at fostering social skills as well as maximizing learning outcomes. It designs activities where learners need some interaction with each other to achieve a shared goal. In an actual classroom, it is often the case that some learners, called “free riders,” do not actively get involved in a group activity, which makes group interaction less efficient. To prevent this, cooperative learning sets out several basic principles. The principles vary widely among researchers, but the two generally accepted principles are positive interdependence and individual accountability (Jacobs & Ball, 1996; McCafferty et al., 2006; Millis & Cottell, 1998).

The first principle, positive interdependence, falls into one of three types of social interdependence (positive, negative, and none), which can be expressed as “a sink or swim together feeling among group mates” (Kimura, 2009, p. 13). Positive interdependence exists “when the actions of individuals promote the achievement of joint goals” (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 366). Though positive interdependence alone does not lead to higher achievements in student collaboration, it is necessary to provide the foundation on which cooperative learning is built. Another principle, individual accountability, “exists when the performance of each individual member is assessed and the results are given back to the individual and the group to compare against a standard of performance” (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 368). Meeting this principle leads to the feelings of personal responsibility in task completion, which makes cooperative learning more likely to succeed.

Thus, cooperative learning is different from typical pair or group activities in its well-structured task design, in which group members are required to work together to achieve a shared goal. This situation can be created in classrooms by meeting the two basic principles of positive interdependence and individual accountability. What should be noted here is that cooperative learning presupposes to some extent the relative dominance of a teacher in learner cooperation. Although cooperative learning expects the learners to actively join in an activity, it is their teacher who preliminarily determines most of what they are going to learn in the classroom. In this sense, cooperative learning can be described as a form of teacher-centered approach (Panitz, 1999). This so-called “covert teacher-centeredness” is an essential feature of cooperative learning, which will be further discussed later.

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning has been developed mainly within a social constructivists’ school of thought. One of the featured concepts underlying collaborative learning is Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). It facilitates learners’ engagement “with more capable others (teachers, advanced peers, etc.), who provide assistance and guidance” (Oxford, 1997, p. 444). The broadest definition of collaborative learning would be “a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together” (Dillenbourg, 1999, p. 1), but this definition is unsatisfactory and needs to be more sophisticated as Dillenbourg himself discusses in his article. Here, to achieve the purpose of this paper, we compare it with cooperative learning.

As mentioned before, while the primary interests of cooperative learning lie in its elaborate process of small group learning so that students can maximize their learning, students in collaborative learning are assumed to be “responsible participants” who have already acquired, to some extent, the social skills required to undertake and complete a task (Matthews, Cooper, Davidson, & Hawkes, 1995). Rather than prescribing the collaboration process among learners, it puts an emphasis on any learning outcomes gained through collaboration. This is likely to be why the degree of structure and prescriptiveness is lower in collaborative learning (Oxford, 1997), and it is why the collaborative learning approach does not recommend teachers intervene in working groups (Bruffee, 1995). In this sense, collaborative learning can be described as a more student-centered approach than cooperative learning (Panitz, 1999).

Although we cannot say this conclusively, collaborative learning in foreign language education seems to most often take the form of collaborative writing (Storch, 2013), dictogloss (Wajnryb, 1990), learning grammar in collaboration with peers (Storch, 1999), peer feedback or interaction on writing (e.g., Kamimura, 2006), and on speaking (e.g., Sato & Lyster, 2012), and other small group activities. In these ac-
tivities, though there are some exceptions, teachers do not specify the structure of collaboration by, for example, the division of labor among participants. The ways and means of interaction are usually negotiated by the learners themselves. In addition, in contrast to covert teacher-centered cooperative learning, the authority of learning in collaborative learning lies with the learners themselves, which is to say that they are expected to negotiate with others to achieve more than they would alone. Thus, these small group activities (e.g., peer feedback) can be categorized as collaborative learning rather than cooperative learning.

**How Different Are They?**

As discussed so far, there seems to be at least two features that distinguish cooperative learning from collaborative learning: the degree of structure and learner-centeredness (see Figure 1). Regarding the first feature, Oxford (1997) states that cooperative learning “is considered more structured, more prescriptive to teachers about classroom techniques, more directive to students about how to work together in groups” (p. 443), than collaborative learning. This highly structured approach is one of the reasons why cooperative learning has developed so far a lot of teaching techniques (e.g., jigsaw) to make small group activities successful. Conversely, collaborative learning generally allows learners to be more flexible in the working process with their peers.

The second feature that differentiates the two is the degree of learner-centeredness. As discussed above, cooperative learning can be considered less learner-centered because the teacher decides beforehand most of the learners’ behavior during a small group activity and she or he “controls most of what is going on in the class” (Dooly, 2008, p. 21). On the other hand, collaborative learning allows learners more freedom to negotiate their ways and means of interaction among peers because it assumes they are already “responsible participants” (Matthews et al., 1995), who can learn autonomously through collaboration with others.

Figure 1 describes a relationship between the two approaches. By reference to Macaulay and Gonzales’ 1996 study (as cited in Millis & Cottell, 1998, p. 7), this model views cooperative learning and collaborative learning as lying on a continuum. Please note that “less” in this figure does not mean “no:” “less structured” does not mean that collaborative learning has no structure, where learners interact with others in a completely free way. Likewise, “less learner-centered” does not mean that learners have no determination over the path the class takes.

**Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Learning in Action**

The differences highlighted between cooperative and collaborative learning imply that language teachers have to determine which approach to take depending on their teaching goals. If a teacher aims at fostering social skills or motivating students with a highly structured task, it would be better to utilize a cooperative learning approach. Conversely, if the primary focus of the teaching is on learning outcomes and if students are autonomous enough to have responsibility in their own learning, a collaborative learning approach would be a better choice to achieve the purposes.

Because both approaches have respective advantages, it is ultimately the teaching goals that should determine which approach to use. Priority of one over the other cannot be assessed without taking into account teaching environments such as the purposes of the class, learners’ proficiency, learners’ motivation, the degree of autonomy, the past experiences of peer learning, and so forth. With a good understanding of the different backgrounds of cooperative and collaborative learning, language teachers and researchers are expected to apply both approaches appropriately to fulfill their teaching and research goals.

**Note**

1. In the case of Japan, this confusion partially comes from a translation problem. Cooperative learning and collaborative learning are translated inconsistently into Japanese as *kyodo-gakushu* or *kyocho-gakushu*, which are written with several patterns of *kanji*. This lack of uniformity may well induce misunderstanding among researchers as well as practitioners in foreign language education. Sekita and Yasunaga (2005) offer a possible solution for such translation problems.
Acknowledgement

The authors would like to sincerely express their gratitude to Professor Akira Tajino at Kyoto University for his insightful comments and warm encouragement throughout the study.

References


Yoshitaka Kato is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Foreign Language Acquisition and Education at Kyoto University. His research interests include cooperative/collaborative language learning and task-supported language teaching. He can be contacted at <kato.yoshitaka.36u@st.kyoto-u.ac.jp>.

Francesco Bolstad is currently a lecturer at Kyoto University where he teaches academic writing and ESP biology and chemistry courses. His research interests include childhood language acquisition, team-teaching and academic writing. He can be contacted at <fbolstad@me.com>.
Before and After a Study Abroad Programme: Prompt Cards to Facilitate Discussion

Brett Davies
Showa Women’s University, Tokyo
<davies@swu.ac.jp>

Quick Guide

» Key words: Study abroad, peer learning, authentic interaction
» Learner English level: Intermediate and above
» Learner maturity: High school to university
» Preparation time: 10 minutes
» Activity time: 60–90 minutes
» Materials: Prompt cards (one set of six per pair of students), blank cards (three per student)

As MEXT aims to make Japanese students more internationalized, Study Abroad Programmes (SAP) are becoming increasingly common in universities and high schools. While the benefits of such programmes are clear, students often display high levels of anxiety before going abroad, most notably regarding their perceived lack of English ability. In contrast, after returning to Japan, almost all students express satisfaction with the experience and show a marked increase in English fluency and confidence. Unfortunately, in many settings there is little opportunity for pre-SAP students to interact with post-SAP students in order to benefit from their advice.

This activity encourages meaningful English communication between these two groups. It aims to ease pre-SAP student concerns, allow them to practice authentic English and simultaneously giving post-SAP students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences more deeply.

Preparation

Step 1: Arrange a time and place for students to meet a week or two before pre-SAP students depart. Ideally there will be equal numbers of pre-SAP and post-SAP students, though the activity is adaptable for uneven numbers.

Step 2: Make and copy a set of six prompt cards (one set per pair of students; see appendix). These can be simple (Food; Weather) or more complex (The most surprising thing I saw; My biggest regret). If the destination is the same for all students, the cards can be tailored accordingly; for example, Clam chowder (for Boston).

Procedure

Step 1: Give three blank cards to each student and ask them to write their own topic ideas – one per card. Post-SAP students can choose something they particularly liked or disliked during their stay, or something they believe the pre-SAP students ought to know. Some recent examples: Best ice cream; Slang; I wish I took... Meanwhile, Pre-SAP students...
can write down any concerns or questions; for example: Safety? Is the subway easy? Clothes!

Step 2: Pair up students, one pre-SAP with one post-SAP, and give a set of the teacher-made prompt cards to each pair. Ask each student to add their own three cards to the pile, shuffle the deck, and place the cards face down on the desk.

Step 3: Set a time limit for pairs to talk. 10-12 minutes each round allows students to speak to at least four people in an hour, giving everyone some variety in their discussions. The time limit also adds a sense of urgency to the activity, increasing fluency.

Step 4: Ask the pairs to turn a card and talk about the topic in English. When students feel the topic is exhausted, they can turn the next card to discuss a new topic.

Step 5: When the time is up, have the pre-SAP students find a new post-SAP partner, taking their own three cards with them. This allows pre-SAP students to hear a range of opinions about their chosen topics, and keeps things interesting for all participants.

Step 6: Repeat steps 2 to 5 until the end of the scheduled time.

Extension
At the end of the session, each group (pre-SAP and post-SAP) debriefs separately. Write some prompts on the whiteboard: What was the most interesting thing you heard? How do you feel about your trip now? Encourage students to share their impressions.

Conclusion
Pre-SAP students benefit from the real information they can glean from their seniors and often comment that the activity has helped calm their nerves. Additionally, the English fluency of post-SAP students acts as a positive language model for their juniors to emulate.

Post-SAP students have also reacted enthusiastically. For some, this activity is their first chance to discuss their overseas experiences in English. Furthermore, they welcome the opportunity to offer the benefit of their knowledge, and, as one participant put it, “I wish we’d done this before my trip.”

Appendix
The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Engaging Students’ Knowledge of IMRAD
Chieri Noda, PhD candidate
Birkbeck, University of London
<cnoda01@mail.bbk.ac.uk>

Quick Guide
» Keywords: Research articles, IMRAD, reading strategies
» Learner English level: Advanced
» Learner maturity: University
» Preparation time: 30 minutes
» Materials: Research articles, handout
» Activity time: 25 minutes

Learning to scan for information in research articles is an important skill for students in the field of science. Typically, a research article reading class starts with an introduction on the standard format of research articles published in major biomedical journals. This format is commonly referred to as the IMRAD, taking the initial letters of the four main sections: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. Each of these sections bears an important function in communicating scientific research (Glasman-Deal, 2010; Nair & Nair, 2014). A clear understanding of these functions is important in developing effective reading strategies. The simple activity described below enables the teacher to deepen students’ understanding of these functions, following an introduction to the IMRAD format, by engaging their critical thinking.

Preparation
Step 1: Find a well-written research article on a topic relevant to your students.
Step 2: Select a sentence from each section containing elements that hint at the section it is from.
Step 3: Arrange the sentences in random order in a handout (See Appendix for an example).
Step 4: Make copies of the research article.

Procedure
Step 1: After an introduction of the IMRAD format, distribute the article and handout.
Step 2: Explain that the objective of the activity is to find the sentences as quickly as possible.
Step 3: When students have finished, go over the answers and have students point out key information in the sentences that helped them find the sentences within the article.

Step 4: Supplement students’ explanations as necessary.

Conclusion
In a lesson I taught at a medical school, a student who had finished this activity much more quickly than the others explained her reading strategies, pointing out the pertinent information that enabled her to surmise where the sentences (See Appendix) could be found: a specific date of what the authors did meant sentence A was likely to be from the methods section, ‘limitations’ indicated B was probably from the discussion section, the mention of previous research signaled C was likely to be in the introduction section, and a report of results in a table indicated sentence D was from the Results section. Her explanation is a good example of step 3 in the procedure above.

While locating sentences in a text is a straightforward task, finding them quickly in a full-length article requires learners to use their knowledge of the rhetorical functions of the sections in a research article. In this activity, students develop knowledge-based reading strategies using authentic research articles. Searching for complete sentences is less daunting a task than looking for answers to comprehension questions and can help build confidence in tackling research articles. The key to success with this activity is choosing sentences that contain hints about which section they are from. Ideally, the activity is repeated several times using different articles. Once learners have the hang of it, the activity can be made more challenging by mixing sentences from two different articles.

References

Appendix
The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Activities for Large Classes: Tell Me About Your House…
Jim Chapman
Nanzan University
<chapman@nanzan-u.ac.jp>

Quick Guide
» Keywords: Large classes, prepositions of location, furniture, teams
» Learner English level: any level, mixed levels
» Learner maturity: N/A
» Preparation time: 15 minutes
» Activity time: 30-45 minutes
» Materials: Handouts (see Appendix A), scissors, and glue for each team

Preparation
Each team requires one blank copy of the floor plan, one copy of the furniture, a pair of scissors, and a glue stick. One large master floor plan (two A3 sheets preferably) with the furniture already affixed must be prepared in advance.

Procedure
Step 1: The instructor divides the class into teams of four. Each team must choose two sitting members and two moving members. The sitting members remain at their seats and are given the blank apartment floor plan, scissors, glue, and a printout
of the furniture items (teams should be spaced apart if possible).

**Step 2:** The moving members from each team move to the front of the room and are given the materials to deliver to their teams. When they return to the front, they are shown the master floor plan with the furniture affixed and the room names written in the blank spaces.

**Step 3:** The teacher instructs the moving members to tell their sitting partners the location on the floor plan of each of the furniture items, but they cannot leave the assigned space at the front of the room -- they must tell their team, not show them. It may be helpful to establish an area where movers can freely roam back and forth between the master floor plan and the edge of the area closest to their team (see Appendix B).

**Step 4:** The teacher says “Go!” and movers start shouting information to their teammates—“There is a table in front of the TV,” “The dining room is next to the kitchen”—while sitting members listen, ask questions to clarify and cut and paste furniture in the correct location on the blank floor plan. Upon completion, the teacher lifts up each team’s paper to ensure that all items are securely attached and awards points as appropriate.

*** There are three mystery items on the balcony that students must explain and sitting members must draw the items in the correct location: a pool, a BBQ, and a slide.

**Alternatives**
- Movers and sitters change places after 10 minutes.
- A second master floor plan can be prepared and set at the back of larger rooms.
- At the end, students report back about the floor plan for additional team points: “there is a sofa in the living room next to the book case.”
- Students compare the floor plan to their own houses, “there is a sofa in my living room, too!”
- Students prepare a short report about their own houses for homework.

**Conclusion**
This is an interactive exercise for large groups that can serve as a functional reinforcement of in-class study points or as a lesson wrap up activity. It is a noisy but energetic activity that my students enjoy. It can easily be adapted for lower or mixed levels by arranging teams accordingly and can be effective for classes of all ages. My mature students comment-ed that it is the most fun they have ever had in an English class!

**Appendix**
The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

---

**Reformulative Audio Feedback: A Sound Approach to Error Treatment in L2 Writing**

David H. Faulhaber
Kanda University of International Studies
<faulhaber-d@kanda.kuis.ac.jp>

**Quick Guide**

- **Keywords:** Error correction, audio feedback, writing, noticing, technology-enhanced language learning
- **Learner English level:** Intermediate and above
- **Learner maturity:** High school and above
- **Preparation time:** Varies by length of writing samples
- **Activity time:** 1-2 class periods (50-90 minutes each)
- **Materials:** Computers or mobile devices, and headphones

Audio feedback on written assignments often takes the form of one-way conferencing from teacher to student. Less commonly explored is the potential of the aural mode to address localized treatment of errors. To this end, I have been developing what I term reformulative audio feedback as a novel alternative to the hand-drawn symbols and cryptic mark-up schemes typically employed in error correction on student writing. Rather than starting from a returned assignment the teacher has “bled all over” in red ink—generally a disheartening, mechanical exercise in amending decontextualized errors—students revise by hearing their work read back to them, the repairs having been seamlessly integrated into the instructor’s reformulation without disruption to the contextual integrity of the work itself.
Preparation

Step 1: Record yourself reading the student’s written piece while simultaneously correcting treatable errors on the fly. Here, a treatable error refers to non-standard usage, such as, He goed to the park. This is key. While recording, use emphasis, pauses, and intonation cues to draw attention to points in the text that need revision. At the same time, consider that overtly flagging every error in this manner may cause the student to tune out any material read at a more natural pace. You may elect to address instances where awkward vocabulary or stilted language interferes with comprehension. At such times, you can suggest alternate words or turns of phrase in your audio recording. Take caution not to put words into the student’s mouth. Where you cannot work out what a student is struggling to communicate, simply make an aside to that effect in your recording or provide multiple interpretations of what the student may be getting at.

