The Language Teacher

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JALT Publications

Contents

JALT Publications Online

In this month's issue . . .

Greetings and Happy Spring from the still snow-covered Aomori Prefecture. I'd like to thank the editors for giving me this chance to contribute the foreword for this issue of *TLT*. I joined the *TLT* team in 2013 and have edited the *TLT Wired* column since 2014. With every issue, I enjoy bringing timely advice on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) to the readers of *TLT* while getting to know the wider JALT community.

This issue includes more research by our fellow language educators who provide suggestions for improving our practices. The *Feature Article* by **Avril Haye-Matsui** is titled "*They Were Women and I had a Cool Image About Them": Female Role Models and Female English Language Majors*. In the article, Haye-Matsui demonstrates the positive effects that English-speaking female role models can have on young female English language learners. Following this feature are two engaging *Readers' Forum* articles that focus on improving language teacher educational practices—efforts that are vital to the realization of MEXT's English language learning goals for the near future. First, **Anne McLellan Howard**'s article, *Teaching English for Pre-service Teachers: Principles and Practice Activities*, suggests practical activities for improving potential language teachers' English skills prior to entering service. Then, **Brian Rugen** proposes training practices for developing teacher immediacy in his article, *Developing Teaching Immediacy in Language Teacher Education*. Hopefully the research articles in this issue are helpful for our readers who engage in teacher training.

One of my goals for the *TLT Wired* column has been to provide tools for all language teachers to use in taking their first or latest steps in adding computer-assisted language learning methods to their teaching repertoire. Topics include web-based activities, computer programs, and mobile-based language learning tools and activities. Speaking of mobile-assisted language learning, my recently completed doctoral research demonstrated that Japanese university students appreciate and want their teachers to incorporate their mobile devices into English language classes. I hope that more language educators in Japan will adapt their approaches to English teaching to meet the students' desires. One way to do this is to learn from those who have already taken the

TLT Editors: Gerry McLellan, Eric Shepherd Martin
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leap into the fields of CALL and MALL. As we look toward the coming summer, there will be many chances for us to come together at conferences to share our experiences and learn from others. PanSIG 2018 at Toyo Gakuen University in Tokyo <http://pansig.org> and JALTCALL 2018 at Meijo University in Nagoya <https://conference2018.jaltcall.org> are two such examples from the many professional development opportunities available to JALT members. I hope to see many of you there!

The Language Teacher is an excellent resource for language teachers and it is only as good as our members make it. I encourage you to share your knowledge and experience with your fellow readers by submitting a research article, teaching lesson activity for *My Share*, tip for working with *Young Learners*, *Book Review*, or column for *TLT Wired*. The editorial staff—a dedicated and hard-working group of amazing people—are always looking for new submissions and new members to join our merry band. Please consider adding your voice to the chorus of language professionals in Japan. I look forward to hearing from you.

Edo Forsythe, TLT *Wired Column Editor*

TLTの読者の皆様に、まだ雪深い青森から陽光のご挨拶を申し上げます。今月号のForewordを執筆する機会を頂き、編集者の方々に感謝申し上げます。私は2013年に*TLT*のチームに加わり、2014年から*TLT* Wiredのコラムを担当しています。毎号楽しみながら、コンピュータ支援語学学習 (CALL)のヒントを載せています。

今月号も、多くの語学教育者による研究が、授業実践を改善するための提案を行っています。Feature Article は Avril Haye-Matsui による *They Were Women and I had a Cool Image About Them": Female Role Models and Female English Language Majors*です。本研究では Haye-Matsui　が、女性の英語話者がロールモデルとして、女性の英語学習者に肯定的な影響を与えることを示しています。Readers' Forum　の2編は、語学教育の実践向上に焦点を当てています。それは、文科省の英語学習の近い

将来の目標を実現するために不可欠なものです。最初はAnne McLellan Howardの、*Teaching English for Pre-service Teachers: Principles and Practice Activities*という論文で、実際に教鞭をとる前に、将来性ある語学教師の英語力を改善するための実践的活動を示唆しています。Brian Rugen は、*Developing Teaching Immediacy in Language Teacher Education*という論文の中で、教師の近接性(teacher immediacy)を高める教員養成の実践法を提案しています。これらの2つの論文が教員養成に携わる読者にとって有益なものとなれば幸いです。

*TLT Wired*コラムの目的の1つは、すべての語学教師に、コンピュータ支援語学学習法を自分達のレパートリーに加えるためのツールを提供することです。トピックとしては、ウェブをベースにしたアクティビティ、 コンピュータプログラム、モバイル機器を用いた語学学習支援の手段とアクティビティがあります。モバイル支援学習と言えば、最近校了した私個人の博士論文で、日本の大学生は英語学習のクラスにモバイル機器の取り入れを望んでいるという結果を明らかにしました。さらに多くの日本の語学教師が学生の要望を受け入れるアプローチをとることを望みます。1つの方法は、すでにCALLやMALLの分野に飛び込んだ教師から学ぶことです。来たる夏に向けて、多くの学会で自分達の経験を分かち合ったり他から学んだりできる機会が多くあります。例として、東京の東洋学園大学で開催されるPanSIG 2018 <http://pansig.org>や名古屋の名城大学のJALTCALL 2018 <https://conference2018.jaltcall.or>は、JALT会員の皆様の専門性を伸ばす良い機会になるでしょう。皆様にお目にかかれることを楽しみにしております。

The Language Teacher は語学教師にとって素晴らしい情報の供給源であり、会員の皆様なしでは出来得ないものです。投稿していただくのは研究論文だけでなく、*My Share*には授業のアクティビティ案を、また*Young Learners*には若手に役立つヒントを、さらに*Book Review*や*TLT* Wiredにも寄稿していただいて、皆様の知識と経験を他の読者と分かち合うことを強くお勧めします。編集チームは、献身的で働き者の素晴らしいグループですが、常に新しい投稿と、この楽しいチームに協力してくださる新しいメンバーを待っております。日本における語学の専門家の合唱隊に皆様の声を加えてくださるようお願いいたします。それに答えてくださるようお待ちしております。

Edo Forsythe, TLT *Wired Column Editor*

diversity & inclusion
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"They Were Women and I Had a Cool Image About Them": Female Role Models and Female English Language Majors

Avril Haye-Matsui

Aichi Prefectural University

ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

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Based on a qualitative research project on the influence of gender in Japanese female students' English language development, this paper examines the roles that women have played in developing the English language ability of first-year female English language majors at a university in central Japan. Analyses of students' language learning histories revealed that the people who had the largest influence on participants' decisions to study English at the university level were primarily female. Female learners also tended to have mostly female role models. This paper explores how female agency serves to first provide opportunities for female English language development, and then how female involvement in the research participants' lives has motivated and encouraged their continued language development.

本論は、日本の女子学生が英語力を発達させる過程において、女性がどのような影響を及ぼしているかに関する質的研究プロジェクトである。中部地方の大学で英語を専攻する1年生の女子学生たちを調査する。これまでの英語学習歴を分析することにより、大学で英語を専攻する彼女たちに最も影響を及ぼした人物、および、ロールモデルとなった人物は、主として女性であるということが明らかとなった。本論では、女子学生がその英語能力を発達させるにあたり、いかに女性が重要な役割を果たしてきたかを考察する。

This study examines English language learning and the ways in which women act as language role models for female students. In particular, it examines the ways in which Japanese women have motivated, mentored, and supported female university students to arrive at their decision to major in English. Research has shown that young people are more likely to relate to same-gender role models (Bandura, 1997) and that, in the area of education, female role models have a big effect on young women's lives and career trajectories (Beaman, Duflo, Pande, & Topalova, 2012; Zirkel, 2002). This study investigated whether or not female role models have such an effect on Japanese female students' English language learning and, if so, how this influence is manifested.

The Popularity of English Among Female Students

English has been a compulsory subject for all students in secondary schools in Japan since the end of World War II. It is an important subject because of its role in entrance exams. However, once students enter university, there is a gender divide concerning the types of subjects studied. Male students tend to focus on career-oriented subjects that will enable them to gain high-status positions in reputable companies. Female students, on the other hand, tend to choose subjects in the humanities and foreign languages that will enhance their social capital and their chances to marry into a well-off family (Nagatomo, 2012). English seems to be one of the most popular majors for women in two- and four-year colleges (Nagatomo, 2016), and there are several explanations as to why this is so. English has been considered an appropriate area of study, not only because of the social capital it provides, but also because it is believed to open career doors for women and is a means for them to obtain supplementary income if they decide to become housewives (e.g. Kobayashi, 2007; Nagatomo, 2012). Furthermore, female students are often attracted to English because of *akogare*, which is an unattainable longing or desire for all things Western, including romantic liaisons with idealized white males (Kelsky, 2001). There is also a belief that a Western lifestyle offers social mobility, greater career prospects, and an opportunity to create an alternative identity (Takahashi, 2013).

One area that has not been explored when considering the motivations of female English language learners in Japan is the influence of female role models. Female role models in this study refers to the women that students have formed personal or professional relationships with. This study considers this gap and investigates the following question: What impact do female role models have on the language development of Japanese female university English majors?

Methodology

Participants for this study were nine female first-year students from the Department of British and American Studies at a private university in central Japan. They were highly motivated students, enrolled in two required communication classes which met three times a week. Students were accustomed to expressing opinions and focusing on social issues in English because of the university's no-Japanese policy in oral communication classes. The average TOEIC score for the cohort was 650. The study was conducted in the second semester of the 2012 academic year. Participation in the research was completely voluntary and had no impact on the students' grades. Therefore, students were free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Data Collection

Data was taken from students' individual language learning histories (LLHs), focus group discussions, and follow-up questions sent by email. First, students were asked to describe and write their English language learning experiences from birth to the present in a LLH. LLHs are effective in promoting self-awareness, as an examination of past experiences helps learners understand their development and what they need to do to become more effective learners (Cummings, 2005).

Second, the students were split into two focus groups and asked to attend one of two ninety-minute discussions, held on campus. I gave discussion topics and several questions to students before the focus group sessions began (see Appendices). The topics and questions were based on a preliminary analysis of the students' LLH's. Students were also asked to bring questions of their own for discussion. This gave them time to prepare vocabulary and expressions which they wanted to use while speaking in their focus group. I selected the most confident student to moderate the sessions in order to reduce researcher/participant, or in this case, the student/teacher hierarchy (Ritchie & Barker, 2005). She helped the students maintain focus on the topics and encouraged everyone to participate equally, while I acted only as an observer. After the focus group sessions, the students' discussion questions were emailed to all participants, and students responded. This provided them with an opportunity to respond to questions which had not come up during their group discussions.

Data Analysis

The discussions, which had been recorded, were transcribed and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis, a process of placing data into identifiable themes (Boyatzis, 1998). Following Boyatzis's data-driven (inductive) approach to classification, the data was collated, and key quotes were identified, highlighted, and coded manually. The data was then placed into the following themes: preschool education, school experiences, overseas experiences, university English, the future, and people.

Discussion

Examination of the participants' language learning histories, interviews, and the follow-up questions indicated that the participants' desire to study English in university had been shaped in large part by various female role models. A small number of participants also said that male teachers and relatives had had some impact on their English language learning at certain points in their education. However, the data showed that male influence was negligible when compared with that of females.

Friends

Many of the participants talked about the ways they had been influenced by their friends. They described their high school experiences with friends who also liked studying English and with whom they could share the experience of English study. They noted that this created friendly rivalry between them. This was mentioned by one student, Emiko, who said, "I wanted to get a higher score on the tests than my friend. She loved English, too."

Students also mentioned that friendships with female overseas students studying at their school were also important. These friendships gave them a chance to use English in authentic and natural ways. For example, one student, Natsuki, pointed out that she ". . . fraternized with a Mexican friend and usually we spoke in English." Such experiences enabled the participants to develop confidence and the desire to speak English more.

Interestingly, the majority of foreign students were from non-English speaking countries, and their English-speaking skills impressed the participants. As another participant, Kayoko, said, "When I was 18, an overseas student came from Switzerland. She could speak English and Japanese well. I was surprised." This made her see that the foreign students were also English language learners and this perhaps made her believe that she too could become a competent English speaker like them.

Friendships with overseas students also motivated some of the participants to participate in their school's study abroad programs. This enabled them

to reconnect with the friends they had met in Japan, to meet new people, and as Natsuki described, "have more experiences in English." Meeting foreign people, whether abroad or in Japan, made the participants want to speak English more and at a higher level. For several, this experience inspired them to major in English.

Mothers

The participants also discussed the tremendous impact that their mothers had on their English language learning. This impact seemed to occur in three ways. First, mothers exposed them to English from an early age through movies, music, or English language materials such as toys and games. For example, Satoko remembers music that her mother played to her as a young child, and said, "My mother likes to listen to the music of Queen. She said that I grew up listening to those songs."

Second, the mothers provided opportunities for their daughters to learn at local language schools. Those lessons were remembered as being fun and the participants not only learned English, but also about different cultures. As Hanae stated, "I experienced foreign culture for the first time. My mother's friend was an English teacher and I joined trick or treating at her house for the first time. I think I started to like English then."

Third, mothers themselves were also language role models for their daughters. Children are often influenced by what they see their parents do and will emulate the behavior or attributes they deem positive (Ellis, 2008), and this seems to extend to language learning as well. It is not surprising, therefore, that participants wanted to emulate their mothers. This is illustrated by Natsuki's statement: "When we went abroad I watched my mother communicate with many foreigners in English and I envied her and I thought I wanted to be like my mother." Participants seeing their mothers interact with people in English fostered the desire in them to do the same. In fact, for some, these experiences significantly influenced their choice of major and university. Natsuki, for example, said, "My mother graduated from this university and I want to be like my mother, so I decided to enter the high school from which it was easy to enter this university."

Clearly, the mothers' actions and attitudes towards their daughters' English language development created a motivational base for their English language studies. Fostering a positive desire at such an early age is important because once positive opinions of a subject are formed, they will dictate learners' future approaches to that subject (Wlod-

kowski, 1997). In the case of these students, the role their mothers had in actively encouraging their English language learning is clear.

