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Greetings and welcome to the May/June 2013 issue of TLT. Did you get off to a good start with your new classes? Teachers and students are now enjoying a short break from school during Golden Week with nice weather, and preparing to cope with the long and hot rainy season in June.

In our Feature Articles, Howard Brown, Bethany Iyobe, and Paul Riley examine the use of student-generated materials, and Robert Long introduces ETS’s Criterion online writing program and discusses its merits.

We have three articles in Readers’ Forum, Aaron Hahn first reviews two teacher training programs conducted by an ALT and by a Board of Education in terms of promoting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and next Cynthia Quinn develops assignment sheets to help students write effectively. Lastly Daniel Dunkley interviews Patricia Duff about language socialization and language teaching.

In My Share, there are four fresh ideas for the classroom. When you feel you need some changes in your new classes, you might try some of these. Nicholas Domjanic offers appropriate tasks for the first class, Mark Koprowski suggests a timed writing activity for improving students’ writing speed, Brett Davies describes a vocabulary building activity, and Elliot Patton proposes a productive dialog journal with a task-based checklist. In the Book Review section, Mathew W.

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[ login: may2013 / password: 4aqabr2T ]
My Shareでは、教室で使える4つの新しいアイデアを提供しています。新しいクラスで少し変化がほしいと感じたら、そのどれかを試してみてください。Nicholas Domjanicは初日のクラスで使えるタスクを、Mark Koprowskは学生の作文スピードを向上させるための時間制限付きの作文アクティビティを、Brett Daviesは語彙を増やすアクティビティを、Elliot Pattonはタスクに基づいたチェックリストの生産的な対話ジャーナルを提案しています。Book Reviewでは、Mathew W. TurnerがDoor-to-Door: A Complete Study Abroad Guideを論評しています。

この号を作成するにあたり、ご協力いただいた多くの著者やスタッフの皆さんに感謝の意を表します。本号が読者の皆様にとって有益で実践的であるように。

日本語版編集長
阿部 恵美佳

Japanese Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

A nonprofit organization

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

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<tlt.jalt-publications.org>
This study focuses on learner reactions to a discussion project based on student-generated materials (SGM). SGM are linked to authenticity, investment in learning, motivation, and positive learning outcomes. However, SGM may represent a new and daunting experience for students unaccustomed to participatory learning. This study examines the reaction of Japanese university students to an SGM project based on creating discussion and decision-making scenarios for others to use later. Results from questionnaire data indicate that students have positive feelings about using materials created by peers. They show interest and engagement, and request more opportunities to work with materials created by other students. However, they feel less positively about actually creating such materials. They cite difficulty in finding an appropriate topic and writing clear background information and instructions. The pattern is somewhat related to language level with lower proficiency students showing a stronger preference for using others' materials rather than creating them.

An evaluation of the use of student-generated materials

Howard Brown, Bethany Iyobe, and Paul Riley
The University of Niigata Prefecture

Hudd (2003) argues that in university-level content teaching, having students create and assess their own assignments and classroom activities is a key factor in “enhancing participation and student ownership of the class” (p. 195). SGM can allow learners to change from passive consumers of content to active co-creators in the learning process. This new role empowers learners and is associated with increased motivation and participation on the one hand, and improved problem-solving skills and learning outcomes on the other. These activities also call on students to apply and develop social and communication skills that go beyond the actual class contents.

The benefits of the creation and use of SGM are seen by many as being inherently tied to the idea of collaborative learning which has been exhaustively researched in a variety of fields and at all levels of education. Barkley, Cross, and Major (2004) provide an overview of the effects of collaborative education including student satisfaction, deeper, more substantial coverage of contents, increased effort and persistence on the part of students, and positive attitudes towards both the contents and the learning experience. In this study, SGM are viewed as one way to tap into these benefits in language classrooms.

In some applications of SGM in language learning, students are seen as a source of rich language data. Learners’ own language use and that of their classmates can be seen as a kind of input, an alternative to the teacher-fronted classroom with its simplified input made comprehensible for the students (Riggenbach,
In modern classrooms, this kind of SGM is often seen in projects based on working with, assessing and co-constructing student-generated content in a blog, wiki or other online space (see for example Chartrand, 2012; Kent, 2010). In other, perhaps more expansive applications of SGM however, students are given control over and responsibility for not only language input but also patterns of interaction and activity design.

For some teachers, this wider definition of SGM is freeing, moving them beyond the constraints of a teacher-centered classroom. However, for others it may be uncomfortable. Brookfield (1999) talks about the need for teachers to take their students seriously and value their ideas. This implies the need for trust on the part of the teacher who starts an SGM project. Glenn (2003) points to fear of uncertainty and loss of control as two factors that keep teachers from using SGM. Speaking of her own teaching she said,

I put too little trust in my students and refused to relinquish control, perhaps out of fear that the course, no longer fully my creation, would become something I did not anticipate or desire. Unpredictability was daunting and thus limiting. (p. 36)

For students also, creating and using SGM in the wider sense can be daunting. It calls on them to engage in learning in an entirely new way. Traditional roles of teacher as source and student as recipient of knowledge, what Sfard refers to as the “acquisition metaphor” of education (1998, p. 5), are rejected in favor of a more participatory experience. This can be especially problematic in a Japanese context where new university students in language classes tend to be seen as having “high order grammar and translation skills but poorly developed discussion and thinking skills” (Williams, 2011, p. 65). This implies that students may be, at least initially, uncomfortable with classroom tasks that challenge those underdeveloped skills.

However, far from being a fixed element of Japanese culture as some believe, this is related to students’ educational career (Rundle, 2007). Students typically experience extreme teacher-centeredness in high school and may not have exposure to other, more autonomous ways of learning. An overall lack of critical thinking skills and initiative is not limited to language classrooms but can be seen across the curriculum among first-year students and is often seen, by both expatriate and Japanese faculty, as part of the overall difficulty of the transition from high school to university (Brown & Adamson, 2011). SGM projects that require students to think critically, address open-ended questions, and take initiative were seen by the researchers as one possibly effective, albeit challenging way of helping students make the transition.

Considering the researchers’ own misgivings about SGM and the potential challenge it represents for students, any such project needs to be implemented in consideration of how students are reacting to the experience.

The current study

Context

The current study was conducted in Oral Communication classes for first-year students at a small university in northern Japan as part of a semi-intensive English for Academic Purposes program for students in the International Studies and Regional Development Department. The Oral Communication classes meet once per week for 90 minutes. In addition, the students take six other skills-focused 90-minute EAP classes per week. The research involved 86 students, 22 in a higher proficiency class (TOEFL pbt scores at initial placement above 400) and 64 in 3 classes of lower proficiency (TOEFL pbt scores at initial placement between 350 and 400). The project took place in the second semester of the course following a semester of work on developing discussion and public speaking skills, as well as fluency and ease with spoken English.

The SGM project

Students were asked to prepare classroom activities known as “negotiation scenarios” for their classmates. Negotiations in this case are defined as discussions with a clear goal that call for an evaluation of options and a clear final decision. Initially, students were given several negotiation tasks prepared by teachers in order to allow them to become accustomed to the format and procedure. Negotiations involved a certain amount of role-play as students were asked to assume the position of a stakeholder in the negotiation. For example in three scenarios used early in the semester, students were asked to negotiate as members of a PTA committee deciding how to allocate a school budget; members of a government advisory panel deciding which sports to encourage in an anti-obesity campaign;
and members of an elected legislature drafting a constitution for a newly independent nation. In one case, students acted as themselves in designing an award system to recognize the Student of the Year in their own school. These negotiations were conducted over two class sessions with the first dedicated to reading and understanding the negotiation scenario and generating a research plan. The actual sharing of research, discussions and decision-making took place in the second class.

The format of negotiation scenarios was developed by the researchers and consisted of five main sections (see Appendix A for a sample of a teacher-generated scenario).

- **Context** - sets the stage for the negotiation by outlining the situation, providing some background information and possibly useful data, and laying out the negotiation task.
- **Considerations** - lays out certain limitations or important points to keep in mind during the negotiations.
- **Preparation** - gives students a chance to outline questions or issues they want to think about before the negotiation, prepare a list of key words and phrases likely to come up during the negotiation, and think about what kind of information they are likely to need and where they might find it.
- **Decisions** - a formatted section where students can write down their group’s final decisions about the negotiation task.
- **Self-evaluations** - a chance for students to reflect on their group’s and their own performance in the negotiation.

After completing several negotiations prepared by teachers, students were assigned a mid-term project to prepare their own negotiation scenario. They worked in small groups (four to five students) and were free to prepare a scenario on any topic. They were asked to follow the general format of the teacher-generated negotiations used previously in class. To ensure that assessment criteria were clear from the outset, students were given copies of the rubrics to be used for teacher and peer assessment. The project was conducted on a four-week schedule. In week one, groups worked and the project was assigned. Class time was given for initial planning and topic choice. In week two, students worked in class on writing the negotiation scenario, in particular the context and considerations sections. In week three, groups traded negotiations and students had their first chance to read scenarios written by their classmates. Class time was given for reading and checking on any unclear points with the group that had written it. Students also developed a research plan in preparation for the following week. In week four, students actually used the other group’s SGM and performed the negotiation. Following the negotiation they were asked to assess the quality of the other group’s SGM (see Appendix B for a sample of a student-generated scenario).

**Results**

Data was collected in student surveys conducted at the end of the semester following the completed SGM project. Students were asked about their reactions (their enjoyment of the process, how they perceived the value for their language learning and how difficult they found it to be) to aspects of the project in closed, Likert-scale questions and were invited to add open-ended comments. Forty-seven of 86 students responded. This is a somewhat low response rate opening the possibility that the results described below are skewed by self-selection bias with students who enjoyed the project tending to respond more frequently than those who did not.

An overview of the collected data (see Table 1) shows that students seemed to have enjoyed all aspects of the project. This is consistent with open-ended responses, with students reporting reactions like,

> “I felt my group enjoyed deciding the topic and I learn how to make a project.”

> “Planning by ourselves [was fun]”

> “Everyone tried to doing enthusiastically.”

Interestingly though, actually writing the negotiation document was rated somewhat lower than other aspects (3.4 out of a possible 5) with five of 47 respondents reporting that they did not enjoy writing the scenario to some extent.

Students also seemed to see value in the project. Though they did not enjoy it as much as other aspects, students did report that writing the scenario had value for their language learning (3.9 out of a possible 5). Using another group’s SGM in class was rated as the most valuable (4.0 out of a possible 5) with all respondents reporting that they at least somewhat valued using others’ SGM. Open-ended comments about the value of the project included ideas like,
“Mid-term Project was interesting and I wanted to do not only [one] other group’s negotiation but also other group’s negotiations.”

“Scenario written by other students motivated me a lot.”

“I enjoyed do another group’s negotiation. That’s because we had to prepare for it. So when our negotiation was completed, I felt very glad.”

Looking at students’ perception of difficulty, they seemed to rate the overall experience as somewhat difficult. Interestingly, using another group’s SGM, which the students valued most highly, was also seen to be the most difficult aspect of the project. Comments from students and teachers’ classroom observations seem to indicate that this was due to quality and clarity issues in the writing of the negotiation scenario. As one respondent said,

“The negotiation of another group was difficult because we didn’t know what the negotiation meant.”

It seems that students were somewhat unclear about the objective of some others’ SGM.

Table 1. Mean student evaluations of different aspects of the SGM project (1-5 scale)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Enjoyment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deciding the topic</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning the negotiation</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the description</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing others’ negotiations</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring other groups</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breaking down the results by proficiency level (see Table 2), we can see significant differences between the high and low proficiency groups in two areas. Unpaired t-test results indicate that students in the lower proficiency group found the task of writing the negotiation documents more challenging ($t = 2.0770, p = 0.0435$). They also seemed to place more value on completing negotiations written by others ($t = 2.0212, p = 0.0492$). A further difference, which can be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1-5 scale)</th>
<th>Enjoyment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deciding the topic</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning the negotiation</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the description</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing others’ negotiations</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring other groups</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$ t = 0.0268, p = 0.9787, t = 1.4056, p = 0.1667, t = 0.0268, p = 0.9787$

$ t = 1.8066, p = 0.0675, t = 1.2485, p = 0.2183, t = 0.0588, p = 0.9534$

$ t = 0.3034, p = 0.763, t = 0.1070, p = 0.9152, t = 2.0770, p = 0.0435$

$ t = 1.3974, p = 0.1691, t = 2.0212, p = 0.0492, t = 1.0040, p = 0.3207$

$ t = 0.0574, p = 0.9545, t = 0.4527, p = 0.6529, t = 0.4067, p = 0.6861$
thought of as somewhat significant, is seen in planning. Higher proficiency students seemed to enjoy the planning phase more \((t = 1.8066, p = 0.0675)\).

Similar \(t\)-test comparisons showed no significant differences between male and female students’ responses.

Looking to the future, students seem to want the project to continue. When asked if they wanted to repeat the project (i.e., make another negotiation for their classmates to use), 24 of 47 respondents (51%) said they would like to. When asked if they thought the SGM project should continue for next year’s freshman class, 40 responded positively (85%). Two-tailed Fisher chi-squared tests showed no significant differences between proficiency and gender groups in these responses. Students comments also showed that, by and large, they think the project should continue.

“We should spend [more] class time.”

“I want to continue this project.”

Students also had some constructive feedback on this project. They mentioned two areas in particular that need attention. On the question of topic choice, they seemed to want more guidance:

“There should be limits on topic choice so that all groups produce similar academic contents.”

“It would be better to decide on a broad genre for all projects. This would make planning easier. Perhaps each group can be assigned its own genre.”

Time as also an important factor for some respondents:

“We need more time.”

“Increase the time for the negotiations.”

General comments at the end of the survey showed that the students seemed to have had an overall positive experience, with, of course, some mixed feelings:

“I like negotiating in a group!”

“Giving our negotiation to another group was kind of like bragging but I am glad we did this project.”

“I enjoy this semester rather than first semester.”

“It was easier to speak positively than speech and discussion.”

“Planning was difficult because we had to decide all of the negotiation, but this project was a good experience for me.”

“This was interested and important. Connecting with 1 semester’s skills and this project.”

“It was good to prepare our own topic.”

Discussion

In classroom observations, the teachers involved in this project noted that students seemed engaged and motivated. Classroom interactions, in both the preparation of SGM and the use of others’ SGM, went far beyond simple conversation, combining oral communication class with the learning of fundamental academic skills and the development of autonomy. In addition, students’ research notes were generally more comprehensive and detailed than they had been during teacher-generated materials activities, indicating that they had worked harder to prepare for SGM. These observations, combined with the clear overall positive message from students’ feedback lead us to conclude that the SGM project was a success, though a qualified one, with some interesting implications for change coming from student feedback.

First and foremost, more time needs to be dedicated to the project. In the SGM preparation phase, problems that students had with the process can all be, to some extent, solved through allowing more time. The difficulty and lack of enjoyment in planning may be ameliorated with less time pressure and the difficulty in writing the actual scenario can be helped by providing more class time (as opposed to homework) for editing and teacher feedback. Teachers directly correcting or rewriting certain elements of the SGM documents may be called for in some cases but this may run counter to the students’ sense of accomplishment and motivation. Therefore, self-correction based on feedback, though time consuming, seems to be appropriate. This will also likely help in dealing with the difficulties found by some groups in using other groups’ SGM due to poor writing.
More time may also be required before the SGM project even begins. In this study, students participated in three or four (depending on their class) teacher-created negotiations before being assigned the SGM project. Three run-throughs may not have been enough to allow them to fully develop their negotiation skills or fully appreciate the amount and kind of information needed for a successful negotiation. Introducing the SGM later in the course seems called for.

A final implication for change is seen in topic choice. In the current study, groups were free to choose topics. However, this led to some unclear SGM and a feeling among both students and teachers that some negotiations were more academic or deeper than others. For example, a group that prepared a detailed negotiation dealing with Japan’s post-tsunami energy crisis was asked to use a thematically lighter negotiation, prepared by classmates, on the topic of popular hairstyles for girls. Teachers and students agree that clearer guidance on topic choice is called for.

Conclusions
Student-generated materials are associated with benefits including both increased motivation and engagement with learning. Observation of one SGM project in an EFL context has shown that these benefits can be realized. However, teachers implementing SGM projects need to be sensitive to students’ reactions and provide enough time for guidance and editing, as well as setting limits on topic choice, in order to allow students to generate the best possible materials for their classmates.

References


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Bethany Iyobe’s work interests include English-medium content instruction, curriculum design, intercultural communication, student motivation, and early childhood education. She can be contacted at <iyobe@unii.ac.jp>.
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Appendix A: A sample of a teacher generated negotiation scenario

Planning the School budget

Context

These days, Japan is well known as an aging society. While the average age of the population increases the number of school age children is falling. With the fall in the number of students, budgets are also being cut. After paying for teachers’ salaries, utilities and basic maintenance for facilities very little money is left over for special projects. Most schools are having to make difficult decisions about which programs and services to fund.

As a member of the PTA, you are being asked to help decide which programs should be prioritized for next year’s budget at your local junior high school. The school board wants to get your input before they make any final decisions. Your job today is to make a final recommendation on which programs should get funding.

Considerations

The school board has asked the PTA to consider the following points during your negotiation.

1. The funded programs should be those that have the greatest positive impact on the school community as a whole.
2. The school board wants to balance academic and extracurricular activities but the top priorities should be for basic school programs.
3. There are 10 proposed projects for next year’s budget but the school board estimates that it will only have enough money in the budget to fund 5 of them at most.
4. Be sure to rank your choices from 1 - 5.

10 Proposed projects

1. Assemblies - In the past, the school has invited famous performers to the school such as traditional drummers, Rakugo story tellers, Kabuki actors, or ballet dancers. In next year’s budget the school is hoping to invite a professional orchestra and a modern dance troupe.
2. Replacing outdated laboratory equipment - The science labs have not been updated since the school opened nearly 25 years ago. Students in Science class are working with out of date and often broken equipment.
3. Guest speaker program - The school would like to invite members of the community, national figures, artists, musicians, business people, etc as special teachers or guest speakers.
4. Renovations - The school buildings are quite old. By replacing windows, adding insulation and installing a new heating system, the school could become much more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.
5. Hiring an ALT - The JET program budget has also been cut and MEXT is no longer supplying an ALT for your school. You have the option to hire an ALT independently.
6. School Lunch - Currently a fresh hot school lunch is served to all students but the costs are rising. While the parents pay for the actual food, the school can longer pay for the cooks and nutritionists without additional funding.
7. Sister Schools - Every year the school sends 5 students each to three sister schools (in China Russia and Korea) and welcomes 5 students from those schools for a 2 week exchange program.
8. Music programs - The school has always had a popular music program. Many students take music classes and both the student chorus and brass band compete in music festivals around the country.
9. Replacing outdated gym equipment - The gym has not been updated since the school opened nearly 25 years ago. The facility itself is in good condition but the sports equipment is old and often broken.
10. Library - Most of the books in the library are in bad condition and students have been complaining that there are no new titles in the collection. In addition, the computers used for inventory are old and often don’t work properly. The school would like to update the library’s collection and equipment.

Preparations

A) Key Ideas - Make a list here of some information that you think will be helpful for the negotiation. What questions do you need to think about before starting the discussion?

- How have other school answered this question?
- What should a school’s priority be?
- 

B) Vocabulary - make a list here of some words and phrases that you think might be helpful for the negotiation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From the Handout</th>
<th>My Own Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>順位 = ?????</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: A sample of a student-generated negotiation scenario

The Best Way to Study English

Context

Studying English is very important because UNP has faculty of International Studies and Regional Development. However, we should study other subjects, too. It means we don’t have enough time to study only English. So, we must find out the most effective way of studying English.

Your job in today’s negotiation will be to prioritize 5 ways of studying English. Your goal is to rank 5 ways most likely to be effective in improving average student’s English skill. It will help your classmates or the next year’s freshman. You will also have to list 3 ways which are considered least likely to be effective.

Considerations

1. Remember you are an average student.
2. Don’t choose an eccentric way because this negotiation is for average students.
3. Rank the best way from most effective 1 to least effective 5. For the ways on your ineffective list, ranking is not necessary.
4. Here are some other questions you may want to think about.
   • How much time can we spend on studying English?
   • How much can we spend on studying English?
   • Is the way interesting?
   • Which is the meaning of “effective”? (efficiency or least effort)
   • What’s an ineffective way to study English for you?
   • Which way is more effective? (by yourself or group working)

Preparations

A) Key Ideas – Make a list here of some information that you think will be helpful for the negotiation.
   • Which ways are you using now?
   • What types are there?

B) Vocabulary – make a list of some words and phrases that you think might be helpful for the negotiation.

From the handout
   • prioritize

My own ideas
   • 暗記する = ??????
This study will report on the findings of first-year Japanese university students using ETS’s Criterion© Online Writing Evaluation Service. The study focused on two research questions: (1) were there important differences in ETS’s computerized feedback and teacher feedback, and (2) was there any improvement in student writing over the school year? For the 2012-2013 academic year, students wrote six compositions. Results indicate that teachers tended to focus on meaning, whereas computerized feedback centered on grammatical and stylistic issues. As for student progress, only four specific areas showed any marginal improvement: confused words, spelling, missing commas, and too many short sentences, indicating that students became slightly better at expressing meaning and in using punctuation more effectively. The data indicate there were some drawbacks with ETS’s computerized feedback evaluating meaning and organization of ideas, but that it was helpful in evaluating some aspects of grammar, mechanics, usage, and style.

Robert Long
Kyushu Institute of Technology

Universities are coming under more pressure to prove the effectiveness of their educational programs. Accountability is now the keyword for the time, so much so that in some universities, educational departments and English programs have decided to rely on TOEIC test scores as a benchmark of how their students are improving. The common criticism of using such scores is that they are only indicators of students’ analytical abilities, and of their receptive skills, such as listening, reading, and grammatical analysis but not of their productive skills. Hirai (2008) did examine the correlation between TOEIC and the STEP BULATS Writing test, and his results indicated the overall correlation coefficient to be .69, suggesting that this was not high enough to rationalize the use of TOEIC Test scores as an indicator of writing skills. Thus, more awareness is needed among educators about the issue of correlating a test score that is, in essence, based on passive skills with those of productive ones.

Despite the apparent need for more essay writing and critical thinking, writing has often been an area that has been too difficult to address in large classes (of 40 or more students) due to the time needed in correcting large numbers of papers. Further, with such traditional pen and paper-based compositions, it is time-consuming if not impossible to identify word lengths, and analyze lexical or syntactical complexity. Likewise, compiling data relating to grammar, syntax, and vocabulary from among all of one’s students or from various classes and teachers can be problematic. Feedback also becomes an issue with paper-based compositions as teachers’ comments are often scribbled in the paper’s margins, making data analysis from various classes difficult. Because of the above issues, the English section at our institution decided to try ETS’s Criterion©
writing program as one means of monitoring student progress in regard to writing.

The purpose of this paper then, is to report on the effectiveness of ETS’s Criterion for Japanese EFL students after a year of its implementation, particularly in regard to computerized and teacher feedback for grammar, usage, mechanics, and style (see Appendix A for a description of how Criterion works and a list of specific features).

Background

The first computerized assessments of student compositions came in 1966 with Project Essay Grade (PEG), introduced by Ellis Page (Rudner and Gagne, 2001). It was not, however, until the 1990s that the use of computer scoring came to be accepted in English education with Intelligent Essay Assessor (IEA), which was introduced for essay grading in 1997 by Thomas Landauer and Peter Foltz (Landauer, Laham, and Foltz, 1999), followed by Select-a-Kibitzer, (Wiemer-Hastings, 1999), as well as E-rater (Educational Testing Service, 2013), developed by Jill Burstein (1998). E-rater, which is a scoring engine, is used in 20 applications such as Criterion, GRE, TOEFL, and TOEFL Practice Online. It is essentially a sophisticated “Hybrid Feature Technology,” using 60 different features to analyse structure. The software takes into account the issue of syntactic variety, counting the number of complements, subordinates, infinitives, and relative clauses and the occurrences of modal verbs in order to calculate the ratios of these syntactic features per sentence and per essay. In order to obtain a final e-rater score, the software weighs the features scores using a regression scoring model.

Yigal and Burstein (2006) found that e-rater scores have significantly higher alternate form reliability than human scores while measuring virtually the same construct as scores from teachers. Thus, as computerized scoring became faster, and demonstrated increased accuracy and complexity (thus eliminating concerns about rater consistency and fatigue), more teachers and administrators began to accept it as an educational tool.

Lim and Kahng (2012), Han, Chodorow, and Leacock (2006), and Tetreault and Chodorow (2008) have pointed out that while there is correlation with human rates in evaluation, there is also a high rate of erroneous error detection. Lim and Kahng (2012) also argue that since Criterion emphasizes errors regarding surface-level linguistic features or textual forms (disregarding content or tone issues), it is important for teachers to inform students about these two issues. Other research themes concerning computerized assessment focus on validity and automated scoring (Bennett, 2004; Bridgeman, Trapani, & Attali, 2009), automated feedback, and its actual impact on students’ writing (Kellogg, Whiteford, & Quinlan, 2010; Kukich, 2000), and comparative studies of human scoring and automated scoring (Wang & Brown, 2007). However, no studies compared the kinds of feedback that computerized feedback and teachers gave, particularly to Japanese EFL students. In short, the literature has still not clarified whether or not there are important differences between computerized and teacher feedback. A second issue, in regard to Japanese EFL writing and student progress (over a school year), is in what specific areas (grammar, usage, mechanics, or style) does ETS’s software indicate students have made the most significant progress, if any.

