The Language Teacher

Foreword

Francis Bacon once said "reading maketh a full man." This month, for your reading pleasure, we start off with Neil Heffernan's overview of a 10-week university TOEFL program which reveals the methods and techniques used to provide more useful instruction to students wishing to study abroad at universities. This is followed by Shelley Spencer's insightful interview with anthropologist, educator, and writer, Brian J. McVeigh, who speaks on his views of influences on cultural and educational life in Japan. In this month's Readers' Forum, Sae Matsuda takes a look at what counts for success from the students' point of view in her essay on perceptions of achievement. Also in this issue: a report on the anniversary of the Hiroshima Chapter, news from the national officers in JALT Focus, our monthly Conference Calendar, and more. Welcome to the August issue of The Language Teacher.
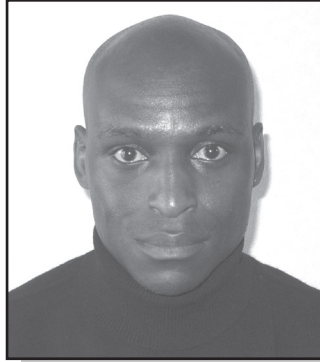
Nigel Henry
Co-Editor

フランシス・ベーコンは、読書が人を作ると言っています。今月号は、Neil Heffernan氏の大学における10週間のTOEFLプログラムの概観で始まります、海外の大学で勉強したい学生さんには有用な情報となるでしょう。Shelley Spencer氏による、人類学者で教育者かつ作家のBrian J. McVeigh氏への洞察力あるインタビューがそれに続きます。氏は、日本での文化的、教育的な影響について語ります。読者フォーラムでは、Sae Matsuda氏が、学生の視点から見た成功とは何かとの見解を示しています。そして、広島支部の記念行事、JALT全国役員からのニュース、会議スケジュールなどが続きます。では、今月号もお楽しみ下さい。

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Building a Successful TOEFL Program: A Case Study

Neil Heffernan

Ritsumeikan University

TOEFLは、英語圏の大学へ留学するときに必要となるテストである。日本の大学では、　TOEFLの効果的な教え方へのニーズが高まっている。このことを念頭において、立命 館大学Center for Language Acquisitionは、年2回開催される10週間のTOEFLプログ　ラムを開始した。このプログラムは、数人の教授とプログラムを運営している2人の　コーディネーター、12名のコース担当講師によって細部にわたって計画され、実施さ　れた。コースの目標は、165人の学生の大多数がTOEFLスコアを50点上げることであっ た。結果的に60%の学生が、最後のITPテストで目標を達成した。さらに、目標を達 成できなかった学生でも多くは、50点近く、最低でも40点は上がっていた。これは、　　ここで使用された指導方法及び技法が有効であり、しっかりと計画され、うまく実施されるTOEFLプログラムは、学生にとって非常に効果的であることを示している。

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is regarded as a major test for assessing EFL/ESL (English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language) proficiency around the world. It measures the English language aptitude of foreign students who apply for higher education in the United States and Canada or other countries where English is the language of instruction. The purpose of this paper is to outline how a regimented and well-organized TOEFL program for Japanese students can lead to student success, which is measured in terms of achievement on the actual TOEFL test.

Educators and students alike are aware of the need for TOEFL education. This need is evident in the volume of resources Japan has invested in improving English proficiency in the past decade (Itoko, 2002). The nature of an increasingly globalized world has placed great importance on learning English for professional purposes, whether in business, sports, science, or technology. Most students realize that a score of five hundred or higher will allow them to enter a university overseas (Obermeier, 2000), which may in turn grant them access to a brighter future. Furthermore, the same score, or slightly higher, allows students to apply for Monbukagakusho grants, which would essentially allow them to study abroad for 12 months with government paid tuition (Monbukagakusho, 2001).

The tasks on the TOEFL tests skills have been deemed to be relevant and important for completing coursework in all subjects at 4,300 North American universities and colleges at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (Abraham, 1990). Thus, not only does preparing/studying for the TOEFL supply learners with academic and linguistic skills necessary to enter a foreign university, it also grants them the opportunity to greatly improve their English ability for other future endeavors. Indeed, with Japanese universities relaxing their admission standards so as to sustain enrollment levels (Mulvey, 2001), more students are looking to the ryuugaku experience for a more inclusive English-intensive education. This experience is undoubtedly a valuable one that can only brighten the future of university-aged students.

It is with these goals in mind that the Center for Language Acquisition (CLA) at Ritsumeikan University implemented a ten-week TOEFL program to be run twice a year. The course was conceived by a handful of professors on the board of the CLA who were conscious of the need for students at the university to not only become more proficient in English, but to score extremely well on the TOEFL test. Programs of this nature are still relatively rare in Japan, with

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the majority of universities having no intensive TOEFL preparation program at all. For the reasons mentioned above, the CLA was intent on providing a meaningful experience to its students, the majority of whom were interested in studying abroad and thus needed a high TOEFL score.

This study was performed during the period of October - December, 2002. The 165 undergraduate students enrolled in this non-credit course (for which they had to pay an extra fee) were divided into three proficiency levels based on a pre-course diagnostic test. Teachers were selected in-house, giving highest priority to those with extensive TOEFL teaching experience. Teachers applied to teach the course and were paid by the CLA.

The TOEFL consists of four sections: listening, structure/written expression, reading, and writing. The test is given in two types of environments. The first is in TOEFL test centers found in numerous countries around the world. The second is in institutions where students are currently studying. For students taking the Institutional Testing Program (ITP), the writing section is omitted. The ITP gives schools, colleges and universities, English language institutes, and other agencies throughout the world the opportunity to administer the TOEFL ITP test locally to their own students. Both forms of TOEFL are official and acceptable for student use. However, the ITP has a limited scope since it is often used only as an indicator of a learner's English proficiency between partner universities (Ritsumeikan has such a partnership with the University of British Columbia). Since TOEFL ITP scores are more or less interchangeable with TOEFL scores obtained from an official TOEFL institution, they were deemed appropriate for this study.

Historically, Japanese college-aged students have displayed poor performance on the TOEFL test (Sawa, 1999; Honna, 1995). Further, overall English abilities in Japan seem to be in decline (see Mulvey, 2001; "Misu-machi", 1999; "Daigaku", 2001; Monbukagakusho, 2002). With this in mind, Monbukagakusho developed a tactical plan to foster English abilities among Japanese. This plan included improving university entrance examinations, boosting the motivation of learners, revising educational content, and upgrading the teaching system (Monbukagakusho, 2002).

A successful TOEFL program should effectively prepare students for the test, with the ultimate goal of increasing any previous scores they may have achieved. For the purposes of the program described here, the administration, professors and coordinators of this TOEFL program set a 50-point increase in score as the goal of the course. This study will describe the course of action taken by the teachers involved in the teaching of the 10-week program.

Methods

Following a diagnostic test, students were placed into three levels: intermediate, high-intermediate, and pre-advanced, based on their scores. However, students who had a pre-existing TOEFL score (approximately 20) were not required to take the diagnostic test because this score was deemed to be equal to the diagnostic scores. Similarly, students took an ITP test at the end of the course, which served as their program exit score. The numbers of students were as follows: intermediate 69, high-intermediate 67, pre-advanced 29.

Classes were 3 hours in length, and were held twice a week over a ten-week period. Teachers (both Japanese and native English speakers) were assigned two sections of the test to cover each class. One class was reserved for listening and structure/written expression, and the other was devoted to the reading and writing sections. It was decided to include a writing class in the curriculum because it would provide students with appropriate training for taking the test with an official TOEFL institution. Moreover, since most students in the program were interested in the ryuugaku experience, no effort was spared to ensure they could achieve this goal.