Step 2: Save the audio file and make it ready for distribution via email, portable memory device, or online course management system, preferably just before the start of class.

Procedure

Step 1: During the first class period, have students listen to the reformulative audio feedback as they read along with their previously submitted written draft.

Step 2: When they note a discrepancy between the instructor audio and what is written on their page, students should pause to consider what triggered the repair and revise accordingly. Make yourself available to answer any student questions during this process.

Step 3: Collect the revised drafts. Listen to the audio feedback once more for each. Use the fast playback feature found on most media players to save time. While listening, highlight any items that students overlooked or got wrong.

Step 4: In a subsequent class, or even as homework, direct students to revisit the audio feedback and focus on the areas you have highlighted as being in need of attention.

Extension

Have students keep a journal to track commonly occurring errors over the course of future written work or to share with classmates. Time permitting, have students edit a paper together as each may hear different features within the audio feedback.

Conclusion

I have found that with a little practice, creating reformulative audio feedback takes no more time than marking a paper with error codes and comments. It is ultimately more satisfying, and I actually enjoy the process. Students have also responded positively to this activity: they enjoy the challenge of close listening and appreciate being presented with alternate ways to express their ideas. Even when I do get it wrong, the breakdown in communication often nudges student authors in the right direction. Above all, students cite the personal aspect of having their work read back by their teacher as motivation to do better. Though still a work in progress, reformulative audio feedback is staking out new terrain on the corrective feedback landscape, straddling the implicit/explicit divide, and bears further investigation. It may be just the thing to turn error treatment in L2 writing on its ear.

Which Sound Did You Hear, /r/ or /l/? Pronunciation Pyramid Game

Tetsuko Fukawa
Kanda University of International Studies
<fukawa-t@kanda.kuis.ac.jp>

Quick Guide

» Key words: Pronunciation, group work
» Learner English level: Beginner and above
» Learner maturity: University
» Preparation time: 20 minutes
» Activity time: 20 minutes
» Material: Pronunciation pyramid handout, /r/ and /l/ signs, scotch tape

Teaching /r/ and /l/ sounds is challenging for many English teachers in Japan. To help students become familiar with and acquire these sounds, I will introduce a pronunciation pyramid game that is used in my Language Lab class. This is a fun, reflective, student-centered, and practical activity.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a pronunciation pyramid handout of /r/ and /l/ minimal pairs and five countries that
have /r/ and /l/ in their names. Put pictures of each national flag below each word on the bottom of the pyramid. The handout sample is available in Appendix A.

Step 2: Using two hand-sized notecards write /r/ on one card and /l/ on another.

Step 3: Make copies of the handout and notecards for each student.

Procedure

Step 1: Instruct students to sit in groups of three and distribute the handout and /r/ and /l/ cards.

Step 2: Teach the pronunciation of all the words written on the handout, focusing on the differences between /r/ and /l/. Give feedback on students’ pronunciation if necessary.

Step 3: Tell students to attach the /r/ cards on their right hands and the /l/ cards on their left using scotch tape.

Step 4: Instruct students to listen to the teacher’s pronunciation carefully. Tell students to raise their right hands when they hear a word with /r/ and left hands when they hear a word with /l/. Read one word in each line, including “start.” After reading five words ask students where their final destination is.

Step 5: Repeat Step 4 until students become familiar with /r/ and /l/ differences as well as the rules of the game.

Step 6: Tell students to practice pronouncing the minimal pairs individually for two to three minutes.

Step 7: Assign each of the three group members a unique letter: A, B, or C.

Step 8: Instruct B and C to sit next to each other, while A sits behind B and C, all facing the same direction.

Step 9: Have A read one word in each line on the handout while B and C respond to A’s pronunciation by raising their hands. After reading five words A asks B and C which country they arrive at.

Step 10: Repeat Step 9 two more times with B and C taking turns as the speaker.

Conclusion

This activity can benefit students in two ways. First, students can produce challenging sounds in a game format. Second, the reflective aspect: students can observe how listeners perceive the speakers’ pronunciation by noting listeners’ responses.

Due to poor listening skills, responders may give a false response even when the speaker pronounces /r/ and /l/ correctly. In this case the speaker can ask the teacher for assistance in order to make sure he or she produce the target sounds correctly.

This game format can be adapted for teaching other phonemes by replacing the words with /r/ and /l/ with minimal pairs that contain your target sounds. The final destinations (i.e., countries) can also be replaced with countries which names have the target phonemes.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Job Fair Project

Andy Hockersmith

Toyo University

<andy@toyo.jp>

Quick Guide

» Keywords: Job hunting, fluency, presentations, creative thinking
» Learner English level: Intermediate
» Learner maturity: University
» Activity time: Four classes, 90 minutes each
» Preparation time: 30 minutes per class
» Materials: Templates for creating companies, resumes, and interview questions (See appendices)

This is a creative, practical project used as the final listening and speaking project for the semi-intensive academic English course at my university. Students work in pairs to create their own companies, introduce them to the class, recruit new employees, and participate in interviews, both as company presidents and job seekers. In doing so, students get a significant amount of spoken English practice, increase confidence, develop a greater awareness of what they can offer prospective employers, and get valuable insights into the job-hunting process.
Step 2: Next, students create a job opening for their company, giving information regarding the position, job responsibilities, required experience, and so on. Later in the project, students will recruit other students to work for their company.

Step 3: Each student prepares a resume, filling in a template with educational background; work experience, including part-time jobs and internships; special skills and talents; strengths and weaknesses; and their job-seeking objective.

Step 4: In the second class, students give a brief PowerPoint presentation of their company to the class, sharing the basics of their company and information about their job opening. Afterward, students sign up for interviews at the three companies they are most interested in and give these companies a copy of their completed resume.

Note: Each student will participate in six interviews on interview day, three in the role of job seeker and three as company president; this is the most logistically challenging part of the project. Because each interview takes place during a specific time slot, ensure that students pay close attention to their interview times to prevent double booking.

Step 4: During the third classroom meeting, students help each other prepare for the interviews that will take place during the fourth class period of the project. They create interview questions, practice responses, and drill each other.

Step 5: Before class begins on interview day (class 4), arrange the classroom desks to create interview stations, one for each company. Assign each company to an interview station, and put the companies’ signs on the interview stations so everyone knows where to go. The schedule for interview day is tight: each interview lasts 12 minutes. Students have 1 minute between interviews to go to the next interview station. There is a 5-minute break after the third interview so that students have a chance to talk with their partners before switching roles. Have students take notes at all interviews, both as job seekers and as company presidents.

Step 6: Because it is impossible to monitor multiple interviews simultaneously, you can assess students afterward based on their participation and completion of the related preparation tasks: the resume, company presentation, and interview questions. At the end of the project, you may choose to hold an assessed speaking conference where you ask students which company they would like to work for and which candidates they would like to hire.

Conclusion
The Job Fair Project is consistently one of our program’s most popular activities. It gives students excellent opportunities to be creative, learn how to market themselves, and use English for authentic communication.

Appendix
The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Using Student BYODs (Phones) for a Getting-to-Know-You Extension Activity
Tim Knight
Shirayuri College
<tknight@shirayuri.ac.jp>

Quick Guide
» Keywords: Speaking, listening, learning about classmates, BYOD, computers
» Learner English level: High beginner and above
» Learner maturity: High school and above
» Preparation time: About an hour for a class of 20 between the first and second class
» Activity time: About 50 minutes in class; 30-40 minutes out of class
» Materials: Students’ mobile phones and computers, computer (or tablet), audio editing software, document-making software (for the teacher).

This activity has three aims: first, to build on the getting-to-know-you activities many teachers use in the first or second class of a term; second, to provide a homework listening assignment based on students’ own interviews; and third, to show students that their mobile phones are useful devices for their foreign language oral communication development, as Hockly (2012) and others have explored. The speaking part of the activity is done in class. The listening part is done out of class, traditionally not a time for getting-to-know-you tasks, and the final part is done in a follow-up class.
Procedure

**Step 1:** Get the students to team up in pairs (a ‘three’ can also work if necessary).

**Step 2:** Students should prepare one or two questions they would like to ask their partner. At this stage you can give more specific directions. For example, if you are teaching a content course, you can specify that the questions are focused on a particular topic. For easy identification later, each interview should start with an introduction, such as “Hi, my name is X and I’m talking to Y.”

**Step 3:** Ask the students to use their mobile phones to record their introduction and the interview. It should last between about 45 and 90 seconds. It’s important to limit the time of the interview. Some students may have never used the voice memo function or even have an appropriate app and need a little guidance.

**Step 4:** Write your email address on the board and tell the students to send their recordings to you. Most universities now have Wi-Fi on campus and the students should make use of that. It is better if you can make sure you have received the recordings before the end of class, so you need to have your own device with internet access in the classroom. You need to allow enough time to check that you have received them, too. Tell the students to expect an email with instructions for their next task.

**Step 5:** Load the recordings into an audio editing software program such as Audacity and join the files together. For a class of 20, you will receive 20 short interviews. Rather than joining all of them into one big file, I recommend dividing up the interviews to make 3 files of seven or eight minutes each. Export as mp3 files and upload them to an audio file-sharing site such as SoundCloud.

**Step 6:** Listen to the interviews and make one comprehension question for each, so you have one question about each student.

**Step 7:** Type the questions with spaces for students to write answers and make a PDF (or Word) document.

**Step 8:** Send an email to your students (I make a group email for my classes) to which you attach the question sheet and in which you provide a link to the audio files in SoundCloud. Remind the students to listen to the interviews, answer the questions and bring the completed document to class.

**Step 9:** Check the answers with the students in a follow-up class.

Conclusion

I have found this activity to be both useful and fun. Both the teacher and the students learn about all the members of the class, while getting language practice outside of class time, as well as introducing new technology in their language development.

Reference


Learning English Through Constructing Infomercials

David O’Flaherty
Kyoto Girls’ High School
< davidoflah@yahoo.co.uk >

Quick Guide

» **Keywords:** Group work, presentation, describing objects, infinitive, gerund
» **Learner English level:** Intermediate
» **Learner maturity:** High school
» **Class size:** Approximately 20 students
» **Preparation time:** 1 hour
» **Activity time:** Three 50-minute lessons
» **Materials:** Handouts (see appendices), fake money

The goal of this activity is for students to describe the appearance and functions of everyday objects. They achieve this by selecting a product from their classroom and then preparing and performing a TV infomercial-style sales presentation in small groups with the aim of selling that product to their fellow classmates. The students acquire the necessary grammar and vocabulary for the presentation through a mixture of pre-teaching and brainstorming. Groups compete against each other to earn the most money for their product.

Preparation

**Step 1:** Put students into groups of three or four.

**Step 2:** Prepare ¥10,000 (10 x ¥1,000) for each group by buying some fake yen or by making your own.

**Step 3:** Make a copy of each handout for each student (all handouts can be found in the appendices).
Procedure

Lesson 1

Step 1: Put students into groups and, with reference to Handout #1 (Appendix A), explain the purpose and format of the presentations.

Step 2: Using Handout #2 (Appendix B), set a two-minute limit and have students brainstorm materials, sizes/shapes, and colors (one at a time). For colors, encourage creativity. For example, shocking pink, ruby red, snow white, etc. Elicit words from each group after brainstorming each category, write them on the board, and label them nouns or adjectives. Highlight the ones you deem to be the most useful for their presentations. After brainstorming, write “It is adjective” “It has (adjective) noun” and “It is made of material noun” on the board. Choose an object in the classroom and make sentences about it using these structures. Choose another object and elicit sentences about it.

Step 3: Teach students how to explain the function and merits of a product. Handout #2 contains the relevant structures for this, as well as the chance for students to practice by making sentences of their own.

Step 4: In groups, have students choose an object in the classroom to be their product (pencil case, bag, dictionary, etc.). They must then give it an original name.

Step 5: Pass out Handout #3 (Appendix C) and show the example of how to make an everyday object sound more appealing. Have groups use the questions provided to discuss how they will sell their product and organize their presentation.

Step 6: Groups begin to write and prepare their presentations using Handout #4 (Appendix D). If time permits, an extra lesson can be allotted to prepare and practice.

Lesson 2

Step 7: Students give their presentations.

Step 8: After the presentations, give each group their money. Students must allocate this money to the other groups’ products based on how much they liked the presentations. Students have 5 minutes to discuss this. During this time, line the products up at the front of the class. One student from each group comes and places the money they have allocated for each product in front of that product.

Step 9: Count the money. The product with the most money is declared this year’s “best-seller”.

Step 10: Give brief feedback about each group’s presentation. As a short review, elicit the goals of the activity and the key grammatical structures. Allow 15-20 minutes for steps 8-10.

Conclusion

Students always approach this activity with enthusiasm. They often start their presentations with a skit emphasizing the need for their product and then move onto describing the product and its various features and uses by utilizing the vocabulary and structures they studied in their preparation lessons. The result is a set of presentations that are original and creative, but also very structured in terms of the English used. Student feedback has shown that they enjoy the format of the presentation and its competitive element.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Environmental School Photo Hunt

Tamatha Roman

Kanda University of International Studies
							<tamatha-r@kanda.kuis.ac.jp>

Quick Guide

» Keywords: Photo hunt, environment, perspective
» Learner English level: Intermediate
» Learner maturity: University
» Preparation time: 10 minutes
» Activity time: 90 minutes
» Materials: Blackboard, chalk, worksheet, students’ phones or cameras, timer

Environmental issues are a hot topic in today’s press, and in Japan, students may or may not realize the extent to which these issues surround them in their own school setting. This activity sends students around their school, taking pictures of the ways that the environment is present in their daily lives. This activity can be used as an introduction to environmental issues and an awareness-raising opportunity before delving into more specific envi-
Environmental topics. As most students have personal smartphones, this is a great way to also incorporate technology and encourage creativity. Furthermore, students can be introduced to new vocabulary and engage in discussion using this vocabulary.

**Preparation**

**Step 1:** Take a walk around your school and note potential photo opportunities that are somehow connected to the environment. Two examples already on the worksheet (see appendix) are “*a place where you can fill up your water bottle*” and “*someone wearing Coolbiz.*” Customize the worksheet so that it includes any original ideas. Items can also be tailored to incorporate topics that will be presented in future classes. Also, customize the number of photos in order to fit your class time schedule.

**Step 2:** Print out the worksheet.

**Step 3:** Ask students to bring their smartphone or digital camera to class for this activity.

**Procedure**

**Step 1:** Get students to make pairs and hand out the worksheet. On the board, write “*eco-friendly*” and “*not eco-friendly.*” Have student pairs brainstorm ways that their school is environmentally friendly, and ways that it is not. For example, maybe the school has an extensive recycling system, or maybe it only provides disposable chopsticks in the cafeteria. After about 10-15 minutes, have some students come to the board and write examples under each category. Discuss any new vocabulary presented.

**Step 2:** Explain the rules of the photo hunt. Teams must go around the school and take pictures of items on the list. Have students read the items and go over any unknown vocabulary (*vegan*, for example). Also note that there are a few free spaces for students to add items they encounter on their hunt.

**Step 3:** Send the students off on their hunt. Make sure to stress that there is a time limit and teams that come back after the time limit will lose points. Also, it’s important to note that teams cannot separate! As the teacher, feel free to wander around with the students and help clarify any items on the list.

**Step 4:** When the students come back, ask them to sit together in small groups with another team or two. Have the groups go through the checklists together and calculate the total number of pictures they took.

**Step 5:** After calculating their points, have teams compare pictures and answer a series of post-activity questions. For example, what was similar or different between the pictures? Which items were difficult to find and why do you think this is? What extra pictures did you take and why? During this time, the teacher should walk around, answer any questions, and help encourage deeper analysis of the questions.

**Step 6:** As an extension, have students select their favorite photo and discuss why they chose it and the environmental issues surrounding the photo. Also, ask them to find a news article related to the issue.

**Conclusion**

This activity can be a great way to help teachers become aware of students’ prior knowledge about the environment in their own localized setting, while introducing some content-related vocabulary. I have found that students genuinely enjoy the timed aspect of this activity and using their own phones for the purpose of taking pictures. This activity allows students to creatively express their own perspectives on their environment as well as choose their own pictures. In future lessons, it is possible to refer back to what they learned from this activity.