Japanese Female English Teachers

Whereas friends and family were important in shaping the participants' motivation for studying English, the third and most influential female mentors were the participants' secondary or cram school teachers. For many participants, these women were the first successful English speakers they encountered, and their impact on the participants' language development, their attitudes toward English, and their decisions to major in English was tremendously important.

The participants said they respected their female teachers and wanted to emulate them. This is evident in Emiko's comment: "I respect them and at the same time, I feel that I want to be like them. Therefore, I am motivated by them."

Teachers were also admired for their knowledge and interactions with foreign countries and cultures. This is encapsulated in Satoko's comment: "They were women and I had a cool image about them. They have a lot of experience of going abroad and their talk was interesting." Furthermore, several participants credited a female English teacher as being influential in their decision to major in English and/or to major in English at their current university. Yoriko says, "My English teacher graduated from this university. She told me about her college life and going to study abroad. Thanks to her I decided to come here."

The teachers' influence on the participants did not end upon graduation from high school. The connection to their teachers was so strong that the participants still turned to them for advice afterward. This closeness is perhaps understandable as Japanese high school and cram school teachers spend a great deal of time with their students and, because they share the same cultural background, students can easily identify with them (Murphey, 1998). Students can, therefore, see a similarity between themselves and their teachers, which contributes to the belief that they, too, can attain the same or even greater levels of success (Bandura, 1997). That female teachers were such important role models for the participants is significant as research has shown that people who regard their teachers as role models are more likely to excel in their studies and to cite their teachers as being influential in their career choices (Nagatomo, 2012).

Implications and Conclusion

Even though this study is small and the results might not be representative of all female students in Japan, female role models were found to profoundly shape these young women's English language experiences.

First, these women were raised by mothers who made sure that they studied English in enjoyable and memorable ways. Japanese media has often highlighted the negative side of maternal involvement in children's education. Mothers have sometimes been described as overbearing, competitive *kyoiku mamas* (education mothers), who will push their children to succeed at all costs. However, the participants' narratives tell a very different story. The support of caring mothers made it possible for the participants to get early exposure to English, and mothers who could speak English well were significant role models for the participants. This is important information for educators who can co-operate with parents to motivate students. This could greatly benefit students, especially those who may lack motivation.

Second, meeting other young women in Japan who were serious about their English study meant that they could benefit from the motivating effect of being with others who shared the same goals. Additionally, the friendships formed with overseas students gave them confidence and a chance to communicate in English. The language became more meaningful because it was used to create relationships. Schools and universities could take advantage of this by providing more opportunities for students to create communities of learners, perhaps through English or dramatic clubs. Institutions could also provide more chances for students to interact with overseas students through social events or by providing more classes in which the students could study together.

Third, the students greatly respected and admired their female English teachers. The fact that these teachers were skilled English speakers seemed to prove to the students that working and studying hard can result in English fluency. Additionally, since participants were able to relate to their teachers, it made it possible for them to clearly envision themselves as successful English speakers in the future. Making teachers aware of the great influence which they have on same-gender students is one way to use this information. Teachers might understand that how they relate their experiences to their students can be just as important as what they teach in class. Furthermore, examining these relationships, how they develop, and their impact on students can give teachers and researchers great-er insight into the role teachers play in students' language development and how students' future goals might be inspired by them.

This study has shown that, prior to entering university, female role models have had a huge impact on one particular group of women's desires to major in English. This implies that female role models at universities could perhaps have a similar effect. Therefore, one could argue that the presence of more female professors might encourage female students to excel in many areas besides English. More research in other subject areas is needed to determine if this is the case.

Despite being such a small sample of students, this study draws attention to the role that women have on the English language learning of younger women. It also provides insight into how female role models have influenced female students to major in English.

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Avril Haye-Matsui has worked in English language education in Japan for over two decades. She currently works at Aichi Prefectural University and is the co-founder of the support and friendship group Black Women in Japan. Her research areas are gender, student identity, and teacher identity.

Appendix A
Focus Group Questions

Please think about your answers to the questions below, before coming to the focus group.

1. Who or what motivated you to learn to speak English? Who and or what motivates you now?

2. Why was English important to you in the past? Why is it important now? Do you think it will still be important to you in the future? Why?

3. Why do you think so many young Japanese female university students choose to major in English, (especially at this university)?

4. Imagine your future English-speaking self. What kind of person will you be?

5. Imagine your future as a non-English speaker; how different is this person from the person in question 5?

6. Do you think your decision to major in English would have been different if you were a boy?

7. Imagine yourself as a man; how would your English-speaking future be different?

8. When you see a Japanese woman (older or younger), speaking fluent English, how do you feel or what do you think?

9. What will an average day be like in your English language future, (or in your future bilingual life)?

Appendix B
Focus group questions created by the students.

1. What was your best and most impressive English-speaking experience?

2. Have you ever felt inferior to your friends who can speak English better than you?

3. Have you ever studied English at an English language school? Do you think schools like that help us to improve our English speaking?

4. When and why did you decide to join the British and American studies department?

5. When did you start to learn English? Not just learning but speaking?

6. What is your goal of learning English?

7. What do you think about the English education system in Japan? Is it effective?

8. Do you want to teach English in the future?

ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

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Teaching English for Pre-Service Teachers: Principles and Practice Activities

Anne McLellan Howard
Miyazaki International College

Regular English proficiency tests are often used to determine if teachers are able to use English as a language of instruction, but teaching English in English requires other skills as well. Teachers must be able to use simplified language, restate, and explain things understandably. For students who are planning on becoming English teachers merely memorizing classroom expressions is not enough; they must build these skills. Awareness and practice activities can be effective measures.

教員の英語で教える能力を計るために通常の英語能力テストが用いられているが、英語を英語で教えることには日常英語以上のスキルが含まれている。簡単な単語を用い、言い換え、生徒が理解できるように説明することが必要である。中学校・高校英語教員を目指している学生は、中学校・高校の授業でよく使われている単語と表現を暗記するだけではなく、これらのスキルをみがくことが必要である。自覚して、英語で教える能力を伸ばすための練習活動を行うことが有効だろう。

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology guidelines stipulating that English be used as a medium of instruction in high school and junior high school (MEXT, 2002, 2008, 2014) have caused a great deal of controversy and trepidation among English teachers. Teacher trainers need to prepare their students to use English in their professional lives, which is not such a simple task. Of course, it is relatively easy to memorize vocabulary and expressions to be used for classroom management or giving instructions. However, presenting a grammar point or vocabulary in English poses a particular challenge. Focusing on principles and practice can make students feel more confident about teaching in English.

Although the MEXT guidelines express a clear goal of classrooms in which English is taught in English for communicative purposes, the literature suggests that this has not been realized, for various reasons. Teachers seem to spend a majority of the time on teacher-fronted activities such as grammar explanation (Sakui, 2004; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), despite the fact that they feel positively about CLT. Although entrance examinations are frequently cited as a reason for this (Browne & Yamashita, 1995; Kikuchi, 2006; O'Donnell, 2005; Stewart, 2011; Saito, 2016), grammar-translation style teaching is also done in contexts where students would not be expected to go on to college (O'Donnell, 2005). In addition to the difficulty of balancing communicative techniques and grammar teaching (Sakui, 2004), teachers may also not be sure how to use English in class. MEXT has unofficially discouraged long explanations of grammar in English, but official guidelines do not give this information (Tahira, 2012).

Two frequently cited reasons that the MEXT goal of communicative classes is still not being met fall within the scope of teacher training. The first is teachers' insufficient English skill. In 2015 only a little more than 50% of high school English teachers, and less than 30% of junior high school English teachers had achieved an advanced level of English (defined as 730 on the TOIEC or equivalent) (*Advanced Eiken levels elude almost half of high school English teachers*, 2015). Freeman, Katz, Garcia, Gomez, and Burns note, however, that such tests measure general English, not specifically English for teaching (2015). Lack of training in practical communicative techniques and adapting them to specific classroom situations is also seen as part of the problem (Browne & Wada, 1998; Kizuka, 2006). This may lead to less confidence on the part of teachers, although they have theoretical knowledge of CLT (Tahira, 2012). Kikuchi and Browne (2009) have pointed out that because of this training deficit, teachers teach the way they were taught, thus perpetuating the grammar translation method.

This article describes ways of training students to teach more interactively and in English. These activities were done as part of two classes within the Teacher Certification program for undergraduate students in the liberal arts department of a small college. Successful students receive a teaching license for junior high or high school or both. The students take the first class, which is team-taught, in the second year, and the second in the third year of the program. All classes in the department are taught in English, and all students are required to study abroad. Therefore, students already have experience expressing themselves in English, and may have higher than average English skills.

Problems With Teaching in English

When students first taught practice activities to their classmates, we encountered the same type of problem many times. Although we carefully delineated what they were supposed to teach, students tended to spend the bulk of the class on exhaustive grammar explanation. A lesson for young children on "on" and "in," for example, began with a description of different prepositions and their usage, before moving on to explaining expressions such as "on time" and "in a hurry." Likewise, a lesson introducing "it" went through all possible uses, including as a dummy subject ("it's raining"). Another very common problem was moving from grammar explanations directly into a communicative activity, without any sort of practice.

We felt the difficulty students had in doing the practice teaching was related both to insufficient knowledge of how to simplify classroom English as well as of more communicative ways of teaching. As college students, they may have never thought about making their language simpler, and may be more used to presentations in which the goal is to explain as much information as possible in a short time. We found when discussing these issues with them that most of them had little concept of sheltering and found it very difficult to order activities from least to most difficult. Therefore, the issue for our classes was twofold: to help students learn how to conduct an interactive class and to teach them how to present information in English.

Principles for Teaching in English

Although these principles are obvious to experienced teachers, they were quite useful to guide students and made it easy for them to understand the purpose of the activities, as well as being a framework for discussion and evaluation.

1. Choose a small focus for the lesson. Rather than trying to cram as much information as possible into each lesson, the teacher should try to find a focus that is small in scope and concentrate on practicing.

2. Make it simple. Not only should the grammar explanation be as brief and simple as possible, but the lesson should also be sequenced from easy to more difficult. Students should also keep in mind that in general the more controlled an activity is, the easier.

3. Give many examples. Lack of examples was one of the major problems of the practice teaching.

4. Ask the students questions. This can make any part of the lesson interactive.

Activities

To help students prepare for their own practice teaching, this sequence focuses on grammar presentation and lesson planning.

Grammar Presentation

Seeing many examples of brief and easy to understand grammar presentations is always beneficial for students. The more examples a student can see, the more likely they are to find a teaching style that they feel comfortable emulating. I use questions from Ur (1996, p. 82) as a way of beginning discussion. First, introduce the questions that students will use to evaluate the lesson: 1. Is the rule explained? 2. Is the structure compared with a similar one in Japanese? 3. Is the name of the structure given? Students can also note if these things were done in English or Japanese.

I use videos from Oita Kyoikuiikai (2017) as these are easily available, and there are lessons available at several levels. Students can watch these, take notes, and answer the questions from Ur (1996). I usually use a segment of around ten minutes.

After this, students in small groups recreate what happened in the lesson with as much detail as they can, before moving on to the questions. I find it is most helpful to steer the students away from what the teacher should have done and examine potential reasons for the teacher's choices. For example, a rule may be explained if it can be done easily and quickly, but some rules are too complex for a quick explanation.

Students can also note when the language of instruction changes, and discuss why this is done. Some possible reasons are to make a grammar point more clear, for procedural explanation, or for discipline (see Cook, 2001).

Making a Lesson Plan
Pre-Teaching

Before teaching lesson plans it is good to give students an idea of what can and cannot be included. I do a demonstration of mechanical and meaningful drills, with students participating in the learner role.

Students can practice one part of making grammar activities by contextualizing a grammar point. Students can be told to find a situation in which the grammar point is used (e.g., certain prepositions when asking the way), or a topic that the grammar point can be used to talk about (second conditionals to talk about imaginary situations). Grammar that

works well are sentences with "can" (used to make a schedule, or talk about sports and hobbies), command form (used to explain how to play a game), adjectives (used to describe a picture), past tense (used to tell a story), future tense with "going to" (used to make a date or appointment), and future tense with "will" (used to tell someone's fortune).

Making the Lesson Plan

In our classes we have students use a lesson plan consisting of warm-up, presentation, controlled practice and free practice. First explain these elements briefly and then give, or elicit, examples of what might go into each section. Give students a blank lesson form. Enact a simple (10–15 minute) lesson with one part missing.

An example of this type of lesson would look like the following:

1. Ask students how they come to school and write answers on the board. (Warm-up)

2. Say "I usually ride to school, but yesterday I walked." Write this on the board and underline "ed." Give a few more examples and elicit the past-tense form from students. (Presentation).

3. Ask students to have a conversation about what they did yesterday. (Free practice).

After the lesson, ask the students to talk together about what they saw, and to fill in the lesson plan. They should try to extrapolate the goal of each activity, for example: "Teacher asks students how they get to school in order to practice present tense." Ask students which part is missing. Many students will not realize that a conversation is free practice, not controlled practice, perhaps because the task is very easy for them. Remind students that younger learners will need practice activities in which they are less creative, but which help them to become confident about the structure. The students can think of their own controlled-practice activities.

If you do not have the means to teach a sample lesson, this could be done as a written lesson. This is done by giving students a mixed-up list of activities, with activities for controlled practice left out. Have the students sort the activities into each part of the lesson plan, and fill in their own ideas for controlled practice. This can also be done as a warm-up or review for the activity above.

The main benefit of these activities is that students and teachers can gain a shared understanding of teaching communicatively. The principles can help students focus on the important points of a lesson, and can be used for self-reflection and peer evaluation. The activities help the students see how to apply these principles in the classroom and the variety of ways this can be done.

The best thing that a teacher trainer can instill in students is flexibility. Expertise in one method or way of teaching is no good if the teacher is helpless when faced with circumstances which prevent them from teaching in that way. Equipping students with the ability to teach in English, as well as make judgments about when to use the students' L1, will make them better, more confident teachers no matter what sort of teaching situation they find themselves in. Although teachers may have many reasons not to use English as the language of instruction "because I can't" should not be one of them.

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JALT NOTICES

JALT2018 Fee Waiver Scholarships

JALT wants to provide opportunities for JALT members who would like to present at our International Conference but are unable to due to a lack of financial support, so the JALT2018 Conference Team is offering three fee-waiver scholarships.