Seeing as a course of this nature is uncommon in most Japanese universities, it is worth noting that this particular program worked because it took place in a Japanese setting: The teachers, syllabus, and design of the program were specifically selected for Japanese students, with their needs and, more specifically, weaknesses in mind. The syllabus was planned around the Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test textbook (Philips, 2001), and designed by the course coordinators. Classes focused on the four skills in the test: grammatical skills such as recognition of and the ability to manipulate verb forms, pronouns, nouns, clauses, parallel structure, conjunctions, and comparisons; listening skills such as listening for detail, questions, idioms, and anticipation of the topic; reading skills concentrated on vocabulary, stated and unstated detail, drawing conclusions, and determining the tone and purpose of a passage; and writing skills such as developing ideas, sentences, vocabulary, and paragraphs into

meaningful prose. It was here that the teachers' familiarity with the TOEFL test—and with their learners' individual needs—was employed. Further, the intensive nature of the class schedule enabled teachers to closely monitor student progress: progress that was clearly perceptible by the end of the course. Instructors taught techniques such as memorization skills, shortcuts to answering questions, time saving methods, proper writing techniques, vocabulary building, looking for keywords, and deciphering idioms.

A teacher's workshop, led by the two coordinators, was held two months before the starting date of the course. At the workshop, the objectives of the course were covered, and the teaching material distributed. The workshop served as a general introduction to the 10-week program. In addition to the workshop, the coordinators of the program were in continuous contact with the teachers to address their concerns. A post-course teacher survey found the workshop and coordinator communiqués to be extremely helpful and informative, allowing teachers to fully understand what was expected of both teachers and students during the course. Moreover, teachers were given ample time to review and study the materials so they would be sufficiently prepared for the course.

Student Attitudes and Progress
In order to gauge student attitudes on their progress and satisfaction with the course, pre-course, mid-term, and final questionnaires in Japanese were distributed, and revealed some noteworthy responses. Specifically, the questionnaire asked about student attitudes toward the textbook, syllabus, teachers and their explanation of the concepts in the textbook, difficulty of the lessons, atmosphere in the classroom, class level, speed of lessons, and overall satisfaction with the course. The questionnaire gave students a three or four-point scale to record their responses. The four-point scale consisted of: very good, good, satisfactory, and not satisfactory. The three-point scale was utilized for the class level, speed of the lessons, and explanations categories. These points were: too high or fast, just right, and, too low or slow. The data from the questionnaires was then gathered, transcribed, and translated into English for the English-speaking teachers. The coordinators of the course passed the information onto the teachers, who then used any student comments and suggestions to improve their teaching style (see the results section).

With the purpose of monitoring student progress during the course, a Personal Development File (PDF) was put together. The PDF was a logbook that allowed students and teachers alike to assess student progress. Aside from having a questionnaire at the beginning to record basic student information such as sex, previous TOEFL scores/diagnostic test score, and reason for taking the course, the PDF consisted of charts listing the exercises in the textbook. Students added their scores to the PDF as they completed in-class exercises and homework. Furthermore, students were given a weekly writing assignment, which was then graded with detailed comments according to the TOEFL 1-6 scale for writing (TOEFL Test and Score Manual, 1990-91). Students also wrote their writing scores in the PDF. Teachers collected the PDF at the end of every class so they could monitor student achievement by noting student scores on exercises completed in-class and for homework. Teachers were able to ascertain whether or not students were making progress by studying the results of their work.

The rationale behind creating the PDF was to allow teachers to observe student strengths and weaknesses, with the intent of addressing student concerns each class. The PDF also acted as a barometer for the students themselves: By keeping track of their work for 10 weeks, they were encouraged to fully commit themselves to the learning process. This was reflected in student comments at the end of the course. These comments show that students thought the PDF acted as a motivator for them to improve their daily and weekly work. Indeed, over the 10 weeks, teachers noticed a substantial improvement in student PDF scores on the textbook exercises. This success can be attributed to hard work on the part of the students, and consistently skillful teaching by the instructors. Students tended to put a great deal of work into the course at home. The majority of students reported doing 12 to 15 hours of homework per week on tasks such as extra reading exercises (articles, short stories), grammar exercises, writing short essays on a given topic, and compiling reports in English on news stories seen on television. This augured well for both the students and the course: Ultimately, results would be the arbiter of the success of the program.

Results
The pre-course questionnaire was completed by 87% of the students in the course (145/165). Of the 145 students, 81 (56%) stated that their purpose

for taking the course was to study abroad, and 57 (37%) claimed their motivation was to improve their English skills.

The mid-term and final questionnaires showed that, overall, students were pleased with the quality of the classes and the teachers. However, the mid-term survey showed a large number of students stating that they were unsure of how to rate the course in general, mostly because it was too early to ascertain if it was effective. In spite of this, detailed written comments by many students allowed some mid-term adjustments to teaching styles, such as: the pacing of the classes, providing more in-depth explanation of complicated grammar, and repetition of listening tasks. Student comments were essential factors for teachers at this stage of the course; teacher's reported tweaking their teaching styles to better fit their learners' needs. Student comments on the mid-term and end-of-term questionnaires will also assist in improving the next 10-week course conducted at this university.

The end-of-course questionnaire, given on the final day of class, showed a marked difference in student attitudes toward the program. In total, 107 (65% of the total) students were present on the final day of the course. Generally, students expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the course, with 78% claiming they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the course (for an outline of responses to the final questionnaire, see Figure 1). Attitudes toward teachers also improved, with the middle ground seen in the mid-term questionnaire all but disappearing. The comments made at the end of the course sounded encouraging notes for future TOEFL programs at this university.

Since the pre-course scores were so diverse, there was plenty of room for improvement for the majority of students entering the program. The lowest pre-course score was 296, while the highest was 563. The breakdown of scores was as follows (a more comprehensive list of pre-course and end-of-course scores on the ITP are in Figure 2): Twenty-three students (14%) scored between 300-350 while thirty-five students (21%) achieved between 351-400. Fifty-six students (34%) scored between 401-450, while thirty-one students (19%) garnered scores between 451-500. Finally, nineteen students (11%) scored 501, or better.

From the outset, the final ITP was determined to be the litmus test for the whole program. However, not all students took the test. The results are based on scores achieved by students who took the exam. Ninety-eight students (59% of the initial enrollment) took the final ITP. The breakdown of their scores, in accordance with pre-course groupings, is as follows: Of the 23 students with a pre-course score between 300-350, 12 took the ITP. Of these students, 10 (83%) increased by 100 points or more, while two (17%) increased by 90-99 points.

Of the 35 students who had a pre-course score of between 351-400, 20 took the ITP. Of these students, seven (35%) increased by 100 points or higher; six (30%) increased by 80-99 points; three (15%) increased by 60-79 points; and two (10%) increased by 40-59 points.

Of the 56 students who had achieved pre-course scores between 401-450, 30 took the ITP. Of these learners, one (3%) increased by 100 points or higher; two (7%) increased by 80-99 points; six (20%) increased by 60-79 points; and 10 (33% of the total) increased by 40-59 points.

Of the 31 students who had a pre-course score of 451-500, 22 took the ITP. In this group one student (4%) increased by 71 points. Further, seven (32%) increased by between 50-60 points; and five (23%) increased by 40-49 points.

Finally, of the 19 students who scored 501 or better on pre-course tests, 14 took the ITP. In this group, two (14%) increased their scores by 50-55

Figure 1: Final Questionnaire Results

Question/Category	Response	% of students
Textbook	good/very good	73%
Speed of class	just right	92%
Atmosphere of class	just right	80%
Level of class	just right	94%
Teacher explanations	good/very good	84%
Syllabus	good/very good	94%
General satisfaction	satisfied/very satisfied	78%

Note: Total number of students answering the final questionnaire = 107.