The study

Rationale

The purpose of using ETS’s Online writing evaluation program was to have a valid and reliable system for the assessment of students’ errors, teacher feedback and comments, and to examine possible differences in computerized vs. teacher evaluation (see Appendix B concerning Criterion’s Feedback in regard to a student’s essay, and Appendix C for graphical results for grammar, mechanics, usage, and style). Unlike in previous research concerned with how computerized scoring correlated with human evaluation, this research focuses on how teachers differed (if at all) in their feedback as compared to ETS’s feedback.

Research questions

1. Were there any important differences between ETS’s computerized and teacher feedback?
2. Was there any improvement over the school year, and if so, in what areas?

Procedure

The compositions for this study were taken over the 2010-2011 school year and involved a total of 1,275 papers. There were three modes of writing for each semester, with the first paper
being descriptive (250 words), in which students introduced themselves. The second paper was argumentative (300 words), whereas the third paper was narrative (350 words). For the second semester, the modes were continued (descriptive, argumentative, and narrative), with the word limit reaching 500 words for the last paper. Some teachers (and students) did not, however, always observe this guideline. For each paper, students were given approximately one month, with teachers having around 10 days to give feedback via ETS’s pop-up notes (suggesting corrections) as well as through overall comments. Class credit was given for each paper. In considering the issue of student progress, only students who had completed all six papers were included in the study.

The appointed administrators (there can be more than one) were then able to view the data relevant to each teacher, class, and student, viewing both computerized and teacher feedback as well as the number of times that students had rewritten and resubmitted their papers. In this study, there were two administrators.

Data analysis
In answering the first research question concerning differences between ETS’s computerized and teacher feedback, only the data based on one paper taken from one class from a teacher who gave a high level of feedback were used. For this paper, 26 students out of 28 students participated, writing on the theme of their future dreams. One of these papers was deemed plagiarized, leaving 25 papers with comments. The teacher gave 191 comments, averaging 7.6 comments per paper.

As for the second question concerning overall progress in writing, data based only on those students who had completed all of the six papers over the academic year were used. Thus, the data for this section included 216 students out of the 598 registered students. Out of this pool, 40 randomly selected papers from the first, third and sixth compositions were used for comparisons. From these papers approximately 170 words were taken from each paper in order to control for the variable of word length. The data set for the first paper totalled 7,052 words, averaging 176.3 words for each paper. The data for the third paper totalled 7,014 words, averaging 175.4 words per paper whereas for the sixth, the total word count was 7,104, averaging 177.6 per paper. These data sets were then submitted to the Criterion database. While reducing the data in this fashion might impact the meaning of students’ writing, it was felt that there would be minimal effect on the computerized feedback.

Results

**Question 1. ETS’s computerized feedback vs. teacher feedback**

Based on ETS’s computerized feedback, prevalent errors in students’ writing involved the repetition of words (2,583), missing / extra article (2,426), spelling (2,171), fragment / missing comma (1,647), too many short sentences (1,590); subject-verb agreement (1,307), and wrong article (1,097). Other less common problems involved confused words, preposition errors, missing initial capital letter in a sentence, missing commas, and sentences beginning with a conjunction. However, in regard to differences between computerized feedback and teacher feedback, the data from one semester (Long & Tabuki, 2012), showed that teachers tended to focus their feedback on meaning (confused words, garbled words, wrong form of word, etc.) and in examining the current data, similar results were encountered (see Table 1). In the area of mechanics, teachers gave no feedback whatsoever on the need to capitalize the initial letter in a sentence or in proper nouns, or advising students on missing punctuation, periods, commas, and compound words. As for style, teachers did not comment on sentences beginning with a conjunction, or the use of too many short sentences or passive voice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Differences in teacher and computerized feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragment / missing comma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run-ons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbled sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill-formed verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Usage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong article / Missing / extra article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results indicate that teachers tend to overly focus on meaning, thereby sidestepping issues that relate to mechanics and style, particularly referring to syntax and sentence length. The reason for this is that teachers may often tolerate or ignore issues relating to basic mechanics, or they may refer to them once or twice, but ignore similar errors later on in the essay. Sentence length is also an issue that can easily be missed, as teachers are less likely to count words or examine the length of concurrent sentences. Based on the students’ level, teachers will tend to focus on particular areas in regard to their comments; however, this practice does necessarily limit the scope of their feedback. In short, while both kinds of feedback are important, students need to learn how to identify which are the most serious kinds of errors that they need to address, and to form new goals on improving in their next essay (see Appendix D for an error feedback and composition preparation handout which helped to address this issue in the past academic year).

**Question 2. Student improvement**

The issue of student progress was taken up by examining randomly selected papers, controlling for word count. The results indicate minimal improvement in the area of usage and marginal improvement in mechanics, whereas grammar and style showed an increase in errors. This data suggest that more writing practice is needed along with more focused tasks addressing rhetorical and grammatical issues (see Tables 2 and 3 for more details).

### Table 2. Areas of improvement (controlling for word count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Paper 1</th>
<th>Paper 3</th>
<th>Paper 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors in grammar</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in usage</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in mechanics</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in style</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td>1337</td>
<td>1433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Feedback analysis for parts of speech (controlling for word count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Errors</th>
<th>Paper 1</th>
<th>Paper 3</th>
<th>Paper 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fragment / Missing comma</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run on sentences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbled sentences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Verb agreement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill-formed verbs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive errors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong or missing word</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofread This!</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong article</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing or extra article</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused words</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong form of word</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition error</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negation error</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalize proper nouns</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing initial capital letter in a sentence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing question mark</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing final punctuation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing comma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyphen error</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound words</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In short, only four specific areas showed any marginal improvement: confused words, spelling, missing commas, and too many short sentences, indicating that students were slightly better at expressing meaning and at using punctuation more effectively. Spelling did show some improvement from the first to the third papers, but teachers tended to ignore this issue as many of the words were related to Japanese names or customs and thus were incorrectly flagged.

Discussion
These results indicate that computerized feedback does significantly differ from that of teachers. Japanese students tend to have problems with using new words and articles, but often struggle with issues of style, such as how to effectively introduce a problem or issue, providing transitions, and concluding effectively. In evaluating errors related to style, teachers often overlooked sentence length as it was generally too difficult to judge, whereas errors that associated with meaning (garbled sentences/weak word forms) were easier to identify and to respond to. A second issue in style (the repetition of words) also proved problematic insofar that it was simply too difficult for teachers to estimate how many times words have been repeated. It is apparent that issues relating to meaning take priority in a teacher’s feedback over issues relating to usage, mechanics, and style. Thus, the results from the first research question indicate that feedback (computerized or teacher-based), if it is to be effective, should be systematic, with students revising their incorrect sentences, keeping error logs, and comparing their problems with their classmates. Teachers should focus on particular grammatical issues or strands and work on these issues repeatedly in different contexts and levels of difficulty. Ideally, many of the examples that the teacher works from as lecture points and for exercises should be adapted from errors that his or her students made.

The results for the second research question concerning student improvement (with students showing marginal improvement in just four areas) show that writing, if it is to be truly effective, should be more in-depth, with weekly assignments and with more resources.

Conclusion
Using ETS’s Online writing program has specific advantages of valid computerized data on page lengths, error rates, and computerized feedback. This feedback and data are proving to be a valuable means of improving the English education program, and to move beyond the test-score mentality and help students with specific skills that they will actually need when they start working. It was clear there were distinct differences in teacher and computer feedback, with ETS’s program providing robust feedback on the four areas of writing and with teachers being concerned with meaning and word choice.

However, it is clear that providing feedback (both computerized and teacher-based) is merely the first step. These results show that the most important issue concerns how students were using (if at all) both kinds of feedback to improve their next paper (see Appendix D). Second, it is important to have very specific goals for each paper. For next year, in addition to the word count, students will need to attempt to provide a variety of reasons and examples to back up various statements, to use various verb tenses, marks of punctuation, in addition to trying out compound and compound-complex sentences.

There were some problems with teachers and students not paying attention to varying goals relating to page length, along with some teachers not giving feedback via Criterion’s pop up notes. As for longer essays, Criterion would not be so helpful concerning issues of organization, transition, and whether or not the writer was effective or persuasive in his or her arguments. However, the program is proving to be a valuable means of not only addressing writing as well as speaking insofar that students use their papers to make a class presentation.

While Cheville (2004) has pointed out concern about the alliance between a private company such as ETS Technologies and her institution, and fear of how “machine-based essay scoring might well undermine the theoretical and practical knowledge of our preservice teachers”
(p. 47), I would argue that it is more important to prove (with computerized data) how students are actually in order to support or improve a particular program. Thus, the advantages (in compiling data about students’ progress, establishing reliability in scoring such papers, providing faster score reporting) seem to outweigh the drawbacks (the cumbersome interface, inputting feedback, emailing data to students, and having more corporate involvement in education). Furthermore, if teachers and institutions accept the computerized feedback as being sufficient, teachers’ workload will decrease, and students, in turn, will have more time for more and more varied writing assignments. In short, as educators, it is important to focus more on the productive skills of writing and speaking, as students will be tested and judged throughout their lives by how well they can communicate and influence their peers, perform in job interviews, and effectively write and present informative reports.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to the TLT Editor and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments and invaluable suggestions.

References


Robert Long is an Associate Professor at Kyushu Institute of Technology, and has worked for TLT as an Editor, Associate Editor, and is currently on the Editorial Advisory
Board. He has published various EFL textbooks on conversational and technical English. He can be contacted at <long@dhs.kyutech.ac.jp>.

Appendix A

Using Criterion

In using Criterion, students, teachers and administrators can register and log in at the following website <https://criterion4.ets.org/cwe/>. Administrators can create classes, assign teachers and writing assignments along with setting beginning and end dates for each assignment. Teachers can design their own particular assignment by clicking "assignment options" and writing the essay prompt or choose from 16 categories ranging from college-level first year to grade nine. Depending on the category, there can be up to four modes of writing: descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive. After choosing the essay topic category, and topic mode, teachers (or administrators) can click on the essay topic drop-down box and choose from a wide range of essay topics, each of which has a self-generated prompt for students. For example, in college-level first year using the persuasive mode, teachers can choose from topics such as "Rebellion," "Reality Class," "Peer Pressure," and "Music," the latter of which provides the following prompt:

Some have said that music not only entertains people but also influences their thinking and behavior. To what extent do you think music has the power to influence as well as to entertain people? Support your views with reasons or examples from your reading, observations, or experience.

Once the assignment has been formulated, there are also the options of giving a particular time limit for writing the paper, whether or not to provide a spell checker or to allow the students to write a plan or outline. In addition, there are options concerning how many revisions (submissions) can be made, whether or not to display a wide range of feedback to the students, and when the assignment begins (date and time), and when it ends. They then register using a login code which takes them to a particular class. Students then input their names, passwords, and email addresses so evaluations can be emailed to them. Once they are registered, they can open the assignment and begin either with a plan or the actual composition. They have options of save and finish later, or submit. In short, the advantages are as follows:

1. This fast and easy tool can help students improve their writing.
2. It provides immediate diagnostic feedback in grammar, spelling, mechanics, usage, style, and organization and development.
3. It offers unlimited and convenient access providing there is an internet connection.
4. It allows instructors to focus efforts on the core areas that need improvement to concentrate on higher-level writing skills.
5. It reduces classroom time spent on teaching writing fundamentals.
6. It provides both student and group reports for two kinds of valuable performance data.
7. It stores online student portfolios with two-way instructor/student interaction capabilities.
8. The program offers eight templates for students to plan and organize their ideas for the 190 essay topics at various levels of difficulty along with the necessary essay prompts for students.
9. 170 essay topics are available for lower-level students.
10. Teachers can generate their own assignment through a text editor.
11. There is an online Writer’s Handbook for additional writing guidance, and students are able to have teachers’ feedback (via pop-up notes) and personalized comments emailed to them.

Appendix B

Criterion’s feedback

Below is an example of the feedback and evaluation concerning one student paper. The topic, argumentative in nature, is stated below, and the paper follows.

Question: New technology can solve problems, but it often creates new problems. The invention of the automobile, for example, created the need for speed limits, driver’s licenses, and traffic lights. Can you think of an invention that created problems when it was introduced? How were these problems solved? Explain your position with reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.
Table 1. ETS’s Holistic Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holistic Score</th>
<th>2 out of 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trait Feedback Analysis: You have work to do to improve your writing skills. You probably have not addressed the topic or communicated your ideas effectively. Your writing may be difficult to understand. In one or more of the following areas, your essay:
| • Misunderstands the topic or neglects important parts of the task |
| • Does not coherently focus or communicate your ideas |
| • Is organized very weakly or doesn’t develop ideas enough |
| • Generalizes and does not provide examples or support to make your points clear |
| • Uses sentences and vocabulary without control, which sometimes confuses rather than clarifies your meaning |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar:</th>
<th>11 errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Fragment of missing comma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Subject-verb agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Ill-formed verbs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage:</th>
<th>31 errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Wrong article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Missing or extra article</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Preposition error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics:</th>
<th>12 errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Missing final punctuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Capitalize proper nouns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Missing final punctuation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Missing commas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style:</th>
<th>17 comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Sentences beginning with coordinating conjunctions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Too many short sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Essay
As of today, we use many 11 machines of new technology. New technology is very 12 convenience and makes me happy. But it may cause new various 13 problem. For example cell phone is. Cell phone is very 14 convenience. If you have cell phone, you can send e-mail, call, use internet anywhere anytime. At present I think most japanese people have cell phone. Also cell phone that has camera, TV and music player function exist. But cell 15 phone have also bad points. These days there is problem that 16 internet depending to young people. This problem cause to be short communication, not to play outside. Also there are sites on the 17 internet to meet people. It is very dangerous those sites cause many crimes. I think cell phone is good goods, so we must jude to use internet one by one. Car is 18 very 19 convenience thing. I ride 10 car to go to 11 kyusyu institution of technology every day. I watch many 12 car in road. Many people ride 13 car to go anywhere almost everyday. If you have driver license and car, you can go to place that anywhere anytime. But car causes many problems. First, there is problem that hold up in the morning and in the evening. I think people use the public facilities for travel to solution this problem. And people 14 don’t feel displease 15 morning and evening. The second, there is problem that the global environment. For example, global warming and air pollution. Global warming is phenomenon to rise temperature on the earth. This phenomenon cause to rise sea level and change ecosystem. To rise sea level may have been sinked small island in the ocean pacific. To change ecosystem may have been vanished many animals. But cause of global warming is not only car but also to use redundant electricity. Advane nation like 16 japan wastes of electricity and resource. I think people should walk as many as possible and not use car. Also I think people save many things. Idea of “mottainai” shold cherish more. So 17 environment of earth get good. Various problems may 18 solution.

Note: The numbered symbols are used as Criterion’s error markers.

Appendix C: Graphical results for grammar, mechanics, usage and style
Appendix D: Error Feedback and Composition Preparation
These appendices are available from the online version of this article at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/>.
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Training teachers

Aaron Hahn
Fukuoka University

Over the last several decades, the Japanese government, through the Course of Study guidelines promulgated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology, has directed schools to include more communicative language teaching (CLT) in their English programs. These top-down directives have met with mixed results. One commonly cited problem is that English teachers are rarely provided with sufficient training in CLT, and thus are unable to implement the new guidelines effectively. However, since other objections also play a role in the rejection of CLT, one question is whether or not increased training increases compliance with the guidelines. This paper examines two local contexts to determine the role that proper training can play. Specifically, it considers informal training provided at a public high school by an Assistant Language Teacher, along with training conducted by a Board of Education to prepare elementary school teachers to begin teaching foreign language classes.

In 2008, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) revised the curriculum for all subjects in all public schools, from kindergarten through high school (MEXT, 2008a). These changes came into effect for primary and middle schools in 2011 and 2012, respectively; high schools just started fully implementing the plan in April 2013. For English, the changes range from starting foreign language education two years earlier (in the fifth year of elementary school) to the requirement that high school English classes be taught, in principle, in English (MEXT, 2008a, 2008b; Stewart, 2009). This is the fourth time since 1990 that the curriculum guidelines, called the Course of Study (CoS), have undergone major changes; each change ostensibly brought the Japanese English curriculum more in line with CLT practices and away from treating English as just a testable, academic subject (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2006; Life, Falout, & Murphey, 2009; Tahira, 2012).

Despite MEXT’s ever-growing attention to CLT, it is widely recognized by teachers and researchers that these changes have not substantially altered how English classes are conducted in Japan (Butler, 2011; Gorsuch, 2000; Stewart, 2009; Tahira, 2012). While there are sound pedagogical objections to the use of CLT (see Butler, 2011, for an in-depth review of constraints on CLT across Asia), one of the major concerns is that teachers lack sufficient training and experience in CLT (Nishino, 2008). As a result, teachers often fall back on the yakudoku method (roughly, the Japanese version of the grammar-translation method) by which they themselves were educated with (Gorsuch, 2002). Tahira (2012) recently expressed concerns that the vagueness of the upcoming high school changes and the apparent lack of plans for extensive training will once again leave teachers unable to fully implement the new guidelines.

While training is not a sufficient condition for successful adaptation to the new guidelines, it is a necessary one. Formal, MEXT-directed training will certainly help, but informal interactions between teachers can also serve as a type of in-service training. I would like to relate two instances of training that occurred in the prefecture where I worked as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in order to show how effective training on the new guidelines might be enacted. The first involves informal training at the high school where I worked, and shows how an initial push towards the use of a strongly TBLT-based curriculum failed, and how a modified approach that involved more collabora-
tion and adjustment to local concerns resulted in increased teacher acceptance of CLT. The second involves formal training for elementary school teachers in the prefecture that seems to have significantly increased teacher understanding of, and comfort with, English teaching.

ALT as trainer
Interaction with ALTs brought to Japanese schools under the JET Programme, can, if those ALTs bring TESOL experience or knowledge, act as a form of informal training. Based on surveys from nine prefectures in Japan, Gorsuch (2002) found that ALTs can serve as a “dynamic, if unevenly available, form of in-service teacher education” (p. 24). While her study did not prove a causal connection between teaching with ALTs and acceptance of communicative activities, it did show a correlation between them, one that she (and I) hold is logical. Engaging with foreign teachers not only gives Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) more chances to use and thus improve their English, but can also expose them to alternative teaching methods.

I worked for five years as a JET ALT at a high academic public high school in Kyushu, where high academic means that almost all students enter four year universities after graduation; the majority aim just below the top rank of universities. I team-taught Oral Communication (OC) to first year students, Reading to second year students, and Writing (translation and essay writing) to second and third year students.

The OC classes were primarily under my pedagogical control, and for my first two years as an ALT I generally used a mixture of communicative activities and audio-lingual role-playing. Additionally, I was asked to include specific, testable points for midterm and final exams in my lessons. In my third year, however, I transitioned away from mixed method OC classes towards task-based (TBLT) approaches, including the use of much longer group projects requiring more extensive intra- and inter-group communication. Unfortunately, these new lessons were often unsuccessful. The JTEs didn’t always understand the point of the lessons, and I failed to provide adequate rationales for my approach. This led to them being unable to assist in classes as well as they had in previous years, since it was unclear to them what their role was supposed to be and what I wanted the students to accomplish. Furthermore, since there were fewer “testable moments”, both students and teachers saw less reason to engage actively in the work. In some cases, students without pre-existing motivation to use English simply stopped participating, leaving the bulk of the work to a much smaller number of “good English students”, much as Carless (2002) found happening in Hong Kong primary school English classes trying to implement TBLT. Finally, the classes were more chaotic, which made some JTEs uncomfortable.

As a result, I believe that many of the JTEs developed a negative opinion of these task-based lessons. In essence, I had done something similar to what MEXT does when it lays out a new CoS: I had dictated a new type of class, but failed to train the JTEs in how and why TBLT is supposed to work.

Shifting focus
In response to those “failed” TBLT classes, and due to concerns about an overall drop in students’ scores on standardized tests at the school, the head of the department proposed that we reduce the number of OC classes to save time for “more important” grammar and translation work. Luckily, I found an ally in a recently transferred JTE who also saw the value in incorporating communicative activities into English classes. Together we developed a plan that we persuaded the other teachers of first year English to follow. This involved a new style (for our school) of team-teaching lessons based on the English I grammar textbook rather than the OC textbook. That is, rather than trying to strike a balance between the “right number” of OC classes and exam-focused classes, we decided to teach a portion of the grammar lessons communicatively. We came to call the new lessons hybrid lessons. While we did not know it at the time, we were essentially following the recent trend of modifying CLT/TBLT approaches to account for local conditions (Bax, 2003; Hu, 2005; Sato, 2010).

Each of the hybrid lessons reviewed one unit of the grammar textbook that the students had already covered with a JTE. Practice included both form-focused work and communicative activities using the target grammar points. While the lessons were intended to be less communicative than previous OC classes, they still contained significantly more student participation than JTE-taught grammar lessons, in which student interaction was mostly limited to providing answers to homework problems. We had three primary goals for the hybrid lessons: helping students convert learned rules into acquired rules, increasing the amount of time spent listening to English, and giving students chances to concentrate on using English as a tool for communica-
cation rather than as a set of rules and vocabulary to be memorized for translation purposes.

**JTE response**

The hybrid classes had a varied effect on JTEs. The most positive effect was on the department chair—the same one who had originally sought to curtail the number of team-taught classes. At the beginning of the semester, he regularly expressed an inability to visualize how the lessons we had planned would work. He understood grammar-based lessons, and understood how to let an ALT run a standard OC class, but he did not understand how the two could be integrated. He was a perfect example of a teacher who is aware of the existence of CLT, but does not fully understand it; that lack of familiarity combined with the never-ending pressure of entrance exams led him to believe that CLT would do more harm than good. As the semester progressed, however, his understanding seemed to grow. In class, he became very enthusiastic about engaging the students in English. His enthusiasm even led him to allow me to collaborate on similarly hybridized English II classes the following year.

I believe two key things made the informal training effective for this teacher. First, the three JTEs and I held weekly meetings in which I laid out not only the lesson plans but also the principles behind them. Furthermore, my JTE ally regularly answered questions in Japanese to the other teachers, ensuring that they could more fully understand the lessons without the affective barrier of trying to do teacher-talk in English. Second, the department chair often scheduled his classes to occur after those of other teachers, so that he could watch others teach the lessons before having to teach them himself. This points to the need for training to extend beyond written materials, including demonstrations and chances for teachers unfamiliar with CLT to see what it looks like in practice, rather than in theory.

The response from English teachers who had not taught the course, however, was not transformative. After watching a demonstration lesson, they explained that they had been impressed with the class, but they felt that teaching such a class themselves would be too difficult. They attributed the success mainly to my JTE partner (my aforementioned ally, who has near-native fluency and over five years’ experience living in the US as a graduate student) and not the hybrid approach itself. As a result, in the following year, the new teachers of first-year English requested that I go back to the traditional OC format and topics. This demonstrates that curriculum changes, which appear to be a directive from the ALT, are just as problematic as those originating from MEXT. Teachers must be involved in planning and implementing curriculum changes from the beginning so that they can incorporate the aspects of CLT they find most valuable, rather than having the changes imposed from an external source; furthermore, training must accompany curricular change.

**Adapting to English in elementary schools**

As mentioned at the opening of this paper, foreign language classes now begin in elementary school. These classes are taught once per week to fifth and sixth grade students, and focus on listening and speaking (MEXT, 2008b). The primary goals are to improve students’ ability to communicate (in any language) and to foster a positive attitude towards foreign languages (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011).

An initial problem identified with respect to this new requirement was that the classes must be taught by homeroom teachers (with some assistance from native-speaker ALTs and “local experts”), most of whom did not study English at university beyond general studies requirements. A survey of teachers in Tokushima Prefecture by Fennelly and Luxton (2011) found that a majority of elementary school teachers lacked confidence in their English skills and worried about their ability to deliver English lessons successfully.

However, just as informal training at my high school helped alleviate some of the concerns of JTEs with respect to integrating CLT in their work, so too did formal training conducted by the Board of Education in the prefecture help allay the problems found by Fennelly and Luxton. For several years a team of teachers and administrators, including an ALT working out of the Education Center, engaged in extensive training and evaluation of elementary school teachers, including demonstrating how to use the mandatory textbook, giving sample lessons, and answering questions. In addition, the university at which a large portion of local primary school teachers study now includes training in teaching English as part of its education degree. Finally, the prefecture extensively employs JET ALTs to visit elementary schools periodically. While the prefecture has not yet published any official results of this work, the Education Center ALT reported that her team has received very positive
feedback from elementary school teachers. The team estimated that at least 70% of elementary school teachers had become “eager to teach English activities” (and the majority who did not are over the age of 50) and that lesson quality and consistency had significantly improved (Johnston, personal communication, January 30, 2012).