Scholarship Details

Free entry to the main conference from November 24th to 26th, 2018. This includes entry to our Welcome Reception on November 23rd and our Best of JALT Event on November 24th. This scholarship is not for Technology in Teaching presenters and does not include entry into the Technology in Teaching Workshops (held November 23rd).

Eligibility

- You must not have access to funding from any external source (external to JALT, such as a research budget from your employer) that could be used to cover conference fees. We rely on your honesty for this.

- You must be a JALT member at the time of the application through to at least the final day of JALT2018.

- You must not have presented at an International JALT Conference in the past.

- You must have your presentation accepted through one of three systems.

  1. Our regular vetting system (ie submit your presentation application for vetting by February 12th, 2018). Only those whose presentations are accepted during the first round of acceptances are eligible for this scholarship through this option. Presentation applications can be made here: https://jalt.org/conference/call-proposals
  2. An unvetted application through the JALT Chapters First-time Presenters Program. Applications are due on May 21st, 2018. Please contact your Chapter President to find out if your Chapter is willing to support your application and submit with the help of your Chapter President.
  3. An unvetted application as part of a SIG Forum. Applications are due on February 12th, 2018. Please contact your SIG Coordinator to find out if you can be involved in your SIG's Forum.

You must submit a scholarship application by May 31st. Applications can be made here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/37DY9QM.

Note: Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Developing Teaching Immediacy in Language Teacher Education

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Teacher immediacy refers to the verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors that reduce the psychological distance between a teacher and students. Despite the importance of these behaviors in supporting student learning, teacher immediacy has received little attention in the field of English language teacher training. In fact, in many teacher training and faculty development programs, the explicit teaching of these immediacy behaviors is often absent. In this article, I first present a brief review of the literature on teacher immediacy. Then, I describe the steps for two specific training practices for developing teacher immediacy. Both practices have been used successfully for several years in an MA TESOL teacher training program in Hawaii.

　教師は、生徒との心理的距離を縮めるためにコミュニケーションを図る。この教師の近接性（teacher immediacy）の方法は、言葉を用いるだけではなく、言語外コミュニケーションを取ることもある。これらの具体的な行動（behaviors）は、教育において非常に重要であるにも関わらず、英語教員養成の中では軽視されている。実際、教員のための訓練や大学のファカルティ・ディベロップメント（FD）に、コミュニケーションの取り方（immediacy behaviors）は含まれていないことが多い。本論では、まず教師の近接性について、先行研究を元に説明する。次に、生徒とのコミュニケーション力を向上させるための2つの方法を紹介する。いずれの方法もハワイの教員養成プログラム（MA　TESOL）で実践されており、長きにわたり成功を収めている。

Teacher immediacy refers to the verbal and non-verbal communication behaviors that reduce the psychological distance between a teacher and students. A substantial body of research in the area of instructional communication has shown how immediacy behaviors support learning and are a key factor in student attitudes toward a course and teacher (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). Therefore, it's critical to introduce these behaviors to pre-service teachers in language teacher training programs. Furthermore, because of the increasing emphasis being placed on faculty development (FD) initiatives at the university level in Japan (Shrosbree & Cheetham, 2017; Suzuki, 2013), training practices that focus on such behaviors can be valuable components of any such FD programs. In this article, after a brief review of the literature, I describe two specific training practices for developing teacher immediacy, practices that can be used with pre-service teachers in teacher training programs or with in-service teachers as a part of a FD program.

Teacher Immediacy

The concept of immediacy as a set of behaviors emerged in the late 1960s in the field of communication studies, where it was noted that people are "drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly, and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer" (Mehrabian, 1971, p. 1). Immediacy in educational contexts, or teacher immediacy, is located within the broader area of instructional communication—an interdisciplinary field of study that combines insights from educational psychology, pedagogy, and communication in order to examine the communication skills and competencies that are used by instructors and educators in the process of engaging in teaching and learning. Insights from educational psychology help explain the psychological and intellectual processes that predict student learning. The insights from pedagogy focus on the instructional methods teachers use in the classroom. And the field of communication contributes an understanding of how individuals use verbal and non-verbal messages to trigger meanings in the minds of others. The field of instructional communication, then, addresses the question of how teachers can communicate in ways that help their students learn. One part of the answer to this question is teacher immediacy behaviors.

Immediacy behaviors can be classified into nonverbal and verbal behaviors. Verbal immediacy behaviors include praise, addressing students by name, teacher self-disclosure, talking with students before and after class, humor, and using inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "our," to name a few. Nonverbal immediacy behaviors include gestures, eye contact, smiling, proximity, and a relaxed body position, for example.

Research has highlighted the positive relationship between teacher immediacy behaviors and classroom variables such as student motivation (Christophel & Gorham, 1995) and student engagement—a strong predictor of student learning

(Cayanus, Martin, & Goodboy, 2009). Increased teacher immediacy results in increases in students' cognitive learning. With teachers skilled in the use of immediacy behaviors, students "attend more to the subject matter, concentrate more on the subject, retain more of the content, and when challenged can correctly recall more of the subject matter than students with nonimmediate teachers" (Richmond et al., 2006, p. 184). Research has also demonstrated how teacher immediacy reduces student anxiety (Richmond et al., 2006, p. 185). This is especially important in language teaching, as a large body of research has shown that anxiety is not only common among students, but also that it has a detrimental effect on aspects of language learning such as confidence and willingness to communicate both in and outside the classroom, (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Williams & Andrade, 2008). Indeed, in a review of the research from over 80 studies on immediacy, Witt, Wheeless, and Allen (2004) note that the results of the studies demonstrate "a meaningful relationship between overall teacher immediacy and overall learning" (p. 197).

Despite its importance, the concept of immediacy has received little attention in the field of TESOL. Hsu's (2006) doctoral work, as one exception, studied the relationship between immediacy behaviors and willingness to communicate (WTC) in English for Taiwanese learners. She notes how the literature has shown WTC to have an impact on second language acquisition. Results from Hsu (2006) showed the relationship to be significant, and, by extension, extremely important to L2 acquisition.

Training in teacher immediacy may be especially beneficial to beginning non-native teachers of English, who may be concerned about their level of English language proficiency. For example, in my years of experience training teachers in an MA TESOL program in Hawaii, many of my non-native speaking students noted, as their number one concern, their perceived low level of English speaking ability. As a result, I have observed many examples of demonstration lessons and student teaching where beginning teachers fail to connect with students during the lesson. What happens is that beginning teachers not only prepare detailed lesson plans for their practice teaching, but they also prepare specific scripts of what exactly to say—much like an actor memorizing his/her lines. As a result, the beginning teachers remain quite still—even frozen—behind a desk/table/podium, afraid to break away from the safety of their lesson plan and script. In fact, teacher immediacy helps all beginning teachers get out into the classroom and engage with students. According to Richmond et

al., (2006): "Increased teaching immediacy results in the teacher being perceived as a more competent communicator, one who listens and cares" (p. 185).

So, can immediacy behaviors be taught? Yes, they can. The research has shown that when specifically addressed and practiced, pre-service and in-service teachers are able to develop and consciously control such behaviors (Ozmen, 2010). In the following section, I describe two training practices for developing teacher immediacy. These practices can be used for training pre-service teachers or as components of FD programs for in-service teachers.

The Development of Teacher Immediacy

The following two practices have been used by the author for years with pre-service teachers in an MA TESOL program in the U.S. and both have received positive feedback from teachers.

1. Developing teacher immediacy through professional noticing.
2. Developing teacher immediacy through focused microteaching.

Professional noticing: The first suggestion for developing teacher immediacy behaviors in language teacher training programs is what is called professional noticing. Professional noticing can be defined as "an ability to recognize and act on key indicators significant to one's profession" (Schack et al., 2013, p. 380). For language teachers, this idea seems closely related to the noticing hypothesis in second language acquisition. The noticing hypothesis states that as a starting point for acquisition, a learner must first consciously notice a particular grammatical feature before it is learned. Thus, teachers must provide guidance for learners in order to help them notice particular linguistic features in classroom activities. Without guidance, learners may not notice what it is teachers want them to notice.

Similarly, for pre-service and beginning language teachers, it is beneficial to direct their attention to particular instructional communication features in their observation assignments. Schack et al., (2013) note that novice teachers are often expected to observe their mentor teachers, but without specific guidance, these teachers "may not observe what we intend for them to see" (p. 381). Furthermore, even for in-service teachers, without proper training or specific guidance, classroom observations among colleagues may be disorganized and ineffective (Bollen et al., 2010; Sheal, 1989). Steps for developing a professional noticing component are as follows:

Step #1: If the observation of practicing teachers is not part of your teacher training or FD program,

then this must be organized. Identify some language classes for pre-service and in-service teachers to observe, and, of course, secure permission from the appropriate individuals.

Step #2: Choose one or two immediacy behaviors for any one observation. Inform the observers that they should concentrate on finding evidence of the particular immediacy behavior during their observation. The teachers being observed do not necessarily need to know the focus of the observation.

Step #3: Distribute a handout like the one in the appendix for use while taking notes during an observation. A structured observation form like this will help pre-service and in-service teachers organize their notes that they are taking very quickly.

Step #4: After the observation, set aside time in your teacher training class or with your participants in a FD program for small group or pair discussions, where the observers can share examples of immediacy behaviors that they observed during their observations.

Step #5: Finally, wrap up by sharing examples with the whole teacher training class or FD group. In addition, encourage the pre-service and in-service teachers to visualize, and comment on, how they might incorporate the immediacy behaviors into their own teaching in the future.

Focused microteaching: In addition to professional noticing, a second practice for developing teacher immediacy is what I call focused microteaching. The concept of microteaching, or demonstration lessons, is well known in language teacher training programs. A microteaching demonstration involves a pre-service teacher delivering a short lesson to fellow classmates, other pre-service teachers, who act as the learners. The lesson is videotaped, and afterwards, all the pre-service teachers and a teacher trainer view the recording and offer constructive feedback to the pre-service teacher. The process has been shown to be effective in teacher training (Moore, 2015). The idea of a *focused* microteaching demonstration is that the pre-service teacher focus on one or two particular pedagogical behaviors or strategies when teaching. In order to sharpen the focus on those one or two behaviors, students are not required to prepare a short lesson—a task that occupies much of a pre-service teacher's attention up to, and during, the microteaching task. Instead, they are provided with a lesson plan for a 10-15 minute activity which they will lead. Some of the best resources for this include the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series and the Oxford Resource Books for Teachers series. Both series include dozens of titles covering a wide range of skills, with each title offering a large selection of short activities in an easy-to-follow, consistent, lesson plan template. Activities from these books are perfect to use for a focused microteaching task. Pre-service teachers do not need to prepare a lesson; instead, they are more able to focus on the *how* of teaching. This brings to mind a distinction that appears in the literature sometimes—a false dichotomy that pits the content of what is taught against the pedagogical method of how its taught. In other words, as Mottet and Beebe (2006), note: "What's more important, instructional content (*what* is taught) or instructional pedagogy (*how* the content is taught)?" (p. 10). In teacher training programs, there has long been a preference for content knowledge over pedagogical method. Yet, as many have recognized, deemphasizing pedagogical method may not be producing the results that had been hoped for (Mottet & Beebe, 2006, p. 11). It is important to move past such false dichotomies and recognize that both content knowledge and pedagogical method are equally important. The focused microteaching task, then, is one way in which to develop the less emphasized aspect of pedagogical method in teacher training. Steps for developing a focused microteaching component in teacher training are as follows:

Step #1: Distribute to each student a prepared lesson plan for a short activity from one of the books in the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series or the Oxford Resource Books for Teachers series. You may assign each student a different lesson plan, or you may assign the same lesson plan to several or all students.

Step #2: Assign 2-3 immediacy behaviors as the focus for the microteaching task. A combination of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors is recommended.

Step #3: Encourage the pre-service teachers to practice the behaviors while following the lesson plan for the short activity.

Step #4: Video record each pre-service teacher's microteaching demonstration.

Step #5: After each microteaching demonstration, allow time for immediate feedback in a whole class discussion. Try to keep the discussion focused on the immediacy behaviors that the pre-service teacher practiced in the microteaching.

Step #6: Collect a follow-up, self-evaluation of the microteaching demonstration after the pre-service teacher has viewed and reflected on the recording. Like the discussion, the self-evaluation should stay focused only on the immediacy behaviors.

This focused microteaching practice can be adapted for FD programs as well. For example, participants in FD programs could select any particular

immediacy behavior to target. Then, in pairs, they could each observe a portion of the other's class during which the teacher consciously targets—exaggerates even—the selected behavior. A discussion among the two would follow, focusing only on the immediacy behavior(s) targeted in the microteaching. Such a task would also help boost the currently low number of peer observation tasks that are part of FD programs in Japan (Suzuki, 2013, p. 3).

Conclusion

In conclusion, because of the importance of immediacy behaviors in teaching and learning, teacher training and FD programs should consider addressing these behaviors. Which behaviors, however, should a program target? Where might we get, with limited time, more "bang for the buck," so to speak? Although the answer to this is beyond the scope of this paper, I will conclude with some final thoughts on particular behaviors that have consistently been underscored by pre-service teachers in my years of working with them. First, praise is one behavior that has been frequently noticed and practiced by pre-service teachers. This has led to frequent discussions about the nature of praise, with pre-service teachers noting, and echoing the literature, that to be effective, praise must describe a specific behavior, rather than offer general comments such as "good job."

Furthermore, eye contact and physical proximity are two behaviors that have been frequently discussed and practiced by my students. Eye contact is important when, for example, pre-service teachers address a class from the front of a room. However, when a pre-service teacher keeps that focus on eye contact while at the same time targeting physical proximity—moving around a class—these two behaviors complement each other well. In fact, what emerges is a "close eye contact," a behavior that seems to further reduce that psychological distance between teacher and students.

Finally, humor and self-disclosure are two verbal immediacy behaviors that my pre-service teachers have thought to be the most useful for building positive affect, which is more conducive to learning.

These are just a few of the immediacy behaviors that have been especially highlighted in my experience over the years. In fact, any combination of immediacy behaviors can be addressed in language teacher training and FD programs, which, it is hoped, place an equal emphasis on both the content of what a teacher is expected to teach as well as the pedagogical method through which that content is to be delivered.