**Appendix**

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

**A Stepping-Stone to Skills Building with Students’ Chosen Topics**

Simon Thomas
Osaka Prefecture University
<emailsimonatwork@gmail.com>

**Quick Guide**

- **Keywords:** The Stuff of Genius, integrating students’ topics, multiple skills
- **Learner English level:** Intermediate to advanced
- **Learner maturity:** University
- **Preparation time:** 15 minutes or more
- **Activity time:** From one 90-minute lesson up to a whole semester
- **Materials:** Computers, projector, Internet connection or previously downloaded video, study materials relevant to chosen goals
Students who are not language majors can find it stimulating to bring interests from their academic fields into language classes to develop within a class theme or format. *The Stuff of Genius* videos by *How Stuff Works* are a series of two to three minute, animated videos that introduce inventions or ideas that have in someway affected our lives. These videos introduce a format that teachers can utilize as a stepping-stone into further skill building activities for a number of different learning goals that students can use with their chosen topics.

**Preparation**

**Step 1:** Visit *The Stuff of Genius* website, podcast, or YouTube site. Select a video and topic suitable for your students.

**Step 2:** Decide on the initial procedures to use based on the level of your students. Script gap fill, vocabulary and grammar exercises with comprehension questions offer listening, reading, shadowing, pronunciation, speaking, and discussion expansion activity potential.

**Step 3:** Decide the range of goals and skills you would like students to work towards and how far you would like to expand this theme.

**Procedure**

**Step 1:** Introduce the video and the accompanying exercises. At this stage, content and vocabulary are the focus.

**Step 2:** Break the video down into its component parts, typically including:

1. The history and background to the invention and inventor.
2. A description of the invention, how it is made, works or can be used.
3. Opinions about it based on:
   I. The American Dream Scale (fame & fortune of the inventor).
   II. The Benefit to Humanity Scale (how much humanity has benefited).
   III. The Ripple Effect Scale (how far the effects of the invention have spread around the world).

Ask the students to recount each part of the video, focusing on language form and grammar. These first two steps provide a base understanding of the format.

**Step 3:** Ask students to choose an item from their bags, creatively imagine the background and history to its invention, describe how it is made, works and is used, and rate it using the three given scales with ideas to support their opinions.

**Step 4:** After a teacher demonstration, students can apply these ideas to a mini presentation using key phrases from the original video.

**Expansion**

**Step 1:** Ask students to identify one topic (man-made invention/object or theory/idea) they have studied within their major academic field and feel deserves the title of “Stuff of Genius”.

**Step 2:** Provide students with examples of activities to be completed, grading criteria, and rubrics for these activities.

**Step 3:** With examples, help students to identify key words related to their topic. Teach Internet research techniques followed by reading and paraphrasing strategies to assist in identifying history and background descriptions of their topics.

**Step 4:** Using the three typical component parts of *The Stuff of Genius* videos, teach and practice step-by-step procedures for writing elements of a three-paragraph report with references. Assist students in writing about their topic.

**Step 5:** Clarify differences between written reports and spoken presentations with examples, and support students in converting their report into a presentation with slides or a poster.

**Step 6:** Coach students on necessary presenting skills, asking questions, and forming responses. Give students opportunities to practice and reflect.

**Step 7:** Provide a suitable situation for students to present to their peers, with opportunities to question and interact with other topic choices.

**Step 8:** Create a system for students to exchange reports and test each other on their own topics.

**Conclusion**

The *Stuff of Genius* series introduces and provides a format that can be built upon to support research, reading, speaking, writing, and presentation activities. Utilizing this format and applying it to their interests, students are able to study topics relevant to them in English, acquire a range of skills, and reinforce their academic major studies.

---

*Watch future TLTs for more conference information*
TV Commercial Retelling
Matthew Wilson
Miyagi University
<wilson@myu.ac.jp>

Quick Guide

» Keywords: Speaking, authentic video, learner-centered
» Learner English level: Intermediate to advanced
» Learner maturity: High school to university
» Preparation time: 25 minutes
» Activity time: 10 – 15 minutes
» Materials: Computer, projector, worksheet, TV commercials

TV commercials are a great language learning resource as they are short, high quality, culturally distinctive narratives, and are already sometimes used in English classrooms as a form of cultural exposure. However, rather than simply showing the commercial to students, a more engaging modification is to stop the commercial before the product and/or product name appears, and have students guess what is being sold. Advertisements can often be abstract and obscure which makes this a challenging, yet entertaining activity. The following pair-work activity provides one such variation that emphasizes oral production and listening in a fun, motivating, yet low-anxiety situation.

Preparation

Step 1: Put together a selection of five interesting TV commercials that are appropriate for showing in class: one example commercial to introduce the activity, and four commercials for the pair work activity.

Step 2: Prepare “A” and “B” handouts that have different sets of at least five or six product choices, either in words or pictures, for each commercial (see appendix). Handout A will have product choices for commercials #2 and #4, while handout B will have options for commercials #1 and #3.

Step 3: Preview the commercials to choose an appropriate time to pause before products or product names appear.

Optional: Upload all the commercials onto presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint) to smooth the timing of the activity. Also, depending on the class level, a vocabulary list for each commercial could appear on the handouts or a preceding slide.

Procedure

Step 1: Show students the example TV commercial. Pause it at the appropriate time, and have students think about what product the commercial is trying to sell. After hearing some ideas, show the end of the commercial and clarify what the commercial was selling.

Step 2: Have students make pairs and choose A and B roles. Distribute the worksheets accordingly.

Step 3: Have the B students close their eyes or look away for the first commercial. (Note: It is OK for them to listen to the commercial.) The A students watch commercial #1. Stop the commercial before any brand name or product images are shown. Have each A student explain what they saw in English to their partner. B students listen, look at their choices for commercial #1, and circle the product they think the commercial was selling. At this time, students should not look at or discuss each other’s answers.

Step 4: After all the B students have chosen their answers, show all the students the complete commercial and confirm the answer. Alternatively, before showing the end of the commercial, replay it from the beginning with the sound off, describing in simple English what is happening in order to give students feedback on their language usage and provide a language model.

Step 5: Repeat Steps 3 and 4 three more times, alternating roles so that each student has two opportunities to both explain and listen.

Conclusion

TV commercials have great potential in the language classroom as they can provide a wonderful stimulus for English oral production and listening tasks. Having students retell a TV commercial in a low-anxiety pairwork situation not only allows them the chance to practice speaking with fluency and accuracy, but also lets them exercise the microskills involved in conversational speech, such as self-correction, delivery variation, and backtracking for clarity.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.
Stop the Story: A Game for Encouraging Interruptions and Practice of Short Question Forms

Josef Williamson
Nippon Steel & Sumikin Intercom
<jo353_2000@yahoo.com>

Quick Guide

» Key words: Interrupting, fluency, question forms, game
» Learner English level: Lower intermediate to advanced
» Learner maturity level: Junior high school and above
» Preparation time: 30 minutes to make a one-time reusable handout, 5 minutes to make copies
» Activity time: 15 – 25 minutes
» Materials: Single handout (see appendix)

I developed this activity in response to a lack of willingness on the part of learners in corporate language training classes to engage in interrupting speakers to clarify information and to abbreviate question forms in informal speech. It’s a fast-paced, competitive activity that brings shy or reluctant learners out of their shell and can be easily used as a filler activity at the beginning or end of lessons in any teaching context.

Preparation

Write three or four short stories, each lacking in detail, and, therefore, requiring clarification. A suitable example would be the following:

“It was a cold, rainy day. A woman waited inside a café. She was looking at the clock. The radio was on. A man came in. He sat down next to her. She looked angry. He said something to her and she smiled. They stood up, she paid her bill and they walked out of the café together.”

Alternatively, you can copy the handout in the appendix as it has four suitable stories.

Procedure

Step 1: Put the students into pairs and hand out a worksheet to each student.
Step 2: Tell them they are going to play a simple game with their partner in which one will attempt to read to the end of a story within two minutes (they will need to time themselves) while the other will attempt to stop them by interrupting and asking short clarification questions. The only rules are that the reader must answer the question (by inventing missing details) and that they cannot say “I don't know.”
Step 3: Ask for (or pick) a volunteer to help you demonstrate. Choose a story and begin to read. It is unlikely that your volunteer will interrupt you much, if at all, and you should be able to read through the story pretty quickly.
Step 4: Next, reverse roles with your volunteer. Have them read through the same story while you interrupt and pepper them with questions, thereby showing the class what is expected.
Step 5: Have pairs play the game a few times together.
Step 6: Options at this point would be to finish there, have champions from each team compete with each other, or to highlight some short question forms or other strategies to speed up questions and practice again.

Conclusion

This activity has been successful at giving learners an authentic context to practice real world English speaking strategies such as abbreviated question forms and requests for clarification. In addition, it has helped my students overcome their reluctance to contravene Japanese turn-taking rules. Even more importantly, it has proven to be a lot of fun, both for me and my students, in every context I’ve tried it.

Appendix

The appendix is available from the online version of this article at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.
Puppet Theatre Workshop to Review Passive Used in Processes
Michelle Wong
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
<michellewongmw@ymail.com>

Quick Guide

» Keywords: Puppet show, passive form, creativity
» Learner English level: Pre-intermediate and above
» Learner maturity: Junior high school and above
» Preparation time: 5 minutes
» Activity time: 50 minutes
» Materials: Tablet or video camera, coloured paper, felt-tip pens, scissors, transparent adhesive tape

Puppet theatre workshop is a learner-centred activity that involves students creating and filming their own puppet shows. Unlike what often happens with role-play activities, students do not need to face the fear of performing in front of other classmates and the teacher, and instead can concentrate on producing their show.

This activity can be adapted to practise various language points, but for the purpose of this article I have chosen the passive voice. The aim is not to teach the passive form as such, but rather to demonstrate and review the functions of describing a process.

Preparation

Step 1: Find a video of a simple but entertaining paper puppet show.
Step 2: Brainstorm a list of processes (e.g. production of coffee, paper, etc.).

Procedure

Step 1: Using illustrations or props, elicit how milk is manufactured (e.g. cows are milked, milk is taken to the factory). Hopefully students will recall the passive form from previous lessons. If not, give them some guidance. Highlight transition words for sequence order (e.g. first, next, after that).
Step 2: Explain that they will be making and filming their own puppet show and elicit information to see what they know about puppetry. Have a brief discussion and show them the video of the paper puppet show.
Step 3: Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Have students choose a process from the list or let them come up with their own. Ask groups to decide roles for each member: cameraman, narrator, and actor(s).
Step 4: Give students time to brainstorm and write down the instructions for their chosen role. Limit explanations to about 5-7 steps to ensure that there is enough time for making puppets and filming. Encourage students to use their imaginations. The roles do not necessarily have to reflect reality.
Step 5: Monitor progress, assist where necessary, and be strict about time.
Step 6: When students are ready, demonstrate how to make a simple paper puppet by sticking a cutout drawing onto a pen with tape.
Step 7: Hand out coloured paper, felt-tip pens, scissors, and tape. Give students time to make paper puppets, backdrop(s), and a title sign.
Step 8: Have students rehearse the show before filming.
Step 9: Tell students they only have one take, so even if something goes wrong, they will have to keep going. Instruct the cameraman to record the performance while the narrator reads the script and the actors manipulate the puppets.
Step 10: Let students watch a playback of their performance (or each other’s performances in the case of larger groups) and have a good laugh. If time allows, have an informal feedback session.

Variations

This activity was designed for after-school classes of 3-6 students, but can be adapted for larger groups and different levels to practise various language points.

Some successful variations I have tried are creating a “Kewpie (a well-known Japanese doll) 3 minute cooking” video to practise instructional language; and recreating a fairy tale as part of a narrative writing exercise. These can also easily be transformed into longer projects over several lessons.

Conclusion

Through doing something hands-on together, students create a more memorable connection between language and context, and even shy or lower-level students can easily find ways to participate. With a bit of luck, some may even discover their hidden artistic side.
Any Questions?


Reviewed by Brad Perks, Ritsumeikan University and Osaka Shoin Women’s University

Any Questions? is an EFL lateral thinking puzzle textbook. The book’s stated aim is to solve lateral puzzles through active English communication. The textbook is ideal for intermediate level university speaking classes that focus on form communication and want to develop their problem solving skills.

Each unit sets out to solve a puzzle in a two-paged structured sequence. The first page has a question jumble and a match-the-question head to the tail section to help students grasp the topic and linguistic content. The second page requires students to fill in question heads and question tails; then each puzzle ends with students making their own questions. Students accomplish the task through focus on form questions and remedial grammar tasks.

The teacher’s manual supports the textbook by explaining what lateral thinking is, and how to help the learners solve the puzzles. There is also an English grammar guide and a lateral thinking puzzle explanation in Japanese. The textbook uses relatively well-known lateral puzzles, some taken from gleaned contemporary news stories.

Most students look forward to the puzzles, even though they display frustration in trying to solve them. One articulate student theorized that you should have to disregard your own preconceptions. This is very similar to De Bono’s (1970) definition, which states, “lateral thinking requires changing concepts and perceptions” (p. 85).

Any Questions is not specifically targeted to Japanese students. However, it is mainly culture neutral, with the exception of a few topics that presuppose some knowledge or experience of Western culture. However, this posed no problems I simply avoid using those puzzles in which background knowledge deduction was vital to solve them.

Any Questions’ puzzles usually take about 40 minutes to complete. Student feedback was always positive and they mention that it was unlike any other class they had experienced. Lateral thinking in the classroom offers something new to the field because it breaks the mold whereby Japanese students expect to participate passively in language lessons. The puzzles have a bizarre outcome, and finding the answer requires students to think outside the box.

The text follows a notional-functional approach to syllabus design that it provides opportunities to practice pre-selected, pre-sequenced linguistic structures through meaning-focused activities (Kumaravadivelu 2006). The sequential order of the question format is repeated in all units and the receptive language allows students to gain information and meaning.

The textbook also follows the Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach as solving the puzzles requires a work plan that necessitates learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve a successful outcome (Ellis 2003). It also involves extensive meaningful repetition, which enables high student involvement through information gathering and problem solving.

Any Questions can support either student-centered or teacher-fronted lessons. In my case, I like to demonstrate the format and explain the rules; then, after a routine is formed, I delegate a student or group to take on the role of answering the other students’ questions. These puzzles are versatile because they can be assigned to individual students for homework, or given in pairs, or given as a group activity.
I only use the Puzzle section because the other sections such as; Speed questions, Questions for communication, and What did you say? are only used to challenge groups that have completed the tasks. Since my class consists of four students, after we solve the puzzle we continue with a different activity. The unexpected answer to the puzzle can generate discussion for follow-up activities. For example, has this happened to you? Alternatively, do you agree with the answer to the puzzle? Is it realistic?

Overall, Any Questions is an ideal textbook for challenging students’ problem solving skills and providing genuine information gap tasks. The questions range from general to specific. The questions can receive one of only three possible answers: yes, no, or irrelevant. The aim of the task is to ask many questions and eliminate irrelevant lines of questions until the students get closer to solving the puzzle. A weak point I found is that the additional communication tasks and crossword puzzles did not relate to the unit puzzles. However, it acted as a consolidation activity and helped assist in both understanding and retention of key vocabulary. A strong point is the repetitive nature of the puzzle completion tasks as I find that they develop students’ active questioning skills and provide a clear focus on form.

Any Questions offers exciting ways to regularly practice English grammatical questioning forms through puzzles, which arouse students’ curiosity in a fun and challenging learning environment.

References

DVD, teacher’s manual, classroom DVD and CD, and Linguaporta access).
*Catch the World: International Culture Magazine (2nd edition)—Various authors. Tokyo: Macmillian Language House, 2014. [4-level reading skills-based course with articles contributed by journalists from around the world incl. teacher’s manual with answers and audio script and audio CD].
Drive—Various Authors. Tokyo: Compass Publishing, 2014. [4-level course focused on vocabulary building through repeated exposure and skill building via scaffolding w/ text for each of the 4 skills incl. workbook for each skill].
Face to Face: To Better Understand Japanese and American Culture—Someya, M., Ferrasci, F., & Murray, P. Tokyo, Sanshusha, 2014. [14-unit course based on cross-cultural understanding incl. teacher’s manual with passage translations, final exams, and audio CD].
Nice to Meet You: Academic (Japanese Edition)—Barker, D. Nagoya, Japan: BTB Press, 2013. [7-unit course focused on language used when meeting someone for the first time].
Positively English: Developing Speaking Fluency—Diem, R. Carpe Diem Learning Solutions, 2013. [12-unit conversation course incl. downloadable teacher’s manual and e-learning companion website with assessments and activities].
Real Reads: An Introduction to Literature—Nakanishi, W. J., Bibby, S., & Ota, M. Nagoya, Japan: Perceptia Press, 2014. [12-chapter literature-based reading course study book w/ glossary and translations incl. online teacher’s guide w/ downloadable audio and additional materials].
**OUTSIDE THE BOX**

Adam Lebowitz

“Outside the Box” is a column that not only challenges the community to address a problem, but proposes a creative solution without concerns of being unrealistic. The focus is on originality and creativity, not rigor. More information on submissions can be found online, or contact the editor.