Figure 2: Pre-Course and End-of-Course ITP Results

Intermediate (pre-course scores of 296-420)											
Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase
350	-450	100	400	-463	63	313	-432	119	410	-447	37
296	-397	101	343	-496	53	310	-423	113	356	-477	121
410	-517	107	416	-410	-6	406	-433	27	393	-456	63
306	-417	111	356	-460	104	367	-430	63	413	-473	60
346	-426	80	383	-490	107	410	-450	40	416	-470	54
320	-456	136	406	-486	80	406	-467	61	343	-396	53
346	-460	114	393	-486	93	320	-417	97	376	-393	17
313	-427	114	360	-497	137	320	-433	113	380	-470	90
400	-487	87	423	-457	34	360	-507	147	416	-470	54
383	-483	100	350	-456	106	352	-452	100	413	-423	10
357	-403	46	403	-483	83	420	-510	90	386	-497	111
390	-487	97	420	-493	73	400	-443	43	403	-450	47
High-Intermediate (pre-course scores of 420-500)											
Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase
433	-463	30	443	-467	24	436	-463	27	450	-521	71
443	-450	7	433	-487	50	486	-450	-36	453	-507	54
433	-487	54	433	-487	40	460	-520	60	443	-433	-10
440	-450	10	443	-460	17	486	-536	50	463	-480	17
473	-487	54	486	-530	44	486	-467	-11	433	-483	50
440	-513	73	473	-510	63	456	-487	54	470	-490	20
460	-500	40	476	-523	47	453	-500	47	423	-450	27
450	-497	47	470	-473	57	470	-490	20	423	-450	27
473	-490	17	450	-521	71	453	-507	54	473	-490	17
Pre-Advanced (pre-course scores of 500-563)											
Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase	Pre	Post	Increase
520	-507	-13	530	-540	10	536	-500	-36	520	-573	53
563	-583	20	533	-580	47	506	-520	14	500	-513	13
500	-553	53	506	-517	11	503	-527	14	500	-543	43
516	-500	-16	510	-533	23						

Note: Pre = pre-course score; Post = end-of-course ITP; Increase = the increase or decrease in score from the pre-course ITP to the post-course ITP. The pre-course test was administered four days before the course began (some students did not take it, due to a pre-existing TOEFL score). The post-course ITP was on December 7th, 2002. Ninety-eight students took the final ITP test.

points; two (14% of the total) increased by 40-49 points; two (14%) increased by 20-25 points; and five (36%) increased their scores by 10-19 points. Clearly, for this last group of students it was more difficult for them to raise their scores significantly, seeing as their starting point was much higher than the other students.

Conclusion

The improvement exhibited by the learners in this study demonstrates that a clearly thought out, well-taught TOEFL program can produce tangible results. Specific goals were set from the beginning of the program, then a plan was formulated and implemented throughout. The instructors involved in the course were experienced and

aware of the needs and goals of the students facilitating a substantial increase in TOEFL scores. The course itself came at an important time for this university and others, as there is a palpable need for intensive TOEFL programs of this type in Japan. The students, who completed the course, were highly motivated and did the assignments. These factors all contributed to the success of this program. There was no secret formula involved here: Hard work by everyone involved from the planning stage to the final ITP ensured an increase in TOEFL scores for the majority of students in the program.

In total, 60% of the students who took the final ITP test obtained a score of 50 or more above their original score. Furthermore, 93% of the students who took the final test had some increase in their TOEFL score. Conversely, seven students actually saw a decrease in their final scores. This could be the result of a number of factors, including lack of attendance and participation, or incomplete homework (when the student log was examined, this was the case for some students). Some pre-advanced students had a decrease in score, which can be explained in the intrinsic difficulty in raising ones TOEFL score at this level. However, seeing as the majority of students reached the pre-determined 50-point increase deemed to be the goal of the course, it can be stated that the course was a success. Future programs of this nature will want to build upon this success and reach a higher percentage of students achieving the stated goal.

The program described here could be easily replicated at any university or college in Japan with similar results. However, at present, only a few offer programs of this nature. Why is this? It is evident that there is a need for productive TOEFL instruction in Japanese universities. More needs to be done to create programs of this type so that Japanese university students will improve their English ability, and obtain the necessary scores to enter foreign universities.

Much of the success of this program can be attributed to its uniqueness. This involved using highly skilled teachers, reliable teaching methods, good materials, an interactive student-teacher worksheet (the PDF), a teacher-training session, and regularly distributing questionnaires to the students. Students in this course dramatically improved their scores because of the nature of the program: It was tailor made for Japanese university students and their specific needs in each area of the TOEFL test.

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Acknowledgement

Neil Heffernan is a lecturer at Ritsumeikan University. He obtained his PhD in July, 2002. His research interests include TOEFL, CALL, and sociolinguistics.

An Interview with Dr. Brian J. McVeigh

Shelley A. Spencer

The following interview with Dr. McVeigh was conducted in person by Shelley Spencer on January 16, 2003.

Dr. Brian J. McVeigh, a social anthropologist, lived in Japan from 1987 to 2003 engaged variously in studying, researching, and teaching. He has published widely and frequently gives public talks. Although he taught courses in anthropology at universities in Tokyo, he has also taught a number of English courses. Recently, he accepted an appointment at the University of Arizona. In this interview, he talks about his research and the implications for language teachers.

Shelley Spencer: By way of introduction, could you explain the interests of a social anthropologist, and your interests in particular?

Dr. Brian J. McVeigh: Certainly, but I must point out that it's rather difficult to define the specific interests of social anthropologists, since there are so many. Research topics can range from ethnicity, socio-linguistics, social and political structures, national identity, kinship, etc. I'm interested in how macro-level political and economic forces shape socializing experiences—for example, the mechanisms at work in the school community—by linking up with the micro-level. Such linkages influence individual behavior and thinking patterns. Or we might say I study how individuals are primed to accept certain roles that are constructed by social forces.

S: Your first book (1997) explores deeply the roles enacted out at a particular women's college. In your research, you have come to regard the Japanese psyche as intensely concerned with role-playing and with images of "self," both "expressed" (intimate) self and "performed" (theatricalized) self. The result is that the world becomes rather like a stage, with people adopting certain roles depending on scenario. What are some of the potential roles being acted out in the classroom?

B: Before answering this question, let me say that I think we can find in all societies, not just in Japan, manifestations of "expressed" (intimate) and "performed" (theatricalized) selves, but perhaps the distinction between these two sides of the individual are more explicitly distinguished and keenly felt in Japanese society. This is due to a strong collectivist ethos designed by corporations and the state

Shelley A. Spencerによるインタビューで、文化人類学者、作家、教育者であ るBrian J. McVeigh博士は日本での自らの研究について率直に語り、日本の文化や教 育に多くの影響を与えている点を明らかにしている。博士は彼の主張や言語教師への示唆について語っている。

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Interview

to make dedicated workers. Many Japanese students, then, bring with them into the classroom a rather theatricalized self. This results from being socialized to perform a student role intended to please the educational authorities and more specifically, to pass tests. Ultimately, the idea is for them to become diligent workers. Anything associated with an expressed self, like opinions, personal views, spontaneity, while not wholly absent from the Japanese educational experience, is not encouraged. Rather than just being themselves and making mistakes as they learn, students are implicitly taught to play a role designed to please the teacher. Also, the role of preparing for and passing exams is also stressed. But as any good instructor knows, exams and tests should only be tools for learning, not the primary purpose of schooling.

S: I want to return to the topic of roles later, but firstly, you've touched on the topic of external influences on education, driving to produce dedicated workers. In your writings, you claim that poor academic and classroom performance cannot simply be blamed on the students (or even teachers). You suggest, and I quote: "There is a more fundamental, political dimension involved, with roots in Japan's over-rationalized socioeconomic structures" (1997, p. 180). How did it evolve that these external forces came to dominate the education system?

B: This is a very big but important question. This quote, if I elaborate on it a bit, means that since the late nineteenth century, Japan has played a very vigorous game of "catch up" with the other great powers, and designed political and economic institutions that were very much geared to enhancing national power. Other societies, of course, carried out similar crash programs in nation building, but the Japanese took it very seriously. Educational institutions had a crucial part to play in socializing Japanese to become dedicated workers for Japan's brand of economic nationalism. But though these institutions produced good workers, the notion that learning in itself is something inherently good was weakened. In other words, learning was not for the individual, but became a type of rigid training for larger collectivities, such as the company or the state.

S: Assuming that some common complaints about students that you discuss (e.g., absenteeism, passivity, substandard work,

homework avoidance, lack of critical thought or responsibility for their own learning) are the end result of this situation, and assuming that people genuinely wish to address these concerns, what solutions do you see?