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JALT NOTICES

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25th Anniversary Conference

For educators & researchers in digital technology & language learning

- **Theme:** *New Directions in Educational Technology*
- **Dates:** *June 8-10, 2018.*
- **Venue:** *Meiji University, Nagoya*
- **Keynote Speaker:** *Agnieszka (Aga) Palalas*
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Iwate JALT Event

Michinoku English Education Summit in Hachinohe (MEES) 2018

Observations on Teaching and Learning

Hachinohe Gakuin University

Sunday, June 3 2018

Appendix
Observation Task: Immediacy Behaviors

- Instructor's name: _____
- Course/level: _____
- Number of students: _____

Immediacy behavior _____

Tick the box every time you see an example of this immediacy behavior	What was happening in the classroom when you observed this immediacy behavior?

After completing the above table, write down what you have learned from this observation

ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS

JALT FOCUS

Torrin Shimono & James Nobis

Greetings! For this issue, we are excited to share with you an interview with Professor Ryuko Kubota. Born and raised in Nagano, Professor Kubota taught English in junior and senior high schools in Japan before deciding to continue her studies abroad. She earned an MAT in TESOL from the School for International Training in Vermont and a Ph.D. from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She has taught at universities in both the United States and Canada. Since 2009, she has been a professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Professor Kubota regularly presents at international conferences and has published widely on topics related to second language education and critical pedagogy. She recently spoke with Colleen Dalton, a 20-year teaching veteran who is currently a Senior Assistant Professor at Shinshu University in the School of General Education. Colleen teaches Academic English and English education courses. Her research interests include critical pedagogy and L2 writing instruction. So without further ado, on to the interview!

Celebrations and Hurdles: Critical Pedagogy in the Language Classroom
An Interview with Professor Ryuko Kubota

Colleen Dalton: *Professor Kubota, I would like to begin by asking how you became interested in critical pedagogy and how you now define it.*

Ryuko Kubota: I first became interested in critical pedagogy when I was at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto where I received my Ph.D. When I was a student, I was interested in critical approaches to contrastive rhetoric, which are cross-cultural investigations of the characteristics of rhetorical organizations of texts. I started to critically look at the commonly held ideas about cultural differences in writing. Around the same time, there was a group of Ph.D. students in the program who were interested in critical pedagogy and critical issues of applied linguistics. That encouraged me to pursue critical perspectives in second language writing, and later, more broadly about issues of culture. And culture is always connected to issues of race and other social categories.

As for my definition, from a Paulo Freirean perspective, the central focus of critical pedagogy is praxis, which is critical reflection and action that can lead to social transformation. Critical reflection includes problematizing taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and practices—meaning classroom practices or social practices; questioning power and inequality with regard to gender, race, class, language, and sexuality; and practicing reflexivity, which entails how reflecting on ourselves—critically reflecting on how our thoughts and actions are ideologically situated and implicated in multilayered power relations—actually leads to social transformation.

Your interest in critical pedagogy developed in North America where economic and racial diversity and disparity seem, at least to me, more obvious and more shocking than in Japan. How does it apply to the Japanese context, in particular to the English classroom in Japan?

We defined criticality and critical reflection in terms of problematizing taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs, correct? So that can be about everything and anything. It doesn't have to be economic disparities like in other countries—although I think one in six children in Japan live in poverty, with the percentage being higher for single-parent households. And the economic gap is becoming wider and wider. There are lots of assumptions with regard to English; for example, there are beliefs that native English-speaking teachers of standardized American and British English are better teachers than other non-native or non-standard speakers of

English. So that's a belief that people have. I think it is very important to ask where that assumption comes from and whether this thinking really helps our students become effective communicators in a global society where more and more non-native speakers are interacting with each other, rather than interacting with native speakers.

These days, I do think people are more conscious of English diversity and English as a lingua franca. But in terms of the commercial sector, there is still a strong belief that the best places to learn English are inner-circle countries. Race is certainly another taken-for-granted assumption. White native-speaking teachers are thought to be more legitimate than people of color.

Yes, I have heard some teachers here in Japan say native speakers, particularly white native speakers, are part of PR. What can teachers do in the classroom to help students recognize and appreciate varieties of English?

I think it is a good idea to bring in guest speakers, and they don't have to be inner-circle English speakers. People from Singapore, the Philippines, India, or those from China, Korea, or Taiwan. We have to find ways to bring in local people for cultural exchange. This would be important especially in schools. Students must work together with peers of non-Japanese descent. It is very important for them to interact with local people from diverse backgrounds. Also, technology can allow people to interact with people from different backgrounds.

I know some university students who are interacting with Filipinos through online English learning. Students save money, but in some ways I think it might also strengthen the feeling that other varieties of English do not have the same value.

Yes, yet actually these Japanese students are probably more likely to interact with non-native speakers in the future.

I agree. But students still seem to think that studying in inner-circle countries will serve them better. Maybe it really will help their test scores. So how can English teachers adopt a critical pedagogical stance and promote World Englishes while also helping students pass tests?

I think the answer is contextual. For example, if a student is writing an academic paper for publication in an American journal, then there are certain preferred styles and the student may not be able to get the paper accepted unless those standards are observed. There is an ongoing dilemma and paradox in the field of writing research. There has

been a lot of emphasis on "translanguaging" these days. More and more researchers have recognized different ways of expressing in writing, even in academic writing, and liberal-minded instructors and researchers want to embrace this diversity in English writing, which is a good thing. It resonates with World Englishes and English as a lingua franca, and really embraces diversity. But there are some stakes there, some hurdles that people all have to jump over. It is ok to celebrate diversity before this hurdle, but then in order to jump over the hurdle, you have to be able to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency that is pre-determined. It doesn't necessarily mean that it is fixed, but there are certain expectations.

So depending on the purpose and context, I think it is the responsibility of teachers to help students who are trying to jump over the hurdle. At the same time, I think this hurdle can be transformed, can become more diverse, like different heights. That should be done maybe by us—educators and researchers who are actually involved in all these research and educational activities as well as publishers and other stakeholders. So transformations should happen both bottom-up and top-down.

In recent discussions in translanguaging, multilingualism, and pluralingualism, I find it a little bit problematic in terms of not addressing real transformation. Language tests are the gatekeepers, and unless that changes, nothing will change. We have to help students pass those exams.

Recently, I read an article by Geneva Smitherman. It was an academic article in terms of content, but it was written in Black English. Using your image, I might think about it as a kind of celebration after the hurdle. But the hurdle is still there.

There has been some debate on this in the United States, particularly Nelson Flores and his colleagues. In the 1980s and 1990s, for writing research or writing pedagogies, process writing became popular. Process writing was criticized by Lisa Delpit, saying that it does not really benefit minority students who need to be taught normative ways of writing. But Flores has criticized this way of thinking. If we only teach academic English, if we only try to help students accommodate rhetorical norms, then nothing will change. Their linguistic and cultural identities will not be valued. At the same time, unless we recognize the gatekeeping functions of language and cultural expectations, we are not helping our students. So I think both are important. Encouraging the use of language and culture in the classroom is good. But at the same time, we have to help students pass high-stakes tests while we

work to change tests or maybe start talking about portfolios instead of tests. The situation of minority students in the United States and Canada might not be very different from English learners in foreign language settings.

What do you think about the methods of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in Japan? These methods have basically been developed in the West and generally benefit the West. Thinking critically, can we ask whether these methods are appropriate for the purposes and classrooms of learners from other cultures?

That's a good question that leads to the question of the purpose of learning English. I think the official purpose, according to MEXT, is to promote communication skills in English. Whereas for some students, learning English might be an opportunity to challenge themselves. They want to really try and accomplish something by getting good scores. That requires learning grammar and vocabulary. That's ok. For some students, they might want to learn English because they are interested in hip-hop or Hollywood movies or Bollywood movies. There are so many different goals and purposes and motivations. But from the official perspective of MEXT, it is to promote English language proficiency because English is important as an international language. That is the rhetoric.

In the educational context, we need to recognize individual desires and motivations, but at the same time, language education is for communication actually. To me, it is not for learning grammar. The grammar-based approach has more to do with exam systems than with communication.

Ideal language education should focus on communication in my opinion, even though it might be European-based, because people regardless of their location, use language to communicate. That is the meaning of language education.

I am comfortable with communicative classrooms, but I still wonder if students in Japan might have a double task of learning English and learning to feel comfortable in a communicative classroom. I feel as an English teacher, I don't want to put my own English and own culture onto students.

Of course, teachers bring in their own experiences and backgrounds. There are certain issues they feel more comfortable with, so I don't see every teacher to be teaching in the same way or on the same topics. But I think the basic principles of problematizing taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs; questioning power and issues related to race, gen-

der, culture; and being self-reflective in daily practices apply to everyone. For example, all teachers should reflect on power dynamics in the classroom. We all bring something: nationality, race, gender. So we are all in a different power relationship with students. It would be different if you and I taught the same group of students. The power dynamics would be very different. In that sense we have to be mindful of the very complex power dynamics, and the question of imposition is a valid one.

Critical pedagogy can come in different forms. Freire was a literacy educator in Brazil and was concerned about the literacy problems of the peasants. He wanted to empower these people to become agents of social change. Then his ideas were imported into North America and taken up by people like Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, these white male educational philosophers, who were progressive at that time in the 1980s. They wanted to promote critical pedagogies as progressive philosophies of education. But then the way these ideas were discussed and taught in the classroom was perceived as top-down and male-dominated. Women researchers in education like Elizabeth Ellsworth, Carmen Luke, Jennifer Gore, and others critiqued this white male-dominated approach. So that's where the reflexivity comes in. Does the version of critical pedagogy that we regard as legitimate dominate others? We need to constantly exercise reflexivity.

As a final question, for those of us involved in research, could you suggest what kind of critical research might benefit language teachers and learners in Japan?

Anne Burns talks about action research. That is something that is very practical; and probably critical action research with a critical perspective, with reflexivity, about things that we have talked about. Educators must think about our privilege, and how it impacts students' perceptions about language and about us as teachers—in other words, how privilege affects power dynamics in the classroom and how students learn the language or develop certain perceptions about people and languages.

Professor Kubota, thank you very much!

Further Reading

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Steven Asquith & Nicole Gallagher

Hello and welcome to the March/April edition of the My Share column, where we introduce novel teaching ideas from fellow educators. As the school year winds down and we look ahead to a fresh start in April, many of you may find yourselves teaching somewhere new, or perhaps just looking to try something different in your classes. In this edition of My Share, we are excited to tell you about an excellent crop of classroom activities from educators around Japan and the world.

First up, Brian Cullen and Tom Fallon present us with the original idea of having students use illustrated symbols to tell stories and engage with creative language expression. Students who love manga will be particularly drawn to this activity. In the second article, Justin Pool shares a fun way to build student confidence in oral communication through the Lebo Lebo game, which utilizes non-verbal sound and intonation to express ideas and feelings. I'm sure this would work well as an icebreaker or as a communicative activity in many junior and senior high school contexts. Third, Andrew Tidmarsh presents a fun, low-stakes speaking activity that encourages conversation on less serious topics. This rally activity seems particularly well suited for getting students accustomed to expressing their opinions in English when they are beginning to develop their speaking skills. Finally, Darin Schneider suggests a fluency activity variation called Fluency Squares, which encourages students to develop their oral fluency in a one-to-one configuration. Fluency Squares seems useful for getting students to learn how to expand on what they are going to say and give more detail. Online, Geoffrey Butler provides us with an ingenious activity for memorizing tricky vocabulary or terms using stick figure drawings. We hope you enjoy reading up on these great ideas!

—Nicole Gallagher

From Words to Symbols and Back Again

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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Pictures, symbols, visual narrative grammar*
- » **Learner English level:** *Beginner to Advanced*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Junior high and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *15 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *30 minutes plus 30 minutes in the following lesson*
- » **Materials:** *Pencil and paper*

Most Japanese students are interested in manga, and the average student is able to draw better than his or her Western counterpart. One fun and useful way to connect this to language learning is through visual narrative grammar (VNG). VNG suggests that sequentially ordered images take on narrative roles in the mind of the experiencer in much the same way that sequential words in language take on grammatical roles (see Cohn, 2013 for more details). While VNG can become very complex, this activity offers a simple way for students to explore the richness of symbols and their connection with linguistic communication. Students first translate words into symbols, and then use these symbols to create simple symbol stories which become the basis of verbal and written communication.

Preparation

Step 1: Prepare a list of simple words (see example in Appendix A). In our example, the words included common nouns, verbs, prepositions, and a negative marker. You may also like to include some recent vocabulary that students have learned, but it is good to keep it fairly simple and concrete. Abstract words are much harder to represent in symbol form and may lead to confusion.

Step 2: Prepare a short symbol story (see Appendix C) that you can use in Step 3 below. The symbols should tell a simple story.

Procedure

Step 1: Write the words on the blackboard. Tell students to express the words by drawing simple pictures or symbols (see Appendix B).

Step 2: Have students share their symbols with other students and find out if other students can translate the symbols back into the words.

Step 3: Draw your symbol story on the blackboard. Ask students to write three sentences to describe the story.

Step 4: Elicit student answers. Explain that there is no single correct answer.

Step 5: Have students create their own symbol story using their symbols from Step 1.

Step 6: Divide students into groups of four.

Step 7: Have students show their symbol stories to the other members of the group without explaining the story. The other students have 2-3 minutes to write a written version of the story.

Step 8: Tell the students to receive the written versions of the story from the other three students.

Step 9: For homework, have the students prepare a simple presentation comparing the other students' versions of the story with their own original story. Depending on the level of your students, some useful prompts for the presentation might be:

- Did they write something similar to your original text story?
- If their text story was very different, how do you think that happened?
- Did anything surprise you?

Step 10: In the next lesson, have some or all students make a presentation explaining the original story and their comments on the other versions.

Variations

If you have a large class, you can do this activity in groups. The group works together to create the symbols and the symbol stories.

Conclusion

This is a fun activity which taps into students' love of manga and allows them to creatively play with language. This approach highlights how communication is constructed of simple elements and is a great way of showing students that communication is far more than words and text. This activity also introduces students to symbols and metaphors and can easily be extended into related reading and writing exercises.