Email: <outside-the-box@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/outside-the-box>

**Require Confidence Intervals for Effect Size Estimates in JALT Journal**

In issue 38.4, I proposed that university Foreign Language Centers network for research collaboration. Methodologically, these networks could improve test power and help JALT as a national organization fulfill its primary purpose to “…improve) language teaching and learning in Japan…” (emphasis added, Article 3 of the Constitution).

Most empirical research is assumed significant for the whole population. Therefore, the most important outcome should be effect size (as opposed to between group variance), and perhaps eta-squared, in particular since sample factors are “naturally occurring”—age, gender, international posture, etc.—for all students (Kline, 2004).

However, until Language Center networks are established, JALT Journal could adjust analytical practice to clarify “true” population scores by requiring confidence interval (CI) reporting around effect size results. Jacob Cohen (Cohen, 1994) advised 90% CI, and soon after the American Psychological Association Board of Scientific Affairs Task Force on Statistical Inference recommended (but not required) the same for its publications (Wilkinson & APA Task Force on Statistical Inference, 1999). Effect size CIs are a plausible requirement since JALT Journal follows APA guidelines. They also aid meta-analysis by inferring the importance of replicability (Steiger, 2004; Thompson, 2002). That is, “true” population parameters can only be realistically estimated through multiple, stable studies (Schmidt, 1996). Graphing effect size intervals also makes it easier to visualize where that “true” region lies among overlapping intervals.

Just as comparable effect size values within CIs could establish plausible parameters for a national population, they could show if differences between nationalities truly exist. For example, different correlations between international posture and the ideal self have been reported between Hungarian (r = .51) and Nihonjin students (r = .43) (Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Yashima, 2009), converting to $h^2 = .26$ and $h^2 = .19$ respectively. However, how truly “different” are these two values? Without CIs it is impossible to see if parameters containing these values overlap, or not.

Calculating effect size CIs may seem daunting because it is not an SPSS function. Instead, use the Methods for the Behavioral, Educational, and Social Sciences (MBESS) package from the open source R free-downloadable software <http://www3.nd.edu/~kkelley/site/MBESS.html>.

**References**


Edo Forsythe
In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

Email: <tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/wired>

Internet Search Tools and Resources for EFL
Gary Henscheid
<garyhenscheid2000@yahoo.com> Nihon University

Since the advent of the Internet in the early 1990s, the amount of new resources available to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and students seems to have multiplied exponentially. Indeed, the variety of resources in cyberspace is so vast that finding the best materials can be challenging. This paper first introduces some Internet commands and tools useful for obtaining quality search results; then it recommends sites that have particularly appealed to many Japanese high school and university students; and finally, it offers ideas and websites useful for finding language exchange partners.

Google Search Tips
According to comScore.com (2014), around two-thirds of Internet users in 2013 typically started their Internet searches with Google. To help users get the best information possible, Shaw (2007) provided tips to search Google like an expert. To illustrate how these might be useful in an EFL class, examples of PowerPoint slideshows can be found by using the specific document-type search command of topic:document-type, as in Japanese history:ppt. To retrieve published works or references to a specific author from a publication’s website, the site specific command author-name:publication-url, such as Noam Chomsky:http://jalt-publications.org/tlt, usually works well. Alternatively, users can use a website’s special search box when provided. Learning a few search tricks such as these can be a huge help for students when navigating Google’s vast domain.

Web Ranking Sites: Alexa.com and SimilarWeb.com
Two useful supplements to Google for finding teaching resources online are Alexa <http://www.alexa.com> and SimilarWeb <http://similarweb.com>. Users will quickly note that the method of search differs when using these types of sites. With Google, a regular search begins with keywords, whereas with Alexa and SimilarWeb, a search begins with a website domain name.

One of Alexa’s best features is its search index. To access it, open the main page and click on “Browse Top Sites,” which is found just to the left of the search box in the top right corner of the screen. Then, click on “By Categories” on the left side of the next screen and you will find the All Categories index. As an example, a teacher helping a student look for information about student exchange programs would find information on 29 different programs by using the following search sequence: All Categories>Reference>Education>International. Note that there are also 352 links under language schools, which a student interested in international student exchange might also find useful.

The most popular sites will usually rank highly in all search engines. While the use of keywords is a major advantage for Google and other large
search engines, an advantage of using a web ranking service such as Alexa or SimilarWeb is that a regular domain search yields a number of related search terms and links, as well as referring and destination sites; the latter tell where users found the site and the ones they most often visited next.

Figure 1. Screenshot of Alexa.com category search for international education

Clustering Engines
Other powerful search tools are clustering engines, which conveniently organize search results into subtopics. Many algorithms for analyzing large fields of data exist, but cluster engines typically begin with Google’s search results and then group or cluster them, allowing users to find exactly what they are looking for more easily. One that is free and relatively simple to use is Carrot2 <http://www.carrot2.com>. Another clustering service that is free and user-friendly is Yippy <http://yippy.com>. In addition to clustering the data, Yippy also filters unwanted material such as pornography from the results. Everyone has their own preferences and Alexa or SimilarWeb and cluster engines can help teachers and students find high quality EFL materials. Figure 2 shows the Carrot2 search results for practice EFL.

Useful English Learner Websites
Two sites which have a variety of audio and visual materials as well as good quality business English materials are BBC Learning English and VoA Learn English. The BBC’s cloze exercises, located under “General and Business,” are great for higher levels since they include a good but rather challenging mix of business vocabulary. Upon completion, learners are given a score and are allowed multiple attempts at repeating the task until a perfect score is attained. The BBC site also has a great diversity of audio materials about topics ranging from a centuries old time capsule that was thought to have been laid by American revolutionaries in 1795 to a drama series about Frankenstein.

The VoA site also includes materials on a variety of contemporary issues at different levels. The audio lessons are downloadable as MP3 files and they are each narrated slowly and clearly at rates appropriate for most EFL learners. Moreover, the VoA site provides numerous video materials on global issues and each provides a transcript, discussion questions, and a blog for students to share their reactions.

Another site that many students enjoy is Kids’ Web Japan, which is part of the Web Japan provided by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://web-japan.org/kidsweb>. The 19 Japanese children’s stories listed under Folk Legends and the numerous articles under Hi-tech are excellent. As a caveat, the latter are written on a level that would sufficiently challenge most university level EFL students. On the other hand, those teaching young children would probably find GenkiEnglish.net even more useful than Kids’ Web Japan because the topics and grammar are clearly intended for young English beginners.

For practicing English conversation, there are numerous websites that help students connect with other students who are also seeking language exchange partners worldwide; one excellent example is The Mixxer (for details, see <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired>
Adult learners who prefer practicing face-to-face can peruse ads in the free Metropolis Magazine <http://metropolis.co.jp>. Friends of the author have met language partners through this site and they have enjoyed friendship and good language interactions. Other options are sites matching students with private teachers such as <http://senseinavi.com> or <http://findateacher.net>. These sites allow students to search the profiles of hundreds of English and other foreign language teachers, and for a fee of around Y4,000 students can get the names and contact information of several instructors. Students then contact the teacher and negotiate details such as a meeting place and lesson fees. Students can also arrange to take lessons online via services such as Skype. Students brave at heart and truly determined to learn English might want to consider living in a foreign residence house, or share house. Around half of the residents are usually Japanese and information can be found at <http://www.sakura-house.com> or at <http://www.borderless-house.com>.

Conclusion
Cyberspace is an appropriate metaphor for the Internet since the amount of materials available to teachers online is so vast. This article has provided English teachers with information on online resources that the author has found useful. The paper has also provided examples of search techniques and resources that teachers and students will hopefully find useful in discovering new resources to suit their own teaching and learning styles and needs. Google is surely among the most powerful resources available for locating English teaching and learning materials online, but learning a few relatively simple search commands can help users find better quality results with less time and effort. Even highly experienced users continue to discover and develop new ways to improve the search experience, and it behooves us all to utilize them. Web ranking sites such as Alexa and SimilarWeb, and cluster engines such as Carrot2 were provided to supplement rather than replace Google. One of the main goals of educators is to foster learner independence in our students, and ever more new tools are available to assist educators. It has been a pleasure sharing some online resources which have proven effective, particularly those sites that might help colleagues find new and better materials for their classes. A better learning experience for students will hopefully also inspire in them a lifelong love of learning English.

References


Editor’s Note: I hope that some of the tips and websites discussed above were helpful. For a LOT MORE information and suggestions for using technology in language learning, be sure to join the JALTCALL 2015 Conference in Fukuoka on June 5 – 7, 2015. For more information, visit <http://conference.jaltcall.org>—conference attendees always come away Wired!

Malcolm Swanson
This column serves to provide our membership with important information and notices regarding the organisation. It also offers our national directors a means to communicate with all JALT members. Contributors are requested to submit notices and announcements for JALT Notices by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

Email: <jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus>

New JALT Associate Member
Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments

Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments (CaMLA) is a not-for-profit collaboration between the University of Michigan and Cambridge English Language Assessment, two institutions with long and distinguished histories in the field of language assessment, teaching, and research.
In this edition of Showcase, Morten Hunke shares with us Speaking is communicating—always and his experiences with prosody in language learning and how this forms an integral part of his language teaching.

Speaking is communicating – always

Morten Hunke

Prosody and its relevance to speech and successful communication entered my life gradually in different phases and guises. Decades before I ever encountered words like pitch or contour, I was playing music by ear and took a distinct dislike to reading from sheet music. Later, studying languages at university I came across acoustic and articulatory phonetics and was also introduced to prosody through working as a student assistant researcher in a prosody acquisition project. Understanding more and more about prosodic elements of speech in various target languages, suprasegmentals (prosodic cues) slowly revealed themselves as a powerful means to benefit one’s speaking and thus communication abilities in both native and foreign or second languages.

Improving students’ public speaking has been a distinct focus in my classes for at least a dozen years. The presumption I am working from is that understanding is no absolute category—either fully reached or miserably failed at. It is a process, a more or less deliberate negotiation of meaning, pursued by speaker and listener in mutual engagement, communication. In languages like English and German, the speaker has a high degree of responsibility towards tailoring speech acts to the listeners’ ability, needs, or fancies. And here intelligibility is key. Am I providing the listener with the prosodic cues as to what is new/important information? Is my communication easy on the listener’s ears and where appropriate, supported by posture, gestures, and/or facial expressions?

Aspects of prosody and performance are woven into my teaching from the earliest beginner all the way through to highly proficient levels. All throughout their studies, my students are being challenged institution and provide a highly reliable measure of test takers’ overall language proficiency. Scoring is quick, easy, and performed by your staff.

We also offer a range of high-stakes tests that are administered by official CaMLA test centers. These proficiency and certification tests include the Young Learners Tests of English (YLTE), a fun and interactive test aimed at children aged 7-12, as well as the Michigan English Test (MET) and the MELAB. The MET is a high-beginner to low-advanced EFL examination measuring general proficiency in a variety of contexts, while the MELAB is recognized as evidence of proficiency for university admissions or professional certification purposes.

For more information about these and other products, visit our website at <http://www.cambridgemichigan.org>.
to tailor their speech performances to the listeners’ needs. And thus, they are also learning about how the target language (TL) works in terms of pragmatics, mentality of speakers/listeners, or quite simply in a broader sense: culturally. Students actively engaging with TL prosody begin to realise that there is language (learning) beyond grammar, vocabulary lists, and translations exercises.

Step 1) At absolute beginner level students are challenged to write haiku and tanka poetry in the TL. Since the smallest rhythmic unit in Japanese—mora—differs from that in syllable-based languages, the first task to be undertaken is to develop a practical understanding of this unit: i.e., syllables. This is not an easy feat to be accomplished, and it takes practice, repetition, and time. Only when possessing a concept of the syllable can one begin to address overarching prosody issues like word stress, phrasal stress, intonation, and eventually rhythm.

Step 2) At later—more intermediate—stages students are required to apply a simplified take on phrasal stress to existing communicative scenarios. These are often group presentation tasks, where students are scripting for others in the group. In the group performances, students additionally use self-produced kamishibai pictures to further illustrate their content. Whilst one student presents the other students are accompanying with what is being said and shown in the pictures by using gestures, facial expressions, spoken interjections—signalling approval, surprise, applause—and even spoken language comments. These performances are regularly video recorded for peer and self-feedback purposes and to showcase students’ achievements.

Step 3) At an intermediate to higher proficiency level students are challenged by having to engage with performance poetry. In this step, canonical poetry is brought to life by drama pedagogy inspired performances. Students are required to produce kamishibai pictures, mark phrasal stress, and produce intonation curves. Students are being given basic vocal coaching, and they are introduced to various theatre performance techniques. Throughout the course of one semester, they intensively work with one chosen poem. Four video recordings are being shot, including one at a semester final performance event for the wider public. By completing the course, students regularly exhibit signs of being much more confident in speaking in the TL, being able to envisage a prospective audience, and to modify their speech acts accordingly.

In their formative feedback students often comment positively on the active role they have to take in my classes. They largely appreciate the responsibility they are being given to take charge of their speaking. Success stories are those like the fourth-year student who attended the poetry performance class twice and won second place in a competitive recital contest recently. Another student, an International Relations major, completed a number of my classes and managed to secure a much sought after study abroad place with one of our partner universities in Germany—out competing the German majors.

Morten Hunke was educated in Germany, Ireland, and Sweden. For many years, he has been using literary formats creatively with students. Furthermore, fostering learner autonomy, engagement, prosodic, public speaking, and performance skills are also key concepts in his teaching.

David McMurray

Grassroots Outreach (GO) is a place for essays and short reports that can motivate readers to take action and bring about positive change in our language teaching profession, here at home, as well as around the world. The GO editor invites 750-word reports, essays, and interviews about grassroots movements going on inside and outside of Japan that can change the way second languages are learned.

Email: <go@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/grassroots-outreach>
New Developments in EAP

Gregory Strong
Aoyama Gakuin University

One of the most exciting changes in language teaching at universities in the UK has been in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). I found this out at Sheffield Hallam University while attending the 29 November, 2014 meeting of The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP). BALEAP is an institutional reboot of a much older association, founded in 1972 for the development of language materials for overseas students. The group took its current name in 1989, and rebranded itself in 2010 to help promote a new approach.

That approach proves impressive in both scope and execution. First of all, it recognizes that language teaching at British universities is very different than providing ESL teaching in elementary or secondary education, or in community-based adult language education that is generally for immigrants. In contrast, language teaching at universities prepares students for academic work and may also provide some assistance to students during the regular academic term, particularly in writing.

It also acknowledges the economic importance of this educational sector at a time when universities around the world, including prominent Japanese ones, are competing for foreign students. Summarizing an article by the British Council on High Education, Sellgren (2014) reported that International and EU student numbers at British universities were 307,205 in 2012-13. That academic year, these same students brought an estimated £3 billion to the universities. For almost 29 years, their numbers in the UK have been steadily growing. Often, British universities will accept these foreign students provided that they take pre-sessional courses to prepare them for academic work.

To cope with the demand while ensuring a high quality of education, BALEAP has developed standards for teacher training and qualifications; for courses, and their design, outcomes, and assessment; for program development; for student welfare; as well as for institutional requirements in terms of resources and facilities, management, and administration. As an example of a required competency related to teaching practices, an EAP teacher should be “familiar with the methods, practices and techniques of communicative language teaching” (BALEAP, 2011, p.3) and be able to apply them to academic contexts.

The conference I attended was a Professional Issues Meeting (PIM) on the subject of teacher education. This is one of the several meetings that BALEAP organizes each year in addition to holding a biennial conference. It drew about 180 participants, proving so popular that organizers had to turn away a number of people who wished to attend.

The first plenary speaker, ELT Consultant Simon Borg, formerly a professor of TESOL at Leeds University, outlined the role of practitioner research in professional growth. According to him, teachers are typically “consumers of knowledge.” Borg (2014) argued that their professional development is better sustained when they become “creators of knowledge” through action research, study groups, discussions, and other collaborative efforts.

Phil Martin at the University of East Anglia described how ELT teachers felt after transitioning into EAP teachers. Among the differences they described were “the higher stakes” for students and teachers and the focus on building learner autonomy. Martin Seviour of Nottingham Trent University spoke of the challenges in getting new EAP teachers to provide quality feedback on student writing. Other presentations ranged from peer coaching, the differences between ESL/EFL and EAP, ways of scaffolding teacher reflection, and efforts to promote professional development.

During one presentation, an audience member commented on the applicability of The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which is being adopted by some universities in Japan and elsewhere as a tool for assessing language ability. However, the presenters made it clear that BALEAP’s value was not primarily in assessment, but in addressing students’ academic needs, and in suggesting how teachers and institutions can meet them.