Looking forward

MEXT has given the directive to Japanese schools, for the fourth time in about twenty years, to use a more communicative approach in English classes. Past directives have not led to much change due in part to a lack of training in how to implement them. JTEs need clear advice on how they can incorporate communicative activities while still meeting the rest of their ethical and professional obligations as defined by their local contexts. If the informal polling of my prefecture’s elementary school teachers is an accurate representation of local trends, it may be that a serious focus on formal training at the high school level will produce similarly positive results, though such a program would have to be adapted to the different needs and perceptions of high school teachers and students. Such a program could be supplemented by informal training from ALTs and JTEs already familiar and comfortable with CLT. While knowledge of contemporary TESOL practices is not required to be accepted into the JET Programme, the nature of the program could allow MEXT to directly train ALTs in ways that may be impossible or ineffective with JTEs. Further research on how ALTs are trained, along with how they can be agents of change, could help determine how to implement such a program.

References


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The assignment stage of the writing process requires teachers to define the task and clarify expectations to students in concise, comprehensible terms to ensure that learners can write with direction and confidence. To help teachers achieve this goal, this article recommends the use of assignment sheets to enhance teacher-student communication and shows how these documents can be used in class for a variety of pedagogical purposes. Beyond the basic aim of clarifying task requirements, the author shows how they can be used as a heuristic for teachers, as a reference tool for students, as a means to advance learners’ composition metalanguage, and as a resource to bridge the gap between teacher and student expectations.

Communicating writing tasks effectively: Assignment sheets as pedagogical tools

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Many years ago as a graduate student in linguistics, I taught English composition as part of my assistantship, which involved taking a course entitled Teaching Freshman English. Of the many topics we covered, one was about creating assignment sheets: a detailed 2-3 page description that outlined our expectations and thoroughly explained each part of the writing task. This document was taken seriously in my teacher’s course to the point that it was referred to as a contract between the student and teacher to make sure that both parties understood what the purpose, content, and form of the writing task would entail.

Now, when I recall this contract approach to teacher planning, I see how culturally inappropriate it is for the writing classes I teach here in Japan, not to mention how tedious it would be for foreign language learners to wade through pages of explanatory detail. So once I moved from teaching L1 to L2 composition, I largely abandoned this practice and instead focused on clarifying my assignment expectations through more hands-on approaches such as genre analysis, assessment rubric application, and peer review.

Yet despite giving students plenty of practice with sample texts that model what I want them to do, I have realized that some learners need more explicit guidance as to how they should proceed through the writing process. This is especially true when students are writing in new genres, such as research essays and other academic papers. Rather than inferring task requirements through model text analysis and the like, an assignment sheet speaks directly to the student. Of course, this
kind of direct communication can take place through spoken interaction during class, but over the years, I have found that defining a writing task through a formal document can be an extremely efficient and resourceful instructional tool, enabling students to write with direction and confidence.

Rationale
In this article, I am recommending the use of assignments sheets to communicate formal writing tasks to students, in other words tasks designed to assess writing performance and that involve a multi-step writing process with at least one revision cycle (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 162). Specifically, an assignment sheet delineates the task from start to finish, stating assignment goals, the prompt, the text type or rhetorical mode, essay structure or components, as well as length and deadlines. As part of the planning process, a teacher needs to decide these task features in terms of her particular group of learners, which involves anticipating difficulties and challenges that students might face as they write. If not properly thought through and communicated clearly by the teacher, students can misunderstand what is expected of them, which is frustrating for both and results in wasted efforts.

Although conveying writing tasks to learners is a basic responsibility of any writing teacher, there is little guidance on this aspect of classroom communication in the L2 writing literature. From a survey of teacher resource guides on L2 writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Harmer, 2004; Hyland, 2003), only Ferris and Hedgcock’s provides examples of assignment sheets. In their guide, the discussion briefly introduces factors teachers should consider when constructing a formal writing task, and they refer to Kroll and Reid (1994) and Reid and Kroll’s (1995) oft-cited investigation into the many factors relevant to designing effective writing prompts.

In contrast, four well-known L1 composition teacher guides devote entire chapters to developing formal writing assignments (Conners & Glenn, 1995; Gottschalk & Hjortshøj, 2004; Lindemann, 2001; White, 1999), instructing teachers on everything from conceptualizing, preparing, and sequencing writing assignments to composing assignment sheets that are clear, effective, and accessible to learners. These L1 guides acknowledge the difficulty of clarifying teacher expectations to novice writers, and considering that differences in cultural background, educational experience, and linguistic proficiency are typical characteristics of L2 writing classrooms (among students and/or between student and teacher), pedagogical tools that aim to enhance communication between teacher and learner are bound to be worthwhile.

Assignment sheets: purposes and functions
Assignment sheets are basic but valuable tools that synthesize class work and instruct students regarding the features of the task. Beyond this basic function, these documents can also be used to accomplish several other pedagogical goals.

As a means to express teacher expectations, the assignment sheet (AS) can fill an often unspoken gap in communication between teacher and learner—particularly true in L2 contexts where English teachers cannot easily make assumptions regarding learners’ literacy backgrounds. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) show through a questionnaire- and interview-based investigation that L1 literacy can vary from student to student, and we cannot assume that all Japanese learners have received a standardized instruction in writing. Consequently, teachers need to find out from students what writing experience they do have—both in the L1 and L2—in order to help learners draw from their L1 writing expertise and bridge the gap to L2 composition. When teachers introduce a new assignment, the AS can help elicit this sort of dialogue within the context of a given writing task. For example, after reviewing the basic components of a new assignment, I often have students do a short, question-prompted free-write that addresses their writing experience as it relates to the assignment at hand. As a more general resource, I have also conducted writing diagnostics at the start of the course that require students to describe both their L1 and L2 writing experience in terms of what writing assignments they have completed in high school and through exam preparation.

Aside from different literacy backgrounds, sometimes students can misinterpret an instructor’s expectations (Basham, Ray, & Whalley, 1993; Conner & Carrell, 1993). Based on a NES freshman composition course, Nelson (1990) reports on a series of case studies that involve mismatched intentions between teachers and students about writing assignments. What is surprising in many of the examples is how disparate the views of students and teachers are in terms of writing purposes and expectations.
In my experience, I have assigned a summary-response paper, which asks students to start with a one-paragraph article summary followed by a multi-paragraph response to the article’s ideas. Despite carefully reviewing two samples in class, I received some essays on the reading topic but unrelated to the class article, a long detailed summary only of the reading, and other papers where students copied the original opinions and artfully pasted them into a response section. An AS can complement such class work by explicitly reinforcing the purpose and task features and help reduce the likelihood of multiple interpretations.

Thus, considering the possibilities for miscommunication, a major advantage of the AS is its immediacy. The audience for the AS is the students themselves, and the rhetorical situation is framed in terms that address them directly. This can help some learners recognize the task requirements more easily than through model essay analysis or inference-based exercises alone. Assignment sheets explicitly instruct students to connect class work to their own text production, and teachers can highlight this connection by referring to the AS as needed throughout the writing process. Further, as teachers comment on student papers, they can point back to the AS in their written feedback in order to highlight discrepancies between the learner’s text and task expectations. In this way, the AS becomes a useful reference tool.

The AS also contains important composition metalanguage that will be used between teachers and students throughout the task sequence and the overall course. Terms such as draft, revision, development, reaction may be new to students in English and warrant time spent on clarification. At the end of one of my writing courses, I can remember reviewing the contents of a student’s final portfolio, and when I asked if he had included both the first and final drafts for all course assignments, he looked at me blankly and said, “What’s a draft?” Students need a vocabulary for talking about writing, and an AS is an excellent tool to introduce and review basic composition-related terms. Equally important as composition terminology are “strategy words” (Conners & Glenn, 1995) that typically appear in essay prompts, such as analyze, describe, explain, justify. These words define the essay’s rhetorical purpose and are key to understanding how to respond to a writing prompt and to organize one’s ideas. If not understood correctly, learners’ efforts can easily be misdirected.

Finally, for teachers, preparing an AS functions as a heuristic in that it helps clarify their thinking about learning goals and how to best accomplish them. Through the process of preparing a written AS, teachers must consider the writing task from several perspectives and then articulate their ideas in concrete, task-specific terms. Thinking through an assignment cycle down to the seemingly minor details leads teachers to make a number of decisions in advance before students begin to write, an effort that greatly helps anticipate pitfalls and avoid frustrations later.

### Preparing the assignment sheet

Minimally, an assignment sheet should include the following components (see Reid and Kroll, 1995, for more comprehensive advice regarding writing task design as well as Lindemann’s, 2001, p. 220-221, heuristic of question prompts to help teachers write their own assignments).

**Assignment goals:** A good assignment is based on learning objectives commonly understood between teacher and student. Which writing skills and strategies will be developed through this task? What is the class working towards improving as they write this essay? How does this particular assignment connect to the overall course goals? Answers to these questions clarify why the teacher is assigning a given task.

**Writing topic:** The writing topic, or prompt, introduces the theme and the purpose for writing. The first step in preparing a good prompt is to define the rhetorical problem that students will solve (Lindemann, 2001). Essentially, a rhetorical problem engages students intellectually on a number of levels so they are not pursuing a meaningless exercise. For example, writing tasks such as “My favorite sport” or “Write a letter applying for a job” or “Describe your bedroom” have no purpose beyond just having students write; however, “Describe your room and explain how various details in it reflect your personality and habits” is a prompt that introduces a rhetorical problem (Irmischer, as cited in Conners and Glenn, 1995, p. 57). Here, students are given a reason to write and must assess their relationship with the reader and subject in order to make their description interesting and informative (Lindemann, 2001). These layers of decision-making make the task meaningful for the writer.

**Essay requirements:** An AS should specify the essay’s components, steps in the assignment cycle, deadlines, and length. The prompt typi-
cally indicates the rhetorical mode or genre, but it’s helpful to further clarify how an argument or theme should develop. For example, maybe you want students to include a summary paragraph, a certain number of reasons or cited sources to support the thesis, a definition of a key concept, or a counter-argument—whatever information you expect to see in the students’ writing should be included on the AS. Next, specify the steps in the assignment cycle so students can see the overall process from start to finish, including due dates. It is important that students understand how each preparation task contributes to the final essay. Students will invariably ask how long their papers should be. Even if you do not have a firm expectation in mind, in my experience, it’s best to at least give a page range. Length indicates how much content they need to generate, which in turn spells out how much time they need to spend on the homework. No guidelines in this area can lead to misinterpretations in topic scope and depth.

**Evaluation:** This section ties the assignment to teacher evaluation. It recasts the assignment’s expectations into evaluative terms making it transparent to students how their essays will be graded. By addressing evaluation up front at the time of assigning the task, students can better understand what they need to do in order to write a successful essay.

**Sample essay:** Attaching a model essay to the assignment sheet is another way to further clarify an effective, appropriate response. Teachers can save successful examples of students’ work for future classes or simply write a response themselves. With a sample essay on hand, the teacher can refer back and forth between the AS and sample, highlighting each requirement. This process greatly helps students envision the assignment description in final composition form. In the Appendix for this article, a student essay is included with the AS, and although not a “perfect” text, it gives students a clear idea of what kind of response meets the assignment criteria within the realm of their abilities.

Finally, regarding the overall AS document, it’s best to use transparent, jargon-free language. In the sample AS (see Appendix), professional terminology like prompt, task, genre, rubric were all substituted with more learner-friendly terms in order to avoid making the essay instructions unnecessarily complicated. At the same time, too much detail can discourage students and shut down communication. When students read the AS, they need to feel like the task at hand is manageable and that the document is pointing them in the right direction. Above all, the AS must be fully comprehensible to your students.

**Processing the assignment sheet in class**

Once the writing assignment has been prepared, it needs to be reviewed and discussed with students. With some creativity, this can be done interactively in class. Below are a few suggestions based on the sample AS provided in the Appendix, which was designed for an intermediate-level, reading-based writing course.

**Introducing the assignment sheet**

Here the aim is to review the contents of the AS and to ensure students fully understand the expectations for the task. Rather than just reading through the document in class, teachers can employ any number of interactive reading exercises such as timed scanning exercises, jigsaw tasks, T/F questions, quizzes, or some other comprehension check type exercise. The AS is a reading in itself and can be processed actively like any other written text.

**Deconstructing the prompt**

An important part of reviewing the AS is deconstructing the prompt, or in other words, identifying exactly what students are being asked to do and distinguishing the various parts of the writing task. The prompt for the sample AS is quite simple and is phrased as a question already, but for prompts that describe a situation or that are expressed as statements, it can be helpful for learners to rephrase the central task as a question and in their own words. For example, “Write an essay that discusses whether it is worthwhile to study abroad or not” could be rephrased as “Is study abroad important for students?” or “Do I think studying abroad is useful or not?” For more complex prompts, asking students, “What is this assignment asking me to do?” and having them list the required tasks helps to confirm understanding. Overall, reformulating the prompt as a question or series of questions helps learners distill the task down to a direct, response-oriented idea.

**Addressing composition metalanguage**

In order to participate in the composition classroom and to advance their own knowledge of the writing process, students need to develop a
metalanguage for talking about writing. The AS is an important resource for this key vocabulary. Looking at the sample AS, we see strategy terms like summarize, respond/response, synthesize, explain, justify. Do students know exactly what these terms mean? One way to make sure is to prepare a matching exercise in which students connect the word with a sentence or short paragraph that illustrates it. As a follow-up, teachers can have students find applications of the term in the model essay by cross-referencing it with the AS, such as identifying sentences that function as justification.

Other terms, like draft, revision, development, and support, are used throughout a writing course regardless of the specific assignment, especially for evaluative purposes in teacher written feedback, on assessment rubrics, and in peer review. Teachers can familiarize their students with this language by cross-referencing the terms between the AS and evaluation rubric. For example, one of the assignment goals on the sample AS is “to respond to the article’s ideas with your own opinion.” How is this goal expressed in evaluative terms on the corresponding evaluation rubric? By searching for parallels between the evaluation rubric and the AS, students gain practice using composition language while at the same time, assignment requirements are being reinforced.

Analyzing model essays

Sample texts are reviewed in writing classrooms for a variety of purposes. When analyzed in terms of assignment expectations, learners make a direct connection between task description and final product. For example, model essays can be used to identify essay components cited on the AS (e.g., “Where is the article summary?” “What are the writer’s opinions about living alone?”) and to practice evaluation based on the AS’s learning goals (e.g., Is the summary section complete? Are the main ideas fully developed?). Ultimately, this cross-referencing reinforces the information on the AS and clarifies task features.

Conclusion

Naturally, teachers want to avoid misunderstandings that can cause setbacks in the writing process or undermine an assignment’s original objectives. Conveying instructor expectations clearly and succinctly is not easy, and doing so via a written document is much more effective than delivering the details verbally in bits and pieces or through a brief rundown on the board. In my experience, students appreciate having a written document to refer to, and they often have the AS in hand when asking me questions about the homework. In order to improve teacher-student communication, assignment sheets can serve multiple roles, not only as documents that delineate task requirements, but also as pedagogical tools that reinforce and further students’ composition knowledge.

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Appendix

**Sample Assignment Sheet**

**Assignment Goals**
- to summarize two news articles
- to respond to the article’s ideas with your own opinion
- to synthesize your opinions with the article’s ideas into a multi-paragraph response essay

**Writing Topic**
During their university years or soon after graduation, many students begin living on their own. This can be a difficult period of transition, and according to the articles we read, loneliness and feelings of depression are more common in people who live alone. On the other hand, moving away from your family is an important step to becoming an independent adult.

Do you think it’s better to live alone or with your family? Why? Write a response essay in which you explain your reasons and justify them with information from the class readings, examples and/or personal experience.

**Essay Requirements**

**Length:**
- 2-3 pages
- 12 point font, double-spaced

**Structure:**
- Paragraph 1 = Introduction
- Paragraph 2 = Article summary
- Paragraph 3, 4, 5, etc. = Response paragraphs
- Final paragraph = Conclusion

**Due dates:**
- Article summary paragraph: due May 10
- Article annotations: due May 17
- Essay draft: due May 24
- Final essay: due June 7

**Evaluation**

Like the other essay assignments, this essay is worth 20 points. See evaluation form below for more detail.

**Essay Evaluation Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an accurate summary of the readings?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the essay express the writer’s opinions in relation to the readings?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the entire essay well-organized and easy to follow?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are paragraphs properly structured?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the writer’s ideas explained fully?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the writer use information from the readings, examples and/or personal experience to explain the main ideas?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the language clear and correct?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are ideas explained with effective vocabulary and varied sentence structure?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Response Essay

The merit and demerit of living alone

When people graduate from high school and enter a university or get a job, some of them begin to live alone. Many of my friends are living alone now. Some people had to leave their home because it’s too far to go to the school or their place of work from their home. Others did not have to live alone, but they start to live alone because they want to live on their own.

In the two articles, there are some bad points of living alone. For example, the number of elderly living alone is increasing, so it can causes some social problems. Furthermore, living alone can make people feel depressed and isolated, not only for elderly but also for young working-age adults. The articles show only bad points of living alone, but I think there are also some good points of living alone. According to the article of “Will living alone make you depressed?,” people who tend to feel depressed are more likely to live alone because of their temperament. However, I wonder if it is true. I wonder if living alone is equal to loneliness.

I have never experienced living alone because I do not have to leave home. I can go to the university easily from home. It takes about only about 45 minutes. I do not want to leave home and live alone, because I have no confidence in living on my own. However, I can understand the good points of living alone. My friends who live alone can cook. They said that they could not cook before starting to live alone, but they got used to cook. I want to be able to cook, but I do not have chance to challenge and practice cooking because my parents are good at cooking. Those friends need to cook something to eat, but I do not need to cook. If a person lives alone, he or she must manage living expenses, do housekeeping such as cooking, cleaning, washing laundry and so on. It is hard, but it will become good experience. Living alone can help people to become independent. I do not have experience of living alone and I do not want to leave home, but sometimes I think I need to be more independent.

One of the reasons why I do not want to live alone is that I do not feel isolated. I can agree that living alone make people depressed. However, I do not understand enough the idea that the depression-prone are more likely to live alone. If a person who is depressed begins to live alone, he or she will feel more isolated and lonely. I cannot understand why people who tend to be depressed take the trouble to live alone. There may be people who return their parents’ home because they are depressed and lonely. As I said, living alone has some good points. However, if you feel depressed or isolated, you should not live alone. To leave home and live alone become a good experience to be independent, but sometimes people must need somebody’s help. When I am depressed, I want to be alone at first, but after then I want someone to be with me, so I cannot understand enough the idea.

I have lived with my family since I was born, and nobody has leave home to live alone, so if I begin to live alone, I may feel lonely and be depressed. However, I do not think living alone is equal to loneliness. There are many people who enjoy their life although they live alone. One of my friends is living alone though her family live in same city. She wanted to become independent, so she decided to live alone. She enjoys her lifestyle. She sometimes feels lonely, but she says she does not think about returning home. Not only her, I have friends who enjoy living alone. They can use their time as they want, so they enjoy their free life. Of course there are many people living alone who are lonely and depressed. Especially, elderly people living alone may be lonely and anxious about their life. However, I do not want to define living alone as negative mean, such as lonely life.

Living alone has both good points and bad points. If you start to live alone, you may feel lonely. It can make you depressed. However, you can have good experiences and learn many things from living alone. You need to prepare your meals, wash your laundry, and clean your room on your own. You must also manage your life budget. You feel those works are too hard to get done successfully, but you will get used to the cycle of living alone. You can find that how your parents work hard for your family and how your family is important. When you can get used to live alone, you will become more independent than ever. However, you should keep in mind that living alone is possible to lead negative feeling and cause some problems, especially to elderly. We should take care of people living alone who feel lonely or isolated. I thought living alone was lonely and very difficult for me, so I have never thought that I wanted to live alone. However, I get interested in living alone through thinking of good points of living alone. We should consider both good points and bad points of living alone.
Language Socialization and Language Teaching: An interview with Patricia (Patsy) Duff

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Social linguistics has grown in importance in recent years, and we have become aware of the role of language not just as a means of communication, but also as a creator of social identity. Additionally, in our current globalized world, contact between users of different languages has increased, especially in countries with large immigrant populations. This interview with Dr. Patricia Duff explores the major issues in Language Socialization. Dr. Duff is currently Co-director of the Centre for Research in Chinese Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, Canada, where she is Professor of Language and Literacy Education. Her primary research activities concern the processes and outcomes of (second) language learning and language socialization in secondary school and university classroom contexts (foreign/second language, bilingual/immersion, mainstream content courses), as well as in workplaces and communities more generally.

Patricia Duff (PD): LS is a theoretical perspective that also has a methodology associated with it. The goal of that perspective is to understand how people learn to become proficient in the ways and linguistic conventions, and other kinds of cultural conventions, of a particular culture or community, the kinds of assistance they get in doing so, and how that affects their life trajectories as a member of that community or other communities. It started out by looking at children becoming proficient in their first language and in other aspects of communication in their own culture, in their communities, schools, and so on.

DD: What led you to this field?
PD: Well, I came to it informally through lots of experience abroad, in Japan among other places. I was interested in local cultures, ways of using language, learning language, and the pragmatics of communication. As I’ve worked as a teacher in Japan, China, Korea, and other countries, I’ve always been a kind of amateur anthropologist. But I came to it more formally when I went to UCLA to study second language acquisition (SLA) traditionally from a functional linguistics perspective.

DD: How did you move from psycholinguistics to sociolinguistics?
PD: At that time Elinor Ochs, one of the pioneers in this area, was at UCLA. Having studied a lot about mainstream SLA up to that point at the University of Hawaii and then at UCLA, her arriving (as a newly appointed full professor in applied linguistics) with a very different perspective opened a new window onto things. Ochs has a background in linguistic anthropology. At the time I happened...
to be involved in a project in Eastern Europe and I thought this would be a very interesting context to apply Ochs’s ideas. So it was my own prior interest to a large extent, coupled with expertise from the work that Elinor was involved in, that led me into the exploration of LS in the second language field, which was not her main interest. In Hungary I planned to look at changes in discourse, political discourse, as well as the languages of education, Hungarian and English, in bilingual schools from an LS perspective.

DD: What LS research have you done in Canada?

PD: The work in Hungary was my first major project for my dissertation. Since then I’ve done similar projects in the Vancouver area, in the Canadian high school context. Here I’ve studied the integration of newcomers, mainly from Asia, into mainstream social studies classrooms, which was of concern to me from my work in Hungary. I wanted to see what was going on this side of the Atlantic, and how the insights I got in Hungary might help me understand what was going on here.

Subsequent to that, I was involved in a number of studies here at the university, looking at similar issues, but as students move from high school to university in ESL, mainstream, or sheltered language instruction contexts. In that work I was not particularly interested in immigrant students, but rather international students and English first-language students. What does it take to give an academic presentation in a course in arts and sciences? What are the different cultures around that—around knowing, representing knowledge, engaging in discussions about that? More recently I’ve been looking at the same kinds of things in academic writing, for term papers, for theses, and dissertations.

That has been my main work in connection with English language socialization, something which refers to the previous language experience of the student. At UBC, in connection with the Centre for Research in Language and Literacy Education I’m also working on issues connected with Chinese (heritage) language education and socialization. That’s not concerns explicitly with LS, but implicitly it is. The reason is the particular situation in Vancouver. Here we have such a big Asia-Pacific population, whether it’s people from Asia or those born here but with Asian backgrounds. So it seemed very timely for us to look not at people learning English, but those learning Chinese. The students are both heritage language learners of Chinese and English native speakers. We try to understand their language development, their experiences, social aspects, and LS too, to some extent.

DD: What aspect of LS do you deal with now?

PD: The work that I’m doing here is concerned primarily with second language learning in secondary schools, universities, workplaces and so on, where people have to learn how to communicate in context-appropriate ways through their second language. The most recent work I’ve been doing at this university is related to academic discourse socialization, both oral and written, and how people learn. For example, I’m teaching a doctoral seminar this afternoon with our new PhD students in language and literacy education and TESL, and a lot of it is about preparing them to become scholars—that is published scholars and presenters, thinkers in education and in other related spheres, policy, and so on. So what does it take for these students to become successful in the ways of academe? That’s what we look at.

DD: How does LS relate to SLA?

PD: Traditionally, SLA has examined linguistic developmental patterns, stages of development, and some of the cognitive and linguistic explanations for that development. But since the late 1990s there’s been a greater emphasis on the social aspect of that experience and how that affects learning. Also we’ve understood more about learners’ perception of themselves, both as learners and as users of the language of a culture. So LS has developed a so-called social turn to some extent. That aspect of learning has become increasingly mainstream both in understanding linguistic repertoires and also the process of contact with the communities in which they participate using that language—the communities they strive to become active members of.

The intersection with SLA is that with LS it’s all about developing cultural and communicative competencies in another language, but it also brings in their social experience, cultural experience, and community engagement.

DD: What is the relevance of LS to TESL?