Reference

Cohn, N. (2013). Visual narrative structure. *Cognitive Science 37*(3), 413-452.

Appendix

A handout is available from the online version of this article at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/myshare>.

Lebo-Lebo Game
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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Nonverbal communication, communicative competence, question formation*
- » **Learner English level:** *Beginner and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *Junior high school and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *10 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *20 minutes to entire class*
- » **Materials:** *Explanatory PowerPoint or paper (optional), reflection sheet (also optional)*

This activity gives students a firsthand opportunity to discredit the notion that they cannot communicate in English by showing learners just how much they can express themselves nonverbally or through intonation. Students communicate to a partner what they did during summer vacation (or other break) through intonation, gestures, facial expressions, and the medium of a nonsense language (Lebo-Lebo) while their partners practice confirming information and asking for details. In my

experience, after playing this game students become much more willing to try to express themselves in English rather than resorting to Japanese or simply giving up.

Preparation

Prepare a PowerPoint explaining the basic rules. Create a self-reflection or discussion sheet.

Procedure

Step 1: Tell students we will play the Lebo-Lebo game and that this game requires the use of Lebo-Lebo language. Ask the students rhetorically if they have heard of Lebo-Lebo language. When they acknowledge that they have not, admit that this is because it is a language that you have invented. Speak the nonsense language in front of them (when I do it, it involves the tongue moving rapidly along the roof of the mouth and lips to make a repeated sound of lebo lebo, but any repeated phonemic chain will suffice).

Step 2: Explain the rules. Students will be playing this game in pairs. One partner speaks only Lebo-Lebo language and the other partner speaks English. The English-speaking partner asks the Lebo-Lebo speaker what they did for summer vacation. The English speaker then listens and only speaks to confirm information or to ask for more details. The Lebo-Lebo speakers must use their voice volume, intonation, facial expressions, and gestures to convey meaning.

Step 3: Model the activity with a team-teaching partner or student whom you feel confident understands the gist of the activity. Act as the Lebo-Lebo speaker. Choose activities that you are confident that you can communicate to your partner, such as watching fireworks with your daughter, swimming, bike-riding with family, etc.

Step 4: After modeling the activity, remind students how much they learned about my summer vacation when I used no English or Japanese at all.

Step 5: Pair the students and choose one in each pair to be the Lebo-Lebo speaker and one to be the English speaker. Have the students speak for three minutes before switching roles.

Step 6: Have students report back (voluntarily or randomly chosen) about what they learned from their partners and confirm the accuracy of the information. Again, remind the students that they were able to communicate all this information without the use of Japanese or English.

Step 7: Engage in self-reflection or group/class

discussion where you have students ponder the purpose of the activity.

Step 8: Repeat with new partners to give students the opportunity to perform the task with an awareness of its goals.

Conclusion

Students inevitably communicate more through Lebo-Lebo than they think they can in English. Through continual engagement with the idea that students can communicate large amounts of information without the use of English, they begin to see English as a tool to add greater nuance to their meaning-making endeavors rather than focusing on their inability to engage in error-free production. They become confident in their ability to communicate their ideas while also developing positive active-listening habits. Many students have commented on the impact of this game in year-end reflections.

Giving Opinions Rally
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Quick Guide

- » **Keywords:** *Opinions, speaking, disagreeing*
- » **Learner English level:** *Intermediate and above*
- » **Learner maturity:** *High school and above*
- » **Preparation time:** *15-30 minutes*
- » **Activity time:** *30-75 minutes, depending on class size*
- » **Materials:** *Handouts (see appendix), pencils*

The free exchange of opinions is not especially easy for Japanese students. This speaking activity lets students practice sharing opinions and disagreeing by creating a non-threatening, competitive environment. The activity focuses on situations with options which are relevant to university students. Situations are deliberately more trivial than serious, so conversations are kept light. Students generate their own options for each situation, as well as two further situations. The activity can last as long as students have the energy, allowing for everyone to have a chance to solicit and give opinions.

ARTICLES

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Preparation

Print out the worksheet found in the appendix. Before the activity, students add five possible options for ten situations. They also add two original situations with options.

Procedure

Step 1: Divide students into three equally-sized groups by assigning letters A, B, and C.

Step 2: Instruct A students to stand around the perimeter of the room with their completed handouts. Ensure sufficient space is between students to minimise distractions from other conversations.

Step 3: Make B-C pairs with remaining students. Make sure these students do not take their handouts with them.

Step 4: B-C pairs visit A students and start conversations, beginning with small talk about the weather, recent activities, or news stories, for example.

Step 5: A students change the topic to introduce a choice and five possible options. It is up to the A student to decide which situation they want to present. For example: "So anyway, which activity do you think I should do at the weekend? Go to my friend's party, go hiking, play tennis, see a movie, or go bowling?"

Step 6: B and C students must select different options and justify their choices.

Step 7: Student A summarises the choices and reasons from student B and student C and picks the one he or she prefers, giving a reason for the choice.

Step 8: Students close the conversation.

Step 9: B-C pairs move clockwise to the next A student and repeat the process. It is a good idea to let pairs move only when the next A student is ready, rather than curtailing conversations with set time limits. This naturally allows students to take short breaks as they wait.

Step 10: After one third of the total activity time has passed, change the roles and repeat. Change again later to ensure every student tries each role.

Conclusion

This activity should make it easier for students to get comfortable with sharing their opinions. Contests usually develop between B and C students during the course of the activity, and some learners may become increasingly vocal about their opinions as they increase their confidence. In my experience, it is easy for students to become absorbed in this activity, as they have become so focused on choosing

the likely "winning" option that they forget the pain of sharing their opinions.

An additional benefit is that students are naturally pushed to provide convincing justifications for their choices, which is usually challenged by partners. The activity, therefore, helps to develop critical thinking skills. The activity may be adapted to use more serious topics once students are more comfortable with sharing their opinions. In this case, the progression from small talk to serious topics is especially important as it ensures a balance of heavy and light themes.

Fluency Squares
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Quick Guide

- » Keywords: *Fluency development, repetition*
- » Learner English level: *All levels*
- » Learner maturity: *All levels*
- » Preparation time: *2-3 minutes*
- » Activity time: *Varies upon teacher's objective*
- » Materials: *None*

Classroom activities that are student-centered and incorporate repetition can improve oral fluency and boost learner confidence. Fluency squares, adapted from fluency circles (Bohlke, 2014) in which students practice speaking with different partners rotating in a single inner-outer-circle pattern, is a technique with many benefits. These include giving students the chance to speak with their peers one-on-one instead of in front of large groups, maximizing time efficiency by having all students speak at once, and allowing students to interact with more than one partner. In addition, unlike a fluency circle, it is applied in a way that is easy to recreate in any classroom environment with minimum disruption.

Preparation

Organize students in seated groups of four and inform them they will be working together (see Appendix A). Provide students with a topic to practice. This could be conversational English for an upcoming oral test, task-orientated role-plays, or rehearsing sections of an important individual or group presentation. Explain to the students that a "fluent" response is a response that is spoken easily

without long pauses while not relying *only* on the fewest number of words possible.

Procedure

Step 1: Model the word, phrases, or dialogue you want your students to acquire. For example, if the students are preparing for an oral test, give them a topic question prompt such as "What classes did you like/dislike in high school and why?" and a possible response, "I disliked math because it was difficult."

Step 2: Have students practice speaking the modeled language with their first partner: A + B and C + D (see Appendix A).

Step 3: Have students practice with their back-to-front partner: A + C and B + D (see Appendix A). Encourage students to make individual variations and expand upon their answers.

Step 4: Finally, have students practice a third time with their "crisscross partner:" A + D and B + C. To prevent too much overlapping noise, an alternative option is to have D and C students simply switch seats with each other so they are back to front with their final partner (see Appendix A). Having students speak to multiple partners gives them the opportunity to hear different responses and build vocabulary. It also allows them to adjust their speech if there are any misunderstandings. The repetition and adaptations should contribute to boosting confidence and lead to better fluency.

Step 5: Have each member give verbal feedback to their group by restating which responses they thought were the most "fluent."

Possible Adaptations: Reduce the amount of time given with each new partner. Increase the amount of time to let students contribute more information on the topic. Add supplemental or replacement wordage. Allow students to refer to the text only in the first round.

Conclusion

Through using fluency squares, students can speak more fluently each time they practice with a new partner and internalize what they are using. Therefore, students have a better chance to build their English speaking fluency in an interactive way. Fluency squares is an easy-to-use technique that can be used in practically any teaching context or school level.

Reference

Bohlke, D. (2014). Fluency-oriented second language teaching. In D. M. Brinton, M. Celce-Murcia, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 121-135). Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Appendix

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

Edo Forsythe

Learning Japanese Beyond the Classroom: Recommended CALL Tools

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Chengjiu Yin

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CALL tools have provided learners and teachers with numerous ways to enhance out-of-class learning experiences. This article provides technology-based tools that can be utilized for learning Japanese as a second language (JSL). These JSL CALL tools facilitate autonomous and ubiquitous learning that can take place anywhere and anytime. Portals and websites containing useful links for learning Japanese will be listed, as well as apps for mobile devices. The criteria for selecting the resources discussed below were as follows: (a) the popularity of the resource as indicated by the large number of users and/or ratings and reviews, and (b) the authors' own personal use of and experience with them. This list of resources, although by no means exhaustive, reviews the current state of the practice of JSL CALL tools.

Podcasting Websites

Podcasting websites offer multimedia episodes to assist language learning. Table 1 contains a list of both free and fee-based websites that contain Japanese lessons comprised of audio, video, and supple-mentary tools at various levels, which are accessible through desktop computers and mobile devices. In addition, some of the advantages and disadvantages of each website are listed in Table 1 to give readers a quick, concise idea of the affordances that each resource can provide. This information can be used to guide learners in selecting the tools that fit their personal goals and needs.

Dictionaries

There are several free online Japanese dictionaries with a variety of features such as kanji stroke-order diagrams and animations, verb conjugations, and example sentences. The input method can be kana, kanji, romaji, or English. The following are four examples of online dictionaries that are easy to use for beginners: jisho (http://jisho.org), RomajiDesu (<http://romajidesu.com>), Japanese Learner's Dictionary (http://dictionary.j-cat.org/JtoE/index.php), and Breen's WWWJDIC (http://nihongo.monash.edu/cgi-bin/wwwjdic?1C). Moreover, 日本語コロケーション辞典 (http://collocation.hyogen.info) and Karin (http://japanese-learning.isc.yamaguchi-u.ac.jp/collocation/pc.html) are useful resources for upper-intermediate and advanced learners of Japanese to identify collocational lexical strings and find words that usually occur together.

Other Web-based Resources

Apart from podcasting websites and online dictionaries, there are some other helpful resources available for learning Japanese. JGram (<http://www.jgram.org>) contains a list of the most frequently used Japanese grammar rules, with explanations and sample sentences. NihongoShark (<https://nihongoshark.com>) is a resource on how to learn Japanese, introducing tips, tools, and free daily lessons. NihongoShark also offers paid courses such as "Toby in Tokyo."

Enjoy Learning Online Japanese (<http://www.ajalt.org/english/online>), created by the Association for Japanese-Language Teaching, allows learners to study a wide variety of materials ranging from elementary grammar lessons to advanced reading comprehension practice.

Table 1. *Podcasting Websites for Learning Japanese*

Websites	Advantages	Disadvantages
JapanesePod101 <http://japanese-pod101.com> Cost: A limited number of materials available for free	• Available study tools: 　1. Audio cast 　2. Video cast 　3. PDF lesson notes 　4. Kana learning suite 　5. Personal vocabulary database 　6. Kanji and audio dictionary 　7. Flashcards 　8. JLPT preparation course 　9. Mobile app (iOS & Android) • Pronunciation and accent review • Community forum and lesson discussion • Levels: beginner to advanced	• Short dialogues (usually less than 1 minute) • Not good for intermediate and advanced learners who need more exposure to longer stretches of discourse • Overuse of English as the medium of instruction • Occasional problems with the mobile app according to user reviews
Nihongonomori (日本語の森) <http://nihongonomori.com> Cost: Free	• Japanese, English, Korean, and Vietnamese as the languages of instruction • JLPT preparation videos from N3 up to N1	• Most videos focus on JLPT preparation and only a few on basic Japanese • Does not include videos for JLPT N5 & N4 • No mobile app
Easy Japanese <http://www.nhk.or.jp/lesson> Cost: Free	• Available study tools: 　1. Audio cast 　2. PDF lesson notes 　3. Kana training 　4. Mobile app (iOS & Android) • Audio lessons on basic grammar and useful expressions • Offered in 17 languages	• None noted
Erin's Challenge! <http://erin.ne.jp> Cost: Free	• Available study tools: 　1. Audio cast 　2. Video cast 　3. Game-like exercises 　4. Illustrated vocabulary builder • Available in 9 languages	• No mobile app

E-learning for Japanese (<http://e-nihongo.tsukuba.ac.jp>), supported by the University of Tsukuba, can be used to learn Japanese through three modules: "Learn", "Talk", and "Write", which contain flash-based animations, pictures, and illustrations. Speech recognition technology and a learning community are also part of the E-learning for Japanese system. Finally, Maggie Sensei (<http://maggiesensei.com>) offers enjoyable lessons on topics such as Japanese slang, vocabulary, grammar, as well as Japanese culture.

Internet Browser Add-on Tools

There are also some pop-up Japanese add-on tools, which provide plugin dictionaries for helping JSL learners read kanji characters on their browsers. On a Japanese-language website, these tools enable the learner to better understand the content by just hovering the mouse over the kanji characters to reveal a pop-up bubble of kanji readings and meanings, then the kanji readings and meanings can be seen in a pop-up bubble. Examples of pop-up Japanese dictionaries available for a variety of browsers include Rikaichan (<http://www.polarcloud.com/rikaichan>)—for Firefox, Thunderbird, and Seamonkey; Rikaikun (available on Google Chrome web store)—for Chrome; PeraPera (available from the Firefox Add-ons Manager)—for Firefox; and Safarikai (<https://github.com/ashchan/safarikai>)—for Safari. It is important to remember that these add-on tools might have some bugs which from time to time stop them from functioning effectively.