On a lighter note, some cultural and linguistic differences between JALT and BALEAP became immediately apparent to me. While we refer to teachers as “instructors,” “part-time teachers,” and “professors,” British educators refer to themselves as “lecturers,” “tutors,” and “senior teaching fellows.” Equally bewildering, BALEAP offers sophisticated teacher and program accreditation plans that are termed “schemes.” In American and Canadian English, a “scheme” suggests something underhanded or subversive. The BALEAP (2014) scheme, however, is a valuable document that provides a roadmap for assessing professional development and institutional practice.
The second plenary speaker, Olwyn Alexander of Heriot-Watt University, a past president of BALEAP and co-author of a very lucid and readable description to teaching EAP (Alexander, Argent & Spencer, 2008) presented “a transformative model” of teacher expertise. She described how it develops through experience and reflection. Alexander contrasted “experienced teachers” with those who were “expert,” continually seeking new challenges in the classroom. She also outlined how teachers could become accredited through BALEAP as “associate teachers,” “fellows,” and “senior fellows,” the latter, enhancing the teaching practice of others through scholarship.

At the conference I also learned about a new publication by Edward de Chazal (2014) that has concise summaries of relevant research on EAP and excellent suggestions for everything from teaching reading to dealing with student plagiarism.

Unlike more broadly-defined organizations such as TESOL, IATEFL, or JALT, BALEAP emphasizes language teaching at the university level. As such, it offers a valuable look at EAP through targeting student skills, teacher and course development, and the institutions that support them.

References

A Variety of ESP Topics Covered at the JALT CUE SIG Symposium

Paul McAleese

*Nara Institute of Science and Technology*

The third JALT College and University Educators (CUE) English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Symposium was held on September 13, 2014 at Waseda University in Tokyo. The one-day event aimed at bringing together educators from across Japan to build on their knowledge and share ideas in the field of ESP. The symposium attracted over 70 attendees and included three keynote presenters, a round table, panel discussion, and two poster presentation sessions.

Keynote Presentations

The first keynote presenter was Yasushi Ikebe from the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Mirai-kan). He has extensive experience researching and working abroad including two years at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in the United States. His presentation began by focusing on how his language needs evolved as he grew up and started pursuing his career. While living in another country, he recalled how he lacked the ability to interact effectively in spoken English, even in informal social contexts like parties, and how he struggled with the everyday cultural aspects of English, such as humor. Similarly, he found oral interaction challenging on a professional level, especially in roundtable-type discussions or group teleconferences.

The next keynote presenter to take the floor was Michael Handford who lectures at the University of Tokyo on professional discourse analysis and intercultural communication. Handford contended that there is presently a large gap between research and what is found in teaching materials, particularly in the area of spoken language in professional contexts. Referring to his research using authentic data from engineering and IT companies combined with corpus analysis, he further argued that, while educational materials contain ample language describing business, there is a general lack of content related to language used by people actually doing business. He further focused on the large degree and nature of language devoted to the function of problem-solving.
The final keynote presenter was Brian Paltridge, a professor of TESOL at the University of Sydney and widely published in fields such as ESP and discourse analysis. In the first part of his presentation, Paltridge provided an overview of current ESP research including the origins and development of the genre concept, specialized corpora, and English as a lingua franca. In the second part of his presentation, Paltridge outlined future directions of ESP, including areas that are still underexplored in research. Giving particular mention to learner needs and identity in ESP, he emphasized the increasing importance of needs-analyses that address this issue in more depth, specifically, helping learners to see themselves more clearly in their contexts and becoming their “ideal selves”. Ethnography in the ESP classroom, ESP for community membership, and moving beyond native-speaker models were also outlined as future directions in the field.

Roundtable and Panel Discussion
Following the final keynote presentation, the participants were split into three groups and were asked to discuss how an ESP approach might contribute to the success of the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. Each group was given 45 minutes to discuss the topic from slightly different perspectives and then asked to present their ideas to the other groups with the three keynote speakers given the option to add comments. Ideas ranged from comprehensive needs-analyses to building intercultural awareness and the use of English as a lingua franca. It was also mentioned that such events provide not only unique opportunities to further motivate ESP learners, but also unique research opportunities for ESP educators based in Japan.

Poster Sessions
Each of the two poster sessions had about ten posters on display, allowing the audience to experience a range of ESP topics including quantitative research, teaching methodology, and syllabus design. Participants mingled freely and shared ideas while visiting the posters.

Overall, I felt the symposium was well worth attending. The caliber of the keynote speakers was particularly impressive and, with the wide range ESP topics covered, it offered something for everyone. More information can be found on the CUE website <jaltcue.org>.
JALT Business English SIGは、世界のビジネス界に通用する英語教育の発展を目的に持つ、結成されました。連携体制を組み、最善の教育方法を共有することにより、英語教育に携わるインストラクターの皆様のお手伝いを致します。

College & University Educators

Recently CUE celebrated its 20th anniversary by organizing various professional events from Hokkaido to Kyushu. CUE officers would like to thank each and all of its members for their support and involvement in SIG-related activities. We hope you will continue to be engaged! Please feel free to contact us at <http://jaltcue-sig.org/officers> for further information about our events and activities. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you soon at one of our events!

Computer Assisted Language Learning

The JALT CALL SIG is in the midst of preparations for the JALT CALL 2015 Conference. The conference will be held from 5-7 June at Kyushu Sangyo University in Fukuoka. The theme for the conference will be Language Learning Technologies and Learner Autonomy. Ema Ushioda, a specialist in language learner autonomy and CALL curriculum design, has generously agreed to be one of our featured speakers. We will release more information about the other featured speakers, the call for proposals, and other conference details as our planning progresses. This information will be made available via social media and on our website: <http://jaltcall.org>. We hope to see many of you at JALTCALL 2015 next summer.

Critical Thinking

In January and February members of the Critical Thinking SIG (CT SIG) presented in various places throughout Japan. Visit our website <http://jaltcriticalthinking.org> to see reviews of all events, as well as announcements for coming attractions.

Currently, the Critical Thinking SIG is openly soliciting articles for the next issue of our flagship publication – Critical Thinking and Language Learning (CTLL) (you can download a copy from our website). We are also seeking content for our newsletter CT Scan (again, please visit our website for past issues of CT Scan and ways to submit your research to our publications).

If you are seeking opportunities to present at the 2015 JALT conference in Shizuoka at the Granship, and your area of research/teaching focuses on critical thinking, consider the Critical Thinking SIG Forum. The 2014 forum at the JALT conference in Tsukuba was a great success! Not only were the presenters informative, but attendees were treated to a hard-copy of the first issue of CTLL. Watch our website for details on when and how to submit for the opportunity to present at the Critical Thinking SIG Forum at the 2015 JALT conference in Shizuoka.

Finally, you can always engage with CT SIG members by leaving messages and comments at our website forum <http://jaltcriticalthinking.org/ct-sig-forum>. Hope to see you in cyberspace!

Extensive Reading

We have a new URL for the ER SIG website: <http://jalt.org/er/>. Please update your bookmarks and visit it! You can also find a link to our Facebook page there.

8th Annual Extensive Reading Seminar: “What is ER?”

The JALT ER SIG is planning to hold the annual seminar on Sunday, June 21, 2015 in Kitakyushu. Go to the Vocab Symposium in Fukuoka on Saturday and come to the ER Seminar on Sunday! Check our website for up-to-date details.

ER Forum at PanSIG 2015 - “What is ER?”

A panel of ER practitioners and researchers will discuss (re) defining ER. Come joins us for this at PanSIG in Kobe.

Write for us:

Use the links to our publications ERJ and JER to find out about how to submit articles. Get started at <http://jalt.org/er/publications>.

Join us:

If you aren’t yet a SIG member, please join us. You’ll get our twice-yearly printed Extensive Reading in Japan, usually sent with a sample graded reader, discounted admission to our seminar, and our regular e-newsletter.

Framework & Language Portfolio

Activities in 2015:

• Poster presentation at Bremen Symposium (20-21 Feb, Bremen University, Germany) commenting on progress in the second kaken project—Critical, constructive assessment of CEFR-based language teaching in Japan and beyond
• Symposium at Language Expo 2015 (15 Mar, Waseda University) on the CEFR in the classroom in Japan—challenges and chances
• Workshop at JALT Shinshu chapter (18 Apr, Matsumoto) addressing CEFR implementations at institutional and class level at universities in Japan

The second kaken project is ongoing—and we need you to get involved and contribute. We are still looking for contributions highlighting classroom level implementations.

Ongoing work:

SURVEY – HELP needed – Please take the survey at: <http://tinyurl.com/CEFRinJapan-survey>, spread the news and help us collect data. Thank you very much!

In June we will hold a second conference on Critical, constructive assessment of CEFR-based language teaching in Japan and beyond. The precise venue, time, and date are currently being deliberated with all prospective participants. Please keep checking our homepage regularly: <http://sites.google.com/site/flpsig/home>.

Gender Awareness in Language Education

All JALT members are encouraged to consider attending future GALE forums and events and read GALE publications so as to encounter a range of perspectives about gender issues, teaching, and learning.

We also have a Facebook page, an online discussion list for all members, and an executive discussion list for officers and any GALE member who would like to take an active role in, or know more about, GALE business.

For more information about GALE, visit our website at <http://gale-sig.org/website>. If you have any questions
about joining GALE, please send a message to <coordinator@gale-sig.org>.

Global Issues in Language Education

GILE aims to promote global awareness, international understanding, and action to solve world problems through content-based language teaching, drawing primarily from the fields of global education, peace education, environmental education, and human rights education. The SIG produces a quarterly newsletter, organizes presentations for local, national, and international conferences, and maintains contacts with groups ranging from Amnesty International to Educators for Social Responsibility to UNESCO. Contact us for a sample newsletter or for more information about the SIG’s work in “teaching for a better world.” Visit <http://gilesig.org> or contact Kip Cates <kcates@rstu.jp>.

Japanese as a Second Language

The mission of the Japanese as a Second Language Special Interest Group (JSL SIG) is to serve as a resource for promoting JSL/JFL teaching, learning and research. We welcome JSL/JFL teachers, learners, and researchers to join and take an active role in our SIG. Would you like to make a contribution to our SIG newsletter by sending your article? We are accepting articles, book reviews, JSL announcements, conference reports and reviews, interviews, lesson plans, student essays, etc. from JSL SIG members and their students and colleagues. Write your article either in Japanese or English and send it to <jsl@jalt.org>.

Junior & Senior High School

The JSHS SIG is now on Facebook! If you are a JSHS SIG member, then come and check out our exclusive group at <http://facebook.com/groups/jsshsig>. Whether you want to ask a question, help someone out, or just share something, this is the place for junior and senior high school teachers to be. We also have a public page at <http://facebook.com/JSHSSIG>, so anyone can have a look. Click “like” and our news will be your news! Everybody is welcome!

Learner Development

The Learner Development SIG is a friendly network of more than 200 members who are interested in exploring and researching practices that develop autonomous learning and teaching. We organize forums at the JALT national conferences and hold local get-togethers to discuss research and practice. We publish research, reports, reviews and more in our biannual newsletter and are planning a new annual journal on key research issues. We support community outreach projects in Tohoku and education-related NGOs. We offer grants for membership, subscription, research, conferences and outreach projects. For more information, visit <http://ld-sig.org>.

Lifelong Language Learning

The LLL-SIG invites those teaching languages to young, middle-aged, and older adults to share information through our website <http://jalt.org/lifelong/index.html>, newsletter, at various SIG conferences and events (including PanSIG), and at the JALT International Conference, where an annual LLL-SIG forum is held.

Our Facebook page can be accessed at <http://facebook.com/jaltLLL>. As of this writing, we have nearly 200 likes and we always welcome more. If you “like” us, you will not only be able to find out about our SIG’s events, but you will also be able to get tips about lifelong language learning and teaching, and find out about opportunities and events in the community that stretch your capabilities and broaden your horizons, including volunteering possibilities.

Literature in Language Teaching

LiLT SIG members engage with literature through film, creative writing, poetry, the short story, classic literature and world literature, as well as literature in translation. We welcome interest from those working with cultural studies, politics through literature, language learning, and applications of literary texts in different contexts. If you are thinking about getting involved we welcome you to contact us!

Upcoming events this year include the PanSIG in Kobe, 2015, which links together the ideas of storytelling and happiness. We also welcome suggestions on possible lit-themed events for future conferences. We are always interested in volunteers to help out with things such as events planning, reading and proofing for our journal, and helping the SIG grow. If you are thinking about getting involved we welcome you to contact us!

All important guidelines and information for contributors are available on our website <http://lltssig.org>. To join the SIG tick Literature in Language Teaching when renewing your SIG membership.

Materials Writers

The MW SIG shares information on ways to create better language learning materials, covering a wide range of issues from practical advice on style to copyright law and publishing practices, including self-publication. Our newsletter Between the Keys is published three to four times a year and we have a discussion forum and mailing list. Our website is <http://materialswriters.org>. To contact us, email <mw@jalt.org>.

Mind, Brain, & Education

The Mind, Brain, and Education (BRAIN) SIG is a forum for language educators and researchers to share insights in neuroscience. We hope to be a driving force in bringing relevant new discoveries in psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and neurolinguistics to language teaching in Japan.

Neuroscience is changing many parts of the world, but not ours. It is disturbing how slowly new findings are coming into the language classroom. We feel that if we wait for findings in neuroscience to percolate through linguistics and the other academic fields not directly related to our profession, we will miss too many opportunities to improve our practices. Therefore, we plan to learn as much as we can and teach each other. Since only a few of us are neuroscientists, we will have to (a) maintain standards of rigor in the work we do, (b) reach out to neuroscientists and psychologists abroad to inform us, and (c) remain appropriately humble about our own work. At this
point, our primary goal is not to conduct our own research, but rather to study what others have discovered and consider the implications for our classroom practices.

Other Language Educators

OLE has issued NL 72, containing the detailed coordinator’s report and an updated report from the ALE SIG meeting with new officers, as well as an extended schedule with information on OLE related events in JALT and beyond in 2015, including PanSIG and OLE’s 3rd SIG conference. Copies are available from the coordinator at <reinelt.rudolf.my@ehime-u.ac.jp>.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. The Pragmatics SIG is in the process of creating a library of humorous comics and videos that highlight pragmatic matters in everyday conversation. Look for some new videos on our website <http://pragsig.org> soon!


The teaching of pragmatics to language learners has been advocated because of empirically demonstrated needs and benefits (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996, 1999, 2003; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper & Rose, 1999). Furthermore, language textbooks rarely include pragmatic information and teacher manuals generally fail to offer any supplements (Vellenga, 2004). Over the past decade, efforts have been made to collect and publish pedagogical guides and materials for use by language teachers. A recent cataloguing and analysis (Tatsuki, forthcoming) of pragmatic topics addressed by several prominent pedagogical collections indicates that directive and expressive speech acts (especially requests, apologies, compliments, refusals, and suggestions/advice-giving) are the most common topics for teaching materials/lesson plans. Awareness-raising activities are the next most frequent. The areas underrepresented by teaching materials include deixis, commissive speech acts, and other topics such as implicature/explicature.

Prospective authors are encouraged to contact the editors with other suggestions for rare/underrepresented topics. For information on manuscript formats contact Donna Tatsuki <dhtatsuki@gmail.com>.

School Owners

JALT2014, our SIG elected a new coordinator, Ryan Hagglund. Welcome to the team!

Please consider signing up for our newsletter! The sign-up form to the SO SIG’s free quarterly newsletter is now active on the SO SIG website <http://jalt.org/groups/666>. To subscribe, visit the site and enter your email address. Subscribers receive articles, freebies, and news on upcoming SO SIG events.

Speech, Drama, & Debate

SDD SIG is continuing its winning combination of conferences, workshops, publications, and events. This is the exciting lineup we have planned for you:

1. Workshop: Drama Workshop at the University of Yokkaiichi, 22 Feb
2. Conference: Presentations and Workshops at PanSIG2015 in Kobe, 16-17 May
3. Conference: Yokohama Chapter/SDD Conference
4. Conference: Presentations and Workshops at JALT2015 in Shizuoka
5. Publication: Something new—we plan to publish an activities book, so if you have ideas for teaching speech, drama, debate, or oral interpretation, or would like to be an editor of the book, send inquiries to the SDD contact email address on the official JALT SDD page or <sdd@jalt.org>. The format will be the same as the My Share articles in The Language Teacher.
6. Publication: We are preparing the next issue of our peer-reviewed journal, Mask & Gavel. Please consider submitting an article. (See <http://sites.google.com/site/speechdrama/maanddebatepublicsite/home> to download some of the back issues.)
7. Speech Contest: JOESC2. The first annual JOESC (Japan Online English Speech Contest) was so successful that we will repeat it this year.