PD: One of the things that is most relevant to teaching is making teachers aware that just exposure to different uses of language is not sufficient for their students to appropriate the kinds of discourse that are privileged or expected in a particular context. We know from the comprehensible input-output-interaction approach that
input alone is not enough, but if we look at the discourse level and not just the phrase or sentence level, it’s commonly assumed that people will understand, for example, what APA style is, what the appropriate genre is for writing, say, a letter or newsletter, or what genre is used when you are asked to discuss something in class. It goes along with raising the awareness of students about the different conventions that they really need to be taken seriously in their different fields. In the piece I contributed to the Hornberger and McKay (2010) volume, it’s quite applied in the sense that it would be helpful for teachers to know. I think every chapter in that book can be expected to have some direct application to teachers.

DD: How has our understanding of classroom teaching changed as a result of LS concepts?

PD: Firstly, in understanding the rituals of classrooms, in terms of interaction patterns for newcomers: What takes place at the beginning of a class? How do things proceed? What are the norms of interaction in the classroom? And how can teachers themselves help support those who don’t already know what those norms are to get to know them?

Another thing in this work, which may be a little harder to tease apart, is that with language comes culture. This doesn’t necessarily mean you’re talking about the culture of Japan when you’re teaching Japanese. Rather, as you study the language there are all sorts of verbal routines—for example, some which you use before you eat, after you eat, as you’re leaving or returning to the house and many other kinds of formulaic, ritualistic types of interaction throughout the day. With Japanese so many parts of the language come not just with a semantic meaning but a pragmatic and cultural meaning as well, related to in-group/out-group and cultural expectations of hierarchy, deference, honorifics, and empathy building.

In fact lots of LS work has been done with respect to Japanese. Researchers such as Haruko Cook (2008) have studied what it is for learners of Japanese to appropriate those norms and to perform them as is customary. Furthermore, they have suggested what teachers can do to help students know what the options are. Conversely they tell us what the consequences are of not conforming to those expectations, whether they be gender-related language norms or others. So in summary, LS actually has a lot of relevance both to teachers and learners.

DD: How about your future publications?

PD: We’re just in the process of publishing a book through this Center. The title is Learning Chinese: Linguistic, sociocultural, and narrative perspectives (Duff et al., 2013). Our original contribution is to study the ways people learn and engage in narrative production, annotation, and revision about their experiences of learning Chinese; to examine the sociocultural themes expressed in relation to identity and community, which have been looked at very little in relation to Chinese as a second/additional language; to examine the linguistic dimensions of learners of Chinese at different points in time and different levels of proficiency and how they might best be captured; and to consider Chinese literacy(ies), not just in terms of character knowledge but also how people engage in literacy in their everyday lives (i.e., outside of school). In the book and a recent presentation in Boston (AAAL), we examine some of the everyday uses of literacy in people’s lives, whether through email, tattoos, Facebook, or logographic art.

DD: Thank you very much for your thought-provoking ideas, Dr. Duff.

References

Daniel Dunkley is an English Lecturer at Aichi Gakuin University, Nagoya. His research interests include language testing and cultural studies. He holds an MA from Surrey University, UK, where his supervisor was the testing specialist Dr. Glenn Fulcher. He is a member of JALT Testing and Evaluation N-SIG and JLTA (Japan Language Testing Association). He has contributed several review and interview articles to TLT and to Shiken, the JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG journal.
Welcome to another issue of My Share. As we enter the rainy season, it’s natural to find ourselves spending a bit more time indoors, and what better way to spend this time than to plan a few lessons? In this issue, Nicholas Domjancic provides a news activity to gauge students’ level, Mark Koprowski helps students improve their writing speed, Brett Davies brings vocabulary cards into the oral communication class, and Elliot Patton provides ideas for improving dialog journals. These four great activities are certain to brighten up even the cloudiest day.

Before getting to those activities, though, we have one final note. Harry and I would like to announce that this will be our last issue as My Share editors. We’d like to thank the hard-working staff of TLT, our readers, and most of all, the contributors to the column, without whom My Share could not exist. Working on My Share has been a great learning experience, and we both feel we have grown professionally over the years of being with the column. The ideas and activities provided by our contributors have helped our own students in the classroom, and for this, we are extremely grateful.

Starting in June, two new editors will have the pleasure of gathering and organizing all your great ideas and seeing them off to print. We wish the new My Share editors all the best and are sure they’ll enjoy working on the column as much as we both have.

Tasks and the news: Learning about mixed-level students’ abilities in the first class
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Quick guide
• Keywords: First class, current topics, task-based lesson, group work
• Learner English level: Intermediate to advanced
• Learner maturity: University
• Preparation time: 1 hour or less
• Activity time: 90 minutes
• Materials: Four topics from recent news, lesson handout, dictionaries

About two years ago, I was asked to teach a content-based university class. I was told that the levels would be mixed and that the class would be composed of a mix of Japanese and exchange students. So, I thought of a simple task-based news lesson for the first class that would give me an idea of the students’ abilities, awareness, and speaking level.
Preparation

**Step 1:** Select four current issues from the news for the activity; then, divide the class into small groups of three to four.

**Step 2:** Give students a handout with the activity steps (see Appendix) and a list of the four news topics.

Procedure

**Step 1:** (10-15 minutes) Have students do a simple ranking exercise using four topics from the news. The activity tells students to take a few minutes to look at the topics. They must decide which topics they are most familiar with and which they are least familiar with. Students then make a list with reasons for their ranking. Provide students with phrases like *I don’t know about _____ because…* or *This is unfamiliar …*. After completing their lists, students report them to the class.

**Step 2:** Each group of students now must say one thing about each topic: what they know or do not know about each topic. Introduce phrases like *We know that_____ is happening…* or *We didn’t know about this topic since it happened in…*. The responses should give an accurate depiction of students’ speaking level and should take less than 15 minutes.

**Step 3:** Now have students make a list of five words connected to each topic. This part of the lesson takes about 10 to 15 minutes. When students have finished compiling their lists of words they associate with each topic, each group has to write their words on the blackboard, making it easy for the class to see what others have thought of. This is also a good way to explain new words that some students are not familiar with.

**Step 4:** Instruct groups to predict the future developments of the events listed above. I encourage the class to be imaginative when predicting the future of these events, and students seem to enjoy thinking of the possible futures. This also gives the teacher a picture of how well discussion-based lessons will work out in subsequent classes.

**Step 5:** Finally, have individual students expand upon **Step 4** of the activity by having them give a short spoken presentation (under 2 minutes) in the following class. The topic of this presentation is predictions for the outcome of a news event from the activity. For an additional challenge, students should incorporate at least five of the vocabulary items from **Step 3** of the activity in their presentation.

Conclusion

Although this lesson best suits intermediate- to high-level content-based classes, it is a useful way to get to know and challenge any class. Also, this lesson gives the teacher a good picture of how well students can speak and discuss complex issues in class. Finally, it is a good way to see how well students will interact with others in a task-based setting.

Appendix

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

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**Boosting writing speed through timed continuous writing**

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**Quick guide**

- **Keywords:** Writing, fluency, speed, practice, activity, develop
- **Learner English level:** Beginner to advanced
- **Learner maturity:** Elementary school to adult
- **Preparation time:** None
- **Activity time:** 15 minutes
- **Materials:** Paper, pens

The aim of building fluency has long been viewed as an uncontroversial and vital component of the language learning program. In fact, Nation (1997) has urged teachers to apportion as much as 25% of class time for the sole purpose of developing fluency so that “learners can make the best use of what they already know” (p. 35).
To this end, ample opportunities for fluency-based practice are necessary to enable learners to make their language knowledge available for immediate use.

Yet, more recently, language experts have extended the traditional concept of fluency beyond speech to include all basic skill areas: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. However, in many writing courses, it is formal accuracy (organization, grammar, sentence structure, and mechanics) that tends to prevail while the prospect of enhancing writing speed, a useful skill in its own right, is neglected.

One simple but effective activity to offset this disproportionate focus is what Nation has termed *continuous writing* (1991). What follows is a practical step-by-step elaboration of this idea.

**Procedure**

**Step 1:** Ask students to clear their desks, apart from a pen, so that there are no distractions. Distribute lined paper to them.

**Step 2:** Explain to the class that you will give them a simple topic and they will write non-stop on this topic for ten minutes. They should write as much as they can within those ten minutes. Students should not worry about correct grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Rather, the priority is to express their meaning on paper as quickly as possible. The use of dictionaries or erasers is not permitted. Explain that their papers will not be read by their classmates or formally corrected.

**Step 3:** Write the topic on the board (e.g., *my hobbies, my daily routine, my family, travel, music, shopping, last weekend, my summer break*). For a fluency-building activity, it is important that the topic be somewhat simple and familiar. The aim is for students to become faster and more agile with the language they already know. It’s best to avoid any heavy or complex topics that might place a greater linguistic or conceptual burden on them.

**Step 4:** Give the class one minute of thinking time (or longer) to consider the English vocabulary and grammar they may need to express themselves. Allocating even one minute to brainstorm the topic should be enough to result in longer, more fluent and organized responses.

**Step 5:** Say “Go!” A stopwatch will be useful to keep track of the time limit.

**Step 6:** After ten minutes, call time.

**Step 7:** Ask students to count the total number of words they have written and to write the number at the top of the page. Have them make a record of the result in the back of their course books: today’s date, topic, total number of words. It will look something like this: *March 3, 2012, My hobbies, 148 words.* If this activity is regularly carried out as a warm-up at the start of each class, a written record will allow students to look back upon the completion of the course and notice the steady and tangible progress they have made. They will see and feel a real sense of achievement.

**Step 8:** Collect the papers. To add a fun element of competition, you may also award a prize (e.g., chocolate) at the end of the lesson to the student who has written the greatest number of words. Alternatively, a prize can be awarded to the student who has made the greatest leap in progress compared to their last score. This option has the strategic benefit of avoiding the same winners every time. Optionally, you can return the papers later with a brief positive comment on the content.

**Conclusion**

Continuous writing offers an easy, practical, and convenient way for learners of all ages and levels to gradually boost their writing speeds. If we sincerely want our learners to develop greater fluency, including writing fluency, this activity is an effective addition to any writing program.

**References**


Guess my word: Building vocabulary in oral communication classes

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Quick guide

• **Keywords:** Vocabulary, speaking, peer learning, negotiating meaning
• **Learner English level:** All
• **Learner maturity:** High school, college/university, adult
• **Preparation time:** 20 minutes
• **Activity time:** 15 minutes
• **Materials:** Vocabulary cards (one per student)

As demand grows for learner-centred oral communication classes in high school and beyond, teachers are frequently faced with a dilemma: How can I teach students the necessary vocabulary to discuss a topic but maximize student-to-student talk time?

Vocabulary lists encourage students to rely too heavily on the written word and explicit pre-teaching of vocabulary in class is time-consuming and teacher-centred, but ignoring the issue of vocabulary completely can lead to stilted discussions, frustrated students, and a drop in confidence.

This activity aims to solve the problem by inviting students to own one new vocabulary item and use it in a group discussion. As classmates negotiate the meaning of new words, the activity encourages authentic student interaction and peer learning.

Preparation

**Step 1:** Select items of vocabulary that you think will be useful for discussing the day’s topic but may be new to students. For example, before a lesson on the environment, you could choose **global warming**, **fossil fuels**, **ozone**, and **eco-friendly**. I limit the number of new vocabulary items to four per lesson.

**Step 2:** Put each vocabulary item on a separate card alongside a short explanation, some synonyms, or, for lower levels, an L1 translation. For example: Eco-friendly: Helpful for the environment; Re-using a shopping bag is eco-friendly.

**Step 3:** Print enough cards so that there is one per student.

Procedure

**Step 1:** Hand out one vocabulary card per student and request that they do not show their card to anyone else. Give students one minute to read their own card and clarify the meaning with the teacher, quietly, if they are still unsure.

**Step 2:** Introduce simple phrases for negotiating meaning, for example, *What does (unknown term) mean?* or, *In other words*...

**Step 3:** Ask students to use their new vocabulary whenever appropriate during a group discussion. In my classes, with four students per group, students usually discuss a question for about 15 minutes. You may wish to put a minimum number of times students must use their new vocabulary, such as, *Use your new words at least three times.*

**Step 4:** Monitor students’ performance. If a student does not understand a classmate, encourage them to negotiate meaning and explain in their own words, but remind them not to reveal whether it is the item on their vocabulary card.

**Step 5:** At the end of the lesson, students try to guess what new vocabulary is on their classmates’ cards. If students are still unsure of any words, they can explain more explicitly or read out the definitions on the cards.

Variations

More motivated students can be encouraged to research the lesson topic beforehand and prepare vocabulary cards with words of their own choosing. You could hand out the vocabulary cards at the beginning of class and have students use their new items throughout the entire lesson, not only during the group discussion.
Conclusion
This activity has proven useful in helping students build vocabulary with minimal teacher talk time.

The collaborative learning aspect leads to authentic interaction and increased confidence as students get to own a piece of language and help their peers. Thanks to their exposure to relevant language items, students' ability to talk about difficult topics can improve, resulting in more fluent and interesting discussions.

The game element—guessing what is on a classmate's card—encourages students to listen to their peers more closely and helps raise awareness of any new language they hear, regardless of whether it comes from the vocabulary cards or not. It also makes a lively end to the lesson as students' guesses are confirmed or denied.

Creating a more productive dialog journal through task-based checklists
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Quick guide
- **Keywords:** Dialog journal, writing, tasks, organization, feedback
- **Learner English level:** High beginner to advanced
- **Maturity level:** University
- **Preparation time:** 30 minutes to prepare a sample journal entry, time to provide feedback, 15 minutes to prepare and print the checklist
- **Activity time:** Approximately 90 minutes
- **Materials:** Notebooks, pens, paper, paste

Dialog journals, notebooks used to establish written communication between teacher and student, are an excellent addition to any writing class. A common issue, though, is the tendency for a student, at a loss for what to write, simply to chronicle the previous weekend's meals and shopping experiences. This results in writing that can make productive dialog difficult. One alternative is to provide a directive prompt, but this takes away from the freedom a journal provides. Perhaps the simplest compromise is to paste into the journal a student-generated checklist of writing tasks that can be completed in the order the student chooses. This allows students to engage in a wide range of useful writing tasks while feeling free to write about what they wish.

Preparation
**Step 1:** Before students begin creating entries, prepare a model journal entry they can use as a reference. This is my normal format for a high-intermediate university writing class:
Left-hand page: This space is reserved for other course-related assignments, such as vocabulary lists.
Right-hand page: Dialog journal. Length requirements vary by level; for a high-intermediate class, I would expect at least 100 words per week. I also request that students leave room for me to write comments.

**Step 2:** Based on your writing goals for the class, make a list of 10 to 15 possible tasks to suggest to the class. Students may approve or reject these as well as provide their own. Potential tasks include expressing an opinion, describing a photo, describing a process, writing a movie review, and drawing a manga.

Procedure
**Step 1:** Introduce the model journal to the class and provide guidelines.
**Step 2:** Allow students class time to create their first entries (30-45 minutes). For the first topic, I suggest assigning a brief self-introduction.
**Step 3:** Collect the journals at the end of class. You can collect journals either weekly or biweekly. I try to keep them for no longer than three days. The amount of feedback rests upon the level and size of the class. For large classes, feedback can become incredibly time-consuming, so you may wish to alternate the weeks students submit their journals.
Step 4: Return the journals, allowing students time to read comments.

Step 5: Now, the class can determine the remaining tasks. Write two to three journal task suggestions on the board. Put students into groups and ask each group to brainstorm five to six tasks.

Step 6: Ask groups to suggest tasks for the whole class. I like to create a checklist on a projection screen during the class as students make suggestions. The result should be a list of 15 to 16 tasks from which students can choose.

Step 7: Make the list into a checklist by putting a box beside each entry for students to check upon completion and a line on which they can write the completion date. Before the next class, print and photocopy checklists for each student.

Step 8: Have students glue the lists into their journals.

Conclusion

Students seem to enjoy the gentle prompting the checklist gives them, and they also appreciate the freedom to complete whichever task they choose. If you need to conserve class time, you can simply have students handwrite the checklist in the journal. As an alternative, some instructors may prefer an electronic dialog format, such as a blog. I myself have incorporated message boards and blogs into previous courses. Notebooks, however, have their advantages: I appreciate the accessibility of paper for Japanese first-year college students, who often lack computer literacy. I also appreciate the creativity allowed by the medium; many student treat their journals like scrapbooks, filling them with comics, photos, and stylized writing. I hope that the small addition of a checklist can improve the functionality and productivity of your students’ journals without sacrificing enjoyment.

BOOK REVIEWS

Door-to-Door: A Complete Study Abroad Guide


Reviewed by Matthew W. Turner, Rikkyo University

For English language learners in Japan, opportunities for genuine and meaningful English usage are decidedly limited. The chance to partake in study programs overseas can arguably be a valuable and viable supplement to learning English, and an option that could yield long-term future benefits. Although such programs have ample positive aspects, they can still present challenging and unfamiliar situations for Japanese learners to overcome. Door-to-Door: A Complete Study Abroad Guide is designed to help students navigate and enjoy this experience. It provides a wealth of practical and helpful advice, from finding a program to the logistics of living abroad.
Abroad Guide, attempts to make this process more enjoyable for learners. Suitable principally for tertiary-level learners of English who wish to embark on study trips to native English speaking, inner-circle countries (see Kachru, 1992), the book aims to prepare and offer support to learners by bridging the gap between home and host countries, through a collection of activities and projects. Door-to-Door could be described as more of an interactive guidebook for learners than a traditional classroom-based, teacher-fronted resource, for the following reasons. As the title of the book suggests, the layout leads the learners through all stages of a study trip. Section A, Before You Go, helps learners consider their own contexts, and how information about family and home country could be communicated during a forthcoming study trip. Section B operates as an advice section structured around problems which learners are likely to meet during a home-stay. This section is then followed by a rather lengthy, but informative guide about a group of commonly visited countries including Australia, Canada, and America. This section is supported by reading comprehension tasks such as crosswords and quizzes. The final two sections are more learner-autonomous and involve a series of projects to be undertaken during learners’ trips, before communicatively reflecting on their programs after returning to Japan.

The text is written to appeal to a wide audience, as there does not seem to be any overt focus on particular groups of learners or specific study trip purposes. Therefore, it seems that this text is designed more as a general resource for a variety of learners which focuses largely on the social aspects of study abroad as opposed to any ESP learning needs (see Hall, 2011, pp. 193-195). For example, no attention is paid to classroom experiences of learners or any language that may be of use in these situations. There is limited L1 used throughout, which other culturally oriented materials tend to use more of (see Hoffer, Honna, & Tajima, 2010), and the text largely depends on English as the medium for both instruction and information. It is interesting to find such a text that attempts to partner language activities with information about particular countries that learners would perhaps more traditionally go to a guidebook for. Although the benefits of using more authoritative and specific resources like a guidebook, to find out the essentials about a country of study are clear, this text presents the added benefit of facilitating communication, and promoting interaction with peers who may also be embarking on trips abroad.

The overall design and instructions are easily understandable for learners of pre-intermediate level and above, making Door-to-Door an attractive option for self-study. Additionally, this text could be used as orientation material, in courses preparing learners for study abroad. In sampling this textbook, the reviewer brought together a small group of Japanese undergraduate learners who had all returned from a short study trip in the UK. Of particular interest was the Photo Expo activity in the final section of the text. With very little teacher intervention, the students were able to speak confidently about photographs they had taken during their trip. A great deal of incidental language was generated, which evoked fond memories within the learners. The group also studied the Country Guide section about the UK, commenting that they felt this information would have been of benefit to them before embarking on their trip. It remains to be seen, however, if the set of projects in Section D really added much to the study abroad experience. Learners regarded tasks such as writing about an outing or grocery shopping were time-consuming and felt that activities which fostered direct communication between native speakers and fellow English learners on their courses would have been more beneficial.

In summary, this text is highly recommended as independent learning material for learners preparing to study abroad and encourages learners to continue using some of the activities included at every stage of their trip. The text may also be suitable for educational departments as material for pre-departure orientation seminars.

References
Recently Received

...with Steve Fukuda

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 Steve Fukuda 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:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/recently-received>

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

Books for Students (reviewed in TLT)

Contact: Steve Fukuda
<pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

* Helbling Essentials. Becker, L., & Frain, C. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2013. [Two 15-unit courses in business and tourism, respectively, providing basic levels of work-related language and communication skills incl. audio CD and downloadable online activities].

* Choose Your Own Adventure. Benevides, M. (Ed.). Singapore: McGraw-Hill Education Asia, 2012. [Graded reader series for ER at an upper-intermediate level and above. One or two select titles from the series, or a full class set of Mystery of the Maya w/ streaming audio and downloadable activity sheets, are available for review].


! Hooray, Let’s Play! Gerngross, G., & Puchta, H. Crawley, UK: Helbling Languages, 2012. [3-level course for very young learners incl. teacher’s book, DVDs, audio CDs, story cards, flashcards, and a hand puppet].


* World Link. Stempleski, S., Morgan, J. R., & Douglas, N. Hampshire, UK: Heinle/Cengage Learning, 2011. [4-level series for young adult/adult learners from false beginner to high-intermediate level incl. student CDs, online workbooks/video workbooks, lesson planner w/ teacher’s resources CD, and interactive presentation tools kit].

Books for Teachers (reviewed in JALT Journal)
Contact: Greg Rouault
<jj-reviews@jalt-publications.org>
*Agendas for Language Learning Research. Ortega,


OUTSIDE THE BOX

...with Adam Lebowitz
To contact the editor:
<outside-the-box@jalt-publications.org>

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

OUTSIDE THE BOX ONLINE:
A linked index of Outside the Box articles can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/outside-the-box>

If you are not lucky enough to be a JET Programme participant, your first experience teaching L2 English in Nihon is likely the conversation “school” (minkan-eikaiwa). The “stopped-clock rule” dictates that, even here, a good idea or two may pop up despite the general idiocy of the industry. Peter Quinn sees a possibility for reducing recidivism in the university classroom. In this scenario, canny readers may see a concern for teachers: the number of students could change significantly each week making it difficult to plan future tasks. Why not propose a solution? Write it up and send it here!

A “level-up” system for the university classroom

Wouldn’t it be great to have a university where no students fail? Let’s replace the pass/fail method of grading students in universities with the “level-up” system used in conversation schools. In conversation schools, students study in a class chosen according to their ability. When it is appropriate, the student “levels up” and joins a higher-level class. Nobody ever fails.

In university, instead of passing a class, students would level up to earn credits for graduation. They would accumulate participation points by studying hard. When a student had enough points, they would level up.

What would a university lesson look like in the “level-up” system? Let’s say a student wanted to take an English class next Tuesday. Online, the student would check classes available at their level. They would download the materials used and watch a short video of the teacher explaining what the class was be like and what homework was required. The student would then choose a class. The teacher would get the student list for each class meeting sent to their mobile device. The student list would have links to all of the information about each student: attendance, homework, and participation in class. The teacher would call the roll, check homework, and teach the class as usual, all the while updating each student’s records on the mobile device. This record-keeping would not have to be a chore.

For example, if a student were to complete a task very well, the teacher could say, “Very good! You get a participation point!” and update the student’s record at once on the mobile device. Having records updated can motivate students to study harder.

JALT2013
October 25-28, 2013
Kobe International Conference Center & International Exhibition Hall
<jalt.org/conference>
Using Simple English Wikipedia in the classroom

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Despite the lure of its authenticity, mediating online material in the classroom often requires a lot more work than a teacher has time for in order to make the materials usable for English language learners. This can be especially true when using online materials with lower-level students. On the other hand, unmediated access to online English-language content, while having many benefits, can be overwhelming and demotivating due to the length and difficulty of texts (Takase, 2004). Therefore, the desire for authenticity must be balanced with the need for ease of comprehension and usability.

Simple English Wikipedia (<simple.wikipedia.org>) provides an easy answer to this problem. It can be adapted and used in the classroom with much less time-consuming mediation. *Simple English Wikipedia* (SEW) is meant for students, children, and English language learners and provides articles written using a slightly extended version of Ogden’s Basic English. SEW articles tend to be slightly shorter and more concise than regular articles but no less in-depth. For example, the Wikipedia article on Einstein is 8,500 words long, while the SEW version is only about 5,000 words. The shorter version is no less detailed and provides appropriate reading material for low-level classrooms.

Use in Class

The simplest use for *Simple English Wikipedia* would be for reading comprehension practice by choosing an article relevant to a lesson topic, writing some comprehension questions, and requiring students to complete the questions.

A more *Wired* activity using SEW would be a WebQuest. A WebQuest is an Internet-based learning task where students are given the task of finding information on the Internet. A typical WebQuest follows these steps:

1. An introduction to the WebQuest, its processes, goals, and outcomes.
2. A demonstration of what is expected and how it should be achieved.
3. A list of online links or search terms to help achieve the desired outcome.

The classroom goals of a SEW WebQuest are to motivate students to use the Internet in English and provide them with stimulating extensive reading practice in class. To do this, the teacher needs to provide a set of questions for students to answer while conducting the quest. A typical question is, *What present from his father made Einstein interested in science?* Einstein is underlined to provide students with a keyword to search for in SEW. The teacher can demonstrate this to make sure students do not waste time searching for the wrong term. Students then have to read the SEW page and find the answer.