B: I see many solutions, but too few concrete movements toward reform. My opinions are not original, since many informed and honest Japanese will say the same type of things. Some of my ideas, though accepted among some Japanese, are unorthodox by official Japanese standards. One idea is to get the Education Ministry out of the higher education business. Regardless of their good intentions, Ministry officials merely bureaucratize the educational experience, turning it into a non-educational experience.

As for corporations, they should begin examining what students actually studied at university, rather than what ranking a university has. There's much talk coming from the private sector about putting more emphasis on "individuality" and "personal talent", but this talk has been going on for many years now and I don't see any real changes.

Also, schools and teachers should make the schooling experience less dependent on exams and objective rankings. Such exam-obsession hinders real learning.

Moreover, I think it is important to remember that like all great civilizations, Japan did and still does possess an idea that education can be utilized by the individual for self-cultivation and self-improvement, and that schooling does not always have to be for someone else, whether for the company or the national state, but this ideal is being submerged. The challenge, as I see it, is how to revive and strengthen this more individual-oriented, less job-oriented, view of learning.

S: A two-part question: Do you think students are aware of all these external forces, and what can the discerning teacher do to minimize their effect, restore focus on genuine learning, and encourage suitable academic standards?

B: Of course, I think many students are aware of these issues, though perhaps not as explicitly as they should be. But this is probably true of students everywhere. Our job is to make them aware of these issues, as we would for students in any society.

As for teachers, though it is imperative to know

the history of Japan's educational system and the powerful political and economic forces that shape and often distort it, I also believe that while in the classroom, instructors should focus on what is right before them, taking each student as an individual with particular strengths and weaknesses. Also, we should not be afraid to maintain standards. This does not mean being overly strict. It just means challenging students at the appropriate level. Many instructors, both Japanese and non-Japanese, appear to think that if they appease students by giving easy grades or passing them when they should've failed, these students will in the end somehow improve. They won't. And what's more, the students who do make sincere and serious efforts to learn feel cheated, resentful, and demoralized when they see their peers being babied by the instructor. This is, needless to say, very damaging to any educational endeavor.

S: Returning to the topic of roles, how could certain problems in the classroom be attributed to confusion about roles, particularly with a non-Japanese teacher present?

B: Personally, I don't think it should matter what ethnicity or nationality an instructor is. It seems to me that in Japan, more so than in many other societies, cultural differences are overly emphasized. This comes from a strong "we're Japanese and you're not" nationalism. Of course, to a certain degree, having a non-Japanese teacher present does encourage many students to play the "we-students-are-Japanese-but-the-foreign-teacher-is-not" role, thereby making national identity the focal point of the classroom experience for some. But teaching and learning should not be a "cultural issue" or about one's national origins, but rather one of quality, standards, and evidence that a student has learned something. While I was at university, I had many professors from all over the world, but their national origins or ethnicity hardly mattered to them or the other students when it came to lecturing or getting the material down. This is different in Japan, where many students are socialized to become almost fixated on ethno-cultural differences.

I might add that the problems we witness in Japanese universities do not concern a "foreign language" problem, but rather a general educational problem, since Japanese students have the same difficulties with self-expression, critical analysis, asking for clarification, etc., in

other courses besides language classes. Honest Japanese instructors report the same problems as non-Japanese. Having said this, I do think role confusion arises when Japanese students are confronted with a non-Japanese instructor who grades students according to real academic criteria, not according to how many times students happened to show up in class.

S: As well as external politics influencing education, you also mention the internal politics in the classroom that influence student participation, e.g., tatemae, harmony, disharmony (1997, p. 180). You state they are a form of bullying, having a subversive effect on the classroom environment, and many teachers may not be aware of their existence.

B: Right. Bullying is not always explicit; it can be very subtle. For example, if there's a critical mass of less than serious students, they discourage the more serious students. This is tatemae at work. There is no easy translation of tatemae, but a direct translation is "stated principle". It refers to a kind of consensus that everyone agrees to, but which may not necessarily reflect a real state of affairs. Tatemae is concerned with maintaining a superficial harmony within the group (or classroom). This is where harmony comes in. Many people in Japan value harmony above all else. Therefore, raising a hand in class can be viewed as a disharmonious act. So, we're not talking about pedagogical issues here, but political issues. Many teachers are not aware of these undercurrents, resulting in big problems. Here's another example: If a student is very serious and does his or her homework, this may clash with the group's tatemae, which states: "We will give the appearance of being attentive, studious and civil, but we do nothing to prove that."

What is the cause of this behaviour? I recall that when I started teaching, a sensei told me that Japanese students are not afraid of the instructor. On the contrary, they are afraid of other students. So strong is tatemae, this forced consensus, this power in numbers, that bad can drive out good. The students may not even be aware of what's happening—they are simply caught up in the environment.

S: What can the teacher do to counter these influences on students?

B: There are several things that come to mind. Firstly, and ironically, teachers should be careful when giving praise, because they may in fact cause a student to feel singled out, thus creating disharmony in the group. Secondly, students often receive mixed messages, because teachers are not operating on the same wavelength; as members of a specific educational institution, they are not applying the same standards or ethics. Students learn that teachers are not serious about requirements and policies, and that they can influence teachers with excuses. Thirdly, individual instructors are not consistent with all students, in approach, grading, rewarding etc. Students who make little effort are allowed to pass, causing resentment by students who worked diligently. Weaker students may be offered extra assistance, whereas none is offered to stronger, keener students. Although the students may not openly express their discontent, they are simmering beneath the surface, or grumbling amongst themselves. These situations just eat away at the moral authority of the instructor, therefore the students don't take things seriously. As I see it, an institution ideally needs to determine its philosophies toward students, and all teachers need to consistently apply these standards.

S: Are there other scenarios in the classroom that language teachers may be encountering, that you wish to highlight?

B: Well, one thing I've noticed is that, due to the "we're Japanese and you're not" mentality, some students may come to feel that non-Japanese instructors do not acknowledge their "Japaneseness," and thus they assume their "cultural authenticity" is under siege. This is why it is crucial that both students and instructors realize that genuine learning comes from the interaction of two individuals, and that it doesn't really matter where one is from or what one looks like. I guess what I'm saying is that always searching for some cultural barrier that gets in the way of learning is not the same as respect for cultural differences.

S: In your latest book (2002), you have the courage to take a stand on Japanese higher education. You vividly portray some disturbing effects on Japanese youth, and reveal the "subterfuge" you believe is undermining education. What do you see for the future?

B: Well, that's a tough question, and it's difficult to make predictions. But I suppose, unless there are radical changes of the kind I noted above, the system will just muddle through. The Japanese schooling system, in spite of its serious problems at the higher educational level, does have some strengths, since it is generally able to turn out good workers with the basics. But I would like to think that as instructors, we want to go beyond just the basics, and would like to see our students do more than just muddle through. Education is, after all, not about mastering a set amount of facts, but rather it is about being challenged to do better. Educators should be willing to periodically raise the bar. In the classroom, if mediocrity is the goal, failure will probably be the result, and then eventually students lose interest.

Let me say here, that at the very end of my latest book (2002), I quote Richard Fiordo, who says: "To be sincere is to overcome obstacles." In other words, focusing on sincerity should be the goal of not just students, but also teachers, parents, and others concerned about education everywhere. We should all ask ourselves: "What is the real purpose of schooling? What is the real aim of education?" Is it solely to secure a job? Or, is it also to contribute to society through the healthy self-cultivation of the individual?

S: Dr. McVeigh, I would like to thank you for your time, and for the insights you have given us. There are implications there for language teachers, which remind us of the crucial role of the teaching profession, and the responsibilities we have in guiding these young people who will soon take more active roles in society.