Mobile Apps
Flashcards

Spaced-repetition flashcard programs are recommended for long-term retention (Toppino & Gerbier, 2014) and one of the better JSL CALL tools offering such a program is Anki (<http://ankisrs.net>), which allows its users to either make their own deck of study cards, and/or study the cards shared by other users on different topics, including Japanese (<https://ankiweb.net/shared/decks/japanese>). Anki is available for free on desktop computers as well as on Android mobile devices.

However, the iOS version AnkiMobile Flashcards is not available for free.

Dictionaries

An array of Japanese dictionary applications have been developed for learners of Japanese, among which, imiwa? has come into wide use. This is a free, multilingual dictionary available on iOS devices. Midori is another iOS dictionary app remarkable for its search suggestions, search by handwriting, and wildcard search. A third dictionary application, Japanese, allows users to create their own vocabulary lists and exchange them with others. The entries of this dictionary are also tagged with JLPT levels where applicable, making this app helpful for those interested in taking the JLPT.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Apps

OCR-based dictionary applications that recognize kanji characters in images can be of tremendous help in reading Japanese texts. With the Google Translate app, users are able to translate a text by taking a picture of some text and selecting scanned kanji characters to be translated. It is worth mentioning that Google Translate offers network-supported translations as well as offline, instant translations. Yomiwa is a paid app available on iOS and Android with which Japanese texts can be translated offline in real time. Wakaru is another useful iOS app which features a web browser, an ebook reader, and flashcard builder, all within the app itself.

Kanji and Kana Study Apps

A multitude of mobile apps exist for learning hiragana, katakana, and kanji. These apps incorporate various features such as stroke order practice, readings, and meanings. Examples of these apps include TenguGo Kana, available free of charge on both iOS and Android, and Dr. Moku's hiragana and katakana mnemonics app, which is downloadable from iTunes and Google Play. KanjiPictoGraphix, another iOS app, also relies on pictorial mnemonics to help users practice 600 basic kanji characters. There are also some game apps for learning kanji, such as Kanji Crush (iOS) and Kanji Connect (iOS and Android).

Conclusion

This article presented an overview of CALL resources for studying Japanese as a Second Language. Most of the tools introduced can be used autonomously by learners outside the classroom or incorporated into classroom-based language training. The authors hope that these tech tools will help teachers and learners of Japanese in promoting and facilitating autonomous mastery of the Japanese language.

Reference

Toppino, T. C., & Gerbier, E. (2014). About practice: Repetition, spacing, and abstraction. *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation, 60*, 113-189. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-800090-8.00004-4

Editor's Note: *The end of the school year has come and many of our readers are already planning for the coming year. Be sure to stay on top of the registrations for the PanSIG 2018 and JALTCALL 2018 conferences coming up in May and June. Both conferences have CALL-related presentations full of excellent ideas to help you keep your classes* Wired! *in 2018! I'll see you there!*

JALT NOTICES

JALT2018 on Social Media

- **Twitter**
  https://twitter.com/JALTConference
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- **Facebook**
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- **Instagram**
  https://www.instagram.com/jaltconference
  @jaltconference
- **LinkedIn**
  https://www.linkedin.com/groups/99764
- **YouTube**
  http://bit.ly/jaltYTchan

JALT NOTICES

JALT ER SIG—10th Annual ER Seminar

October 13–14 (Sat & Sun) 2018

Hiroshima YMCA

Tentative Schedule

- Saturday Oct 13: *Tour of Hiroshima (Miyajima or Peace Park), evening event with speaker, dinner*
- Sunday Oct 14: *ER Seminar*

  Call for papers and updates on event details can be found at

  http://hosted.jalt.org/er/

Mari Nakamura & Marian Hara

The Young Learners column provides language teachers of children and teenagers with advice and guidance for making the most of their classes. Teachers with an interest in this field are also encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the editor at the address below. We also welcome questions about teaching, and will endeavour to answer them in this column.

Email: young-learners@jalt-publications.org

Hello, colleagues,

In this fourth installment with the theme of 21ˢᵗ century skills, Patricia Daly Oe, one of the most active and renowned picture book authors and storytellers based in Japan, shares her experiences in nurturing young children's linguistic, cognitive, and social skills through picture book based activities.

In addition, please make sure to take a look at the greeting from the new co-editor of this column, Marian Hara, at the end of this segment. Welcome aboard, Marian!

Two Events for Introducing 21ˢᵗ Century Skills to Young Learners

In the summer of 2017, I was requested by Trivector Inc., a translation company based in Tokyo, to hold events on two consecutive afternoons for eleven pre-school age children (aged between three and six years). Most of these children had not attended any classes in English before and for many it was their first time to come into contact with English. Participants came from various places and had not met before.

My aim was for them to have two afternoons of enjoyment based on picture books with songs, games, and simple craft activities, to perceive English as a fun language, and to directly experience the four 21ˢᵗ century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Trivector was under the impression that I would be using Japanese with the children as the children could not understand English at all, while my plan was to use English only and to have the children communicate in English.

By the end of the first session, Trivector saw that it is indeed possible for children to communicate in English within only a few hours of encountering the language. This communication is achieved by the children not simply repeating words without understanding, but actually understanding what they are saying through the use of stimulating content and enjoyable and meaningful activities that build up vocabulary systematically.

Here is a report from day one of the two-day event.

- Date: 23ʳᵈ August 2017
- Duration: 120 minutes
- Materials: Session based on two picture books, *Milkshake Shake* (Nakamura & Oe, 2015) and *Princess Lizzie* (Oe, 2005)

I started with *Milkshake Shake* (Nakamura & Oe, 2015) as the content is easy and suitable for the children to feel comfortable and confident with each other and the new language.

First, I showed some flashcards of various kinds of fruit, and asked the children, "What fruit do you like?" Each child answered with their favorite and some children mentioned fruit that was not on the flashcards, such as lychees.

Next, I read the story *Milkshake Shake* (Nakamura & Oe, 2015) using the picture book. The story has rhythm and rhyme, and I used a shaker to the beat of the rhythm. The shaker was a simple plastic bottle half-filled with rice. For the second reading, I gave the children their own shakers which they shook to the beat together and some of them started to dance and join in the chorus of "Milkshake Shake!"

Then I showed the four flavors of milkshakes that come up in the book (strawberry, blueberry, chocolate, and melon) which I had made with colored clay pressed into plastic cups with a straw in each. Now it was time for the children to produce their own sentences. The children could not wait to make their own milkshakes. I acted as the shop owner so each child had to come to me and ask for one of the four flavors of milkshake, "Strawberry milkshake, please" or "Chocolate milkshake, please." I gave them a plastic cup, some colored clay of the flavor they had requested (red, brown, green, or blue clay), and they chose the color of the straw that they wanted.

After all participants had made their milkshake we had a short quiz. "Who has melon milkshake?" "Who has chocolate milkshake?" And the children with those flavors held their milkshakes up.

Then we had one more reading of the book, and the children held up their milkshake when the word "milkshake" or the words for the flavor of their own milkshake came up.

I taught the children the actions for "stir," "mix," "crush," "shake," "up," and "down," and we sang the Milkshake Shake Song that was composed based on the story, with all children doing the actions at the appropriate time.

During all of these activities based on *Milkshake Shake*, the children communicated their likes and wishes, collaborated with each other in the rhythm reading, used critical thinking to decide when to hold up the flavor milkshake they had chosen, and creativity to make their milkshake.

I started the second part of the event by introducing the main vocabulary that would come up in the story *Princess Lizzie* (Oe, 2005). I showed pictures of the creatures that come up in the story, and children repeated their names (lizard, frog, ladybug, snail, ants, butterfly, bee, and grasshopper).

Then I introduced the main concept in the book of "I want to be," by using various hats or pictures (ballerina, witch, singer, baker, swimmer). For example, I said "I want to be a …" and put on the witch's hat and said, "I want to be a witch." To check comprehension of the meaning of this sentence I asked each child, "What do you want to be?" and got some interesting answers, including Kamen Rider and three bakers.

Next, I showed the soft toys of the lizards in the story, and the children enjoyed touching them and saying the word "lizard." Then, I read the story of *Princess Lizzie* (Oe, 2005) using large story boards.

After I had read the story, we sang the Princess Lizzie Song which was composed based on the story and includes the repetition of "I'm a princess" many times, so by the end of the song all of the children were singing "I'm a princess!"

Then I gave each child a set of the five creatures made from paper taped to separate chopsticks and we had a quiz, "Hold up the ladybug!" and so on.

Next, I turned the other way and asked all of the children to hold up one creature. Then I turned around and showed them the creature that I had chosen. Children with the same creature said the name of the creature and stayed in the game while the ones with a different one sat down.

We played the game until only one or two children remained in the game and played the game a number of times so that all of the children could experience staying until the end. Then I changed the rules so that in the next game the children who held up the same creature as I was holding sat down and those with different creatures stayed in the game.

Now it was time to introduce a large picture of a lizard and teach the names for the parts of the lizard's body: head, eyes, mouth, body, legs, and tail. The children repeated these words while I pointed to the parts of the lizard in the picture. Each part of the body was assigned a number from one to six (head = 1, eyes = 2, mouth = 3, body = 4, legs = 5, and tail = 6). Children made three groups and were given a large piece of paper. They threw a large dice in turn and drew the part of the lizard that matched the number that came up on the dice on their piece of paper. The children were laughing a lot because some of the pictures started off with only a mouth and then the tail came next. Near the end of the game all of the groups were waiting for only one number to come up to complete their pictures. For example, all members of one group were shouting "Six! Six! Tail!"

Next was craft time. I had prepared a lot of cut-out pictures from some scenes in the book with the creatures, flowers, sun, clouds, and grass, and put some crayons in the middle of the room for children to add anything else that they wanted. I gave each of them a piece of paper and a glue stick to make their collage and walked around talking to them while they were making their pictures, asking them what the creatures were and saying things like, "Lovely!" "Many flowers!" and "Here is a frog." The children were totally absorbed in this activity and were quiet as they selected where to put each item.

When all of the children had finished their pictures they came up to the front one by one and gave a mini presentation by holding up their picture and pointing to one or two parts and saying what they were. Some of the children were very confident and said many words that they had learned during the session loudly and clearly. Others were a little shyer so I interviewed them about their picture instead. "What's this?" "A bee." "What's this?" "An ant."

In the second part of the session, vocabulary was steadily developed with a limited number of words from the story repeated many times in the song,

game, and craft activity. Children collaborated well in the dice and drawing game and finally produced a simple presentation in English of the picture that they had created.

Activities based on picture books in English are an ideal way to introduce even very young learners to the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. The impact of the visual input of the pictures and the interest of the children in the stories and in the activities based on the stories lead to children learning and using English in a meaningful way in a session of only a few hours duration, even if they had not had any formal lessons in English before that time. Having children express themselves in English by doing creative and fun activities based on picture books encourages them to develop a view of English as an interesting language which will in turn help them to be open to further learning experiences in the future.

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Nakamura, M., & Oe, P. D. (2015). *Milkshake Shake.* Tokyo: mpi Matsuka Phonics.

Patricia Daly Oe comes from the U.K., graduated from Aston University, and has been writing and illustrating children's stories for her own classes, narration events, and storytelling sessions for many years. She has had a number of picture books published, including *Peter the Lonely Pineapple, Blue Mouse, Yellow Mouse, Lily and the Moon, Milkshake Shake* and *Can We Be Friends?* (The latter three titles co-authored with Mari Nakamura). Visit her website and blog for more information: http://patricia-oe.com

Hello! My name is Marian Hara and I'm excited to be a co-editor of this column. After a long, full-time career teaching at junior and senior high level I'm now working with pre-school and elementary students again—which I started in the mid '70s. I am happy to see an increasing focus on Young Learners in JALT. Since last year I have been organizing Young Learner teacher events for Tokyo JALT and the Younger Learner SIG. I'm a huge fan of TPR, and my interests are in developing literacy and oral fluency with younger learners and global studies with older students.

[JALT PRAXIS] BOOK REVIEWS

Robert Taferner & Stephen Case

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

Email: reviews@jalt-publications.org
Web: http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews

This month's column features Kate Maher's review of Understanding Silence and Reticence: Ways of Participating in Second Language Acquisition.

Reviewed by Kate Maher, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies

Understanding Silence and Reticence: Ways of Participating in Second Language Acquisition

[Dat Bao. London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2014. pp. vi + 229. ¥3,978. ISBN: 978-1-4742-5306-2.]

Many language teachers try to reduce student silence, and they believe talk time is more valuable for improving language skills. Although a lot of students may realise this, what about their perspective on being silent in class? Is it a lost opportunity for practicing their language skills, or do they see it as a valuable moment for language acquisition? *Understanding Silence and Reticence* presents students' perspectives on silence from six language learning contexts. From an anti-essentialist view of silence (Jaworski, 1993), Bao urges readers to reconsider silence not just as an empty moment, arguing

that there is "a justifiable place for productive silence in pedagogy" (p. 3).

Bao begins by establishing his justification for silent pedagogy in SLA, demonstrating how it has often been dismissed as ineffective for learning. He includes an outline of past theoretical research to illustrate the spectrum of meanings and functions of silent behaviour throughout all the stages of SLA, which go beyond the silent period. The following chapters present studies from six different countries: Australia, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Each study uses qualitative methodology to collect and analyse perspectives of students in each context. The complexity of silence in SLA is apparent in the differences highlighted by each study. However, shared views also exist amongst narratives and views expressed by students. Consciously or not, Bao shows that students use silence in multiple ways for language learning; reflection, cognitive processing, rehearsal, and dealing with anxiety. The experiences of students in the studies also indicate there are multiple influences, sometimes simultaneously, on a student's silent display. These are often related to socio-cultural values, psychological aspects, educational expectations, and individual differences.

In the final chapter, Bao draws on their shared perspectives to demonstrate the positive roles silence can play in SLA, and introduces silent engagement pedagogy (SEP) with a proposed learning model. Here he distinguishes between high and low-quality talk and silence, and gives a series of points to consider when planning a class activity to effectively use high-quality talk and silence to facilitate language acquisition. His concluding message calls for respect of student silence, providing learning space through moments of silence, and using silence as a chance for building learner autonomy. At the same time, he advises against leaving silent students alone. Rather than waiting for them, teachers should give them guidance on how to effectively use their silence.