Finally, we are happy to provide speakers to chapters/events. Send inquiries to the SDD contact email address on the official JALT SDD page or <sdd@jalt.org>.

Study Abroad

The Study Abroad SIG provides a supportive place for discussing areas of interest regarding study abroad and intercultural training. We welcome submissions for our newsletter, Ryuugaku, and we are looking for new officers to join the team. Visit our new website at <http://jalt-sa.org> or contact us at <studyabroadsig@gmail.com>.

当研究部会は、留学や異文化教育に関して議論し、また支援できる場を提供しています。当部会のニュースレター Ryuugaku “への皆様からの投稿をお待ちしております。新役員の募集をしています。詳細はニュースウェブサイト<http://jalt-sa.org>へお願いします。<studyabroadsig@gmail.com>へお願いします。

Task Based Learning

The TBL SIG was created for teachers and other professionals who currently use or are interested in using task-based approaches in the classroom. It focuses, in particular, on issues related to task-based language teaching and learning in the Asian EFL context. The SIG serves as a useful forum for the exchange of practical teaching ideas, theoretical discussion, and academic study of TBLT issues. Our journal, OnTask, focuses on both research and theory, in the form of feature articles as well as more practical TBLT-informed lesson plans. Potential contributors to OnTask are invited to contact our publications officer at <tbtlnasia@gmail.com>.

Teacher Education & Development

The Teacher Education and Development (TED) SIG is a network for those who want to help themselves and others become better teachers. TED SIG had a big presence at the JALT 2014 conference, but as we herald spring, we also start looking towards PANSIG and the next EFL Teacher Journeys conference, so please check our website for more details as they are confirmed.
The beginning of a new academic year also heralds some changes. Peter Hourdequin is passing the baton of SIG coordinator on to Bill Snyder. Jan Visscher will also be retiring after many years as Membership chair with Steve Morgan taking over his duties. The success of TED has been down to both our officers and the active participation of our members, so check out TED’s website, <http://jalt.org/ted> for more details about the SIG and how you can participate.

Also, don’t forget about TED SIG’s journal Explorations in Teacher Education. The journal welcomes stimulating articles across the field. Submission guidelines for articles can be found on the website. You can also stay in touch with us via Facebook or Google+ or by following @tedsig on Twitter.

Teachers Helping Teachers  
THT will have its usual complement of programs this year as follows:

1. LAOS (Vientiane): The Laos program is now underway. If you are interested in participating next year, please contact Chris Ruddenklau at <chrisruddenklau@asahi.email.ne.jp>.
2. VIETNAM (Hue) will be from Aug 7-11, 2015 at Hue University and our theme is Activities and Motivation for the Language Classroom. Please contact Joe Tomei at <tht-jalt+vietnam@gmail.com> for more details.
3. KYRGYZSTAN (Bishkek) will be on Sept. 3rd and 4th (Thurs./Fri.) (Travel to Osh) and the programs with Bishkek Humanities University and FORUM are scheduled for the week of Monday, 7-11 Sep. Those interested, please contact Brent Jones at <bjoness_jp@yahoo.com>
4. BANGLADESH (Dhaka) is tentatively scheduled for mid Sept. For more information, contact either Steve Cornwell <njcsteve@gmail.com> or Patrick Dougherty <pdoougherty@aiu.ac.jp>.

Information about these official programs and two related volunteer opportunities in Nepal and Myanmar can be found at our website <http://tht-japan.org>. If you are interested in Nepal please contact Randall Bollig <ranbochan2@gmail.com> or Ann Mayeda <ann.mayeda@gmail.com>. Myanmar liaison is Frank Berberich <fberberich@icloud.com>.

Teaching Children  
As always, if you have any ideas, activities, advice or experiences you would like to share with your fellow teachers, please consider submitting them to some of our upcoming issues of the TLC Newsletter! Email your submissions to the editor at <editor@tcsig.jalt.org>. For more information about the Teaching Children SIG and all our activities, please visit our TCSIG Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JALTtc-sig>.

Testing & Evaluation  
The Testing and Evaluation SIG is concerned with all aspects of testing and evaluating language performance and language programs, and welcomes both experienced teachers and those new to this area who wish to learn more about it. Our interests encompass quantitative and qualitative approaches to language assessment, including alternatives to traditional testing such as peer and self-assessment, portfolios, and project evaluation. Shiken, our refereed newsletter, contains a variety of assessment-related articles, including research reports, interviews with prominent authors, book reviews, as well as instructional columns on statistical analysis, Rasch measurement, and assessment literacy.

Vocabulary  
Call for submissions to our 2015 Vocabulary Symposium!
- **Date:** 20 Jun 2015
- **Location:** Kyushu Sangyo University
- **Featured Discussants:** Dr. Stewart Webb and Dr. Rie Koi zume

To submit a poster presentation (deadline 30 Mar) please follow the link from the symposium web page. You can also see our publications page for more info about our latest SIG publications.

The JALT Vocabulary SIG provides a venue for the discussion and research into second language vocabulary acquisition and assessment, particularly as they pertain to language education in Japan. <http://jaltvocab.weebly.com>.
renowned researcher and practitioner in the field of pragmatics and language education. Other speakers will include S. Fukazawa, R. Nagata, M. Kasuya, M. Konakahara, and Y. Nogami. Sat 7 Mar, 9:30-18:00; Sun 8 Mar, 9:30-17:15; Aster Plaza; Pre-register at <http://tinyurl.com/2015praghijil>; and see <http://hiroshima-jalt.org>; Non-members ¥7,000, members ¥4,000, full-time students ¥4,000, JALT student members ¥2,000.

HIROSHIMA—Ideas and inspiration for raising bilingual kids by Adam Beck, Bilingual Monkeys. Beck, founder of the popular blog "Bilingual Monkeys" <http://bilingualmonkeys.com> and co-editor of JALT's monograph "The ABCs of Bilingualism," will examine key issues associated with raising bilingual children in Japan. Sun 19 Apr, 15:00-17:00; Peace Park, 3F Conference Room; <http://hiroshima-jalt.org>; Non-members ¥3,500, students ¥200.

KITAKYUSHU—Assessment for learning: Dynamic assessment by Joseph John Simpson, Fukuoka Prefectural Board of Education. This presentation will examine the negative effects that standardized tests have on the learning process and present an alternative approach that is increasingly gaining in popularity in the field of language learning: dynamic assessment. Sat 14 Mar, 18:30-20:30; Wel Tobata; Non-members ¥1,000.

KITAKYUSHU—Literacy and gender by Michael Berg, Kyusandai University. Boys and girls use literacy in different ways, and girls generally have fewer problems learning to read. Girls generally score higher on average than boys on tests revolving around reading and writing, and fewer girls are diagnosed as dyslexic. Why is this? How important are books for boys? Sat 11 Apr, 18:30-20:30; Wel Tobata; Non-members ¥1,000.

KYOTO—Basic applied statistics for language education research by Matthew Apple, Ritsumeikan University. This workshop aims to provide language teachers with the statistical tools they need to conduct classroom-based research. The first half of the workshop will consist of an overview of common statistical analyses and other key issues. The second half of the workshop will give participants the opportunity to practice statistical analysis using ersatz data files of vocabulary quiz scores and questionnaire results. Sun 15 Mar, 9:00-12:00; Campus Plaza Kyoto; See <http://kyotojalt.org> for more information; Members free, one-day members ¥500.

MATUYAMA—Useful websites and apps for language education by Kevin Tang, Ehime University, and Ian Brown, Matsuyama University. This presentation will introduce websites and apps ideal for learners of all levels. It will show participants how these technologies help manage classes, and incorporate aural and visual elements to foster greater communications and creativity. It will also outline the benefits of using these technologies to supplement language learning and extend classroom interactions. Sun 15 Mar, 14:15-16:20; M33, Aida Muse, Ehime University, <http://www.ehime-u.ac.jp/english/access/johoku/cge.html>; One-day members ¥1,000.

MATUYAMA—Beyond the red: Approaches to student writing feedback by Junko Otoshi, Okayama University, and Luke Draper, Ehime University. This presentation will consider various effective methods of feedback beyond comments written in red pen. The first speaker will present a case study and student evaluation of peer feedback workshops. The second speaker will discuss a project in which upperclassmen have been trained to advise students on their writing. Sun 19 Apr, 14:15-16:20; M33, Aida Muse, Ehime University, <http://www.ehime-u.ac.jp/english/access/johoku/cge.html>; One-day members ¥1,000.

NAGOYA—Teaching the question of culture by Brett Hack, Aichi Prefectural University. Language education at Japanese universities has shifted towards cultivating a "global" mindset, which includes cultural instruction. However, set images of a "target culture" carry the risk of reinforcing a stereotyped worldview. This presentation will investigate how language classes can nurture a more reflexive understanding of culture—and language—as always in process, always in question, and always open to invention. Sun 15 Mar, 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 1, <http://nic-nagoya.org.jp/en/about-us/access-hours>; One-day members ¥1,000, 1st visit free.

NAGOYA—Re-writing classic foreign literature as graded readers by Alastair Lamond. The presentation will focus on the mechanics and retelling process of writing graded readers at a low level, as well as look at the sociocultural benefits of low-level graded reader versions of non-Western classic literature. The presenter will share how he approached projects to ensure a connection with a modern audience. Participants are asked to bring ideas for classic foreign literature that would be popular as English graded readers. Sun 19 Apr, 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 2, <http://nic-nagoya.org.jp/en/about-us/access-hours>; One-day members ¥1,000, 1st visit free.

OKAYAMA—Content-based instruction workshop by Brent Jones. Content-focused language teaching approaches such as Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) continue to gain both recognition and credibility. Participants will be introduced to both the theory and practice of such approaches. The aim is to highlight each step in the instructional design process as well as some of the various considerations at both the macro (curriculum) and micro (task) levels. Sat 18 Apr, 15:00-17:00; Notre Dame Seishin University, Logos Hall, Room 7-2; Non-members ¥500.

SHINSHU—Can-do statements & assessment in a Japanese context by Morten Hunke and Yumiko Miyamoto. Many teachers are under immense pressure to prepare Can-Do statements that specify what aspects of communicative competence their courses are designed to develop, and how students are assessed. To explore this issue, Hunke will discuss how the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages can be applied at the university level in Japan, and Miyamoto will discuss assessment at the senior high school level. Sat 18 Apr, 14:00-17:00; Venue: Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture; For latest details, see <http://JALT.org> event page; JALT members free, Non-members ¥1,000.
Tom Mahler

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

Email: <chap-reports@jalt-publications.org> Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/chapter-reports>

AKITA: December — Let’s examine Ondoku-based learning strategies from various perspectives by Yo Hamada, Akita University. This workshop focused on learning strategies for listening and communication from three different perspectives: as a teacher, as a learner, and as a researcher. The presenter’s university developed a unique English language learning environment, called ALL (Autonomous Language Learning) ROOMs, in which teachers instruct student staff members in SLA and learning strategies, the staff then assist students’ English learning. The presenter described the learning strategies and considered their effectiveness by examining them from a teacher’s perspective, a learners’ perspective, and a researcher’s perspective. Specifically, the presenter introduced various types of “Ondoku” based activities including shadowing, repeating, and dictation. The presenter introduced the activities academically and practically, and the participants engaged in these various activities to understand them better.

Reported by Stephen Shucart

GIFU: November — Gifu JALT conference preview by Mike Stockwell, Kathleen Cahill, Brent Simmonds and John Spiri. Participants were treated to a tag-team style preview performance of the JALT National Conference, as four Gifu members ran through their scheduled presentations. Firstly, Mike Stockwell presented Crossing Borders: Projects with Authentic Audiences. Stockwell noticed that students get motivated when the discussion is authentic, particularly in four important areas: input, task, output, and audience. A number of examples were given of students engaging in authentic use of English, such as getting involved in English language conferences and creating websites. Kathleen Cahill then gave her presentation, Classroom Interaction in Elementary Eikaiwa Classes, which reported on her investigation into teacher circles. Including teachers from other disciplines is necessary to break down the walls that both protect and sequester. The second is Heuristics—simple ‘rules of thumb’, which, when applied inevitably change teaching interactions. Many new insights can be gained by trying new things and breaking from your normal teaching styles and methods. The third was Re-explorations of Traditional Technique, where-in Maley introduced “old-fashioned” language teaching techniques that have been renovated: dictation, homework, vocabulary, reading and grammar. He also suggested some others ripe for re-development, such as repetition, questions, dialogues, drills and translation. In his fourth source, borrowing from Feeder Fields he suggested the potential benefits to be had from considering areas outside education such as neuroscience, the psychology of consciousness, and creativity theory. Maley’s last and most obvious source for new ideas was Information Technology and social networking services. In less than two hours, Maley gave attendees a hundred new roads to walk down to find new ideas. Most of these roads may lead to dead ends, but it is the search which is most important for the motivational and developmental progress of teachers and trainers.

Reported by Joël Laurier

GUNMA: November — Where do new ideas come from? by Alan Maley. Maley suggested five possible sources for new ideas. The first was Teacher Interaction such as teacher training, conferences, staffroom conversation and informal teacher circles. Including teachers from other disciplines is necessary to break down the walls that both protect and sequester. The second is Heuristics—simple ‘rules of thumb’, which, when applied inevitably change teaching interactions. Many new insights can be gained by trying new things and breaking from your normal teaching styles and methods. The third was Re-explorations of Traditional Technique, where-in Maley introduced “old-fashioned” language teaching techniques that have been renovated: dictation, homework, vocabulary, reading and grammar. He also suggested some others ripe for re-development, such as repetition, questions, dialogues, drills and translation. In his fourth source, borrowing from Feeder Fields he suggested the potential benefits to be had from considering areas outside education such as neuroscience, the psychology of consciousness, and creativity theory. Maley’s last and most obvious source for new ideas was Information Technology and social networking services. In less than two hours, Maley gave attendees a hundred new roads to walk down to find new ideas. Most of these roads may lead to dead ends, but it is the search which is most important for the motivational and developmental progress of teachers and trainers.

Reported by John Larson

HAMAMATSU: October — E-learning systems workshop by Adam Jenkins and Gregg McNabb. The purpose of the workshop style presentation was to show that becoming proficient in e-learning systems is simple and explain how it contributes to teachers’ best practices as regards to pedagogy. The basics of Moodle, the current world standard in learning management systems, were demonstrated. Jenkins

Reported by Paul Wicking
explained that e-learning and blended learning will soon be facts of life and that MEXT has already determined that e-learning will be part of teachers’ futures. He explained numerous reasons why using a learning management system (LMS) is sound pedagogy. Primarily, it allows teachers to focus on aspects of active learning and collaborative learning. He explained how using an LMS effectively can save hours and hours of work, especially when collaborating with other educators. McNabb further explained how to use the LMS feature by feature, intoning that as LMSs will become a de facto part of education in Japan for five core subjects within the next five years, teachers must familiarize themselves with new technologies. All detailed explanations about using Moodle are still available in Japanese or English from either of the presenters and both also have Japanese language presentations available that explain important rationales for adopting a nationwide standard.

Reported by Gregg McNabb

HAMAAMATSU: December — My share and year-end get together by various presenters. On December 13, Hamamatsu had its annual My Share presentations and year-end get together. Gregg McNabb led off with a Canadian version of “The Twelve Days of Christmas” to demonstrate how learners can use Quizlet and Moodle’s quiz plug-in to do review or self-study (listening and vocabulary). Sue Sullivan shared with us in some detail how she has flipped classrooms by having student-led lessons to empower them. Abbi Spencer exposed us to a variety of informative and extremely well-designed short videos, such as the effects of caffeine on our system. Jon Dujmovich brought his children in to perform a heartwarming Canadian version of “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” Toward the end we really believed it was “10 salmon leaping, 9 Mounties riding….” Jane Joritz-Nakagawa provided meticulously prepared handouts and spoke about gender-balanced poetry. We learned that there are many accessible, appropriate poems we can and probably should introduce into our classes. Adam Jenkins also talked about the flipped classroom from several perspectives, but mentioned something that we tend to overlook: we need not flip an entire lesson (we tend to think in whole-lesson blocks), just 15 minutes may be enough. From considerations about which poems to use to an actual poetry recitation, Dan Frost recited three seasonal classics: “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost, the first and last section of Walt Whitman’s “Song of the Open Road” and “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening” also by Robert Frost. Finally, Serena Samsel wrapped up the evening with a brief demo lesson to encourage beginning speakers to become more active.

Reported by Gregg McNabb

HIROSHIMA: November — Storytelling from the beginning by Bill Harley. Bill Harley, a two-time Grammy-winning children’s musician from the United States, was one of the plenary speakers at JALT2014 in Tsukuba in November. Before the conference, he stopped by Hiroshima to lead us in a very special workshop on storytelling. He offered basic advice and practice in the telling of stories, with an emphasis on telling stories in your own way, appropriate to your own setting. Bill gave many examples and insights on using personal stories, the effect and functions of storytelling in the classroom, storytelling ideas you can use in your class, and lots of encouragement. And of course, he told and elicited many good stories!