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What Counts as Success?: A Sense of Achievement in Language Learning Diaries

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Review of Literature
Learner-Centered Learning

Stranded in a transitional phase of educational reform, teachers in Japan are required to respond flexibly and creatively in language classrooms. The current EFL environment is an assortment of various teaching approaches and styles; therefore, teachers are constantly left to figure out what is best for the group they are teaching. Curriculum revision is being undertaken in many universities to attract students and to nourish more "communicative" learners. Nunan (1989) argues that "no curriculum can claim to be truly learner-centered unless the learner's subjective needs and perceptions relating to the processes of learning are taken into account" (p. 177). However, as Rausch (2000) claims, although the direction of language teaching is becoming more learner-centered, teachers' and learners' beliefs do not always match. Conrad (1999) believes that "the classroom should be a meeting place where the matching of valid student expectations with curricular content and pedagogical appropriateness all contribute toward satisfying and effective learning" (p. 495). Do teachers really know what learners want?

Gaps between Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions

Quite a number of studies have focused on learners' perceptions towards language learning and revealed that what teachers believe is not always true from the learner's point of view. Various types of mismatch have been reported on perceptions of teaching methodology (see Rausch, 2000; Matsuura, Chiba, & Hilderbrandt, 2001) and class objectives and activities (see Harlow & Muyskens, 1994; Barkhuizen, 1998). Kumaravadivelu (1991) attempted to identify potential sources of mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation. Jackson (2002) examined learner reticence in the classroom and found that it is viewed differently by the teacher and the students. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to sensitize themselves to learners' beliefs and expectations and narrow the gap in order to facilitate learning outcomes.

Diary Study

An effective way to explore learners' perceptions is through their diaries. A diary study is one well-recognized research method, and despite its limitations, it has provided valuable

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insights into language learning. The strengths of diary studies have been noted (see Nunan, 1992; Taylor & Bogdon, 1998). Matsumoto (1987) argues that it is a natural way of collecting classroom data; moreover, it enables the researcher to discover hidden parts of language learning which indicate what is important for learners.

A diary study, however, should be treated with caution because of its limitations (see Matsumoto, 1987; Nunan, 1992). It might, for example, be difficult to obtain appropriate and consistent data. What learners write can be subjective; it only reveals conscious information. Also, keeping a diary might be a burden for learners, especially when their target language is used as a medium. Furthermore, for the teacher, analyzing the diary data requires a tremendous amount of time.

Nevertheless, diary studies to date have provided valuable information about what language learners are experiencing. Some examined psychological aspects of language learning and recognized the existence of anxiety, competitiveness, and cultural sensitivity (Bailey, 1983; Hilleson, 1996; Peck, 1996). Others have examined the types and effects of language learning strategies found in diary use (see Halbach, 2000; Carson & Longhini, 2002). Matsuda (2003) examined learners' orientations and motivational intensity/change in language learning diaries and identified various types of orientations. Learners' sense of achievement, however, has not been thoroughly examined. Slimani (1989) investigated learners' reports on uptake: i.e., "what learners claim to have actually learned at the end of a lesson" (p. 223). Yet, this was limited to linguistic uptake such as grammar, words and expressions, pronunciation, and spelling. Thus, this study attempts, in wider aspects, to investigate what learners claim to have accomplished.

The following research question was explored in this study: Do learners' feelings of achievement take different forms? What types can be found in language learning diaries?

Method
Participants
A total of 29 students majoring in English at a large university participated in the research. (One male student's data were eliminated from this study because although he was present in class, he never submitted his diary.) The participants consisted of 8 male and 21 female students, taking the same so-called "four skills" class. The class met three times a week for 90 minutes each, twice with the Japanese researcher and once with an American teacher.

Language Learning Diary
Students were assigned to keep a weekly language-learning diary in English as one of the course requirements. The format had been developed by two full-time faculty members in the department and used in the entire first-year "four skills" classes. The language learning diary attempted to promote learners' autonomy or introspective ability at becoming a better learner. Items in the format included (a) new things learned (grammar, vocabulary, idioms pronunciation); (b) work done with a "Study Buddy"; (c) my biggest success this week; (d) what I want to try harder on next week; and (e) outside activities using English (TV/movies/videos, reading, and speaking in English). "Study Buddy" refers to a partner each student chose at the beginning of the term. The students were supposed to help each other both inside and outside of class. The diaries were collected every Tuesday by the Japanese teacher and returned on Wednesday by the same teacher with her comments on or responses to what students wrote. No corrections were made.

Procedure
When the academic year ended, all of the diaries were collected. Data related to the students' sense of achievement appeared mainly in my biggest success this week. Those descriptions were picked up weekly and typed into a computer database. Diary data covered 13 weeks per term, or 26 weeks all together in the academic year. The number of diary entries submitted by the students averaged 10.2 for the first term, 10.6 for the second term.

The researcher went through each diary entry and attempted to identify the important sense of achievement recorded. When categorizing the sense of achievement, the researcher consulted with another teacher (a native speaker of English) in order to assure reliability. Finally, nine major categories were agreed on.

Results and Discussion
Various types of sense of achievement were observed and then classified into the following categories:

Academic Sense of Achievement
Naturally, the most common type reported was course-related academic success. Since they had a variety of course requirements inside and outside of class (oral presentation, group discussion, outside reading, CD-ROM and video activities, compositions), fulfilling each assignment

provided them with a sense of achievement and probably a sense of relief. "I was able to get perfect answers in outside reading's quiz, and my total points became 10.3." "I finished my presentation in my class. I really gathered myself up. But our presentation was pretty good I think. I was praised by teacher. I was very happy." "I made a report. I wrote about my favorite movie. It is Leon. This story is about a killer and a girl. I really like this movie."

Intercultural Sense of Achievement

Communication with foreign people (including native-speaker English teachers) using English was often reported as a success. The interaction took place at different places such as on campus, at part-time jobs, and other places. Excerpts from reports on cases like these are listed below:

(a)   "I talked with foreign students at welcome party." "Dormitory festival was on last Sunday. I got acquainted with Hana […] I spoke with her in English." "I thanked Matthew for his fun classes. He was really kind and interesting."

(b)   "I talked with foreign people in English when I was [working] part-time at Osaka Dome."

(c)   "We had conversation with two U.K. girls. They are 19 years old…" "Two foreigners asked me how to go to Ginkakuji on my way to barber near Ginkakuji." "I met a man who was from Canada. He is my friend's acquaintance…" "I talked with foreign people in Kyoto city." "I played baseball with American."

Although Kyoto is blessed with tourist attractions and there are some cases where students encounter foreign tourists on the street, opportunities to speak English outside of school are limited. Thus, it is exciting for them to have a chance to make use of English in a real situation.

Social Sense of Achievement

It was intriguing that some students valued social relationships with their classmates and reported that building a good relationship with them was a success. Examples are: "I could make friends with some students of new class." "I tried to speak English. At first, I was very nervous, but after [a while] I relaxed and speak each other." "I talked with some different persons in class." It is understandable that this type was observed especially at the beginning of the year/term or among students new to the class.

Linguistic/Content Discovery

As seen in Slimani (1989), students frequently claimed to have learned linguistic items that were covered in lessons, such as grammar, pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, idiom, proverbs, vocabulary. "I understood how to use wish." "I tried to pay attention to sentence stress." "I now understand there is rhythm of English." "I learned to give an excuse." It was also apparent that new content broadened their worldview and provided them with a sense of achievement. "I was able to learn world." "I now understand how American gesture is different from Japanese one." "I learned various medical things." "I learned about environment at Intensive ABC class. How many electrical appliances can I name in English? (Something we use in our home needs electricity.)" "I can explain a few recipe for cooking now." "I interviewed my grandmother and we talked about 'the change of Japan.' I learned a lot of things from her."

Sense of Participation

Students were encouraged to take initiatives or answer voluntarily in class, so some of them set participating in class as their goal. They tried to stick to English in pair/group work: "I tried to speak English with my friends without being shy." "I tried to talk to my pair [partner] in English." "I tried to speak English quickly in discussion." "I tried to speak English in my group." Some occasionally tried to volunteer in class: "I could raise my hand actively." "I raised my hand and answered questions quicker." However, it was difficult for most students to speak up in front of the whole class. The situation was well described in one student's entry: "I tried to speak hard. I decided to study English very hard, so I worked hard to answer the teacher's question. Everyone didn't raise a hand. I think it's not good. I want to enjoy studying English more, so I think everyone speaks more in class."