To make the activity slightly more challenging, a teacher could ask a question such as, *What was...*
Barack Obama’s wife’s brother’s job? This question will require students either to search for Michelle Obama or to click the link on Barack Obama’s page that leads them to the answer. This will require more reading and critical thinking on the part of students and satisfy the Quest element of the exercise. Again, the teacher may want to demonstrate this beforehand and should monitor students’ progress to keep them on course.

This exercise can be done as a game to make it more interesting for students. Questions that come from short articles where answers are easy to find are given a score of one point. Questions that come from longer articles or questions that require more work to answer are given a score of up to five points. Students are given a list of 20 questions worth various points and are given a time limit in which to complete the WebQuest; this allows them to practice strategic thinking as well as English. Students have to decide how best to answer the questions in order to obtain the highest score in the class. The teacher must make it clear to students that they do not need to answer every question, just as many as possible to get the highest score possible in the allotted time. (See Appendix for an example WebQuest activity sheet.)

Setting up the classroom for a WebQuest is relatively simple. This activity could be easily done in any computer room. Teachers without access to a computer room could do this in their own classroom by having students use their cell phones to access the Internet. It is important to keep in mind that students may not have unlimited Internet access on their cell phones, so they may need share phones in small groups. Students enjoy this activity, and the competitive aspect keeps them engaged in the activity to acquire the best score. Teachers can give incentives or prizes as appropriate to further motivate students to win.

Advanced-level activities
For more advanced students, Simple English Wikipedia has a Schools Gateway <simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Schools>, which allows teachers to have their students create or edit an article themselves. Allowing students to create content on SEW or Wikipedia provides a tangible artifact of students’ English ability. It is something they can show to parents or friends to demonstrate their progress in English. When having students create content in Wikipedia, the article can be flagged as being edited by students to alert readers to who the authors are so that changes or comments by others are done with that in mind. Having students author articles in this section allows them to enjoy writing for the web but in a kind and helpful online environment. Students can create their own articles or simplify existing SEW articles relating to their own country and culture. For example, students can write about their school or university to provide information from a student’s perspective. Also, many pages about Japanese foods, festivals, and customs do not yet exist on SEW, so they would make ideal subjects for students to write about. (See <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hirosaki_University> for an example of a student-edited Wikipedia article and compare the history page from August 2011 with the current version to see how much students can accomplish with minimal guidance.)

These are just two ideas for using an easily-accessible resource that requires little more than Internet access. SEW and Wikipedia provide a wealth of materials and opportunities for English language learners to engage in while studying English. Simple English Wikipedia has the advantages of needing little content mediation and being unlikely to overwhelm students as other text-based websites might. It is an easy gateway to building student confidence online. The authors of this article would be interested in hearing about other teachers’ experiences and methods of using Simple English Wikipedia; please send them to the email addresses listed at the top of this article.

Reference

Appendix
The Appendix, “Webquest: The World” is available from the online version of this article at <jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired>.

From the Editor: Registration is underway for JALTCALL 2013 & the 6th ER Seminar to be held at Shinshu Univ. from 31 May – 2 June, 2013. Register at <account.jaltcall.org> and I hope to see you in Matsumoto! Until then, stay Wired!
The Language Teacher Online • <jalt-publications.org/tlt>

THE LANGUAGE TEACHER

Online • <jalt-publications.org/tlt>

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THE LANGUAGE TEACHER • JALT Focus • JALT NOTICES

…with Malcolm Swanson

To contact the editor:
<jalt-focus@jalt-publications.org>

Contributors are requested by the column editor to submit notices and announcements for JALT Focus by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication.

JALT FOCUS ONLINE: A listing of notices and news can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/jalt-focus>

JALT NOTICES

President’s Message

There are a lot of events coming up in the next two months, aren’t there? Tokyo Chapter is holding a special workshop, “Reacting to the Past”, 11-12 May at Sophia University in Tokyo. That same weekend has the 4th Annual Shikoku JALT Conference, co-sponsored by East Shikoku JALT and Matsuyama JALT, which will be at Kagawa University in Takamatsu. On the next weekend the 12th Annual JALT PanSIG Conference, “From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community”, will be held at Nanzan University in Nagoya. Two weeks later, the CALL SIG will have its annual conference, from 31 May to 2 June, at Shinshu University (Matsumoto-shi, Nagano-ken). Needless to say, there are many other chapter and SIG events in May and June. The amount of energy that JALT members put into organizing and holding events is always inspiring. Please see the Events Calendar on jalt.org for more details of these and other upcoming events.

I would also like to bring your attention to JALT’s 1st Annual Ordinary General Meeting (OGM), which will be held 30 June, at Campus Plaza in Kyoto, 14:30–15:30. As before, we are making it possible to submit an absentee ballot for the OGM via <jalt.org>. Thus, by clicking a couple of buttons, you can vote on accepting our annual reports, such as the financial report. We really appreciate your support in this matter. Our constitution requires at least half of all JALT members to attend an OGM, in person or via having submitted an absentee ballot. Thus, to help us maintain our NPO status (which is of paramount importance for JALT as it helps make it possible for chapters and SIGs to put on the great programs that they do), please “click for JALT” after you get an email from us about the OGM absentee ballot. Thank you as always for your membership in JALT and your support of our activities, and I look forward to seeing you at a JALT event soon!

Kevin Cleary
NPO JALT President

JALT National Officers, 2012–2013

Our elected national officers work with the JALT Executive Board to administer NPO JALT. They can be contacted at <jalt.org/main/contact>.

- President: .......................... Kevin Cleary
- Vice President: ....................... Nathan Furuya
- Auditor: ............................ Caroline Lloyd
- Director of Treasury: ............. Oana Cusen
- Director of Records: ............... Roehl Sybing
- Director of Program: .............. Steve Cornwell
- Director of Membership: .......... Buzz Green
- Director of Public Relations: ...... Ted O’Neill

2013年第1回総会開催通知

Notice of the First 2013 JALT Ordinary General Meeting (OGM)

- 日時: 2013年6月30日(日)
- Date: June 30, 2013 (Sunday)
- 時間: 14:30 – 15:30
- Time: 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
- 場所: キャンパスプラザ京都, 第4講義室
- Location: Campus Plaza, Kyoto Kogishitsu #4 Meeting Room
議案 / Agenda:
- 第1号議案 議長選出 / Item 1. Determination of chairperson
- 第2号議案 議事録署名人選出 / Item 2. Determination of signatories
- 第5号議案 平成24年度監査報告 / Item 5. Audit Report (2012/04/01 – 2013/03/31)
- 第7号議案 平成25年度予算 / Item 7. Budget (2013/04/01 – 2014/03/31)
- 第8号議案 その他の重要事項 / Item 8. Other important issues

*議案詳細、各種報告書のリンク先及び不在者投票の方法に関しては、6月中旬に各会員にメールでお知らせします。
*Details of the agenda, including links to the various reports that will be presented, and an absentee ballot, will be sent to you via email in mid-June.

メールには総会報告書の閲覧方法及び不在者投票の方法が説明されておりますのでそれに従ってください。JALT定款により、総会開催には過半数以上の会員の投票登録が必要です。会員の皆様のご支援・ご協力に対し感謝申し上げます。

When you receive the message, please follow the instructions on how to view the OGM reports and complete the absentee ballot. We need a majority of JALT members to register their vote at the OGM so that we can hold an official meeting as per the JALT Constitution. Thank you very much for your membership and your support.

SHOWCASE...with Kristen Sullivan
To contact the editor:
<showcase@jalt-publications.org>

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

SHOWCASE ONLINE: A listing of Showcase articles can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/showcase-members-profile>

In this edition of Showcase, Matthew Reynolds introduces the forming School Owners SIG.

Matthew Reynolds
Independent language school owners and operators have been contributing to the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) for decades, but never through their own special interest group (SIG). I proposed the idea of a SIG for school owners to the JALT executive board and the formation of the SIG was voted in 42 to 0 at the October executive board meeting in 2012. There are many school owners in JALT, and I sincerely hope this new SIG will prove useful to them.

How I became a school owner
About 12 years ago, I had reached my limit of teaching at language schools, corporations, high schools and universities. I had built up some very loyal private students locally, and naively assumed the transition from teaching them at home to teaching them in a rented office space wouldn’t be such a leap. So, in 2001 I opened the ‘English Please! Language School’.

The joys of owning a language school
Being a school owner, as it turns out, is a lot harder than you think. The language school business in Japan is a highly competitive, saturated market that you need money and expertise to enter. Most local owners, like me, open their doors with little more than teaching experience, blind faith, and a shoestring budget; and, like
me, they often struggle. When things go wrong for a local owner, the banks will not lend to you and there is little or no government regulation. It is a very tough business.

Yet after 12 years of weathering the storm I couldn’t recommend owning your own school more. You provide exceptional value for money to your customers and they genuinely appreciate it. There are few bureaucratic or institutional constraints. You are free to teach who, how and what you like. You can innovate, often with amazing results. You can provide quality employment to people who deserve it and, once the school grows, you are often well paid yourself. In short, when local schools take off, everyone wins, and that is why I felt it was paramount that JALT support them.

Creating a modern SIG
What I wanted to do with the School Owners SIG was create a modern SIG: a SIG where you can access useful resources such as forums, downloads and articles the moment you sign up, a SIG where everyone is immediately welcomed. I also wanted the SIG newsletter to be free and available to non-members through a mailing list so anyone interested in the SIG’s work can stay informed of what we are doing. Pretty much every JALT chapter has an owner who I hope will check out the site <schoolowners.net>; but I am hoping that interest in the SIG will not be limited to school owners.

Owners & business
As a non-profit organization (NPO), JALT can be, understandably, a little guarded where commerce is concerned. Language schools, however, are businesses and businesses need trade to grow. So, far from trying to hogtie commerce, trade to and between owners is not just welcome on our site, it is positively encouraged. The simple proviso for this is that anything said on the site that is a conflict of interest must be declared one. Owners thrive on new ideas so if you have a product or service you think school owners in Japan would benefit from, please join the SIG or add your name to our mailing list.

Owners & academia
Academia and industry have always had a lot to offer each other in the world of language teaching, and we hope this SIG can contribute here in some way. Most of the papers written about second language learners in Japan focus on undergrads and high school students; however, such students only make up a small portion of the overall language learner population. We’d like to see more published for and about language schools and their learners and if the issue is access, independent owners could help. Academia should of course be accountable to students for its teaching; but it is also accountable to society at large for its research. More papers testing the claims of some of the more fanciful marketing copy that’s out there would also be welcome as it protects consumers and helps level the playing field for local schools.

Looking to the future
There is a lot the School Owners SIG can do in the long term to strengthen the market position of independent schools. However, these are early days and what we offer should be decided through feedback from members. Sponsored talks, research grants, advocacy work, cost sharing projects, and mini-conferences are all possibilities, but it is really up to those who join and how they wish to shape it.

Matthew Reynolds has been living in Japan since 1997. He is the director and owner of English-Please! and EP! Kids language schools and a Centre Examinations Manager for Cambridge English Language Assessment. Learn more about the School Owners (SO) SIG at <schoolowners.net>.
Grassroots Outreach: A Place for Essays and Reports

Grassroots Outreach, a place for essays and short reports, invites readers to take action and bring about positive change in the language teaching profession. Contributions can discuss events, groups, or resources that are organized within or outside of Japan.

To contact the editor:
<go@jalt-publications.org>

First-time authors who require help to write for Grassroots Outreach and other JALT publications can receive free advice from the Peer Support Group (PSG), a volunteer group of writers and reviewers who assist inexperienced writers.

In the second report, Joseph Shaules, an associate professor at Rikkyo Graduate School for Intercultural Communication, shares anecdotes from his seminars and conferences to introduce JII (The Japan Intercultural Institute).

In addition to international links, JALT has partnered with AJET (The Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching), ESTEEM (The Elementary School Thematic Education Movement), ETJ (English Teachers in Japan), and JII. JII is a private, non-profit volunteer-based institute which is funded through membership fees, event sponsorship, and revenue generated by training seminars. It cooperates with major publishers, academic associations, and universities. Its executive advisory committee is chaired by Torikai Kumiko, dean of the Rikkyo University Graduate School for Intercultural Communication.

I hope that you enjoy reading this inaugural issue of Grassroots Outreach and that the reports might motivate you to take action to bring about positive changes.
change in our language teaching profession, locally here at home, as well as around the globe.

**Unscrupulous journal solicitations: What they are, what they do, and how you can protect yourself**

Howard Brown  
University of Niigata Prefecture  
<b>brown@unii.ac.jp></b>  
Melodie Cook  
University of Niigata Prefecture  
<b>cookmelo@unii.ac.jp></b>

Recently, academics are receiving an increasing number of email invitations to submit papers. While some are legitimate announcements from reputable organizations, many are a new kind of spam from what Beall (2012) calls “predatory publishers” (p. 179). Basically, they track you down through the titles of your work and invite you to submit manuscripts. They promise quick turnaround and imply guaranteed acceptance. If you are a novice researcher, you might be flattered into submitting. However, you may find later that there is a hefty fee. We wrote this paper to help you identify suspicious solicitations so that you can avoid being duped.

**Characteristics of suspicious solicitations**

Looking at seven email solicitations received in 2012 from suspicious journals, we found the following commonalities:

*Appeal to legitimacy with ISSN/indexes.* All seven solicitations used various techniques to claim legitimacy. Two journals quoted ISSN numbers and all seven referred to themselves as internationally-oriented. Two also made a point of listing data bases in which they claimed to be indexed (including EBSCO, Proquest and Ulrich’s). Interestingly, we could not find them on those lists.

*Peer review/open access.* All of the solicitations stated that they were peer-reviewed and three gave a detailed explanation of the meaning of peer review. Four of the emails mentioned their status as open-access journals, and offered a detailed explanation of open access. By doing this, they seem to be targeting novice researchers for whom peer review and open access may be unfamiliar concepts. Legitimate journals will mention these things, too, but not in such detail because they don’t need to.

*Inner circle affiliation.* Four emails claimed legitimacy through association with countries in which English is the dominant language and the use of an inner circle variety of English as defined by Kachru (1992), specifically North America. Two e-mails listed a Canadian address and two claimed to have US roots. However, a tracking of the IP addresses of the emails revealed an interesting pattern: the three emails which did not claim an inner circle location did in fact originate in the US. However, the four emails which claimed a North American connection were actually sent from China.

*Location.* As mentioned above, the location of where these journals were published was unclear. Three listed no address at all, and two journals listed the same address in Canada (but when we tracked down a list of tenants of the building at the address, neither the journals nor the associated publishing company was listed). Another two emails gave inconsistent locations: one claimed that the journal originated from a location in Illinois but the mailing address listed at the bottom of the email was in California.

*Scope.* Often using the word multi-disciplinary, all of the solicitations cast a rather wide net. One called for submissions of “Basic and applied research, case studies, critical reviews, surveys, opinions, commentaries, essays, etc.” Another journal seemed interested in papers on “Literary criticism, translation studies, linguistics research, English teaching and Intercultural Studies, etc.” A third contained this amazing offer: “If you have other original and unpublished papers or books at hand which have not been published yet, please feel free to send them to us.”

For us, the use of etc. and at hand are telling. In other words, they’ll take anything!

*Editorial issues.* In three cases, the same person, or at least the same location, was found to be associated with multiple journals. One email
soliciting contributions to a language teaching journal was written by an “editorial officer” (whatever that may be). The same name and job title were found in a solicitation for papers in pharmacy — a very large mandate for a single editor! For another journal, the website linked to in the email was found to be the home of 28 different journals ranging from agriculture to library and archival studies.

**Speed.** All of the solicitations promised a very fast turnaround. Three guaranteed a response from the editor within 3 days and all promised a quick response from reviewers. One said a review decision would be forthcoming “soon” while others were more specific, with estimates ranging from 2 to 5 weeks.

**Language problems.** All seven emails contained obvious spelling and grammar mistakes.

**Implied acceptance.** While all journals claimed to be peer reviewed, their language implied otherwise. Phrases like “We would like to publish your latest paper” and “Submit your manuscript(s) for publication” were used in all seven samples, implying automatic acceptance. One journal promised that “Everyone can read your article when it is published” (emphasis ours).

**Flattery.** Another commonality involved flattery. Two emails referred to one of us as “Doctor” in the salutation even though the title is incorrect. Three others referred to our expertise or the quality of previous work saying “I can tell from your work that you are an expert…” or “We are very interested in your paper”. Four email authors also claimed to have been impressed by a specific paper we published recently, although one of them made a spelling error when quoting the title of the paper. Another kind of flattery came through invitations for “Qualified and high profile researchers to join [the] editorial team”. Four of the emails invited us to not only submit papers, but also to become a reviewer, a sub-editor, or even in one case, a member of the board.

**Fees.** On the bottom line, all of these journals charge a publication fee. Two of the emails directly stated a flat fee. For the others, fees were found on the associated website. Some listed a flat rate; others a per-page price. Flat fees were around $200 while per-page prices could go as high as $50/page. In short, what these companies do is flatter you, promise you quick service and guaranteed publication in a legitimate-sounding journal. Once you have taken the bait and submitted, they charge you a hefty fee.

**How you can protect yourself**

Learning to recognize the common characteristics of a scam is recommended, and a quick Google search will often help determine legitimacy. An online search for the publisher mentioned in one of the emails revealed it was described in various places as super shady. One blogger, who was told it would cost $750 to publish his paper, offered his experience as an example of bait and switch. It is also good to know what the standards of the field are. While there are some, such as natural sciences, which do legitimately require contributions from authors to cover printing and distribution costs, applied linguistics is generally not one of these.

Matsuda (n.d.) offers a checklist of red flags. These points can help you spot an unscrupulous call for papers:

- The email is unexpected.
- The publisher is looking for papers from novice researchers, graduate students and others without a strong track record.
- The review process is vague or does not involve established researchers from the field.
- The journal has few published issues.
- The journal has not published any works by established researchers.
- Articles in the journal are not cited elsewhere.
- Colleagues from the field are not familiar with the journal name or publisher.

**Is it really so bad?**

So the journal is a bit sketchy. So what? In today’s competitive job market, a publication is a publication, especially if it is “peer reviewed.” Isn’t it worth the $200? The answer is a definite no. While publications in these journals may pass a cursory examination if listed on a resume, they will not stand up if you are short-listed for an interview when your references are being thoroughly checked. Because nothing ever disappears from the Internet, job-hunting sites now regularly advise people to be aware of their social media presence on-line. Just as your reputation could suffer as a result of those party pictures from college, so it could if you publish work in a journal of questionable repute.
When Benedict XVI announced recently that he would be stepping down as pope, he did so in fluent Latin. This prompted discussion among my students. One asked: “Is there a Latin culture?” This led to a discussion of dead languages, and how a community of speakers is needed for a language to develop and evolve. We concluded that grammar and vocabulary alone is like a skeleton—an elegant structure that is lifeless until animated by human interaction. In too many classes, of course, language is barely alive—a zombie lumbering awkwardly around the classroom scaring students.

In my teaching, I try to present language as a key that opens a door to other cultural worlds. I share stories of my own travels, mistakes and discoveries. A whiff of the exotic can entice students out of their comfort zone and help them look at their learning in broader terms. Students are interested in language-culture issues generally: contact with “foreignness,” cultural difference, taboos, customs and values, and in travel and study abroad experiences. They’ve been at their desks for years and are often ready for exploration.

Culture can be hard to incorporate into classroom teaching. Two things that have helped me are: 1) learning a bit of theory, and 2) seeing what other teachers are doing. I get these things through involvement in the Japan Intercultural Institute (JII). JII is an independent NPO (non-profit organization) that is also a JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching) affiliate. Its mission is to bring together intercultural specialists interested in the learning that comes from intercultural experiences. JII sponsors seminars, social events and a conference. It acts as a gathering place for teachers, researchers, intercultural trainers, and business people.

The theme of JII’s 2012 conference was Developing Global Leaders: Education and training for Language, Culture and Confidence. Our plenary speaker was U.N. Diplomat Yasushi Akashi. He spoke of the role of English in a globalized world and the need for Japanese people to speak their own brand of international English. There were also more than 25 presentations with titles such as: Developing Cultural Awareness in the Language Classroom and Reading for Cultural Competence: The Use of Immigrant Fiction in Language Learning. There were also contributions from the world of business and intercultural training with titles such as Intersections: Coaching for Global Communicative Competence.

One presentation that was overflowing with participants was Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two personalities? The presenter, Seiji Nakano, not only introduced research results but he also shared his personal perspective, which includes living and studying in New Zealand, the UK and Cyprus, learning Greek and falling in love in Italy. His presentation was popular because we all want adventure, and because many of us are drawn to the deeper challenges that accompany our intercultural explorations. Seiji provided a space for everyone to share something of their personal journey.

For the past several years, JII has been offering the Deep Culture Seminar and Certificate Program. It is designed for people who have intercultural experience but have not studied intercultural communication more formally. So far, around 70 people have received certificates. The level one seminar covers topics of foundational importance for those wanting to deepen their understanding of intercultural issues. Advanced seminars are designed for educators and trainers who are responsible for the learning of others. This year JII will be offering an advanced seminar specifically created for language teachers, to help them make the language-culture connection in the classroom.
In one recent JII seminar, we were learning how cultural programming affects cognition. We answered the question “What do you see?” while viewing an underwater scene. Westerners tend to focus on objects, such as a fish or turtle, whereas Asians are more likely to answer holistically, saying “the sea” or “underwater.” One American participant, Maurice, startled by these results, blurted out “I’m going to have to apologize to my wife!” He told a story of teasing her for not noticing a phone booth on a street they both frequented. He concluded that they were probably processing information differently. It was a wonderful moment of insight for all of us. This is the kind of camaraderie I often get at JII events.

If you are interested in what we do and would like to join us, I encourage you to check out our website at <www.japanintercultural.org> where you can apply to receive our events newsletter and find contact addresses. And finally, thanks to JALT for this opportunity to share what JII does and for the wonderful cross-pollination that our affiliation brings.

...with Jennie Roloff-Rothman

To contact the editor:
<sig-news@jalt-publications.org>

JALT currently has 26 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) available for members to join. This column publishes announcements of SIG events, mini-conferences, publications, or calls for papers and presenters. SIGs wishing to print news or announcements should contact the editor by the 15th of the month, 6 weeks prior to publication.

You can access SIG News online at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/sig-news>

SIGs at a glance

Key: [ ] = keywords  [ ] = publications  [ ] = other activities  [ ] = email list  [ ] = online forum

Note: For SIG contacts & URLs, please see JALT’s website <jalt.org/main/groups>.

Pan-SIG2013

The PanSIG2013 Conference is coming up soon - May 18 – 19! Plan to come as it promises to be an interesting and informative gathering of most of the SIGs in JALT. This year’s conference theme is: From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community. The structure of the conference will reflect the theme as related SIGs have formed partnerships and will explore overlapping areas of research and pedagogy. Judith Hanks from the University of Leeds and Robert Croker from Nanzan University will be the plenary speakers. For more information on them, see <pansig.org/2013/JALTPanSIG2013/Plenary_Speakers.html>. Come, collaborate, cooperate, and join our community!

JALT’s newest SIG

TLT and the SIG News column would like to extend a warm welcome to the newest forming SIG in JALT, School Owners. We wish you the best of luck in your endeavors! Please read the information below from SIG coordinator Matt Reynolds to learn more or join this group, or read the Showcase column earlier in this issue of TLT.

School Owners

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

SO SIG at PANSIG 2013

We are delighted to announce 2 events as part of the upcoming PanSIG 2013:
1. Come meet the SO SIG!

To attract new members and discuss upcoming opportunities, SO will be hosting a 60-minute open door session as part of the conference proceedings. We have 10 SIG memberships to give away and visitors will receive free gifts c/o
Cambridge English Language Assessment. If you are an owner, please bring promotional school literature for our “pamphlets clinic.”

2. **School Owners, Business English & CALL joint panel: “Cloud computing: Merits and demerits”**

Partnering with CALL & BE we will be discussing which cloud apps are or are not a good fit for language teachers, business English professionals, and school owners.

More information about both of these events can be found on the <schoolowners.net> website.

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### Bilingualism

- Bilingualism, biculturality, international families, child-raising, identity
- Bilingual Japan—3x year, Journal—1x year
- Forums, panels

B-SIG provides support to families who are bringing up children in two or more languages in Japanese contexts. Our newsletter, *Bilingual Japan*, includes practical information about bilingual parenting, as well as academic and theoretical issues. To request a free inspection copy of our newsletter, email <york@notredame.ac.jp>. Further information can be found at <bsig.org>.

We’re looking forward to seeing you at the PanSIG conference in May.

### Business English

The JALT Business English SIG is intended to develop the discipline of teaching English conducive to participation in the world business community. We wish to provide instructors in this field with a means of collaborating and sharing best teaching practices.

JALT Business English SIG は、世界のビジネス界に通する英語教育の発展を目的に持ち、結成されました。連携体制を組み、最善の教育方法を共有することにより、英語教育に携わるインストラクターの皆様のお手伝いを致します。

### College and University Educators

- Tertiary education, interdisciplinary collaboration, professional development, classroom research, innovative teaching
- On CUE — 2-3x year
- Annual SIG conference, regional events and workshops

The College and University Educators (CUE) Special Interest Group aims to engage in activities for those interested in the development of language education in Japanese colleges and universities. CUE SIG celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, so we plan to make this a big year! We are planning lots of regional events including: a CUE/JALT Hokkaido Event with Paul Nation, CUE at the PanSIG Conference, a CUE/Vocabulary SIG – Vocabulary Symposium 2013, the CUE/IAIST ESP Symposium, a CUE Technology Workshop, and a CUE/JALT Okinawa Qualitative Research Workshop. For more information about these events, please see our website <jaltcue-sig.org>.