Bao's work contributes to the understanding of the ambiguous and complex phenomenon of silence in SLA, building on other recent work that has sought to emphasize the multiple routes that can lead to student silence (King, 2013) and the significance of its function in language learning. SLA literature often focuses on verbal participation, so this book helps to balance the focus on silence by portraying a positive interpretation and thus encouraging a more balanced teaching approach in the classroom that values talk and silence at different moments. Importantly, Bao achieves this by bringing to light perspectives of silent students' learning needs.

Although this book raises awareness regarding the positive side of silence, it is lacking in practical application of SEP. Throughout the discussion, stress is placed upon the teacher's ability to effectively use silence for SLA. Bao comments that teachers do not receive adequate training and usually focus on the negative interpretations of silence (p. i). Therefore, this book might have been more practical for teachers if there had been additional advice and suggestions on how to implement SEP. The learning model has reflective questions and an example activity that uses poetry, but this is somewhat limited in terms of guidance and content. Adding an intervention study may have been a useful way to demonstrate methodological application of SEP with teacher and student perspectives.

Through theoretical and learner perspectives of silence, this book aims to reposition silence in SLA as not just something to support talk, but as a valuable form of participation that should be considered with a similar impact on language learning as verbal participation. Teachers that encourage silent learning moments in class may find new approaches in this book. For those concerned about student silence or their own silence in language class, Bao provides socio-cultural, psychological, and educational explanations that encourage understanding and improve the quality of verbal and silent participation.

References

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King, J. (2013). *Silence in the second language classroom*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Recently Received
Steve Fukuda & Julie Kimura
pub-review@jalt-publications.org

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

Recently Received Online

An up-to-date index of books available for review can be found at <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/recently-received>.

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

Books for Students (reviewed in *TLT*)

Contact: Julie Kimura — pub-review@jalt-publications.org

Blueprint — Williams, E. & Niederhaus, A. Seoul, Korea: Compass Publishing, 2017. [4-level, 4 module coursebook incl. student book, CD-ROM, workbook, MP3 CD, downloadable online resources, teacher's edition, assessment CD-ROM, and interactive whiteboard materials].

English Presentations Today: Language and Skills for International Presentations — Pond, C. Tokyo, Japan: Nan'un-do, 2018. [15-unit course covering stages of a presentation and associated skills incl. audio CD and teacher's manual].

! Inspire — Hartmann, P., Douglas, N., & Boon, A. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2014. [3-level speaking and listening course incl. online student and instructor resources].

! Journeys: Communication for the Future — Ano, K., Ueda, N., Toyama, M., Toshima, M., & Haedrich, K. Tokyo, Japan: Asahi Press, 2017. [15-unit 4-skills course incl. teaching manual, web and classroom audio].

Keynote — Bohlke, D. Tokyo, Japan: Cengage Learning, 2017. [4-level integrated skills using TED Talks course incl. workbook, online practice, teacher's book, assessment CD-ROM, and classroom presentation tools].

! Listening Steps — Yoneyama, A., & Wells, L. Tokyo, Japan: Kinseido, 2017. [15-unit listening course incl. teacher's manual, online videos, and classroom audio CD].

Provoke a Response: Critical Thinking through Data Analysis — Gale, S., & Fukuhara, S. Tokyo, Japan: Nan'un-do, 2016. [15-unit course designed to facilitate students' critical thinking ability using survey and other data to express opinions incl. teacher's CD-ROM and teacher's manual].

Reading for the Academic World — Coxhead, A., & Nation, P. Sachse, TX: Seed Learning, 2018. [A three-book series that incorporates items from the Academic Word List incl. MP3 CD].

! Reading for the Real World (3rd edition) — Malarcher, C., Janzen, A., Worcester, A., & Anderson, P. Tokyo, Japan: Compass Publishing, 2015. [4-level academic reading series designed for high school and university students incl. teacher's manual, free app and website worksheets and tests, and downloadable audio].

Speaking for Speeches — Robinson, L. Sachse, TX: Seed Learning, 2017. [3-level coursebook with 16 units designed to develop public speaking skills of English language learners incl. MP3 CD].

! VOA News Plus — Yasunami, S. & Lavin, R. L. Tokyo, Japan: Seibido, 2016. [15-unit writing, listening, and speaking course incl. teacher's manual, classroom audio and video, and online English Central access].

! Vocabulary for Economics, Management, and International Business — Racine, J. P., & Nakanishi, T. Tokyo, Nan'un-do, 2016. [10-unit course using corpus-driven vocabulary incl. quizzes and vocabulary notebook].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in *JALT Journal*)

Contact: Greg Rouault — jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org

* English-Medium Instruction in Japanese Higher Education: Policy, Challenges and Outcomes — Bradford, A. & Brown, H. (Eds.). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters, 2017.

* Nonformal Education and Civil Society in Japan — Okano, K. (Ed.). Oxon, England: Routledge, 2017.

* Project-Based Language Learning with Technology: Learner Collaboration in an EFL Classroom in Japan — Thomas, M. Oxon, England: Routledge, 2017.

[JALT PRAXIS] TEACHING ASSISTANCE

David McMurray

Graduate students and teaching assistants are invited to submit compositions in the form of a speech, appeal, memoir, essay, conference review, or interview on the policy and practice of language education. Master's and doctoral thesis supervisors are also welcome to contribute or encourage their students to join this vibrant debate. Grounded in the author's reading, practicum, or empirical research, contributions are expected to share an impassioned presentation of opinions in 1,000 words or less. Teaching Assistance is not a peer-reviewed column.

Email: teach-assist@jalt-publications.org

This issue's Teaching Assistance suggests ways in which the student assistant (SA) and teaching assistant (TA) can help undergraduate students successfully write and present graduation theses.

Assisting University Students with Graduation Thesis Capstone Essays
David McMurray

Strong structures have foundation stones, cornerstones, and a capstone affixed on the top. Comprehensive curricula have foundation subjects, required subjects, and a capstone thesis. The graduation thesis is a multifaceted assignment in a particular field of study. In undergraduate programs at universities in Japan, a graduation thesis can be referred to as the capstone. University curricula vary, but successful completion of seminars that lead to, and include the required capstone course and thesis can represent 20 credits of a 124-credit university degree program. Formulating a hypothesis, reading

related literature, designing a research instrument, and writing up results is the culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. For many degree-holders, in addition to a diploma, a well-written and well-defended 30-page thesis can represent the tangible, crowning achievement of four years of study.

In Japan, instructors in charge of seminars usually provide students with advice on the process of writing a capstone paper in the particular field of study they specialize in. Teachers in the field of English education, for example, can begin these seminars in the freshman year and continue until graduation. Capstone papers written by English language majors are predominantly penned in Japanese, but a number of papers written in English can readily be found online (Kubo, 2018).

Some universities offer report and thesis writing workshops assisted by TAs and led by qualified writing instructors. Others have curricula that include 30-week thesis writing courses led by professors.

Large universities sometimes open writing centers in which students can seek assistance from SA's and TA's throughout the school year.

Figure 1. Capstone workshop with SAs and TAs.

Writing instructors can lead students through the process of prewriting, organizing information,

Table 1. *Rubric proposed for conducting an evaluation of a graduation thesis by an academic supervisor that is convenient to use and rational, aiming at making teaching more effective*

Criteria	Pass	Failure/Retry
(25%) Problem Setting Questions	Set an appropriate and clear purpose, raised issues and problems. Originality can be seen.	Ambiguous problems and issues, poor setting of hypothesis, insignificant questions.
(25%) Reference Materials	Extensively explored and collected reliable materials such as previous research, literature, data, and were skilled in using it and properly citing and referring to it.	Did not refer to reliable materials such as previous research, literature, and data. Did not collect data useful to solving the set problems. Evidence of extensive copy-pasting were discovered.
(30%) Consideration Discussion	Developed consistent and logical considerations that lead to creative and convincing conclusions.	The paper lacks logical consistency and it is difficult to pursue the author's argument.
(10%) Presentation	Was able to present an overview of the study and the key findings. The author was able to respond to questions from peers, the TA and the supervisor concerning the study.	The author was neither able to summarize the key finding nor articulate the key findings. Questions from the audience were not fielded.
(10%) Sentence & Style	Corresponds to the prescribed number of words and form, it is written in a unified style, appropriate for the field of study. Paragraph breaks, and correspondence between subject and predicate is appropriate. There are few typographical errors, or grammatical errors.	It does not correspond to the stipulated quantity and appearance. The style and numbering of sections is not unified. Correspondence between paragraph breaks and subjects and predicates is not appropriate. There are many typographical errors and grammatical errors, which severely impede understanding.

writing, evaluating, setting titles, and rewriting a graduation thesis. SAs can refer students to theses in comparable fields of research written by peers. Libraries contain style guides that TAs can emulate to help authors learn the appropriate style as well as rules of quotation, citation, and how to write references.

Capstone course books, such as that by Kluge and Taylor (2018), can include guides which provide worksheets and easy-to-fill-in templates to explain the style and formats which are essential for academic writing in English. TAs with specialization in a particular field of study can readily guide undergraduate students (Hussain, 2015).

Writing a good research paper is challenging and consumes a lot of class and extra-curricular time. There are always some students, however, who attempt to write a final paper during the closing week of the final semester. The Internet has made it easy for students with wide ranging interests and shallow knowledge to amass information and piece together a report. Kluge and Taylor (2018) suggest the following example of a good thesis statement: "The Internet of Things first showed much promise for improving daily life and health, but now disturbing problems have emerged" (p. 39). With such a topic, as an advisor of dozens of undergraduate theses, I have observed how some students can come up with a report overnight with chapters on: *The history of machine communication*, *The way wireless connections have developed*, and *The means by which the government has tried to protect users of such technology from hackers*. Students can draft such essays by pulling out references in Wikipedia, copy-pasting from computer journal articles, and paraphrasing recommendations from government papers. Data charts and maps can be readily downloaded and pasted into the appendices. The resulting 20 pages might look cohesive and thorough on the surface, but anyone with access to broadband can come up with a similar paper. Gratton (2014) observed similar performances by her own 15-year old before asking, "But does my son actually know anything about [it]? In a sense he does–but this is generalist knowledge created from the scraps and scrapings of information from public sources" (p.205).

An evaluation rubric (Table 1) would assist the course evaluator to assess papers, and sort passable papers from those that are too general to be of value. The capstone paper needs to be assessed on whether it contains original thoughts, well-developed points of view, and valuable insights that others don't have, or is plagiarized. The rubric could also assist students to clearly see how they need to write a passable capstone paper. The TA could

help explain the rubric during class. By doing this, students can grasp step by step what they need to do to write higher quality graduation papers. The supervisor should assess and give a final grade.

Toward the end of the capstone thesis writing process, the author should be encouraged to share their findings with seminar classmates during a group presentation. A final presentation to the whole seminar would encourage students in lower grades to possibly follow in the presenter's footsteps.

Figure 2. Capstone presentation with peers and TA.

Integrating and coordinating a capstone presentation for undergraduate theses could help universities reach their fundamental goal of equipping students who can participate in society, start on a career, and create the future. As a specific strategic effort to attain this goal, departments and faculties could promote the presentations of research papers, graduation theses, and seminar reports by students at meetings with faculty, TAs, SAs, classmates, and invited guests. This could be an improvement over most final examination systems that give instructors only two options: requiring students to submit written papers or sit for written exams. Together with those who supported them to graduate, alumni would reap the rewards of having studied in a stronger university structure that placed freshman courses at its foundation, required courses at its corners, and a deserving capstone thesis on top.

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ARTICLES

JALT PRAXIS • TEACHING ASSISTANCE

JALT FOCUS

Robert Cvitkovic & Max Praver

Writers' Workshop is written on a collaborative basis with the members of the Peer Support Group (PSG). In each column, topics are shared that provide advice and support for novice writers, experienced writers, or nearly anyone who is looking to write for academic purposes. If you would like to submit a paper for review, please contact us.

Email: peergroup@jalt-publications.org • Web: http://jalt-publications.org/psg

Strategies for a Successful Grant Proposal: Part One

Robert Cvitkovic
Tokai University

Max Praver
Meijo University

In the next several issues of The Writers' Workshop, researchers Robert Cvitkovic and Max Praver are going share on the topic of "Strategies for a Successful Grant Proposal." Having recently presented on the topic at the JALT 2017 conference in Tsukuba, Ibaraki, and having worked on or being in the process of working on a total of eight MEXT grants between the two of them, they bring a wealth of experience to the topic of receiving funding for research. Throughout this series, they will address relevant issues concerning grant proposals, and hope to provide illumination for those that are interested in applying for these valuable resources for research.

What is a Grant Proposal?

A grant proposal is a strange beast. On the surface, it can seem like a confusing document full of puzzling instructions that leads to a pot of research "gold." There are thick manuals full of instructions, numerous handbooks describing the process, and even workshops packed with tips, tricks and secrets, but when you pause and think about what a grant proposal really is, you may realize that it is a roadmap to something profound: It is the expression of an idea. Not just any idea, but an original research idea that leads to the edge of human knowledge and ever-so-gently expands those boundaries. A grant proposal is a description of a multi-year plan of learning and discovery. It is original, creative and scientifically rigorous. It is a roadmap to innovation, breakthroughs and exploration. It is also a set of instructions outlining how to accomplish your research purpose. It is all this and much more.

If there is a purpose to this article series, it is not how to get large sums of money from the government to do research, although this might happen. No, this would be putting the cart before the horse; funding is something that will happen when you do your due diligence as a researcher. The driving principle for a good grant proposal, we will argue, is a good research idea. It needs to be original and relevant to your field, and appropriate to current research trends in Japan. Only after you have an original research idea can you present it in a way that other scientists will be willing to support your project financially, because they too find value in learning about what you have outlined in your proposal. If the research purpose, plan and goals are laid out succinctly, and if the idea has scientific rigor, originality and significance, then there is a high probability that your proposals will be accepted every time. Once you have your research idea established, and by keeping a few grant writing rules in mind, your proposal will essentially write itself, fueled by your passion and vision towards your topic.