Instrumental Sense of Achievement

During the academic year, some took English proficiency tests such as STEP, TOEIC, and TOEFL outside of class. Diligent test preparation was sometimes reported as a success, and of course, "passing" the tests (at least in the case of the STEP test) was expressed as a major excitement. "Failing" the tests was considered a devastating disappointment.

Sense of Progress

Successful students became aware of their own progress along the way and reported it as a success. "I was able to understand the meanings of words more than before." "I can hear spoken English gradually." "Recently I understand what [the] teacher say[s] in English." "I was able to memorize more sentences than before." "I felt that whole class went by very fast. That is, I was able to concentrate during my class." "I think my pronunciation became better than before." "I could make a sentence easily. I thought my English ability improved!"

Unique Sense of Achievement

Some students expressed a unique sense of achievement. A student who was not very organized wrote, "I am writing diary. This is an outstanding success." Another student praised himself, reporting, "I wasn't absent once." Some entries were totally irrelevant to language learning or English: "I am strong (maybe)." "I succeed[ed] in cooking gratin. It was good." Although not related to class, the uniqueness was enjoyed by the teacher.

No Sense of Achievement

Once in a while, students had an unproductive week or did not bother to report their success, recording "none," "nothing," "nothing special," or "I don't know." It was interesting that some students were shocked to realize their listening comprehension had deteriorated over the summer vacation. One student wrote, "I studied English after a long separation. I forgot some English words. So, this week has no success things." Others also declared. "I don't adapt life in English class after summer vacation." "I tried to make an effort to catch what the tape said. However, I didn't listen [hear] it perfectly." Yet, as time went on, those students reported: "I got used to hearing English than last week," or "I could hear listening more and talk English with my pair [partner] in this class." That shows that although most students do not expose themselves to English during vacation and have a sense of loss when they come back to school, they fall back into a routine quickly and pick up where they left off.

It was also noticeable that a novel experience was often described as a success regardless of category. "I asked my classmate a question for the first time." "I used a word processor for English composition for the first time." "For the first time, I can have a good chance talking in English with foreign people." Trying something new surely gives them a sense of achievement.

Conclusion

Learners' sense of achievement varies depending on individuals and changes over time. Some students value communication in English, and thus find interacting with foreigners worthwhile. Others with strong extrinsic motivation become satisfied by fulfilling course requirements and studying for/passing English proficiency tests. Learning new linguistic items and discovering fresh content also give learners a sense of achievement. Furthermore, some students feel a sense of success by speaking English and participating in class.

Certain types of achievement perception may be very situation-specific and related to short-term goal settings. Building a good relationship with classmates is important at the beginning of the term; however, once students get to know each other, its relevance diminishes. After taking an English proficiency test, students revise their goal as their instrumental orientation weakens. It has been observed that learners' sense of achievement changes from time to time as their orientations continue to evolve. It is a challenge for teachers to satisfy all learners' needs; yet it is encouraging to know that learners' impressions of their accomplishment are wide-ranging. This knowledge allows teachers to better cater to their needs.

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This month's My Share looks at three different activities to freshen up your classes. Mary Hughes looks at using short conversations in a controlled setting. Jacqueline Norris-Holt introduces a 'homestay' programme using teddy bears. Our final three writers talk about an activity for increasing reading fluency.

Five-minute Fluency in the Language Lab

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Quick Guide

Key Words: Natural flow of conversation, reactions, follow-up questions, transitions
Learner English Level: High-beginner to low-intermediate
Learner Maturity Level: First-year university
Preparation Time: The time required to create or find a suitable dialogue for Step 2
Activity Time: 60 to 90 minutes (depends on how much practice time is given). Follow-up Activity: 10 to 15 minutes
Materials: Cassette tapes or MDs; preferably access to a language laboratory

The goal of this activity is to have a 5-minute conversation, using reactions, follow-up questions, and transitions. The discourse should not be one where students are receiving random pieces of information from each other, but one where they are getting and then building upon that information in order to make a fluid conversation. It may seem that a 5-minute conversation is a little long for some 1st-year university students, but this allotment gives them ample time to practice using follow-up questions and transitions. In order to develop awareness in their usage of these conversational tools, I have them record and analyze their conversations. The activity can be followed by a game where students can have fun practicing what they have just learned.

Procedure

Step 1: Present students with the idea of reactions. Modeling the different intonations of reaction words and phrases according to their usage can be an additional activity. Students enjoy practicing this and it helps them to loosen up. This list is in no way exhaustive, and it can also be broken down into categories such as: Reacting to good news, Reacting to bad news, Showing you understand, etc.

Reactions:

> Really?
> No way!
> You're kidding!
> I see.
> That's too bad.
> That's fabulous!
> Cool!
> What?
> Excellent!
> Oh, no!
> You are?
> I'm sorry to hear that.

Follow-up questions:

Next, have students brainstorm follow-up questions on different topics, such as from the sentence I went to a karaoke bar recently.

> WHO did you go with?
> WHERE did you go?
> WHEN did you go?
> WHAT songs did you sing?
> HOW was it?
> DID you have a good time?
> DO you go often?

Then, present the idea that transitions are used in conversation to smooth over a change in subject.

Transitions:

> By the way,
> Anyway,
> So,
> Speaking of
> That reminds me,
> Not to change the subject but,

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My Share

Step 2: After presenting the three tools above, give each pair of students one handout with a model conversation exemplifying reactions, follow-up questions, and transitions. Have them work together to identify the different parts.

Step 3: Introduce ways to close or end a conversation such as: Well, it was nice talking to you, or Gotta go, talk to you later.

Step 4: Give the students some question ideas for starting a conversation, such as What did you do last night? or What do you do in your free time? Next, have the pairs practice with the goal of continuing a conversation for 5 minutes. To provide them with several fresh starts, have them change partners a few times. During this time, make sure question words (who, what, why, etc.) are written on the board for their reference. By practicing with different partners, they will probably repeat the same information. This is fine as it enables them to get more practice and become comfortable using these linguistic devices to continue a conversation. After practicing with three or four different partners, they may begin recording a conversation (with a new partner). After a taped conversation of 5 minutes, students listen to their recording and write a transcript. Students may wish to record several times before they are satisfied with their output. For homework, ask students to mark all the places where they used a reaction, asked a follow-up question, or used a transition to change the subject. Further homework may be to correct grammar mistakes, but the main point of this exercise is for students to be aware of the flow of conversation and their usage of reactions, follow-up questions, and transitions.

Step 5: The next class could begin with the following game, which reviews the structures previously learnt. Divide students into groups of six or less. Standing in a circle, one person (the leader) starts a conversation with a random question such as What did you do last weekend? The next person must give an appropriate answer. The conversation continues around the circle with each student giving an appropriate response to the person before them. As the utterances should resemble a real conversation between two people, follow-up questions should be answered by the next person in the circle, rather than the previous student whom the question actually relates to. One student from each group should stand in the middle and act as timekeeper. You can start with a generous 10-second time limit until students are used to the game. If a student cannot begin to give an appropriate response within the time limit, he or she is out. The round continues until there are only two students left. A new round should begin with a new leader, a new person in the middle, and a new starting question. Reduce the time limit after a few rounds and see how far down it can go. As you can guess, it's a great time to practice fillers such as ummm, let's see, well, etc. The team that can keep the conversation going with the least seconds being counted by the timekeeper wins.

Note: Unless you have many portable tape recorders, this activity must be performed in a language lab where each student controls a console. I have two students sit together at one console and share a microphone. Students may feel uncomfortable speaking into a microphone at first, but I have found that once they record and listen a few times, they get a feeling of what they want to change and try again to improve their output. Students are usually encouraged by the resulting 5-minute, free-flowing conversation. Teaching conversation strategy phrases such as these equip students with tools to shift away from dialogue consisting of random information-getting questions, move into small talk, and finally expand into more meaningful communicative discourse.