The next big event is the PanSIG Conference at Nanzan University, Nagoya. CUE is collaborating with the Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education (PALE) SIG and Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE) SIG for this event. In our joint forum, CUE, PALE and GALE SIGs will address multiple issues that shape the identities and experiences of teachers in Japan. Diane Nagatomo (GALE) will discuss gender issues that affect the professional identity of Japanese and non-Japanese female university teachers, and suggest several concrete measures that could narrow the professional gap between male and female university English teachers in Japanese academia. Robert Aspinall (PALE) will address institutional and cultural obstacles that conspire to prevent Japanese and foreign professionals from doing their job to the fullest, and discusses the resulting failure in implementing the desired communicative language teaching in Japanese schools and universities. Lastly, Richard Miller (CUE) discusses the changes that are occurring in the overall employment situation for teachers in colleges and universities, noting a shift in required qualifications and a move towards more professionalism and accountability within Japanese institutions. This promises to be both enjoyable and enlightening, so do come along!

To find out more about the CUE SIG, visit us online at <jaltcue-sig.org>. There you can find out about forthcoming events and read copies of our biannual peer-reviewed *OnCUE Journal*. *OnCUE* welcomes submissions all year round. Stay connected with other CUE members by joining our Facebook group, and by joining our Yahoo group at: <groups.yahoo.com/group/JALTCUESIGmembers>. If you would like to become more actively involved, there are many ways to contribute which will help you to further your own professional development while also helping others. There are many ways in which you can assist, from helping to locate or set up conferences, staffing the CUE table at JALT national meetings or CUE regional meetings, or just contributing your own ideas regarding what
For 20 years, the JALT CALL SIG has been connecting teachers to tackle the challenge of using technology in the classroom together. Through conferences and publications, the SIG supports teachers and researchers that are interested in using computers and technology.

Our main event, the JALTCALL 2013 Conference and 6th Annual ER Seminar is right around the corner. This year, the JALT CALL SIG is celebrating its 20th anniversary conference and in doing so, is joining with the ER SIG to make this year extra special. The two SIGs will be showcasing the “Best Practices” of their respective areas - bringing together best ideas and proven techniques from myriad presenters. The conference will be held at Shinshu University on May 31 – June 2, 2013, in scenic Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture. A variety of interesting presentations are on tap for the weekend as the JALTCALL Conference continues to be one of the annual highlights in Asian CALL Conferences.

The JALTCALL Keynote Speaker, Dorothy Chun, will present, “Fad or fundamental? Keeping up with CALL technology.” Dr. Chun is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Besides CALL, her research areas include: L2 phonology and intonation, L2 reading and vocabulary acquisition, and tele-collaboration. Her speech will explore how we can best keep abreast of the constantly changing field of CALL technology.

The ER Seminar Plenary speakers are expected to be: Kunihide Sakai, author of Misuteri De Hajimeru Eigo Hyakumango: Ninki Jidōsho Kara Honkakuha Pēpābakku Made, and Donalyn Miller, author of The Book Whisperer. For more information about the ER Seminar speakers, check out <www.ersig.org/drupal-ersig/6th-er-seminar>.

This year we are delighted to have the support of several commercial sponsors. By attending commercially sponsored presentations and visiting commercial displays, conference attendees will be able to learn about the latest in educational materials and resources. This year our platinum sponsor is Oxford University Press with Lexxica sponsoring our networking reception. Other sponsors include McGraw-Hill Education, MacMillian, Language Cloud, Oliver Rose, E-Learning Service, Book Smart, Language Center - Harvard University, and DynEd.

All conference attendees are invited to attend the networking reception on Saturday evening. This year’s reception is planned for the majestic Matsumoto Castle grounds (weather permitting). It’s sure to be the event everyone will be raving about throughout the summer. The networking reception provides an excellent opportunity to meet up with old friends, make new ones, and enjoy lively discussions. Admission to the reception is complimentary for attendees who have pre-registered, however, a limited number of tickets will be on sale at the event. We’ll see you all in Matsumoto!

JALTCALL 2013 & ER Seminar registration is at <account.jaltcall.org>. Note: A new system starting this year requires you to create an account on the JALT CALL site to submit proposals and register for the conference. This process will allow users to maintain their registration information from year to year. For more information, please visit the CALL SIG or ER SIG websites. You can also stay informed of SIG news by following @jaltcall>, the SIG’s official Twitter feed.

In addition to the conference, JALT CALL SIG is also involved with publishing members’ research. For almost a decade, the CALL SIG has been fortunate to have Glenn Stockwell at the helm of the JALTCALL Journal. Over the years, he has built the Journal into an internationally recognized publication with Associate Editors on three continents, and a stellar group of researchers on the Review Board. The Journal is always open to well written, research-oriented work, which is published both in paper and on the web. Archives of the JALTCALL Journal are available at <journal.jaltcall.org/jcjarchives.html>.

As a complement to the Journal, and a development of the JALT CALL community, the CALL SIG will announce sponsorship and the launch of a new publication, Digital Mobile Language Learning, or DMLL, at the annual conference in June. We are working hard on building access to practical ideas and opinions in multiple areas with a blog, a quarterly magazine and eventually, a repository of papers. Catch a sneak preview at <dmlj.jaltcall.org>.
Critical Thinking

[ ][ ]

On February 16th, David Gann presented at the First International Academic Writing and Critical Thinking Symposium at Nagoya University. His presentation, “A Four-Stage Blended Approach for Scaffolding Basic Argumentative Competence” discussed explicit instruction of critical thinking as a skill set aimed at developing students’ understanding of academic writing through in-class face-to-face guided discussions and both in-class and out-of-class online learning. He also gave a presentation titled “A Few Considerations on Critical Thinking Instruction” on March 10 at the First Gunma-Omiya My Share Collaboration. That presentation was aimed at raising awareness of three issues: What is critical thinking? What is critical thinking instruction? And what is critical thinking instruction in a language learning context?

We are ALWAYS looking for new input from teachers interested in critical thinking themes! We invite your ideas about the theory and teaching practices related to critical thinking. Whether it’s a classroom idea, a reflection, or a full research paper, we want to hear from you! Please consider writing for a future issue of CT Scan. Full research articles: 1,500-3,000 words, detailing your research related to critical thinking in language education. Articles that connect theory to classroom practice are encouraged. Classroom reflections: 500-2,000 words, detailing classroom activities that have been used to teach or encourage critical thinking among language learners. Commentaries: 500-2,000 words, detailing personal observations meant to create discussion within our membership with regards to critical thinking in language education. All submissions are welcome at <ctscan.editor@gmail.com>. For more information, visit us at <jaltcriticalthinking.org>. We recommend following JALT Journal style guidelines for your submission. Please refer to <jalt-publications.org/downloads/jaltstyle.pdf> for guidance.

Extensive Reading

[ ][ ]

The ER SIG aims to keep you informed about extensive reading. Whether you are new to ER or an old hand, please avail yourself of our resources. One way is our online presence. Check out our website at <ers.org/drupal-ersig>. Here you can find news from the ER SIG, past issues of the ERJ, links to useful resources and publishers, event information, and more. Please visit the site if you haven’t already. Friend us on Facebook. Look for JALT ER SIG or use the link on our website. Follow us on Twitter <@ERsigJALT>. Another way is our publications. Become a member of the SIG to receive the paper version of Extensive Reading in Japan in your post and periodic electronic newsletters in your inbox. Also, anyone can access the new online research journal, Journal of Extensive Reading. For information on joining us or accessing these publications, go to the website.

This year we are happy to announce that in cooperation with the JALT CALL SIG we will be holding a joint event encompassing both JALTCALL 2013 and the 6th Annual ER Seminar to be held May 31 to June 2 at Shinshu University, Matsumoto. In keeping with tradition, ER presentations and plenary sessions will be concentrated on Sunday. We expect to have Kunihide Sakai, author of Misuteri De Hajimeru Eigo Hyakumango: Ninki Jidōsho Kara Honkakuha Pēpābakku Made and Donalyn Miller, author of The Book Whisperer, as our plenary speakers. We think this event will be a great opportunity to enjoy the energy of two conferences at once and find out more about how extensive reading and educational technology can be synergistic. We hope you’ll join us for this exciting and unique event.

Other upcoming ER Events:

• PanSIG 2013, May 18-19 at Nanzan University, Nagoya—Please join us at our joint forum with the THT SIG, TED SIGs and many other ER presentations. Go to the PanSIG 2013 website for complete details: <pansig.org/2013/JALTPanSIG2013/Welcome.html>

• Second World Congress of Extensive Reading, September 13-15 at Yonsei University, Seoul—A conference following on from the First World Congress which was co-sponsored by the ER SIG. See the conference website for complete details: <er-korea-2013.org>

Also, please note, the ER SIG Annual General Meeting minutes, including the elected officers for 2013, are available as a PDF on the website at <ers.org/drupal-ersig/reports>. 
Please participate! FLP needs YOU to help research about textbooks! The FLP SIG is undertaking a Kaken-Project about creating CEFR-informed textbooks. One step is collecting and analysing the opinions and experiences of language teachers with textbooks. For this we created an online survey, which can be found at: <tinyurl.com/FLPKaken>. The survey will only take around 10 minutes to complete. Of course the survey is absolutely anonymous. More information about the survey and about the project can also be found at: <de.surveymonkey.com/s/TLT-Texts>. We feel that teaching books are a very important issue for every language teacher and we would like to invite you all to participate in the survey.

**Gender Awareness in Language Education**

- gender awareness, gender roles, interaction/discourse analysis, critical thought, gender related/biased teaching aims
- newsletter/online journal
- Gender conference, workshops

GALE is honored to be a part of the next PanSIG Conference, “From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community.” Several of our members will be presenting, and a joint forum will also be held by GALE, PALE, and CUE at the conference. GALE also plans to have a general meeting and a dinner at PanSIG, so get in touch at <coordinator@gale-sig.org> if you’d like to attend the dinner.

**Global Issues in Language Education**

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

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

**Japanese as a Second Language**

- Japanese as a second language
- Japanese as a Second Language Newsletter—4x year
- AGM at the JALT conference

Call for Papers: JALT Journal of Japanese Language Education. Japanese as a second language researchers, teachers, and learners are invited to contribute articles, research reports, essays, and reviews. Please visit our website: <jalt.org/jsl>.

**Junior and Senior High School**

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

Please visit our website for more information <www.juniorseniorhighsig.org/wordpress>.

**Learner Development**

- learner autonomy, critical approaches to teaching and learning, teacher/learner roles, learning processes, learning content, group dynamics
- Learning Learning, 2x year
- regular emailings to members; discussion list
- regular local area get-togethers; ongoing practitioner/action research & ebook projects; conference grants; research grants; forum at the annual JALT conference

学習者ディプロラム研究部会(LD SIG)は、学習者とディプロラムを発展させるための実践を探索・研究することに関心のある者約200名が世界中から集まって組織する、活発でフレンドリー、そして成長し続ける研究部会です。私たちは、多様な教育現場で活躍の皆さんの参加を歓迎しています。小学校、中学校、高校、通信教育、言語学校、大学で指導されている皆様、そして英語以外の言語を教えている教師の皆様も、どうぞご参加ください<ld-sig.org>。

今年のPan-SIG Conferenceでは、グローバル問題研究部会や語用論研究部会など、The World, the Language Learner, and Relationshipsをテーマとしたフォーラムを
The Learner Development SIG is a lively, friendly, and growing network with around 200 members who have an interest in exploring and researching practices that help develop autonomous learning and teaching. We welcome the participation of teachers from diverse teaching contexts, including elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, distance learning, language school, university settings, and teachers teaching languages other than English.

At this year’s PanSIG Conference in Nagoya, the LD SIG will participate in a lively collaborative forum along with the Global Issues SIG. The theme of this collaborative forum is “The World, the Language Learner, and Relationships.” The LD SIG will also be hosting a forum on “Best Practices for Autonomous Learning in CALL Environments” at this year’s JALT CALL Conference in Matsumoto, June 1-2. Please see the conference website <conference2013.jaltcall.org> for more information.

Later this year, November 23-24, the SIG will be hosting a two day conference, Exploring Learner Development: Practices, Pedagogies, Puzzles and Research, at Gakushuin University, Tokyo. Please join us for this special 20th anniversary event in which students, teachers, researchers and NGOs will explore together a wide and challenging range of issues to do with learner development and learner autonomy in formal and non-formal (language) education.


The deadline for the SIG grants to attend JALT2013 National Conference in October and the LD-SIG 20th Anniversary Conference in Tokyo in November is on June 20th. You do not have to be presenters to apply for these grants. For more details and requirements, please visit our grant webpage: <ld-sig.org/grants2013>.

**Lifelong Language Learning**

With the aging of Japan’s population, it is now widely accepted that engagement in learning, including language learning, enables an active and healthy life. Therefore, a national organization is needed to distribute resources and information for those teaching languages to adult learners, and those nurturing students who will one day be adults who will have a lifelong perspective on language learning. We are that organization. The importance that JALT places on lifelong learning is reflected in the theme of this year’s Annual International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Exhibition: Learning is a Lifelong Voyage.

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

The theme of this year’s JALT PanSIG 2013 Conference is “From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community.” It is sure to be a lively, fun, and worthwhile event. The call for papers has ended and the announcement of successful applicants has already been sent out. However, there is still time to register for the conference and we hope that you will be an active participant. Past PanSIG conferences have proven to be high-energy occasions for teachers to network and share their knowledge and expertise.

The LLL SIG will have a table at the PanSIG Conference and will hold a forum, in cooperation with the OLE SIG and JSL SIG, entitled “Learning Languages at All Stages and Ages.” As part of that forum, Rudolf Reinelt (representing OLE SIG) will give a case study that shows how a very old learner of German came to enjoy success in a language skill that had not been emphasized by his Nazi-prone, grammar-emphasizing German native speaker teachers many years ago. Don Maybin (representing the LLL
SIG) will describe his own experiences learning languages, starting with secondary school French in Canada, which was taught similarly to the way English is being taught at Japanese high schools. He will show how selected learning experiences influenced his teaching, particularly with immigrants to Canada, and how it came to inform the blended learning courses he was to develop in his prime.

In addition to the LLL co-sponsored forum at the PanSIG, we will also have individual presenters representing us, giving presentations on the following topics: Enriching study abroad programs, Blended benefits: Computer to classroom to Cambodia, English Rakugo and English teaching, Enriching study abroad programs, and Older students as both teachers and learners.

Our Facebook page can be accessed at <www.facebook.com/jaltLLL>. As of this writing, we have nearly 150 likes and we always welcome more. If you “like” us, you will not only be able to find out about our SIG’s events, but you can also get tips about lifelong language learning and teaching, as well as discover opportunities and events in the community that stretch your capabilities and broaden your horizons, including volunteering.

In the past few years, we have received few submissions from our members for participation in the PanSIG Conference, the JALT National annual LLL SIG forum, or our mini-Conferences. These are great opportunities for you to share the wealth and let others bathe in the brilliance of your experience and knowledge. We welcome you to be part of the programs that are vetted by our SIG’s officers through an allocation of forum slots which our SIG is offered at the national and Pan-SIG conferences. This year we would love to have more presentations coming from the grassroots. “Don’t be shy; give it a try!” is our motto.

**Literature in Language Learning**

The Literature in Language Teaching SIG was created in 2011. Our diverse membership engages with literature through film, drama, creative writing, poetry, the short story, classic literature, and world literature as well as literature in translation. We welcome interest from those working in cultural studies, politics through literature, language learning, and applications of literary texts in different contexts.

Our focus for 2012 was to promote literature-themed events around Japan, including the hugely successful World Storytelling Conference in December in Kobe. In 2013 LiLT SIG is looking to continue this focus and will be at the PanSIG and JALT National this year. This year at the PanSIG, which encourages closer cooperation between groups, we are working with the Critical Thinking (CT) and Speech, Drama, & Debate (SDD) SIGs. In our shared forum, Jane Nakagawa and Tara McIlroy will respectively discuss the interrelationship of poetry, critical thinking, and speech, drama and debate, and will talk about selecting poetry for content-based classes. Additionally, Dawn Kobayashi (SDD) will talk about creativity in language learning through drama and David Gann (CT) will discuss critical thinking in ELT. This will be followed by a general idea exchange on developing language proficiency through literature, speech, drama, debate and critical thinking. All are most welcome to come along to join the audience, and please, do join in our discussions too!

In 2013 The Journal of Literature in Language Teaching becomes biannual. The first issue of the second volume is now available on our website, <lilt.jalt.org>, published April 2013. The journal is double blind reviewed, it is academic, and it is high quality. And this time it is BIG. This mammoth issue, double the size of our inaugural publication, comprises five Feature Articles, a ‘Literature in Practice’ article (a new section, with a more practical focus), and a conference report, so there is certainly plenty for you to read. Contributions contain discussions of poetry; of TV drama for EAP discussion classes; critical theory; students creating their own creative writing; technologies and reading; and a literary review of the field. Noting also the dramatic increase in the size of the Liberlit Conference this year (ten presenters in 2012, to twenty-four presenters this year) it is evident that ours is an increasingly active field in Japan.

Recent events for SIG members included an April talk on multiple intelligences for Toyohashi JALT and a presentation on cooperative learning for Shizuoka JALT where publicity chair Jane Nakagawa demonstrated the use of poetry and other materials. Kevin Stein attended the Kyoto My Share event on April 20th and shared activities for using Writers Workshop techniques in reading classes. We encourage members to get in touch to let us know of their activities and events they attend.

All important guidelines and information for contributors are available on our website <lilt.jalt.org>. You can get in touch with us online.
through a newly established Yahoo group and Facebook. To join the SIG tick Literature in Language Teaching when renewing your SIG membership. We look forward to welcoming you and meeting up with you soon!

Materials Writers

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

The Materials Writers SIG now has a Members Profiles section on its website where SIG members can post materials of their own creation for anyone to download. Even if you are not a member of the MW SIG, please check out the materials available at <materialswriters.org>. Also, if you are interested in posting your own materials on our website, please contact the MW SIG Coordinator at <mw@jalt.org>.

Other Language Educators

| [ 📖 FLL beyond mother tongue, L3, multilingualism, second foreign language ] [ 📖 OLE Newsletter—4-5x year ] |
| [ 📖 ] [ 📖 ] |

Besides information in French, German, and simplified as well as traditional Chinese on the upcoming May 18–19 PanSIG 2013 Conference at Nanzan University in Nagoya, where OLE also has a few presentations, OLE has issued flyers for its 2nd Annual SIG Conference October 12-13 at Chukyo University, Nagoya, in English, French, Spanish and German. These are downloadable from the conference website <geocities.jp/dlinklist/ENG/OLEkon2013.html>. OLE also provided JALT 2013 with the theme in French, Spanish, German, and Chinese. All materials are available from the coordinator at <reinelt.rudolf.my@ehime-u.ac.jp> for distribution to your colleagues.

Pragmatics

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

The Pragmatics SIG is pleased to announce the publication and sale of the third book in its Pragmatics Resource series entitled, Pragtivities: Bringing pragmatics to second language classrooms. The book contains 64 pragmatic-themed activities written by and for language teachers helping students focus on language-as-action. It is available for 2000 yen (not including postage) through <pragsig.org/publications.html>. Also a heads up for this year’s PanSIG Conference: Pragmatics will join forces with the GILE (Global Issues) and LD (Learner Development) SIGs for a unique forum. See <pansig.org/2013/> for more details.

Professionalism, Administration, and Leadership in Education

| [ 📖 professional development, ethics, legal issues, leadership dynamics, comparative education, societal demands on educators ] [ 📖 PALE Newsletter ] |

PALE’s mission starts from the recognition that language education does not take place in isolation from society or other fields of education. Issues of concern include curriculum design, implementation and maintenance, professional ethics, professional development and evaluation, administrative methodology, leadership dynamics, comparative education, sociological trends in education, employment problems, legal issues, and the demands that societies place on educators. PALE seeks to apprise teachers of research and trends in these issues by organizing conference presentations and through its journal, newsletter, listserv, and website <jalt.org/groups/PALE>.

Speech, Drama, & Debate

The Speech, Drama, & Debate SIG (SDD SIG) has another exciting year planned. The focus in 2013 will be on speech and debate, as the focus in 2012 was on drama and oral interpretation. The SDD is a sponsoring SIG for the PanSIG conference on May 18–19 at Nanzan University in Nagoya. (See <pansig.org/2013/JALTPanSIG2013/Welome.html> for more information.) SDD will also have a significant presence at JALT2013, and will sponsor or co-sponsor presentations, workshops, and conferences throughout the year. Volume 2 of Mask & Gavel, the peer-reviewed journal of SDD, will be out in October. If you are interested in submitting an article, contact us at <sdd@jalt.org>. For more information on the SDD SIG and to download Volume 1 of Mask & Gavel, see our public website: <sites.google.co/site/speechdramaanddebatepublicsite/home>.
The Study Abroad SIG provides a supportive place for discussing areas of interest regarding study abroad and intercultural training. We welcome submissions for our newsletter, Ryuugaku, and we are looking for new officers to join the team. Visit our new website at <jalt-sa.org> or contact us at <studyabroadsig@gmail.com>.

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

Teachers Helping Teachers
For participation in THT programs, we ask that you prepare 2 or 3 presentations and be prepared to make the presentations a few times so all the event participants can see it. The emphasis is on practical classroom activities with the possibility of linking them up to current theory in ESL pedagogy.

THT Vietnam
As of this writing, we still have room for 2 or 3 more presenters for THT Vietnam, at Hue University, June 14–16 and the topic is Innovations in the methodology of teaching English: Scaffolding activities and the textbook. If you are interested in presenting, please contact Joe Tomei <thtjalt@gmail.com>. We also have PDFs of the Vietnamese textbooks available, so if you want to develop some exercises using that material, please contact us.

THT-Bangladesh
The tentative dates for Bangladesh are the week of September 2–8. For more information, contact Steve Cornwall <ojcsteve@gmail.com>.

THT-Kyrgyzstan
The tentative dates for Kyrgyzstan are the week of September 9–13. For more information contact either Brent Jones <bjonessjp@yahoo.com> or Roger Palmer <roger@center.konan-u.ac.jp>.

THT-Laos
Not too early to plan! Scheduled for February–March 2014 with flexible dates. Contact Chris Ruddenklau <chrisruddenklau@yahoo.com> for more information.

Even if you have a vague plan and are interested, please contact the country director of the place you are interested in so we can keep you informed.
The TC SIG had a busy start to 2013. In conjunction with the International Teacher Development Institute we held a stimulating series of webinars in January featuring Özge Karaoglu, and we would like to thank both the presenters and participants for making them such a success. In January and February we co-sponsored the Electronic Village Online which, again, was a wonderfully varied and informative professional development program.

If you have any ideas, activities, advice, or experiences you would like to share with your fellow teachers, please consider submitting them to some of our upcoming issues of the TLC Newsletter! Email your submissions to the editor at <editor@tcsig.jalt.org>. For more information about the Teaching Children SIG and all our activities, please visit our homepage <tcsig.jalt.org>, blog <jaltcsg.postorous.com>, or TCSIG Facebook page <facebook.com/pages/JALT-Teaching-Children-SIG>.

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

The Vocabulary SIG publishes the bulletin VERB (Vocabulary Education and Research Bulletin) twice a year. To read online or to make a submission for an upcoming issue please see the Publications page on our website: <jaltvocab.weebly.com>.

We are looking forward to the 2013 Vocabulary Symposium (put on by Vocabulary and CUE SIGs) which will be in Fukuoka, Kyushu on June 29, 2013. Our featured discussants are Paul Nation and Yo In’ami. It will be a full day of presentations in two sessions on vocabulary learning and vocabulary assessment. The proceedings from the 2012 Symposium have been put online in the first issue of the online journal Vocabulary Learning and Instruction (VLI) at <vli-journal.org>.

The Vocabulary SIG aims to provide a forum for focused research and discussion in specific regard to vocabulary acquisition. We aim to offer both teachers and researchers a place to connect regarding how learners improve vocabulary knowledge, how to test their knowledge, and how these theoretical aspects connect to classroom practice.
CHAPTER EVENTS

FUKUI—Action research of task-based language teaching towards vocational high school learners by Takuro Fujita. This presentation will report on action research for the purpose of motivating vocational high school learners. Frameworks of task-based language teaching (TBLT) were employed as a means by which to motivate learners. A group of 10th grade vocational high school learners participated in this study. The research details how the TBLT frameworks were implemented and the subsequent effect on learners’ motivation. Sun 26 May, 13:30-15:30; Open University of Japan Fukui Campus, AOSSA, 7F; <jaltfukui.org>; Non-members ¥1,000, Non-member students ¥500.