We would be remiss to emphasize only the idea though, because there are mechanics involved in grant writing as well. However, too often the "tips, tricks and mechanics" of writing a grant proposal are emphasized over a good idea, which is why we would like to gently remind you that both are important. Consider this, a proposal can be broken down into two broad areas: the writing technique and the research idea. Both are important, and taking two extreme examples (good and bad versions) of both areas (technique and idea) gives us four possible combinations to consider. Let us look at each of them one at a time. A poorly written grant proposal with a poor idea has a near zero chance of being accepted. The opposite is true, too. A well written proposal of a well thought out scientific idea has a nearly 100% chance of being accepted. However, if you could only choose one of those areas, the technique or the idea, to be great, which would it be? Would you choose a well written proposal with a poor idea, or a poorly written proposal with a sound idea? We would choose the latter option. Although we aim for both, we believe that it

is always best to write about something that has intrinsic merit and always start with a sound research idea and build from there.

	Poorly written	Written well
Bad idea	(a) near zero chance	(b) low
Good idea	(c) better	(d) high probability

This first article in the series on grant writing will be a discussion about how to improve the scientific part of your grant proposal, because once you have thoroughly developed a good scientific research idea from beginning to end, your 14-page proposal will have written itself, at least in your mind, and all you have to do is act as a conduit for that vision. You will still need to learn several grant writing techniques for expressing that vision clearly and succinctly, but your vision and idea has to come first.

Fun Fact Box: *Success Rates and the Misconception*

There is a misconception that novice grant writers make and it goes like this: "The acceptance rate is around 30 percent, therefore, there is a 1 in 3 chance of getting accepted. If I submit three years in a row, the chance of getting accepted is nearly guaranteed." This would be naive. If your grant idea has the qualities mentioned above and you follow the tips we recommend below: i.e., a clear purpose, plan, and goals; evident scientific rigor; apparent originality and value—then your proposal will have a high probability of being accepted every time. Contrarily, the more of these key elements that are missing, the greater the chance the proposal will never be accepted—ever.

The Secret to Successful Grants

A question you may be asking yourself is why we are giving away *secrets* to writing a successful grant. Why would anyone willfully promote more competition for a limited source of funding? Grant funding is a zero-sum game, which means that there is only a certain amount of *pie* to go around, and the more people trying to get a piece, results in either people getting smaller portions or fewer people getting any *pie* at all. And by pie we mean research funding, if that was not clear. To this we respond, first, the information in this paper is not secret; it is available to anyone who chooses to read the handbooks and documentation of which much of it has now been translated into English

and is now available online. In the past, much of grant funding information was spread throughout a variety of long documents, manuals and handbooks, some of which were only available in Japanese; however, that has changed recently, and the number of translated documents has been increasing every year. The *Japan Society for the Promotion of Science* <http://www.jsps.go.jp> website is relatively easy to navigate and is well organized. Second, it is true that there is information here that has taken a number of years and plenty of trial and error to accumulate, but these are not necessarily secrets. If you sit down with any experienced researcher over lunch and chat with them, they will tell you many of the same things you will find in this series of articles. Last, we would argue that good research can be difficult. You can read all there is to know about research methods and talk to as many successful researchers as you like, but that does not mean you will automatically become a high caliber researcher overnight. It takes some work and a bit of time. For example, in a short amount of time you can read all about juggling, or playing a piece of music, or doing the back stroke, but to actually become a professional street performer, a concert pianist, or an Olympic gold medalist is another thing altogether. So please, go ahead and read and talk to as many people as you can about the *secrets* of grant writing, but be sure to put their recommendations into practice. If you are able to skillfully implement recommendations into your research context, you will increase your chances of receiving grant funding for your excellent research ideas. This is really the secret to receiving grant funding—practice and a little bit of effort. Education and learning is a never-ending process and if receiving 50,000 dollars or more to pursue your ideas and expand the boundary of human knowledge is an exciting proposition to you, then you may find it well worth your time. We hope that you put into practice as many of the recommendations in this series as you find relevant to your research context.

Our Approach to Creating a Successful Proposal

We approach the topic of receiving grants differently than others for several reasons. First, many, if not all, institutions have grant writing workshops for their employees and we do not want to duplicate information that you can get elsewhere. It may be the case that no workshops are available in your native language, but usually with a little effort and arm-twisting you can find a trusted colleague to accompany you for translation purposes. Another reason is that although we will be using informa-

tion from several standard handbooks and manuals, we will be taking a higher perspective and emphasizing more important points than just filling out forms and following instructions. If you read the instructions on the grant application and follow them carefully - and we hope that you do - you will be able to fill in the form in an acceptable manner. However, if that is all you do, you will not have a high probability of being accepted, and you might as well not waste your energy or the judges' and reviewers' time.

We have talked to both successful and unsuccessful grant writers over the years and tried to incorporate as many of the best ideas as possible into this series. If you ask ten different experienced researchers a question you will often receive disparate information, and it is difficult to determine the veracity of these conflicting pieces of information. It is not that one person is wrong and the other is right, although that is possible, rather, it is more likely that there are many different ways to do research. Some researchers work in the field of medicine, some in engineering, some do qualitative work, others quantitative, some work in a laboratory and others out in the field. In short, research context is important when considering what to include in a good grant proposal. In order to cover as much ground within a limited space as possible, and to be as relevant to as many researchers as possible, we need to step back and take a perspective that covers a wide range of research contexts, while also framing our discussion when we examine the details. Through our conversations with many successful grant recipients, and by keeping notes of our own successes and failures through the years, we have gathered useful information in the following pages for our fellow researchers. We hope this series of articles will save you the time and pain of repeating many common mistakes that can be avoided by just understanding a few basic points.

Finally, remember that applying for grant funding is not like a lottery, where proposals are accepted or discarded based upon luck. Luck has nothing to do with the process. Judges are chosen from successful researchers throughout Japan; they know what it takes to carry out successful research, and most importantly they know low quality grant proposals when they see them. If a proposal does not have merit, is over-ambitious, lacks rigor, or does not have value to a Japanese context, they will be able to recognize this immediately. If your proposals are repeatedly getting rejected year after year, then it may be time to look at your research approach and its relevance to your field of research in Japan. When you finish the first draft of your proposal, ask if

you would give yourself 50,000 dollars to carry out your own research. If the answer is anything other than a resounding "Yes!", then maybe you need to either tweak your idea, or re-contextualize it from a different perspective that is more relevant to your research field and Japanese society. We will cover both of these situations as we progress through this series.

The Scope of this Series

We will be discussing a category C (general) grant that has a funding limit up to 5,000,000 yen (approx. 50,000 dollars) for a 3-year period. Although we will mainly focus on this grant type in detail, many of the contained writing principles apply to other grant categories as well. This category C grant focus will be the most relevant to our readers. We will also occasionally provide additional considerations for other larger grant categories that are beyond the scope of this series. This series of articles also assumes the readers are in the field of language education and will be carrying out research within the social science field.

Knowing How Your Proposal Will Be Evaluated

We would like to end this first article with one of the most important issues you need to be aware of when putting your grant proposal together: How you will be evaluated. This issue will be visited throughout this series in various ways, but it is best to be explicit regarding evaluation from the beginning. Judges will be looking for specific points in grant proposals, and if you do not make these points clear, or worse yet, do not address them at all in your proposal then you will be reducing your chances of success significantly. First time applicants or grant writing *newbies* are usually not aware of the grading criteria the first time they apply, and it is usually only introduced to them after the fact if: 1) they have checked the box on their application requesting feedback, 2) they check their feedback in May or June after the application has already failed, 3) they are able to find their reviewer's feedback on the online system, and 4) they are able to finally read the graded feedback written in Japanese. Grading criteria is provided solely in Japanese in at least one handbook (MEXT, 2017, p.20) and we personally have never been able to find an English edition of it. Luckily, we have had the grading criteria (feedback page on a failed proposal) translated into English and we are including here as a reference for our readers (see Table 1).

We will be covering in more detail grounds for proposal rejection in a later article, so for now, let us briefly explain grading criteria. Candidates for research grants will be judged on a scale from one to four by several judges concerning five major categories. Each category has several sub-sections, and a successful proposal consists of scores of three and four in all major categories. That being said, it is important to address all of the five major categories within your proposal (see Table 1). Your score will be given in a table with the main category on the left, your score in the middle and the average successful grade will be on the right, so you will be able to compare your score for any given category against a passing grade for that category.

Table 1. *Main grading categories and number of sub-categories. Translated from MEXT (2017)*

	Main Category (Grading criteria)	Number of sub-categories
1	Academic validity and importance of research	3
2	Validity of research plan and methodology	7
3	Originality and innovation of research	1
4	Universality and applicability of research	2
5	Ability/skill of researchers is adequate and research environment is appropriate	4

It is best to keep these categories in mind both when you write up your proposal, and after the first draft or two is finished, as you can grade them objectively using these categories. Better yet, ask a trusted colleague to evaluate your proposal on a scale of one to four using these categories, four being the highest value.

Next Issue: Creating a Realistic Three-Year Research Plan

In the next article, we will compare a somewhat naive three-year plan with a realistic three-year plan. Unfortunately, the naive plan is not as uncommon as you might think and it is important to examine it in order to avoid common *newbie* missteps. Although a discussion of a three-year plan may seem a bit like putting the cart before the horse considering that you have not received any funding for research yet, it is actually a very important part of preparing a research grant proposal, as it will include a description of the major activities you and your team will be carrying out in order to complete your multi-year project. A little pragmatic planning and forethought can be the difference between a successful experiment and a disaster. We will also take a deep dive into the pros and cons of working with a team or working alone. Please check the next issue for part two in the series "Strategies for a Successful Grant Proposal."

About the Authors

Bob Cvitkovic has been on a total of six MEXT grants since 2009 acting as both principal investigator and co-investigator. He has a Master's degree in Materials Engineering from the University of Alberta and a Master's degree in TESOL from Temple University. His research interests lie in measuring the effectiveness of English educational apps through instructional efficiency, engagement, and learning outcomes. He currently lives and works in Kanagawa, Japan.

Max Praver is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Meijo University. He holds a Doctoral degree from Temple University. Max is currently the principal investigator and co-investigator on two MEXT grants. His research interests lie in teacher self-efficacy, motivation, and technology enhanced learning. He now lives in Nagoya, Japan.

Reference

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The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

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

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- 1,500 to 2,000 participants
  - 毎年1,500名から2,000名が参加します
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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

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

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All members receive annual subscriptions to *The Language Teacher* and *JALT Journal*, and member discounts for meetings and conferences. *The Language Teacher*や*JALT Journal* 等の出版物が1年間送付されます。また例会や大会に割引価格で参加できます。

- Regular 一般会員:¥13,000
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- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications ジョイント会員 (同じ住所で登録する個人2名を対象とし、JALT出版物は2名に1部):¥21,000
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Information

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

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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.
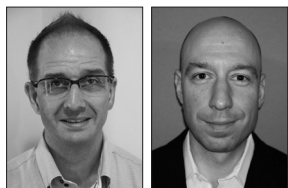
Joël Laurier & Robert Morel

JALT currently has 26 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes an in-depth view of one SIG each issue, providing readers with a more complete picture of the different SIGs within JALT. For information about SIG events, publications, and calls for papers, please visit http://jalt.org main/groups.

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Greetings from the Study Abroad SIG!

As study abroad programs continue to grow in importance in the second language learning of our students, more and more teachers are becoming involved in their school's study abroad programs. Similarly, since its founding in 2008, the Study Abroad SIG has grown from our initial 20 signatories to over 100 members.

One of the main reasons for founding the SIG was a common experience many of us shared. Schools wanted a study abroad program and teachers were asked to take part in it. Unfortunately, many of us did not have any specific knowledge about study abroad. There was no common arena for sharing resources that could help teachers deal with the intricacies of running such a program. Thus, the SIG was formed to be a place to provide information to help teachers develop their study abroad programs.

Events

The strength of the Study Abroad SIG lies in its networking and resource sharing. The SIG is active throughout the year, with the PanSIG conference in May and the JALT International conference in November being the main focus of our work. We hold panel discussions and forums at these conferences and get feedback on new trends in study abroad.

The SIG now has its own yearly conference in September. So far, the presentations have been both outstanding and enjoyable. One thing the conference highlights is the commitment of teachers to their programs. It also indicates the variety of study abroad programs that have been developed throughout Japan and the rest of the world. In addition to research presentations, the conference offers a platform for study abroad students to share their experiences. Their presentations complement the conference theme and add depth to the voices contributing to our understanding of study abroad. The challenge ahead is to see where programs overlap and how we can share our experiences more thoroughly. The SIG would like to expand its list of conference collaborators to include administrators and study abroad companies.

Publications

We published our first newsletter called "*Ryugaku*" in May of 2008. Over the years, we have collected many excellent articles related to study abroad. As we peer-review each article, the quality of articles is high. Moving forward, the SIG is looking to broaden its available resources and help teachers develop their programs more fully.

The SIG has two primary platforms of communication: the SIG website and a Facebook page. The website, <http://www.jalt-sa.org>, carries most of the information and is a repository of resources to aid members. Non-members can visit the site and download older copies of *Ryugaku* while members receive the latest version. There are plans to expand the website to meet the varied needs of our members.

The SIG's Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/groups/874744595974613/) is also a way for our members to connect and discuss things easily and quickly.

As the SIG continually seeks to meet its members' needs, the officers ask that all members get involved in some way. Getting involved does not have to be a big time commitment. We need people to help promote the SIG at conferences, help develop the SIG's website, or connect with other researchers to further research in the field. We also encourage people with specific skills, such as computer programming, to help the SIG develop its online presence. There are many things to do and we would love to hear your voice.

Looking for a new teaching position? Visit our careers page:

http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/career-development-corner/jobs

Tokyo

Pan SIG

Toyo Gakuen University
May 19-20, 2018

PanSIG is an annual conference held in May and organized by the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

This conference brings together leading scholars and practitioners in language education from Japan, Asia, and throughout the world. PanSIG is a place where both SIG members and non-JALT members can network with each other and further their knowledge of language learning and teaching.

Join us at Toyo Gakuen University's Hongo Campus on May 19 and 20, 2018 to share, learn, and connect with teachers and researchers who share your passion for educational excellence.

If you want to join this year's PanSIG Conference, please see our website for more information:

http://www.pansig.org

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