The Bear Homestay Project
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Quick Guide
Key Words: Creative writing, explaining Japanese culture
Learner English Level: Beginner to advanced

Learner Maturity Level: Elementary and above
Preparation Time: Varies
Activity Time: Can be ongoing
Materials: A teddy bear or other soft toy, a sturdy journal, some photos, a map

On a recent visit to Australia, I was fortunate enough to come across a teddy bear journal project which had been introduced in the school my 6-year-old was attending. Adapted from The Teddy Bear Exchange, a project developed by iEARN (International Education and Resource Network), each primary school class had adopted a bear, which then spent time in each student's home. The bear came complete with a set of colouring pencils, a journal, and a backpack. Each child in the class was responsible for looking after the bear for one night and then writing in the journal and drawing a picture of what they had done.

Procedure

Step 1: Purchase a teddy bear or some other stuffed toy. The maturity level of the class may determine the type of toy used. A toy representative of the native fauna of the teacher's home country is particularly appropriate.

Step 2: Write an interesting self-introduction for the bear. It may also be useful to include a few photos of the bear's home, a map of the country or city from which it comes, and any other interesting memorabilia to give the bear a life-like character. Following is an example of an introduction I used for a 1st-year university class.

Self-Introduction

Hello. I would like to introduce myself. My name is Sam and I come from Australia. I am a university student at Canberra University (CU). I am very interested in Japanese language and culture and have come to Japan to study for one semester. I arrived on March 16 and have been staying with the Norris family since then. Since arriving in Japan I have seen lots of interesting things and tried many new foods. I am very excited about staying with you and hope to learn many more new things about Japan and its culture. I have only been studying Japanese for a short time, so please explain things to me slowly. I will also try to help you with your English study.

 I guess I should also tell you about my hobbies and interests. Coming from Australia, I love going to the beach and playing many outdoor sports. I especially like tennis and golf. I have been playing tennis since I was a primary school student, although I am not very good. I enjoy camping and like to go bushwalking when I have free time on weekends.

 I look forward to meeting you and hope that I may be able to teach you some interesting things about Australian culture. Thank you!

Step 3: Prepare a journal to accompany the bear on its travels. Include the self-introduction and the other materials collected. The inside cover should also include a list of student's names and the dates the bear will change students. This will ensure that each student spends the required amount of time with the bear.

Step 4: Explain to the students that they will be responsible for looking after the bear for a specified period of time. This will depend on the number of students in the class. Ideally a 1-week period allows the students ample time to record a number of activities. Emphasize that the bear is visiting in order to learn as much as possible about Japan and that the students must try to expose the bear to a variety of experiences. Students must also read the journal entries of other students to ensure that the bear does not do the same thing a number of times, such as visit Nagoya Castle to view cherry blossoms.

Step 5: A class brainstorming session should be conducted to encourage students to think about what aspects of Japanese culture and lifestyle would be interesting to show a foreign student. These suggestions could then be written on the board for student reference.

Step 6: In order to direct the students to write at a particular level, the teacher may begin the journal by making the first entry or by selecting one of the better writers in the class.

Step 7: Students should be encouraged to include photos if they visit any places of interest with the bear.

Step 8: To allow the teacher to maintain some contact with the journal and the encounters of the bear, students should submit the same journal entry by email to the teacher. This email can then be used to provide the student with feedback. Students should also be encouraged to email the teacher photos, especially as many students have a digital camera or mobile phone with a camera facility.

Conclusion

This project provides students with an opportunity to work as a group on a class project. They are encouraged to read the work of other students in order to ensure similar experiences are not repeated. With the right approach, this writing exercise can encourage students to seek out

interesting aspects of Japanese culture and think about how to explain such information in English. It can also act as a means of encouraging students to go on mini-excursions to places they would otherwise not visit.

I envisage this activity as suitable for 1st-year junior high school and above, although I have not tried the project with junior or senior high school students myself. I do, however, have three 1st-year university classes participating at present, and the project has been well received by both male and female students. They have particularly enjoyed brainstorming and thinking about those aspects of Japanese culture and lifestyle that would be interesting to show a foreign visitor. If the project were to be introduced with younger children, such as elementary school students, it would be more appropriate to conduct the journal in Japanese. For younger learners it might also be useful to find a sister school that could host a stuffed toy, with the animal returning after a set period of time with a journal full of interesting experiences for the students to learn from.

Reading Quickly, Understanding Clearly

Hisayo Herbert, Himeji Dokkyo University <hisayoherbert@yahoo.co.jp>
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Quick Guide

Key Words: Skimming, scanning, automaticity in reading
Learner English Level: False beginner to advanced
Learner Maturity Level: High school and above
Preparation Time: 10 to 20 minutes
Activity Time: 50 to 90 minutes
Materials: A one- to two-page reading and a handout, OHP, OHC, or blackboard

The following technique of in-class reading integrates word recognition drills in the form of a text scanning activity with related skimming, topic anticipation, and discussion activities. Students have found this technique to be very useful for improving their reading fluency, with particular respect to increasing their reading rates. Furthermore, the communicative elements of this technique appease many students' desires to escape drill-based tasks.

Preparation

Preparation to carry out the proposed technique of in-class reading can be applied to any text of more than 100 words. As long as each student has a printed copy of the reading itself, the activity can be implemented on paper, overhead projector (OHP), overhead camera (OHC), or a blackboard. A sample activity that was created by following the steps below has been provided in the appendix. That particular activity was used with a reading from the magazine, Mini World (see York, 1999).

Step 1: Choose a one- to two-page reading from a textbook, magazine, or newspaper, according to the students' level.

Step 2: Select about 10 scanning words or phrases that students will be given and will look for in the reading, in accordance with the focus of the scanning activity. That focus could be based on finding key vocabulary words of a certain length, certain grammatical forms, words seen frequently in the text, or a similar criterion. Students often feel more comfortable scanning for these words when each appears once per paragraph.

Step 3: Decide a time length for skimming that is appropriate for your students and the reading you have selected.

Step 4: Create comprehension questions for the reading that include some clues for guessing the topic. If the reading is from a textbook, comprehension questions from the textbook may suffice.

Step 5: Consider an expansion activity such as further discussion of the reading or vocabulary, more comprehension checks for details, related writing activities, or other suitable tasks.

Procedure

When first introducing an activity that employs this technique, teachers should explain why scanning and skimming are important and give

students some hints or tips about scanning and skimming before beginning the activity. Teachers should coach students to eye all of a given text loosely and quickly and not to read every word when using the following technique. Students should try to choose something in the word or phrase that helps it stand out from the words surrounding it, such as a not-so-common grouping of letters or capitalization. Students need to remember that building their automaticity, that is, their ability to recognize words in a text automatically without having to think about them, leads to improved reading fluency. The procedures described hereafter facilitate the practice and development of such automaticity through skimming and scanning.

Step 1: Familiarize students with the scanning words by reading the words aloud, explaining new vocabulary, and drawing students' attention to the spelling of each word.

Step 2: Call out each scanning word in 3- to 5-second intervals. Students should mark each word in the reading as they hear the word, without looking back at the scanning word list.

Step 3: Ask students to try and guess the topic of the reading based on the title and scanning words only. Let students discuss their guesses with their classmates in pairs or small groups, but do not ask them to share their answers with the whole class until Step 8. Also encourage students to use their imaginations, but do not let them look back at the text.

Step 4: Have students skim the reading within a pre-determined time constraint.

Step 5: Again, ask students to try and guess the topic in pairs or groups based on the title, scanning words, and what they have skimmed, without looking back at the reading.

Step 6: Have students skim the comprehension questions within the decided time constraint.

Step 7: Have students guess the topic again based on the title, scanning words, what they have skimmed in the reading, and clues from the comprehension questions. Students should not look back to read the text or the comprehension questions.

Step 8: Have students share their guesses with the whole class.

Step 9: Allow enough time for your students to read the text and answer the comprehension questions. Then have them check their answers in pairs or groups.

Step 10: Check the answers as a class.

Step 11: Go on to the expansion activity you created in preparation Step 5.

Final Comments

The authors attribute the success of this technique to its interactive nature and its ability to lower the affective filters of participating students. By allowing students three opportunities to guess the topic of a reading before presenting their answer to the teacher, students become comfortable with the reading activity and the discussion that springs from it. As such, the classroom atmosphere becomes friendlier and less threatening than it would have, if the individual students had been pressured to give immediate answers. The authors believe this is one effective way to make the development of automaticity in reading both fun and productive for students.