GIFU—Bridging the gap: Neuroscience and education by Adam Jenkins, Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology. Cognitive neuroscience and psychology research have much to offer the field of education in the explanation of mental processes. However, the gap between these fields of study is seen by many as an insurmountable obstacle. This presentation is a demonstration of how research from the cognitive neurosciences and psychology can be applied to language teaching theory and pedagogy, bridging the gap between theories from multiple fields and teaching practice. Sat 18 May, 19:00-21:00; JR Gifu Station, Heartful Square, 2F (East Wing); One-day members ¥1,000, 1st visit free.

HIROSHIMA—Choice and cooperation in the children’s classroom by Chris Hunt, Wise Hat English, Hatsukaichi, Hiroshima. Hunt, a former leader of the Teaching Children SIG of JALT, will show how the ideas of “choice” and “cooperation” can help children become more enthusiastic about learning English. Sun 16 Jun, 15:00-17:00; Peace Park, 3F Conference Room; More details at <hiroshima-jalt.org>; Non-members ¥500, students ¥200.

HOKKAIDO—Listening activities in the classroom: Exercises for beginner to EAP students by Joshua Antle, Hokkaido University of Education Sapporo. Of the four main English skills, listening is the skill our students will use the most. However, it has not received the same attention/class time as speaking, reading, and writing. ER (Extensive Reading) has been credited for many improvements including
reading speed. Could EL (Extensive Listening) help produce similar gains? This workshop will describe a 2-month quantitative research study in EL and provide several listening tasks/ideas suitable for students of different proficiency levels. Sun 26 May, 14:00-16:00; Location TBA; Non-members ¥500.

HOKKAIDO—Why teach global English? Co-ordinator: Tim Grose, Hokkaido representative of GILE (Global Issues in Language Education); author of Global Issues in Education. Sun 23 Jun, 13:00-16:00; Location TBA; Non-members ¥500.

IBARAKI—Two-day mini-conference. June 1: Academic reading skills for student success by Robert Peacock, Title TBA by Takeshi Kiku-chi, and Painless story writing in ELT by Clay Bussinger. June 2: Sherlock Holmes and the mystery of language learning by Jeroen Bode and Useful language learning through multimedia projects by Deborah Grow. Sat 1 Jun, 13:00-18:30, Sun 2 Jun, 10:00-12:00; The National Center for Teachers’ Development <www.nctd.go.jp> in Tsukuba City; <ibarakijalt.blogspot.com>.

KITAKYUSHU—Online reading and vocabulary environments: Present and future by Rob Waring, Notre Dame Seishin University. This presentation will start by reviewing some of the better, currently available online learning and vocabulary environments leading to a set of principles that good online learning environments should adhere to. There will be some suggestions made for how these environments might best be developed for the future needs of L2 learners. Sat 11 May, 18:30-20:00; Wel-Tobata, Tobata; <jalt.org/chapters/kq>; Non-members ¥1,000.

KITAKYUSHU—Language codes: Helping teachers decode the “L” in JALT by Michael Phillips. This presentation will be divided into three short workshop sessions. Initial discussions will center on a definition and understanding of what language codes both embody and represent. The next session will explore the related concepts of personal idiolects and the expression of language identity. Finally, the third session will lead into a final open forum opportunity by exploring more specific, in-class diglossic issues, and challenge participant notions of correctness, acceptability, and accommodation. Sat 8 Jun, 18:30-20:00; Wel-Tobata, Tobata; <jalt.org/chapters/kq>; Non-members ¥1,000.

KOBE—JALT spring social and BBQ. Come exchange teaching ideas with other teachers in an informal atmosphere. Families with children are welcome. This event will be held outdoors, weather permitting; indoors in case of rain. Childcare will be provided. Sat 25 May; Kobe Regatta and Athletic Club; More details at <kobejalt.org>; RSVP to kobejalt@gmail.com by May 17th; Adults ¥2,000 (plus drinks), children 12 and under ¥1,000.

KOBE—Creating CEFR-J can-do statements for an existing curriculum by Annie Semmelroth, Hiroshima Bunkyo Women’s University. Across Japan there is a movement toward creating or revising curricula to represent the progressive skills of the CEFR-J (Certified European Framework of Reference Japan). Many institutions are likely to face the challenges of measuring an existing curriculum against the framework, which raises a crucial question: “How can an existing curriculum successfully be compared to the CEFR-J self assessment grid?” The first step toward this comparison is creating sound can-do statements which reflect existing curricula. The faculty at Hiroshima Bunkyo Women’s University undertook the accomplishment of valid “can-do” representations of their curriculum, including meetings, workshops, teacher cooperation, seeking general agreement, and in-house and third-party validation. Sat 15 Jun, 16:00-18:00; Kobe YMCA; More details at <kobejalt.org>; JALT members free, one-day members ¥1,000.

KYOTO—An afternoon with Dr. Dongkwang Shin. From the Korean Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, Dr. Shin received his doctorate from University of Victoria under the tutelage of Paul Nation, investigating high-frequency collocation. His research interests include corpora, collocations, high-frequency vocabulary, and student assessment. Come and join us for what is sure to be a stimulating talk on an exciting area of second language education research. Sat 25 May, 14:30-17:00 (tentative); Campus Plaza Kyoto; More details at <kyotojalt.org>; Non-members ¥500.

MATSUMAYAMA & EAST SHIKOKU (CO-SPONSORED)—The 4th annual Shikoku JALT conference. Communications strategies by Chiki Iwai, Hiroshima City University (East Shikoku JALT Featured Speaker); Doing quantitative research by Ian Isemonger, Kumamoto University (Matsuyama JALT Featured Speaker);
Extensive reading & reading strategies by Junko Yamanaka. Extensive Reading Foundation (Oxford University Press Featured Speaker); Short papers/presentations by TBA. Sat 11 May, 11:00-17:00; Economics/Law Campus, Kagawa University, Takamatsu; <esjalt.org/wordpress/?p=138>; One-day members ¥1,000.

MATSUYAMA—Project work: What is it and why: when and how can you implement it? by Paul Moritoshi, Tokoha Gakuen University. Project-based language learning is slowly gaining popularity in Japan’s EFL classrooms, but what exactly is it and why are increasingly more teachers trying it? When should we (or not) use it and how can we effectively implement EFL projects? This workshop addresses these issues through a sequence of related activities and discussions. Sun 9 Jun, 14:15-16:20; Shinonome High School Kinrenkan 4F; One-day members ¥1,000.

NAGOYA—Cultural and institutional obstacles that stand in the way of teaching communicative English in Japan by Robert Aspinall, Shiga University. The working lives of language teachers in Japan are full of many tasks and responsibilities that are unrelated to teaching English communication. Cultural and institutional obstacles alike conspire to prevent teachers and students from applying themselves to the mastery of English communication. This workshop will address this issue and invite discussion of strategies to help overcome the problems outlined. Sun 16 Jun, 13:30-16:00; Nagoya International Center, 3F, Lecture Room 1; <nic-nagoya.or.jp/en/about-us/access-hours>; One-day members ¥1,000, 1st visit free.

OKAYAMA—Caring about learners of nursing English: Adaptable vocabulary activities for ESP and beyond by Simon Capper. Nursing English students with limited English proficiency are frequently overwhelmed by large amounts of new occupation-related vocabulary. Avoiding this pitfall requires both creativity and practicality. This workshop introduces some engaging vocabulary activities that encourage meaningful recycling and repetition, while also being adaptable for general (non-ESP) courses. Capper’s second, shorter presentation will introduce the JALT “Teachers Helping Teachers SIG” Kyrgyzstan seminar. Sat 11 May, 15:00-17:00; NDSU at Logos Hall; Non-members ¥500.

OKAYAMA—First, Reflections on peer assessment of oral presentations by David Townsend. The presenter will detail his findings on a one-year study of students assessing each other’s presentations, including potential benefits and pitfalls as well as future areas of study. Second, Tabletop roleplaying games (RPGs) and EFL by Magnus Kuwahara Magnusson. The presenter will demonstrate how to use RPGs in small, low-level classes and how to maximize the frequency of target language without losing the entertainment aspects of the games. Sat 15 Jun, 15:00-17:00; NDSU at Logos Hall; Non-members ¥500.

SENDAI—Rules, tools, & jewels for teaching young learners by Kim Horne. Explore songs, chants, picture books, class management tips, and other activities that engage young learners with movement, music, interactive reading, drama, and MORE! Delve into the structure and strategies of an actual lesson designed to get students thinking, sharpen their senses, and build their self-confidence. The presenter will also share some original and favorite activities for teaching phonemic awareness. This active presentation will show you essential elements that will add power and punch to your lessons to make learning fun for everyone! Sun 26 May; Sendai-shi Shimin Katsudo Support Center; <jaltsendai.org>; One-day members ¥1,000.

SENDAI—Better presentation slide design: Presentation zen & more by Marc Helgesen. Presentation Zen is probably the most important teacher/presenter skill set since PowerPoint was introduced. You’ll learn to avoid the visual clutter and •bullet •point •overload •that •causes •“Death •by •PowerPoint.” We’ll watch the Presentation Zen video, stopping for discussion, plus look at design basics and before/after slides, and consider when the P-zen ideas need modification for language learners and L2 audiences. Sun 30 Jun; Venue TBA; <jaltsendai.org>; One-day members ¥1,000.

SHINSHU—JALT CALL 2013 conference & 6th annual ER seminar. The JALT CALL conference is consistently one of the premier CALL conferences in Asia, and this year, under the theme “Best Practices in CALL and ER,” the ER SIG is collaborating with the CALL SIG to allow attendees to explore the connections between these two areas in research and practice. CALL
featured keynote speaker Professor Dorothy Chun of University of California, Santa Barbara will speak on “Fad or Fundamental? Keeping up with CALL Technology,” while the ER plenary speaker will be Kunihide Sakai, author of Mitsu- teri De Hijimeru Eigo Hyakumangō: Ninki Jidōsho Kara Honkakuwa Pépäbakkuru Made. Fri 31 May – Sun 2 Jun; Shinshu University, Matsumoto Campus (School of General Education Building), Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture; <conference2013.jaltcall.org>, <ersig.org/drupal-ersig/6th-er-seminar>.

TOKYO—Reacting to the past 2-day work-shop by various presenters. “Reacting to the Past” (RTTP) consists of elaborate games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles with detailed character descriptions based on real historical figures from classic texts. Three RTTP experts will come from the US to present this exciting educational approach that uses content to get students engaged in debates and to research and prepare papers/speeches in a way that allows them to develop invaluable critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork skills. Sat 11 – Sun 12 May, 12:00-18:00; Sophia University; Registration and details at <tokyojalt.org/rttp-registration.html>; JALT Members ¥2,800, Non-members ¥4,500.

TOYOHASHI—Toyohashi chapter annual barbe-cue. JALT Toyohashi will be holding our annual barbecue, again at the usual location, Takashi Ryokuchi Park, south of Aichi University’s Toyohashi Campus. Please find us at the covered shelter near the southeast corner of the park. Anyone is welcome to join us for some delicious food and good conversation. Please bring something to add to the feast. We look forward to seeing you there! Sun 26 May, 11:30-14:30; Takashi Ryokuchi Park, Toyohashi.

TOYOHASHI—Sharing learning and teaching insights from a different angle by Oliver Mayer and Martin Niers. The presenters will talk about their own language learning backgrounds and how their experience of successfully learning foreign languages, including English, has given insights into and influenced their own teaching strategies. Participants will be invited to share their own language learning and teaching histories. Sun 16 Jun, 13:30-16:00; Aichi University’s Toyohashi campus, Building Five, Room 543; One-day members ¥1,000.

YAMAGATA—Colorado and America in terms of history, culture, education, and language by John Hatanaka, Yamagata City. In this talk, Hatanaka will discuss how he brings culture into the junior high school English classroom as well as the challenges of working in an EFL environment. The second half of the talk will be used for open discussion. Sun 26 May, 13:30-15:30; Seibu Kominkan; Non-members ¥1,000.

YAMAGATA—You’re getting warmer: A compendium of activities to begin the class in English by Jerry Miller, Yamagata University. It’s not always easy to shift into English at the beginning of class. Outside the classroom, a student’s entire life is conducted in Japanese. Furthermore, in large low-level classes motivation may be lacking. Learners need a segue of simple, confidence-building activities to get them into the flow of language class. In this workshop, the presenter will introduce easy to use, warm-up exercises to enable successful speaking. Sat 1 Jun, 13:30-15:30; Seibu Kominkan; Non-members ¥1,000.

YOKOHAMA—Appreciative inquiry activities and ideal classmates research by Tim Murphey. This presentation will describe research and activities with 488 students at four universities in Tokyo in which they were asked a special question at the end of a long survey: “Q39 - Please describe a group of classmates that you could learn English well with. What would you all do to help each other learn better and more enjoyably?” The results can be understood through the field of Appreciative Inquiry and the Altruistic Turn. Sat 18 May, 13:00-17:00; Kanagawa Kokaido Hall, Yokohama; One-day members ¥1,000.

YOKOHAMA—The TOEFL iBT by Kazuya Kito and Terry Yearley. This presentation will begin with an overview of the TOEFL iBT. From there, the seminar will move on to talk about how the speaking section is rated and scored, as well as ideas for helping students to prepare for this section. Next will be an overview of the two writing tasks on the test, followed by a look at some of the challenges involved in preparing students to deal with these tasks in the test. Sat 15 Jun, 13:00-17:00; Venue TBA; One-day members ¥1,000.
GIFU: January — *The voices of academic publishing in Japan* by Theron Muller. Muller survived a car collision that morning to give an informative presentation on his research into the motivations and goals of scholars in Japan pursuing academic publishing. Data was presented from an interview with one particular scholar trying to break into the field with his first published manuscript.

There followed an interesting group discussion into the issues surrounding academic publishing. It seems that many who are new to the field are unsure how to go about preparing a work for publication, and often lack people to go to for advice. Two primary motivations for publishing highlighted in the meeting were career advancement and a desire to contribute to the EFL teaching community. An interesting point raised was the perceived status of journals by academic institutions. Most universities have a ranking system by which they award points for publications at different levels. This created some interesting discussion that no doubt fuelled further contemplation by all who attended.

Reported by Paul Wicking

GIFU: February — *Integrating music into the classroom* by Brian Cullen and Jim Smiley. An evening of song, discussion, and fun began with a rousing song, “Maggie in the Woods,” sung by Cullen and accompanied by Smiley. The presenters demonstrated several ways of integrating music into the classroom. The motto of the evening was *sing it, play it, learn it* and Gifu JALT’s members certainly did all three.

After the initial song we discussed reasons for and against using music in the classroom. Some students and teachers believe music is a waste of time as they need to steer the lesson towards the all important test. Teachers often feel the language in songs can be difficult but the presenters demonstrated how rhythm can help develop students’ speaking and listening skills through examining the commonalities between music and language.

Between wonderful musical interludes which beautifully punctuated the evening the presenters demonstrated several ways in which music can be used in class. Grammar can be outlined, verb tenses explored, and new vocabulary learnt. We were given a useful worksheet which explained how to use music, including simple activities such as cloze exercises, jumbled words, and rhyming exercises.

Even though music shouldn’t be used in isolation, the presenters concluded that having fun with music should not be disconnected from learning.

Reported by Brent Simmonds

GUNMA: January — *What young people should know about energy and nuclear power issues: Lessons from content-based university English classes* by Keiko Kikuchi. Kikuchi strongly believes in content-based teaching. When the 3/11 disaster and meltdown occurred, it gave her a chance to introduce the topic of nuclear power, a topic she has strong feelings about, to her students. Kikuchi started her presentation as she starts her classes, by giving attendees a survey gauging their knowledge and opinions about nuclear energy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, her students generally know little about the science behind nuclear power, and are split evenly as to its necessity and perceived danger. The results from Gunma JALT attendees were not much different. Next, Kikuchi laid out her justification for using nuclear power as a
subject of study in an English class: simply, it is such an important issue with such wide-ranging societal effects that teachers of all disciplines should touch on it in their classes. Interspersed with questions and discussion, Kikuchi used the rest of her time to introduce attendees to some of the numerous information sources she shares with her students before allowing them to draw their own conclusions. Please find a list of links to these sources at the Gunma JALT website <sites.google.com/site/gunmajalt/>.

Reported by John Larson

GUNMA: February — From dutiful daughters to English professors: How gender shapes the professional lives of Japanese female university English professors by Diane Hawley-Nagatomo. Hawley-Nagatomo explains for background purposes that education is gender stratified because, for one reason, the role of housewife and mother are highly idealized and women leave the workforce soon after childbirth. From her research, she explains that many women, however, do enter higher education but more often than not attend “lesser” quality institutions no matter their ability. Some reasons are that parents want to keep their daughters at home, or that education for women is more of a self-fulfilling endeavor whereas education for a male is for his own (and future family’s) livelihood. We can see that family plays an important role here. Keep the daughters close for family caretaking, push the sons as much as possible for financial caretaking. Her participants pointed out that families also play an important role in encouraging women to study English, thought to be a “feminine” subject. Women who do progress to professional careers share characteristics such as both their mother and father are university graduates themselves and live in urban areas already. In academia, participants reported that it’s still a man’s world and often they can not crack the secret code of their male colleagues.

Reported by Lori Ann Desrosiers

HAMAMATSU: January — Let’s delve into the minds of “bad” students (Alternative TESOL/Second language learning during a short-term homestay program) by Jun Harada. Harada is an accomplished teacher with TESOL experience in the U.S., as well as in Japanese secondary and tertiary schools. Having often encountered unenthusiastic students, he decided to find out why. Using interview techniques, and tailoring study tasks to students’ particular interests, he found their confidence, attitude and aptitude increased. Focusing on autonomy, relatedness and esteem, Harada found that so-called “bad” students developed interest and skills in English. He concluded that it was best to try to let students use English instead of teaching them English, and from this they will one day be ready to learn. Students showed increased enthusiasm and ability as a result of this method, but an associated increase was not particularly reflected in exam scores.

Harada’s second presentation concentrated on homestays. After accompanying students on a homestay program, Harada discovered that students’ communicative skills increased. Language became meaningful for them, as they tried to negotiate meaning with their homestay families and new English-speaking friends. This also gave students intrinsic reasons to try and improve their English skills. Harada found that students made qualitative gains (not quantitative) in fluency, socio-linguistic knowledge, and vocabulary. Harada suggested using stories in context, film and task based lessons to simulate an overseas experience in the classroom. He
found the activities (and homestays) do not improve test scores as much, but are worthwhile for the development of communicative competence, output, interaction and social aspects of the L2.  

*Reported by Susan Sullivan and Dan Frost*

**HIMEJI: February — It’s great to integrate!**

by *Jason White*. Participants at this quarterly workshop meeting were asked to consider their lessons and activities from an integrative perspective, in terms of lesson goals, language achievement, and motivation. Initial issues raised and discussed involved the three elements of motivation (effort, desire, and affect) and how their relation to the Japanese EFL classrooms of JALT members and workshop participants. The discussion also touched on the background beliefs of stakeholders in this L2 acquisition context; chiefly, whether or not students view the target language in a positive light, as well as whether those in the students’ wider social context believe that learning English “adds” to rather than “replaces” or “alters” their identity. White’s presentation moved on to how activities and lessons can be planned effectively to engender a positive view of English, whilst simultaneously working towards and attaining useful language goals in a motivational classroom environment. Participants were invited to share activities that they utilize, which were then analyzed to see if there was any room for improvement. The meeting ended with a review of how members felt that they could help improve their lessons’ integration of goals, achievements and motivation.  

*Reported by David Lees*

**HOKKAIDO: February — The “WOW!” factor: Ideas and activities for young English learners**

by *Robert Olsen* (Tomakomai Komazawa University). This presentation was jam packed with ideas and activities to “wow” learners, with a special focus on young learners. Robert Olsen talked about the importance of keeping learner attention right from the beginning, referring to the 47-second hook, where people decide whether what you have to say is worth listening to. He also talked about optimizing concentration through the use of variety, with an 18-minute wall representing the maximum time people will concentrate on one activity. He encouraged the use of surprise in lessons to avoid too much predictability and heighten learner attention. However, he also cautioned that too much surprise can end in paralysis by analysis, where learners are too afraid of what might come next for learning to occur. A balance between predictability and surprise is obviously necessary. He introduced a few techniques for teaching, such as building up from known material to unknown material in a lesson, and looping, where something new is taught, followed by something different, and then the new item is returned to so that concentration and learning are optimized. He also encouraged the use of songs and tangible goals to enhance learning. Overall it was a very entertaining presentation and one can imagine that Robert Olsen’s classrooms are filled with laughter and learning.  

*Reported by Haidee Thomson*

**IBARAKI: February — This month, co-sponsored by the GALE SIG, our local chapter had the privilege of having three guest speakers. (1) From dutiful daughters to English professors: How gender shapes the professional lives of Japanese female university English teachers by Diane Hawley Nagatomo*  

Nagatomo shared with us a revealing finding from her dissertation project, which indicates that profiles of female university English teachers are very much alike, in contrast to those of their male counterparts. Namely, strongly encouraged by their parents to study English over other subjects, they climbed the ladder of education, eventually actively pursuing it in order to free themselves from social and cultural binds in Japan. By analyzing female teachers’ personal accounts in light of Gee’s (2000) theoretical framework of identity, Nagatomo concluded that their decision to pursue their current profession was very much shaped by their gender identities. (2) *Integrated speaking tasks used for teaching and assessment by Rie Koizumi*. In this presentation, Koizumi introduced us to the concept of integrated speaking tasks, which require the use of two or more language skills including speaking (e.g., reading and speaking; listening, reading, and speaking). She explained that integrated tasks are gaining popularity because they could improve not only speaking but also grammar, vocabulary, and so on. While maintaining its effectiveness, Koizumi also emphasized the importance of designing a task carefully and choosing an appropriate method of assessment for it. She showed us various sample tasks and method of assessment and offered us an opportunity to evaluate students’ work so that we could experience the benefits and difficulties of the tasks first-hand. (3) *Bring-
ing gender issues into the language classroom by Michele Steele. Steele began her presentation by asking us if we had included gender issues in our classes. Then, drawing on her involvement in the GALE SIG and WELL (Women Educators and Language Learners), she stated how attention to gender issues had enriched her personally and professionally. As can be seen in the case of changing a surname upon marriage, gender issues are prevalent in Japan, as in other countries. Steele maintained that language teachers could promote students’ critical thinking as well as tolerance and understanding by strategically employing gender-related topics and language exercises as part of their classes.

Reported by Naomi Takagi

KITAKYUSHU: January — TOEIC vocabulary seminar applying CLIL approach by Takashi Uemura. Uemura finds that the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach successfully combines cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP) with basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1984) to transcend traditional methods and improve learner performance. Scaffolding and translanguaging are vital to his approach, based on a “4 C Framework” (communication, culture, context, and cognition).

An English conversation school teacher for six years, Uemura began by asking us to visualize his presentation from a learner’s point of view; some are intrinsically motivated to study TOEIC, others want raises, promotions, or overseas positions. For relevance, he integrates finance and accounting into his course, defining meanings of key words in context. As a holistic overview of his teaching philosophy, Uemura started by displaying several vocabulary items of these fields for volunteers to read and guess their meaning. He showed indistinct sketches of famous people for us to identify. The three-letter initials of corporate titles were displayed and we guessed what they were short for. Tongue-in-cheek, Uemura then listed the assets and liabilities of (his) marriage to parallel such considerations with a corporate relationship (including shareholders equity) to introduce vocabulary and continued with a closed written discussion of a tantalizing topic relevant to both relationships - why can’t you receive all your bonus?

Reported by Dave Pite

KITAKYUSHU: February — Love that dog: Making a difference with multimedia by Linda K. Kadota. Kadota first asked how many of us taught poetry and used iPods or other technology. She said many teachers are afraid of poetry. Her classes begin with riddles, which is a good and fun way to get students thinking outside of the box. (What’s a deer with no eyes? No idea.) This starts them thinking about words and meanings in new ways; some get the answers, some come up with new answers. Motivation is vital; if teachers cannot maintain it, classes will fail.

Incorporating into the classroom the five basic types of multimedia — text, video, sound, graphics, and animation — we can use technology to help students better access the English language and appreciate the existence of multiple levels of meaning within it. At first students cannot imagine they can write poetry but realize by the end that they are poets. Among many examples of zany and innovative poetry on her handout is the URL of a web-based concrete poetry generator and new verses generated from Love That Dog by Sharon Creech, a text designed for teaching fourth grade students in the U.S. The handout also included compelling lists of the benefits of classroom multimedia use for both students and teachers.

Reported by Dave Pite

NAGASAKI: February — Proficiency and personality by Masa Tsuneyasu. In her presentation, which included both a research report and introduction of practical teaching activities, Tsuneyasu introduced her exploratory study into the relation between learners’ proficiency and personality, followed by a series of classroom exercises geared towards different personality types. Tsuneyasu reported on the findings of her small-scale study into her students’ personality types. Tsuneyasu introduced her research report and personality inventory, as they correlated to language proficiency scores, measured by the TOEIC test. Tsuneyasu explained her results and then led an interactive class demonstration of several activities aimed at learners with individual personality differences. Tsuneyasu conducted her demonstration activities in Japanese, which was both an enjoyable and enlightening role reversal for the many English teachers in attendance.