Reported by Ariel Sorensen

IWATE: December — Developing automaticity in reading: A study of university students in Japan by Bryan Hahn, Akita International University. Akita International University has a strong emphasis on English and they have a goal to bring their students’ reading levels up as high as possible. Hahn worked with students who were enrolled in advanced reading classes at the University and tested whether or not there was progress to be gained by having them read words in “chunks” that allowed them to gradually read more words at a time. He showed us some of the techniques he used to get the students to practice their readings, followed by a pre-test and then a post-test to allow him to determine if any progression had been made. His hypothesis is that substantial progress can be made with this kind of reading practice. Hahn stated that having the students read in more manageable chunks and getting them reading more words at a time helps them improve the number of words-per-minute they can read. We want to thank Bryan for taking the time out of his busy schedule to speak to us.

Reported by Jason Hill

KITAKYUSHU: November — Pecha-kucha night by various presenters. In The Japanese Languages, Michael Phillips went over the genetics of language/linguistics and the relationship of the Japonic language family, briefly going into the different language groups across the world and the debate of which groups are related or not, as well as touching on diglossia and how it applies to the topic. Roderick van Huis told us about Pronunciation Prediction for the Classroom, offering suggestions on how we can do spot treatment pronunciation in class with no preparation on things that suddenly pop up. In Marcus Yong’s Game Design and Motivation presentation, Yong explained what makes games so addictive and how we can use those elements in our classroom. To further his point, he demonstrated how the free online game “Classcraft” can be used in classes. In Stephen Case’s presentation, 20 Websites for 20 Lessons, he went over some websites that were intended for education use and others not specifically intended for education use and how they could be applied to classrooms in unique ways.

Reported by Jamar Miller

KITAKYUSHU: January — Gamification and language learning by Markus Yong. Yong talked about game theory, what constitutes a game from a theoretical standpoint, and how it can be applied to a classroom setting. He began by introducing the online role-playing game “Classcraft”, a free online application designed specifically for a classroom setting, and explained the rules by having the audience participate in the actual game itself. He then went into detail on how he has implemented this game in some of his university classes, listed some of the advantages and drawbacks to the game, and provided suggestions for how to adapt the game specifically for Japanese learners.

Reported in honor of Dave Pite

KOBE: November — The teaching power of stories by Bill Harley. See Osaka Chapter for more details.

KYOTO: November — The teaching power of stories by Bill Harley. See Osaka Chapter for more details.

KYOTO: December — Teacher employment issues by Richard Miller and Michael Parrish, JALT Career Development Centre. This informative talk touched upon a number of points of interest to teachers seeking part-time, contract, or tenured positions in Japanese universities. Miller and Parrish
encourage jobseekers to think about four areas to consider and improve for their job-hunting: publications and presentations, academic qualifications, work experience, service. They also noted that the requirements for each of these four areas change depending on the level of position one is applying for. For publications and presentations, Miller and Parrish suggested a number of venues both within and outside of JALT for beginning speakers and writers, and noted that many seeking their first university jobs often fail because they do not have academic publications, particularly since this is increasingly required for even part-time work. Another major point in this talk was the importance of service, since it shows potential employers that you don’t just do the minimum required, as teachers are often called to go beyond that. Active participation in JALT chapters and SIGs can be a real boost in job applications and interviews, as can education-related volunteering. In all the work one does to keep a CV updated, the presenters encouraged attendees to constantly add to their CVs and to see what is lacking. Keeping an up-to-date CV on hand, along with summaries of articles and translations of these summaries, can greatly speed up the relentless job-hunting process. Following the presentation, the discussion continued, with both speakers and attendees sharing their experiences and advice.

Reported by Thomas Amundrud

NAGASAKI: July — Blending your classroom with Moodle
by Thom Rawson, Nagasaki International University. In his presentation, Rawson introduced the participants to the possibility of using Moodle as a tool for enhancing a classroom. First he gave a brief overview of Moodle and its capabilities, explaining the current state of Moodle implementation around the world and giving numerous examples of possible situations in which it can be used. Rawson then provided those in attendance with the opportunity to try using Moodle in a controlled and organized environment. He had the participants create several practice activities that one might use in an EFL classroom. These practice activities included making a questionnaire that might be used to gather feedback from a class, as well as making a digital assignment. Additionally, Rawson demonstrated the process of creating a digital rubric to aid in assessing the previously created assignments. Rawson suggested that instructors could use the information presented in the presentation to begin using Moodle in conjunction with their normal teaching methods. The presentation proved to be both interactive and thought provoking.

Reported by John Patrick Owatari-Dorgan

NAGASAKI: October — Japanese high school English curriculum changes
by Cory Koby, Sendai Shirayuri Gakuen. Koby outlined the changes in the Japanese High School English Curriculum outlined by MEXT. One of the bigger changes to the new curriculum is the addition of 800 words to the list of words required in study for JHS and SHS. This makes the total of words studied by the time Japanese students graduate from high school to be around 3000 words. This is the first time in 30 years that the number has been increased. The overall number of hours to study English per week for students hasn’t changed; the maximum number of hours is 21 and the minimum number is just 2 hours. Koby then took us through MEXT learning objectives and the challenges Japanese teachers of English face in implementing the somewhat unclear policy that they have been asked to follow.

Reported by Thom W Rawson

NAGASAKI: November — A four-step process for critical thinking instruction
by David Gann, Tokyo University of Science. In November, Nagasaki JALT members were treated to an informative and interactive workshop-style lecture centered on critical thinking. As the co-author of a podcast <http://criticallyminded.com>, Gann knows the ins and outs of taking students through a comprehensive curriculum centered on critical thinking with the outcome of learning English as a second language. The online resources and classroom discussion and explorations provide a full range of listening goals and text reconstruction activities designed not only to develop English ability but to also increase meta-linguistic awareness in students.

Reported by Thom W Rawson

NARA: November — The teaching power of stories
by Bill Harley. See Osaka Chapter for more details.

OKAYAMA: November — “We’re going global?” A look at local efforts to implement Japan’s national English education goals
by Tom Fast. Fast recently spoke to a group of high school English teachers from 67 schools in Okayama Prefecture. The group included JETs and JTEs. His presentation reviewed the results of a survey he administered to those teachers. Beginning with a history of government programs and guidelines for teaching English, the speaker moved on to the differences demonstrated by JTE’s ideals and reality in teaching communicatively. More than 60% have spent a year or less abroad and 50% spend 10% or less of class time speaking in English. Students’ inability to follow instructions and JTEs lacking confidence were the main reasons for not using English more. Fast then outlined fallacies many teachers were operating under and provided ways to motivate students in a communicative classroom. In concluding, the presenter listed what is now being done in the prefecture to improve English instruction and what steps remain to be taken in order to reach goals set by M.E.X.T. The chapter AGM and installation of new officers followed the presentation.

Reported by Richard Lemmer

OKINAWA: December — Trends in language teaching conference
by Tom Fast. Fast recently spoke to a group of high school English teachers from 67 schools in Okayama Prefecture. The group included JETs and JTEs. His presentation reviewed the results of a survey he administered to those teachers. Beginning with a history of government programs and guidelines for teaching English, the speaker moved on to the differences demonstrated by JTE’s ideals and reality in teaching communicatively. More than 60% have spent a year or less abroad and 50% spend 10% or less of class time speaking in English. Students’ inability to follow instructions and JTEs lacking confidence were the main reasons for not using English more. Fast then outlined fallacies many teachers were operating under and provided ways to motivate students in a communicative classroom. In concluding, the presenter listed what is now being done in the prefecture to improve English instruction and what steps remain to be taken in order to reach goals set by M.E.X.T. The chapter AGM and installation of new officers followed the presentation.

Reported by Richard Lemmer

NAGASAKI: December — Blending your classroom with Moodle
by Thom Rawson, Nagasaki International University. In his presentation, Rawson introduced the participants to the possibility of using Moodle as a tool for enhancing a classroom. First he gave a brief overview of Moodle and its capabilities, explaining the current state of Moodle implementation around the world and giving numerous examples of possible situations in which it can be used. Rawson then provided those in attendance with the opportunity to try using Moodle in a controlled and organized environment. He had the participants create several practice activities that one might use in an EFL classroom. These practice activities included making a questionnaire that might be used to gather feedback from a class, as well as making a digital assignment. Additionally, Rawson demonstrated the process of creating a digital rubric to aid in assessing the previously created assignments. Rawson suggested that instructors could use the information presented in the presentation to begin using Moodle in conjunction with their normal teaching methods. The presentation proved to be both interactive and thought provoking.

Reported by John Patrick Owatari-Dorgan

NAGASAKI: October — Japanese high school English curriculum changes
by Cory Koby, Sendai Shirayuri Gakuen. Koby outlined the changes in the Japanese High School English Curriculum outlined by MEXT. One of the bigger changes to the new curriculum is the addition of 800 words to the list of words required in study for JHS and SHS. This makes the total of words studied by the time Japanese students graduate from high school to be around 3000 words. This is the first time in 30 years that the number has been increased. The overall number of hours to study English per week for students hasn’t changed; the maximum number of hours is 21 and the minimum number is just 2 hours. Koby then took us through MEXT learning objectives and the challenges Japanese teachers of English face in implementing the somewhat unclear policy that they have been asked to follow.

Reported by Thom W Rawson
my Eades, Kanda University; Norman Fewell, Meio University; Tetsuko Fukawa, Kanda University; Wataru Gima, University of the Ryukyus; Tim Greer, Kobe University; Chad Hamilton, Kanda University; Takaaki Hiratsuka, University of the Ryukyus; Joseph Hosback, Ritsumeikan University; Yu Hsiang, University of the Ryukyus; Shawn Hupka, Kanda University; Lorraine Kipling, Kanda University; Fernando Kohatsu, University of the Ryukyus; Nicholas Lambert, Toyo University; Ryan Lege, Kanda University; Chris Leyland, Kobe University; Charlotte Lin, Kanda University; George MacLean, University of the Ryukyus; Samantha Marta, Kanda University; Bill Pellowe, Kinki University; Kristina Peterson, Ritsumeikan University; Jia Ping, National Taiwan University of Science; Kim Rockwell, University of Aizu; Paul Shimizu, Fukuoka; Tokuyu Uza, Meio University; Kevin Watson, University of the Ryukyus; and, Madoka Yabiku, University of the Ryukyus.

Reported by Meghan Kuckelman

**OSAKA: November — The teaching power of stories**

by Bill Harley. As part of the Four Corners Tour, JALT2014 National Conference plenary speaker, Bill Harley, brought his stories and music to a chapter presentation co-sponsored by the Kansai area chapters. Grammy award-winning Harley opened the session with a song reminding us that rhyme, rhythm, and repetition are ways that teachers can make their work memorable. Throughout the session, Harley blended findings from neuroscience and educational psychology with experiences from the classroom and his own personal stories. His message included the notion that a teacher is someone who gives a story to others so that people may then be an agent of their own shared memories. Harley showed how meaning is context-embedded and explained that the real purpose of stories is to get listeners to think about themselves. He also explained how stories exist even before they are coded into language. Participants were asked to identify stories that defined their own lives (e.g. an early childhood memory and where our name comes from) and all were reminded that since teaching is relational to tell our own stories to engage with students. Another of Harley’s songs closed out the session and those in attendance certainly left with greater depth of reflection into their own stories and how they might use the technique in upcoming classes.

Reported by Greg Rouault

**SHINSHU: October — My share**, coordinated by Heather Fukase. In this installment of our Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) series, five educators shared a wide variety of activities which could be used in the young learner classroom. Charles Ward introduced his Homework for Kids worksheets which incorporate listening, reading and writing components. The exercises appear in order of increasing difficulty and include matching, answering yes/no, open and discussion questions, conversations, dictation, Odd One Out, filling in the blank, putting words in order, math problems, creating one’s own questions and much more. Jonathon Loch presented Active Activities, starting with a dance which became progressively faster. He also explained how songs and games can be made more exciting by including students’ names in the lyrics and using a blindfold and coins in his version of Simon Says. Karen Ricks and David Varnes demonstrated activities, based on the Montessori Method, which respect the needs and curiosity of the child and engage the child physically as well as mentally. Various activities based on TPR were also introduced. Many of the activities Masumi Kina presented were customized for the holidays and included How many eggs, Mr. Wolf?, Easter egg hunt, Christmas bingo and Christmas dodgeball, among many others. These presentations were interspersed with Heather Fukase’s Twenty Things to Do with Flashcards (that aren’t Karuta), such as Beat the Clock and Mastermind, all of which were designed for language acquisition in a non-competitive, highly engaging and meaningful way.

Reported by Mary Aruga

**SHINSHU: December — An afternoon with Juan Uribe and Christmas social** by Juan Uribe. In a stop on his worldwide trek, Uribe shared his insights on Affective Language Learning (ALL). To Uribe, ALL is all about going to the core of what/how students feel. It is not about our teaching but about the students’ learning, with everyone being able to learn in their own way. Uribe described three kinds of teachers: 1) the lecturer, who expects a mass of detailed knowledge to be understood by the students, 2) the teacher, who focuses on group dynamics, or the “how” of teaching and 3) the facilitator, who knows the students, where they are coming from, where they want to go and what they would like to change. The facilitator builds the course together with the students, reflects and empathizes. Uribe provided a myriad of ideas the facilitator can use, including welcoming the students, allowing the occasional use of L1, planning the students’ success with achievable goals and clear instructions, making decisions together, offering choices, and above all, smiling. In his words, “children do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Reported by Mary Aruga

**TOKYO: November — Song and story** (lecture/concert) by Bill Harley. In this workshop, participants looked at how stories work in people’s lives, what stories define their own lives, and how to use stories in educational settings. Teachers gained new ideas for using stories in the classroom and a deeper understanding of their work as teachers. Harley explained that the story is the beginning—we can add movement, voices, props, puppets, or fireworks but none are as important as the telling of the story. This workshop offered basic advice and practice in the telling of stories, with an emphasis on telling stories our own way, appropriate to our own setting. Harley gave insights on using personal stories, the effect and functions of storytelling in the classroom, storytelling games we can use in our class, and offered lots of encouragement. He also explained that song and story go hand in hand—one starts where the other stops. Workshop participants explored the connection between song and story, did some simple exercises, and gained practical suggestions on how to use music in storytelling.

Reported by Sayaka Amano

**TOKYO: November — The future of English language teaching: International perspectives** by Dr. John Hope. The English language-teaching world, as Hope explained in this presentation, is changing in ways never previously envisaged. As English rapidly becomes ubiquitous across Europe and increasingly, across Asia, more countries are offering programs taught in English and more countries are adopting English as a mode of instruction in schools. English instruction is beginning earlier and earlier in school systems, reducing demand for introductory English courses at the secondary and tertiary level. A number of other driving forces are combining in unique ways to change the demand for English language instruction. The Generation Y students entering higher education are different to previous generations and no longer want traditional senior secondary and higher education programs. The increasingly widespread offerings of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) are beginning to address the demand...
The role of extensive reading (ER) in developing global awareness by Alan Maley. In this presentation, Maley began by rehearsing what ER is according to his understanding. Attendees discussed some of its undoubted benefits. Maley suggested that, alongside its purely language learning benefits, ER can also be a valuable resource for developing “Life Skills and Critical Thinking.” Awareness is increasing, so as language teachers we need to be more than passive technicians for delivering a package. In Kumaravadivelu’s terminology, we need to become “transformative intellectuals.” That is to say, as educators, we have a responsibility for raising our students’ awareness of the world they live in. Material was drawn from currently available graded readers. Attendees engaged in discussion of these issues.

The way forward: Translating the pedagogical principles of English as an international language (EIL) into classroom practice by Gregory Paul Glasgow. In this presentation, Glasgow intended to clarify any misconceptions about the pedagogy of EIL and to demonstrate how EIL principles can be gradually incorporated into pedagogical practice through curriculum planning, classroom medium of instruction, and materials development. Glasgow drew from his experiences as a curriculum coordinator, lecturer and instructor in upper secondary and tertiary education. The presentation was also combined with opportunities for participants to engage in reflection and discussion. The overall goal of the presentation was to provide participants with a sounder conceptualization of the pedagogical principles of EIL and incorporate them in ways that are effective and compatible with their local teaching contexts.

Workshop on activity development theory and practise by Shirley Leane. In the lecture portion of this presentation, Leane led an exploration of the history of various language education movements, including the audio-lingual method, with discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of pedagogy informed by the philosophical foundation of each. Emphasis was given to the distinction between ‘exercise’ (such as pattern practise) and ‘activity’ (involving communication), and the need to include activities in lessons. The workshop involved pair and small group work in constructing activities, which were then shared and discussed by all participants.

On behalf of the conference team I would like to thank everyone who helped make JALT2014 that huge success. The overall reaction was positive. In this column I will share some of the feedback we received while answering some frequently asked questions.