Reported by Joel Hensley
NAGOYA: January — *The voices of academic publishing/Narrative inquiry in the classroom* by Theron Muller. Muller, a dissertation supervisor and editor of academic publications, showed semi-structured interviews about academic publishing interests and experiences. His research methodology is mainly EFL, all language-related and trying for the balance of Japanese and non-Japanese participants. He organizes texts, drafts of papers, correspondence, official documents, interviews, and dissertations. Nowadays, to get a position in university, even if it is a part-time teacher’s position, you need to submit at least two publications, otherwise you cannot be hired. Muller shared his students’ writings and his assessment criteria, which included total words, lexical density, lexical profile, and sentence length. The positives of this approach are its ease of implementation, and its negatives are its lack of assessing the writing’s deeper context. Muller thinks that teachers should focus on rapport building among all parties in the learning context.

*Reported by Kayoko Kato*

NAGOYA: February — *Music & EFL - Play it, sing it, learn it* by Jim Smiley and Brian Cullen. Commonalities in music and verbal language lie in their rhythm, affect, poetry and lyrics, and content-based possibility. Cullen and Smiley showed us how to introduce songs with movements to the class to teach easy English, using a song, “Good Friends” composed by Cullen, and how to develop phonological awareness (A-E-I-O-U) using a song “Apples and Bananas.” Cullen played the guitar, and Smiley, the recorder, very beautifully. The key to motivation and learning is authentic contact, conceptual integration, verse content, and experiential/meaning-based learning. As a practical way to integrate music into materials, Cullen showed us how to use lyrics for learning grammar, writing, and for building vocabulary, using clozes, line ordering, proverbs, and discussion. Teaching rhyme, rhythm, metrics, stanzas, alliteration, and assonance is also helpful to understand the features of English. Much of the teaching of suprasegmentals can be simplified by using musical notation. An initial taxonomy of the use of music in ELT is traditional uses of music, class management, and interconnectivity.

*Reported by Kayoko Kato*

NARA: February — *The annual Tenri University and Nara JALT joint seminar: “On teaching English in English by Hiroko Taniguchi, Toshihiro Nakae, Rintaro Sato, Hidetami Nakai, Matthew Reynolds, and Shuhei Kadota*. Taniguchi introduced a storytelling activity conducted in English in her junior high school class, stating that pictures and gestures helped students understand a story even though there may be some unfamiliar words and expressions. Nakai’s ten-month project focused on high school students’ improvement in English communication skills through pair work and reading-aloud practice without the translation methodology, encouraging more exposure to English. Sato emphasized the importance for teachers to conduct English lessons in as much English as possible before teachers can expect students’ spontaneous verbalization in English. Nakai also encouraged classroom instruction in English, but suggested a gradual increase of English in class to reduce teacher anxiety. Reynolds explained the benefits of a phonics program at elementary, junior, and senior high schools. These benefits include improving confidence in reading and writing, and building a positive attitude toward English. Kadota highlighted the efficacy of shadowing practice as a tool to increase learners’ output and transform their explicit knowledge to implicit memory.

*Reported by Motoko Teraoka*

OKAYAMA: February — *Revisiting content-based instruction* by Akemi Morioka; *E-learning trends: Lessons from experts in four different countries* by Keiko Sakui and Neil Cowie. Morioka described CBI as an approach and not a method, leaving the applications of the approach open to some interpretation. One interesting gauge she uses, however, is asking students what they remember from a language course. If they name content as opposed to linguistic structures, then the course could be described as CBI. She then related her experience using CBI while teaching Japanese language courses in the U.S., and concluded that CBI might work differently for EFL in Japan than it would for JFL in the U.S. In general the success of CBI depends on expectations of both the language program and the students.

Sakui and Cowie set out to educate themselves in e-learning by interviewing experts in the field. They outlined a few dedicated online learning websites, but then said that, surprisingly, the experts they interviewed hardly used such sites.
and instead used standard online social media and collaboration tools. The advantages of this are that students may already know how to use the sites, and teachers need not rely on institutions to provide materials and infrastructure. Tech-wary teachers were advised to try implementing technology little by little, for example assigning blog entries rather than paper journals.

**SENDAI: January** — We started off the year with two of our favorite local presenters. (1) **DIY NeuroELT – Making your textbook more brain-friendly** by Marc Helgesen. Following up on our June 2012 “Sendai Brain Days” event, Helgesen helped us make the jump from theoretical to practical brain science with this immediately useful presentation that we could bring into our classrooms the very next day. Helgesen said “...some people think the brain is like a sponge, soaking up more information than we can really use. No, it is really more like a sieve. 99% of the input we receive is discarded nearly instantly. How do we make sure the important information in our classroom doesn’t disappear? Brain science is making huge progress in the field of mind, brain, education. But how to connect those ideas to the books we are using in our English classrooms?” In this session we looked at seven ways we can make our current textbooks more brain-friendly. Helgesen showed examples for English Firsthand, plus ways to add them to books, even where they don’t currently exist. (2) **4 good ways to motivate children and 1 bad one!** by John Wiltshier. What are some proven principles that can increase a child’s motivation to become an active learner? Wiltshier outlined four great examples, making use of both theoretical insights and practical suggestions. Wiltshier supported his presentation, where appropriate, with examples from his new children’s course and online world—Our Discovery Island. In addition, one bad idea for trying to motivate children, although commonly used, was dissected with clear explanations of why it is not good. You will have to attend one of his presentations to find out more about these four great (and one bad) ways to motivate—no spoilers here! While the presentation focused on teaching young learners, the motivational principles discussed are generally applicable.

**SENDAI: February** — (1) **English education in Japanese junior high** by Austin Lantz. Opening with a brief history of education in Japan, Lantz traced the developments of English education in junior high schools beginning in the 1980s. These historic developments were used as background to explain the most recent round of changes that took place these past two years in primary and junior high schools. Lantz led a rather animated group discussion on the role of ALTs and communicative English in the current ELT classroom at these fundamental stages of L2 education. (2) **Ready or not, here it comes! High school curriculum changes 2013** by Cory Koby. Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology introduced its once-in-a-decade “Course of Study” in 2009, and the final phase of the mandated changes took effect in April of this year. Koby outlined the changes in high school English language curriculum, with particular attention paid to what is NOT changing. Teacher and student perceptions, attitudes, and practices were discussed by workshop participants at great length, and extensive empirical evidence was presented which illustrated the tremendous obstacles that lie ahead in pursuit of TLEIE (Teaching and Learning English in English) as MEXT has mandated. During the break between presentations, event attendees were able to view excerpts from a very recent all-English high school lesson conducted at his high school by a Japanese Teacher of English (JTE). Time was not nearly enough to sufficiently cover all of the ground that Koby had hoped, as workshop participants had a great deal to contribute to the very lively discussions that sprang forth from the many questions raised during this portion of the event. (3) **Perspectives on curricular design** by Jim Dochtermann. Dochtermann briefly discussed his secondary school’s programs and the changes being made due to the new curriculum. He reviewed some of the major curricular perspectives that school systems adhere to around the world followed by a brief group discussion to define the perspectives of participants and their respective schools. A break out session was planned to identify potential solutions to the disparities in perspectives and what can be done to enhance collaboration for a smooth transition into the new curriculum within secondary levels, and ideas regarding impacts on primary and tertiary levels, but because of time constraints we were unable to complete this final part of the presentation. In the end, it became quite apparent that there is a great deal of interest in secondary school language education policy and practice, and we will surely explore these issues further in future JALT Sendai events.

Reported by Scott Gardner

Reported by Cory Koby
TOKYO: January — Teaching content in multilingual classrooms by Dr. Heath Rose. This workshop explored the issues surrounding the teaching of content through the English language in multilingual classroom settings. The workshop touched upon a number of issues connected to pedagogy, including teaching content and integrated language learning (CLIL), curriculum design and assessment in the multilingual classrooms, and recent paradigm shifts away from using native speaker norms as a yardstick for non-native English performance in higher education.

Reported by Shunsuke Kuwayama

YOKOHAMA: January — Imagining an L2 self through classroom practice by Garold Murray. The January presentation had the participants think of ideas for activities that could motivate students to realize their imagined L2 self in the present. In this daylong workshop, Murray counter-balanced the presentation of theoretical constructs on what it means to imagine an L2 self with opportunities for the participants to apply an understanding of those concepts in their respective teaching contexts.

Murray suggested that the meeting participants think of the theoretical constructs as tools instructors could use to design activities which: (1) encourage the learners to use their imagination to see things as they could be, (2) to feel a sense of belonging to a community, and (3) to be open to possibilities of self that the learners have yet to imagine. For the last point, citing research from Jerome Bruner (2002), Murray explained that the power of the narrative as a tool for imagination not only lies in the ability to create but also to reconstruct the self with each telling.

The activities that the presenter used to reinforce the application of the theories included: discussing a working definition of imagination and how it related to identity, to describe which community that participants identified with, and to create an activity to help learners imagine a possible self as an English speaker. At the end of the last activity, Murray had each group present their ideas for activities. Overall, Murray’s scaffolding of activities for the participants demonstrated the realizable benefits of using imagination as a tool for increasing motivation and learner autonomy.

Reported by Dan Ferreira

YOKOHAMA: February — Applying principles of social psychology for better classroom management by Leander Hughes. Hughes showed concepts from social psychology research that can be effective in altering the perception of the classroom by learners, increasing their motivation and making classes easier to manage. Some of these techniques include priming, anchoring, the foot in the door technique, social proof, and the Pygmalion Effect. Using priming and anchoring, the presenter was able to demonstrate how teachers are able to create a good first impression. The foot in the door technique involves getting someone to follow through on a small task that will lead them to make a larger commitment. For example, ask students to read one page of a graded reader and later, ask them to read a full chapter. Social proof explains how we adhere to groups for positive benefits. Teachers can get learners to follow classroom norms and do class work if it’s presented as something the class majority does. The Pygmalion Effect shows how the belief teachers have in the abilities of their students has an effect on the attention they give the students. Therefore, singing the praises of our colleagues and students can create a more positive atmosphere in our school and classrooms.

Reported by Kevin Trainor

**TLT / Job Information Centre Policy on Discrimination**

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

TLTでは、日本内の法律、国際法および良識に従って、言語、政策および雇用慣習の差別に反対します。JICコラムでは性別、年齢、人種、宗教、出身国（「英国」、「アメリカ」ではなく母語能力としての国）に関する、排除や要求はしません。そうした差別がなされる場合には、明確に説明されるべきです。編集者は、明確に求人広告を編集し、かつこの方針に応じない場合には求人広告を棄却する権利を持ちます。
Publishing options to enhance your CV

The American axiom of “publish or perish” for university faculty in the US is just as true for academics in Japan. In one study that I did of hiring committee members of universities during the 2012/2013 academic year, 82% stated that the biggest weakness they saw of (academically qualified) job applicants was in the area of the lack of publications of the potential hires. This result went across the board from tenured professor positions through contract lecturers and part-time instructors. The remaining 18% of those surveyed stated that it was lack of experience and education respectively. Within the same survey, of those jobs wanted that required publications, 98% of hiring committee faculty stated that any type of published book would greatly enhance an applicants’ prospects (Miller, 2012).

So, if like many of the applicants that were discussed in the study, you are in need of more publications, consider putting together a book. In an often reported study, 81% of Americans believe they “have a book in them” (Epstein, 2002), which shows that high numbers of people think of themselves as potential writers of books. But, when this is compared to the Google research that 129 million books have been published in all languages in all of history (Skipworth, 2010), and considering that the population of the US is 313 million, there is a small percentage of people who have actually published. While there are a variety of reasons for the difference between those who think that they can write and those who get published, there are far more options open to those who complete a book to see it through completion due to the various ways to publish. This is illustrated by the increasing number of books that are being published (and ISBN numbers) in greater and greater numbers (growth in the number of books being published has grown exponentially in recent years) leaving the publishing options wider and more available than ever before. This has created near perfect conditions for academics in Japan to explore and produce their own publications, from textbooks to academic books.

Therefore, while there are a number of different book genres that can be published, aside from a textbook there are two basic types that should be considered to enhance a job CV. They are an instructional (“my share” type) book and an academic book. The options open to writers that are now available are numerous, but one way to get published is to get published through companies such as Amazon. Online publishing, where the book is available for Kindle users, can also be available as print on demand through Amazon. Amazon has a number of tools to help and free Kindle books are also given away (a Kindle reader is all that is needed, which can be downloaded for iPads or PCs). While it may take time to format and prepare the book, remember that just because it is possible to publish anything these days, be sure it is your best work. Upwards of 80% of all newly published books on Amazon sell less than 100 copies, so you don’t need to expect a best seller. However, for job hunters the most important audience will be a hiring committee, and that...
means that it most likely will be read by decision makers for your next employer.

In the next column further ways to enhance your publications will be explored.

References


**Upcoming Conferences**

**JAPAN:**

- **3-5 MAY 13**—9th International Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature: *East meets West*. Rikkyo University, Tokyo. Keynote speakers are Anne Freadman (U. of Melbourne), Winifred Nöth (Catholic University of Sao Paulo), Toshio Ohori (U. of Tokyo). <www2.rikkyo.ac.jp/web/iconicity>
- **18-19 MAY 13**—JALT PanSIG: *From Many, One: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community*. Nanzan University, Nagoya. <pansig.org>
- **22 MAY 13**—TESOL Virtual Seminar: Latest Trends in Student Language Assessment. 10:30–12:00 pm ET <tesol.org/attend-and-learn/online-courses-seminars>
- **24-26 MAY 13**—Third Asian Conference on Cultural Studies: *Intersecting Belongings: Cultural Conviviality and Cosmopolitan Futures*. Ramada Osaka, Osaka. <accs.iafor.org>
- **25 MAY 13**—5th Annual NEAR Language Education Conference: *All is New Again: New Experiences, New Challenges, New Voices*. University of Niigata, Niigata. “This unique, growing conference is seeking to build a community by bringing together language teachers and researchers working in the languages of the North East Asia Region (Chinese, English, Korean, Japanese and Russian).” <jalt.org/groups/433>
- **25 MAY 2013**—7th Research Roundtable for Bilingualism as a First Language: Bilingual children’s language development. Kwansei Gakuin
University, Osaka Umeda Campus, Osaka. Special lecture by LIU Xiangying (Fukuyama City University), as well as presentations on Bilingualism in Japanese-Korean Mixed Marriage Families and A Study of Print Cognition and Receptive Vocabulary Development of Children Raised in a Bilingual Environment.

31 MAY-2 JUN 13—2013 JALT CALL Conference and 6TH Annual ER Seminar. Shinshu University, Nagano. Featured keynote speaker for CALL is Dorothy Chun (UC Santa Barbara) and plenary speakers for ER are Kunihide Sakai and Donalyn Miller. <conference2013.jaltcall.org> and <ersig.org/drupal-ersig>

16 JUN 13—EFL Teacher Journeys Conference. Kanda Inst. Of Foreign Languages, Tokyo. Featured speakers include Andy Boon (Toyo Gakuen U.) and Deryn Verity (Penn State U.)

"We aim to explore the winding but meaningful paths of teachers in our field towards greater self-awareness and improved classroom practice." <sites.google.com/site/teacherjourneys/welcome>

18 JUN 13—TESOL Virtual Seminar: Understanding and Responding Effectively to the Dynamics of a Monocultural Intensive English Program. 10:30-12:00pm ET. <tesol.org/attend-and-learn/online-courses-seminars>

29 JUN 13—The Annual JALT Vocabulary Symposium. Kyushu Sangyo U., Fukuoka. Featured discussants are Paul Nation and Yo In'nami. <jaltvocab.weebly.com/symposium>

10 JUL 13—TESOL Virtual Seminar: Using Technology to Promote Collaborative Classroom Practices. 10:30–12:00 pm ET. <tesol.org/attend-and-learn/online-courses-seminars>

30 AUG-1 SEP 13—JACET’s 52nd International Convention: Collaboration and Relativization in English Language Education. Yoshida Campus of Kyoto U., Kyoto. Featured speakers are Susan Bassnett (U. of Warwick), Ken Hyland (U. of Hong Kong), Toru Iiyoshi (Kyoto U.). <jacet.org>

OVERSEAS:


3-4 JUL 13—4th MICFL: Foreign Language for Specific Purposes: Communication for Development. Malacca, Malaysia. One aim is to explore the "..role of foreign language to accelerate all forms of growth and development." Invited speaker is Twila Tardif, Associate Dean for Social Sciences at U. of Michigan. <micfl2013.upm.edu.my>


3-6 JUL 13—2013 International Conference on English Linguistics: English Language: Past, Present, Future, Korea U. and Korea Military Academy. Seoul, South Korea. Invited Speakers are Arto Antilla (Stanford), Winnie Cheng (The Hong Kong Polytech U.), Mark Davies (Brigham Young U.), Lynne Flowerdew (Hong Kong U. of Science and Technology), Benedikt Szmrecsanyi (U. of Manchester), Shingeo Tonoike (Aoyama Gakuin U.). <elsok.org>

13 JUL 13—2013 Modern English Education Society International Conference: Localizing and Globalizing English Education: Its Challenges and Opportunities. Seoul, South Korea. <meeso.or.kr>

17-18 JUL 13—ILAC International Conference 2013: Innovation in Teaching Languages and Culture. Raktakanishta Hall, Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand. Plenary speaker is linguist Farzad Sharifian. <www.ilac.dusit.ac.th/conference>

18-21 JUL 13—IAFOr’s ECLL 2013: Shifting Paradigms: Informed Responses. Brighton Thistle Hotel. Brighton, England. This is the Inaugural European Council on Language Learning Conference. Chairman is Steve Cornwell, Professor in the Department of International and English Interdisciplinary Studies at Osaka Jogakuin University and Director of Programs for JALT. <ecll.iafor.org>


28-31 AUG 13—2013 Annual Meeting of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain, SOAS, London, UK. Plenary speakers are Philippe Schlenker (Institute Jean-Nicod / NYU) and Jonathan Bobaljik (UConn). Topics include Primate Grammar, Morphology, and Linguistics in Education. <lagb.org.uk/lagb2013>


17-18 SEP 13—2013 IEAS Conference on Language and Action. Institute of European and American Studies. Taipei City, Taiwan. Keynote speaker is Hans Kamp (Institute for Natural Language Processing, U. of Stuttgart / Department of Philosophy, U. of Texas at Austin). “The human capacity for understanding and producing actions is thought to be highly relevant to the ability to understand and produce language.” <ieasphilo.blogspot.tw>


22-24 SEP 13—2nd Global Conference: The Graphic Novel, Mansfield College. Oxford, England. “…In particular Japanese manga has influenced comics in Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, France and the United States, and have created an amazing array of reflexive appropriations and re-appropriations...not just in comics but in anime as well.” <inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/education/the-graphic-novel/details>

29-30 SEP 13—3rd Language Arts and Linguistics Conference, Hong Kong Polytechnic U. Kowloon, Hong Kong. (Program info not yet posted.) “Language arts now embraces new [media-driven] forms and traditional literary works; these developments are particularly affecting the teaching of English...as a second language.” <engl.polyu.edu.hk/events/lal3-2013/index.html>

Calls for Papers, Posters, Presentations

ABSTRACT DUE: 13 MAY 13 (FOR 16 JUN 13)—EFL Teacher Journey Conference. Kanda Inst. of Languages, Tokyo. Under 300 words. <sites.google.com/site/teacherjourneys/welcome/abstracts>

ABSTRACT DUE: 15 MAY 13 (FOR 8-9 NOV 13)—Constructionist Approaches to Language Pedagogy 2013 International Conference. Belgium. 500 words plus references. <fusl.ac.be/calp2013>

ABSTRACT DUE: 19 MAY 13 (FOR 17-18 SEP 13)—2013 IEAS Conference on Language and Action. Taipei City, Taiwan. 300 words. <ieasphilo.blogspot.tw>


ABSTRACT DUE: 20 MAY 13 (FOR 1 AUG 13)—TERA & PROMS 2013. Kaohsiung, Taiwan. 300 words. <education.nsysu.edu.tw/TERAPROMS2013/index.html> Note: Both the above deadline and an earlier (April) one are posted on the site. Please contact them directly for the correct date.

ABSTRACT DUE: 30 MAY 13 (FOR 29-30 SEPT 13)—3rd Language Arts and Linguistics Conference. Hong Kong. 300 words. <engl.polyu.edu.hk/events/lal3-2013>


PAPER DUE: 31 MAY 13 (FOR 17 JUL 13)—ILAC International Conference 2013: Innovation in Teaching Languages and Culture. Thailand. <ilac.dusit.ac.th/conference>


ABSTRACT DUE: 30 JUN 13 (FOR 11-13 NOV 13)—Fifth International Language Learning Conference. Malaysia. 250 words. <iilc2013.wix.com/iilc#!papercall/mainPage>

ABSTRACT DUE: 1 JUL 13 (FOR 23-27 OCT 13)—IAFOR’s Fifth Asian Conference on Education. Osaka. 250 words. <ace.iafor.org/Submissions.html>

ABSTRACT DUE: 1 JUL 13 (FOR 23-27 OCT 13)—IAFOR’s The Asian Conference on Society, Education, & Technology. Osaka. 250 words. <acset.iafor.org/Submissions.html>

PROPOSAL DUE: 10 JUL 13 (FOR 3-4 APR 14)—Personal Pronouns in Linguistics and Stylistics International Conference. France. 300 words. <laure.gardelle@ens-lyon.fr>
The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)

- a professional organization formed in 1976
- working to improve language learning and teaching, particularly in a Japanese context
- over 3,000 members in Japan and overseas

Annual international conference

- 1,500 to 2,000 participants
- hundreds of workshops and presentations
- publishers’ exhibition
- Job Information Centre

JALT publications include:

- The Language Teacher—our bimonthly publication
- JALT Journal—biannual research journal
- Annual Conference Proceedings
- SIG and chapter newsletters, anthologies, and conference proceedings

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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- TESOL—Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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- Joint—for two persons sharing a mailing address, one set of publications: ¥17,000
- Group (5 or more) ¥6,500/person—one set of publications for each five members: ¥6,500

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

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...by Scott Gardner  
<old-grammarians@jalt-publications.org>

**I heart language change**

A while ago I caught a student using the word *heartful* in her in-class essay, so I sternly cautioned her against using Japanglish words that didn’t really exist in the target language, and I reminded her to check her dictionary if ever in doubt. A few seconds later, after I had gone to help another student, she walked up behind me calling “Sensei!” and tried to stick the screen of her electronic dictionary in my face. There, in her Random House English/Japanese dictionary, was the word *heartful*, carrying the definition kokoro kara no (“from the heart”). After an uncomfortable silence (during which I returned my dropped jaw to its properly closed position), I snatched the device from her—its bright red exterior matching the color of my face—and began searching for a way to challenge her shocking revelation on this word, a word I’ve discussed in this column before.

I typed in *heartfelt*, which offered essentially the same Japanese definition as *heartful*. I queried the other sources in her device, such as Genius, which also contained the offending derivation, and finally I pulled out my own (a black one, clearly demonstrating greater authority) and checked both of its English/Japanese dictionaries, Random House and Readers. In both cases there was *heartful*, staring at me in disdain. It was as if I had discovered a mythical hybrid creature, like a jackalope, eating the flowers on my dining room table, only to have it turn to me and say, “What are you looking at?”

I stumbled my way through the remainder of class, mentally questioning the authenticity of nearly every two-or-more-syllable word I uttered, then raced back to my office to continue researching this linguistic affront. I checked my electronic dictionary again, its two English/English offerings from Oxford, and took some comfort in finding no *heartfuls* in either one. But I knew I couldn’t just leave the issue at that. I had to go to the ultimate oracle on language usage—Google (search date January 1, 2013):

- *heartful*—4,700,000 hits (Japanese language sites 2,730,000)
- *heartfelt*—58,500,000 hits (Japanese language sites 247,000)

With this redeeming data in hand I was ready to confront anyone I saw and make my case for good old *heartfelt* English—“from the experts,” as that guy on TV always says. I decided to start off by pestering the graduate students across the hall. But as soon as I told them I was using Google as my source, they looked at each other dubiously and turned to their own computers. One of them brought up COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, where she located only two instances of *heartful*, including one from a *Sports Illustrated* article, of all places. *Heartfelt*, on the other hand, had more than a thousand COCA hits, appearing in everything from spoken dialogue to newspapers to academic publications. The grad students’ scholarly approach had managed to both mock and vindicate me at the same time.

So I set out to try and outdo them by checking some online corpora myself. After all, COCA was just American English, wasn’t it? What did the British have to say about *heartful*? In a far less dramatic display of results, The British National Corpus site I found gave 150 *heartfelts* and only one *heartful*, from a 1992 biography of King Charles the Bald. (I think he used to play basketball for the Phoenix Suns.)

I’m not sure of the cause—whether it was being shown up by a bunch of graduate students or becoming preoccupied with *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue research—but I quickly lost the heart to pursue my campaign against *heartful*, which could well end up being another resilient mutation in the evolution of English. I realize that in adapting such a laissez-faire attitude to language change, this Old Grammarian may be setting himself up to get an earful from language purists, but according to the OED, nobody said *earful* until about 1917.