We had 1,474 participants from 26 countries. There were 47 prefectures represented. Over 1000 attendees were members. We had a good response to our online questionnaire at 348 (23.6%). Over 89% rated the conference excellent or good and 94% stated they would recommend the conference to colleagues. Of the respondents, 56 were first time attendees while 80 had attended more than 11 conferences. Here is some key information.

Key:  
E excellent,  
G good,  
NI needs improvement,  
P poor,  
NA not applicable

Please let us know what you thought about the following aspects of the conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aspect</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>NI</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of presentations and workshops</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Handbook</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary presentations</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured Speaker Workshops</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology in Teaching (TnT) Workshops</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster sessions</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JALT Junior</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cezar’s Kitchen (Lunch &amp; Snacks in the EME)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Material Exhibition (EME)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many other JALT annual international conferences have you attended?

- First time 57
- 1 18
- 2-4 87
Overall, how would you rate your experience at the conference?

- Excellent 154
- Good 158
- Adequate 33
- Poor 3

Would you recommend attending a future JALT conference to a colleague?

- Yes 328
- No 17

Conference Costs

Each year we receive comments about the cost of a JALT conference. We try to provide good value for the money participants must spend. We also use the money from the conference to support programming throughout the year. The following list provides conference fees for a number of conferences in the language teaching field that members have attended in the past arranged from lowest priced to highest (taken from various homepages). JALT has the fourth lowest fee among the 11 conferences listed here. We are providing the costs in US Dollars.

- KOTESOL $46
- JACET $60 (Member)
- Asia TEFL $140
- **JALT $187 (Member)**
- CamTESOL $200 (Standard Rate)
- ThaiTESOL $250 (International participants)
- AAAL $270 (Member)
- IATEFL $295 (Member normal)
- ILTA $300
- IAFOR $425 (Regular Rate)
- TESOL $450 (Member onsite)

(Prices listed are from various homepages and as much as possible are for full conference attendance at membership rates).

Conference location and site requirements

Each year we get comments on the site and its location. Many suggest that we only have conferences in Tokyo or Osaka. Unfortunately, venues in those cities are priced out of our range. Tsukuba being only 45 minutes away from Akihabara is our attempt to have a site close to Tokyo. We are now considering rotating among these cities: Tsukuba, Shizuoka, Nagoya, Kobe.

What we look for in a site

We are often asked what are the requirements for a conference site. The following describes some of what the conference team considers when picking a conference site. Ideally a site would have most, if not all, of these features.

- Have good air and/or train access to the city
- Have adequate hotels at a variety of price ranges
- Have easy accessibility to the site from the hotels
- Have close access to restaurants for lunches and dinners
- Have a large main hall for plenaries and the OGM, capable of holding 600-700+ people
- Have about 25-28 other rooms of varying sizes, with most capable of holding 40 people, and with several in the 80, and a few in the 120+ range. We can consider having some of these rooms be in an annex or space close to the main conference site (within 5 minutes walk).
- Have a large area for the Educational Materials Exhibition (about 1,000 m²) and an area for the SIGs (although depending on the layout they might fit in the 1,000 m² EME).
- Have access to internet in the EME and presentation rooms
- Be within our budget, which in recent years has been 1.5-2.0 million yen per day for the conference site. If the city or region has grants to help offset conference expenses that is also a consideration when looking at costs.
- Allow us to use outside vendors. Although not a requirement, we like to find out if the site requires us to use their vendors or if they allow us to use outside vendors for food and drink.

As JALT conferences have grown over the years, we seem to have outgrown university sites, as most do not have the large hall needed for the plenaries. Also, since there is often not a national holiday on the Monday of the conference, or if there is, universities have classes, it is difficult to “take over” part of a campus for four days. However, we are reassessing this and considering a slimmer conference of three days.

If you have a site suggestion or any comments, please contact Steve Cornwell at <program@jalt.org>. He can send you the complete list of requirements.
Vetting Process

Many attendees have questions about the presentations and vetting process. Last year we received over 750 proposals. Each proposal was read by three readers and then assigned a score using the following criteria:

- Clear/Organized
- Theoretically/Pedagogically Sound
- Original/Innovative
- Appropriateness for Time and Audience
- Holistic Score

Of course, proposals and presentations are different. With 500+ actual presentations it is impractical to try to get attendees to rate the individual presentations they attend, a suggestion that has been made in the past. We work with readers each year trying to improve the selection process and we have an 87% satisfaction rate regarding the quality of presentations and workshops.

We can always use additional qualified readers. If you are interested, email the proposal vetting coordinator, Paul Stapleton at <paulstapleton@gmail.com>.

Accommodations

Periodically we select a travel agent to handle JALT conference participants’ lodging needs through a bidding process. They book a block section of rooms at a variety of hotels and with a range of prices. Last year in Tsukuba JTB reports we used 392 rooms on Saturday evening, the evening of the Tsukuba marathon. The marathon is one reason there was not an extra room to be found on Saturday. JTB had initially reserved 440 rooms for JALT but after the deadline passed, some unreserved rooms were released.

Projectors

We receive comments about presenters having to rent projectors annually. To rent all the projectors we need at some past sites would cost over a million yen—sometimes well over. In 2013 JALT, with help from chapters and SIGs, purchased projectors to help reduce expenses. The fee we charge helps us maintain the projectors we have purchased, and ship them from around Japan to the conference site. Owning projectors helps us keep the fee reasonable.

This past year at the last moment we learned the site intended to charge us to use the screens. It would have added several hundred thousand yen to an already tight conference budget so we choose not to rent the screens. We have already checked at the JALT2015 site and using screens in all the rooms will not be a problem.

Signage

Each year we have comments on signs and finding the site registration. This year we had interns at the station and signs outside the conference center. And specific instructions on how to get to the site were posted on our homepage. At the venue there were signs at each entrance pointing the way to registration and main events. It is unfortunate that some participants report not seeing the signs. We will continue to improve signage and arrange for interns to guide participants to the site; at the same time we strongly encourage attendees to help us by noting the url to sites; here is JALT2015’s site’s url: <https://www.granship.or.jp/english/information.html>. Fortunately, the site can be seen from the station’s Higashi Shizuoka exit.

Additional Feedback

- Provide free coffee, a nice conference bag like in Kobe, and an app that works on multiple platforms. All of these requests take funding. We can consider them, but the Kobe conference bags were made by a volunteer group in Cambodia and cost over 2 million yen by the time we had them delivered to the site.
- Have the conference in October. This is risky—in 2013 two typhoons almost hit Kobe right as the conference was getting underway, and in 2014, we had typhoons on back-to-back weekends in October.
- The submission deadline is too early. The deadline was much earlier last year, but we were fortunate to have had over 500 presentations and even more submissions; as presenters get used to the February deadline we hope this will cease being an issue.
- Make the conference cheaper for students. Two years ago we implemented a discount rate for full time students.

I welcome feedback on all of this feedback. A well-informed membership will help JALT as it works hard to serve the varied needs of our constituency. This feedback will help us improve the conference where we can, and perhaps some of these explanations will help you understand the constraints we operate under. Please enjoy the photo spread of JALT2014.

Steve Cornwell
JALT Director of Program
<program@jalt.org>
Conversations Across Borders
November 21–24, 2014 in Tsukuba, Ibaraki
JALT 2014

Onsite Registration
Conversations Across Borders
November 21–24, 2014 in Tsukuba, Ibaraki
We Don’t Need No Education!

English language teaching (ELT) as a profession has been criticized for a lack of professional standards as entry barriers to employment are often quite low (Rimmer, 2011). Many ELT instructors got their first job mainly by being a native speaker with little or no formal training (in my case on the JET Programme). A great deal about ELT can be learned on the job, and many successful teachers have learned this way and continue to teach effectively. Although the benefits of professional development and formal education cannot be denied, ELT practitioners have a litany of reasons for refraining from these activities. Andy Curtis (2006) lists several common reasons cited for not doing a program of profession-
al development: lack of funding and institutional support, lack of time, lack of motivation and energy, reluctance to change, or belief in the disconnect between theory and practice. Despite these excuses, ELT is becoming more professional and requiring more qualifications than before, particularly in the Japanese market.

In general as you move up in the ELT hierarchy in Japan, from eikaiwa to business classes, or into the formal educational system of primary and secondary schools, most positions require at least a bachelor’s degree and preferably some formal ELT training, such as CELTA. That is the first barrier to entry. To teach in tertiary education, there is a further barrier, a master’s degree, preferably in applied linguistics or TESOL, but not always (e.g., my MA degree is in Latin American Studies). This requirement officially applies to both part-time and full-time positions (there are exceptions, employment through outsourcing companies or “grandfathering in” of previous staff). Previously, an MA backed up with research and teaching experience and Japanese ability, could be enough to secure a tenured university position. In recent years, the MA has ceased to be a terminal degree in ELT. Universities are searching for instructors with higher qualifications at all levels of employment and requiring more research publications than ever before. The recent Global 30 program encourages universities to hire more teaching staff with doctorates. As the number of university jobs shrinks abroad and in Japan, more highly qualified candidates are competing with those with only MAs for even limited-term contract jobs; causing an educational “arms race” and “degree inflation.”

It is clear that the market is changing in a direction that requires more formal education. Now to address some of the reasons given for not starting a program of professional development. The first is lack of time. Until recently, the opportunity cost of getting a respected higher degree was prohibitively high, requiring students to stop working to attend school full-time. Distance learning has become a respected and practical way to earn a degree, hundreds of universities offer advanced degrees online. Time management is still essential, but courses are modular, requiring as little as 10 hours per week. It is beyond the scope of this column to recommend any one program, but beware of diploma mills; verify that the school is approved by a respected accreditation body such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (US) or Accreditation Service for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (UK). If you prefer the physical classroom experience, Temple University offers master’s and doctoral programs at their Osaka and Tokyo campuses. Japanese universities are also an often-overlooked resource. They are conveniently located, affordable, and offer options in English. It also is easier for employers to verify the authenticity of a degree earned locally (though it may not be as valuable for tenured academic jobs outside Japan).

In addition to time, another scarce resource is money. The cost of a higher degree can be daunting, two to five million yen for a master’s and 5-10 million yen for a doctorate, but if you think about the increased earning potential (comparing a three million yen per year eikaiwa job to a five million yen university job), you can recoup your investment within the first year at a good job. Financial aid is typically available if you choose to pursue a degree in your home country. For example, the Australian government offers the Research Training Scheme to its citizens (and Kiwis, too) which pays tuition for students pursuing “research-based” higher degree programs.

If the monetary or time commitments of a full graduate degree are too much, short-term, lower-cost graduate certificate programs are also available. They offer certificates in specific areas, such as literacy or educational technology or management. If you feel you want to improve the practical side of your teaching the short-term, practicum-based programs such as CELTA and DELTA are perfect as they cram a great deal of practice (and theory) into a short, manageable course of study. A focused program may help potential students maintain motivation or give them a taste of graduate level study. Even though a certificate may not substitute for a gate-keeper degree, it can balance a CV or make a minimally qualified person more attractive (in my case earning a CELTA in addition to my MA outside TESOL made me more marketable). Although difficult to list on a CV, free online education through MOOCS is also available and of ever increasing quality and relevance. Some sites offer various certifications. In the end, as the ELT market increases in competition and professionalism, any kind of education can be very rewarding personally and professionally.

References
For many years now I’ve been supplementing an English lesson on “Honesty” with a song from the 90s called “Been Caught Stealing.” The song, by a band called Jane’s Addiction, is sung from the viewpoint of a rebellious youth who enjoys stealing things from local shops. Once during a presentation on teaching English with music I handed out the lyrics of “Stealing” as part of a sample worksheet. Almost immediately a teacher in the audience raised her voice to say that the song was inappropriate as language learning material.

“I could never use this song with my kids,” she said. When I asked why, she replied, “Just look at these lyrics. The first line of the song—’I’ve been caught stealing once, when I was five’—that’s an egregious misuse of the present perfect. He can’t say he ‘has been’ caught stealing, and then pinpoint a time that it happened in the same sentence. My students try to do that all the time, and I’m not going to validate that kind of error by playing examples of it in a so-called ‘authentic’ English song!”

Of course I was relieved to hear that her objection was based on grammar and not on the moral ramifications of teaching English through songs about shoplifting. But it got me thinking: Maybe I need to be more responsible with the songs I use in class. I went to my lesson plan pool (I affectionately call it my “lesson crib”) and reluctantly began sifting out favorite tunes by the likes of Napalm Death, Bong-water, and the Carpenters (everyone knows that “Won’t Last a Day Without You” is about alcohol addiction, right?).

Still, I didn’t want to overdo it. Otherwise I’d be stuck teaching “Honesty” with Billy Joel songs or some other such nonsense. I struck upon a suitable compromise in the form of a musical genre which is, almost paradoxically, both more direct in its general linguistic attack and at the same time more roundabout with its innuendo. That genre is American country music.

Country music is a great choice for a lot—er, for a whole caboose-load—of reasons. First, it is music that, somehow, regardless of subject matter, meets with the approval of your mother. The rebels you hear about in country music are far more preferable to those in, say, a punk song, for reasons no one can really explain. Johnny Cash can sing “I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die,” but your parents would still rather have him joining the family at dinner than “No Future” Johnny Rotten.

Second, country songs like to take normal everyday English phrases and push them to their semantic limits: “Work your fingers to the bone and what do you get? Bony fingers!” Or take this classic song about a man who falls in love with the recorded phone message from his local cable TV provider:

“Tell me what it takes, Woman. Don't be cold.”
“Your call means a lot to us. Please hold.”
“I need you, Darling. Stay with me and support me.”
“A representative will be with you shortly.”

If you find that using country lyrics in their entirety for language practice is too risky, you can stick with just the song titles, which offer plenty of linguistic uniqueness you can throw at students:

Tumbling Tumbleweeds (redundancy)
Don’t It Make My Brown Eyes Blue? (noun/verb agreement)
Stand by Your Man; Take This Job and Shove It (directives)
You’re the Reason Our Kids are Ugly (sentence complements and optional use of that)

And if the vocab/grammar oddities in real titles don’t quite meet your needs, you can always make up more blatant titles of your own:

Having Told You You Had a Dangling Participle, Would You Hold It Against Me?
Sleeping Singular in a Plural Bed
Mamas, Don’t Let Your Phrases Grow Up to be Compounds
Before He Conjugates
Droppin My Gs over You
All My Reflexives Find Themselves in Texas
Joining JALT

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

JALT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

Annual International Conference

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

JALT Publications

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

JALT Community

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

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

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

JALT Partners

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

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

Membership Categories

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

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

Information

For more information please consult our website <http://jalt.org>, ask an officer at any JALT event, or contact JALT's main office.

JALT Central Office

Urban Edge Building, 5th Floor, 1-37-9 Taito, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0016 JAPAN

JALT事務局：〒110-0016東京都台東区台東1-37-9
アーバンエッジビル5F

Phone: 03-3837-1630; F: 03-3837-1631; <jco@jalt.org>

Joining JALT

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

10 small things we can do to play our part in JALT

We don’t all have the time or resources to put a lot into JALT, but here are 10 small things that we can do to help the organisation. Each, on its own, will have little effect, but if we all help out, who knows??

- Bring a non-member friend! At the next chapter or SIG event you attend, bring a new face along. Pay their entrance fee, make them feel welcome, and introduce them around.
- Join a SIG! It costs just a few yen, gives you access to a whole new world of knowledge, and helps the SIG grow.
- Lend (don’t give!) a non-member colleague a copy of your TLT or JALT Journal to read. Show them what’s available online at the JALT Publications website <http://jalt-publications.org>.
- Make copies of the membership information page at the back of any TLT, staple surplus postal bank transfer forms from TLT to the pages and drop them in staff mailboxes.
- Come to JALT2015 in Shizuoka next November. Go back to your chapter or SIG and organise a post-conference sharing session to encourage people to come to the next conference!
- Write something small—a review, a conference report, an interview, or a column article—and submit it to any national or SIG publication. Everyone starts somewhere!
- Download conference advertising material from the conference website, print out copies on good quality paper, and put them on notice boards around your school.
- Organise a group JALT membership with your colleagues or friends. It costs less, and helps introduce new people to JALT.
- Volunteer to do something small. Bake scones for a chapter meeting. Introduce a speaker at a SIG event. Spend a few hours helping at a conference desk.

For more information on JALT, visit <www.jalt.org>
watch,  
http://youtu.be/ZJAZ7HtAHtc

like,  
https://facebook.com/JALT.conference

follow,  
https://twitter.com/jaltconference

and go . . .

JALT2015  
41st Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition  
November 20 – 23, 2015  
Shizuoka Convention & Arts Center “GRANSHIP”  
Shizuoka City, Shizuoka Prefecture, JAPAN  
http://jalt.org/conference