Reference

York, V., (August-September, 1999). Take me to the river. Mini World 66, 34.

Appendix 1
Take Me to the River
1. Scanning Words

unique	peaceful traffic	
especially	excellent	dine
buildings	riverboat	concerts
historic		

2. Skimming Activity

1. Based <u>only</u> on the title, the ten scanning words above, and what you have read as you were scanning the reading for these words, what do you think the reading is about?

2. When the teacher says Go! you may skim the reading once more for only 20 seconds to find the answer to question one. Write your new answer below.

3. Now, skim the comprehension questions below. If your answer to question two changes, write your new answer below.

3. Comprehension Questions

1. Where is the Riverwalk located?
2. What is the atmosphere like on the Riverwalk?
3. What kind of restaurants are on the Riverwalk?
4. What is the most highly recommended way to see the river?
5. Where along the river can you see plays and concerts?

4. Discussion

Where is your favorite tourist spot? Why do you like it?

This month, JALT Focus brings you an insider's point of view of two vital components that help to make JALT the dynamic organization that it is. In his message, Jim Swan, president of JALT, writes about the importance and role of both the Executive Board Meetings and the Ordinary General Meetings. Mark Zeid then follows with a special highlight on the history of the Hiroshima Chapter in the Perspectives section. Once again, it is clear from both of these pieces that JALT is as strong as its individual members, and that means you!

Contributors to JALT Focus are requested by the column editor to submit announcements of up to 150 words written in paragraph format and not in abbreviated or outline form. Submissions for the hard copy of The Language Teacher should be made by the 15th of the month, one and a half months prior to publication. To repeat an announcement, please contact the editor.

Joseph Sheehan <jalt-focus@jaltpublications.org>

From JALT National

Greetings to you all,

Although you are reading this column in early August, I am writing it in late June, on the eve of the mid-year Executive Board Meeting (EBM). We have a lot on the agenda for this meeting, and your chapter and SIG representatives will be working very hard on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning to reconcile everybody's different aspirations and make JALT stronger. As of this writing, there are 18 separate motions of new business, in addition to two leftover items from the January meeting. No fewer than 7 of these 20 motions are about membership and funding issues. Several of them are at cross-purposes, and each of them, if passed, would significantly affect JALT operations, which of course portends a vigorous debate. Democracy is always chaotic (with JALT-style democracy even more chaotic than most, maybe), but I'm sure none of us would want to have our organization run any other way. I will do my best to steer the debates to successful conclusions, so that your representatives can return to you with news of substantial strides forward, not backward.

Closely related to membership issues are several motions regarding chapter dormancy which we will also be considering. At our January meeting, we revised the standards by which inactive chapters would be declared dormant, and several chapters now fall within those new guidelines. Time and events bring ebbs and flows to any organization, sometimes ironically, as in this case, for among the group of least active chapters now are some of the very same ones which had previously been among the most active. Nobody wants to see any JALT chapters declared dormant—it's not good for the organization as a whole, and it's dispiriting to the individuals who have worked so hard to achieve something worthy—so I'm sure that much discussion will be aimed at ways of reviving the faltering groups, rather than simply writing them off.

Other motions, though less dramatic, are also highly significant. Among them is a motion for JALT to approve another international partnership, this time with our counterpart in Singapore, our fellow TESOL affiliate ELLTAS. JALT's Pacific Rim multilateral agreements help to solidify teaching standards and methods in Asia and further demonstrate the ways in which JALT is serving the language teaching profession as a whole. If this weekend's motion is approved, Vice President Ishida and I will sign the pending agreement documents and ELLTAS will

become our latest international partner. This will also be the final step for ELLTAS to become the sixth member of PAC, the Pan-Asian Conference. Next year at this time (June 27) the PAC-5 conference in Vladivostok, hosted by our Russian partner FEELTA, should just be winding up, and ELLTAS has suggested that they will formally propose to host the following PAC conference, probably in 2006.

Shifting our view from the international arena to the domestic arena, the Board of Directors will also seek ratification of Tokyo Chapter President Steve Ross's appointment as JALT Liaison to AJET. Many JALT members are familiar with the JET program and have even served on it, but until now JALT has not made much headway in its outreach efforts to them. Thanks to Steve's persistence, though, JALT is now an official associate of the JET program, and we have won the right to advertise ourselves to their continually changing membership. It is a momentous step forward in JALT's efforts to improve ties with domestic teaching organizations, with the potential for increasing our own membership figures, and nobody is more worthy than Steve Ross to be appointed to the position of JALT's official AJET liaison.

Following the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning EBM sessions, Sunday afternoon is reserved for the first Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of 2003. There are two OGMs per year, one at mid-year and the other at the annual conference, at which times the full membership of JALT is asked to ratify the Executive Board's latest decisions and also encouraged to suggest new initiatives. Although each autumn's OGM attracts some non-Executive Board JALT members, due to its being held at the conference site during the conference period, the reality is that, due to distance and time constraints, few if any individual JALT members ever show up at the mid-year OGM. The usual end result is that virtually the same people, now wearing their "individual JALT member" hats, end up rubberstamping the agreements they themselves have just finished making while wearing their "Executive Board member" hats.

While recognizing the time and distance realities that prohibit many members from

attending a meeting in Tokyo, as well as my stewardship responsibility to act in the best interests of the entire organization, I also want to say to everyone reading this message that we Executive Board members do encourage your active participation. You've missed the June OGM already, but your attendance at the November OGM would be a great way to start adding your voice to the running of JALT. In the coming months, you'll be receiving a barrage of conference-related messages, but please keep this reminder at the forefront of your conference planning: To participate more fully in the democratic administration of your JALT organization, be sure to reserve the space in your conference schedule for attending the November OGM. Speaking for the rest of the Board of Directors as well as for myself, I will say that nothing would give us greater satisfaction than to look out from the dais and see the auditorium full of JALT members eager to participate.

Honest!

Yours for a resurgent JALT,

Jim Swan

Democracy is always chaotic (with JALT-style democracy even more chaotic than most, maybe).

"Pssst.. did you hear pre-registration is now open for this year's conference? <jalt.org/jalt2003> Pass it on!!"

JALT Notices

Peace as a Global Language II and Featured Speaker Tour

Four JALT SIGs (GALE, GILE, PALE, and TC) are sponsoring Peace as a Global Language II at Seisen University, Tokyo, September 27-28, 2003. Plenary speakers are Spencer Kagan, world-renowned expert on cooperative learning, and Japanese Diet member and human rights lawyer Mizuho Fukushima. Prior to the conference, Kagan will give experiential teacher-training workshops in cooperative learning. The Nagoya, Toyohashi, and Gifu chapters, along with the TE and TC SIGs, will cosponsor a workshop on cooperative learning and language teaching on September 15, 2003 in Nagoya. For further details, including other pre-conference workshop engagements, please contact one of the sponsoring group leaders or visit the conference website: <www.eltcalendar.com/PGL2003>.

TESOL Curriculum Development Series

The TESOL Curriculum Development Series, edited by Kathleen Graves, is an eight-volume series that encompasses the range of program and curriculum development undertaken in the field of TESOL throughout the world. The aim of the series is to help administrators and teachers acquire and hone the understanding and skills necessary to develop successful courses, curricula, and programs. The series is built around broad curriculum development challenges rather than more narrowly defined subject matter or contexts. The series examines curriculum development ranging from specific courses to broader curricula and programs. The deadline for papers to be submitted is December 31, 2003. Please access <www.tesol.org/pubs/author/books/curricdevelop.html> to find out more information and to contact the editors.

Universal Chapter and SIG Web Access

As a result of recent developments within the JALT website, chapters and SIGs now have a basic information page available which is linked to the main JALT website. Upcoming meeting information and officer contact details for all chapters and SIGs are viewable at <jalt.org/groups/your-chapter-name> where your-chapter-name is the name of the chapter or SIG you wish to access. For example, information for the West Tokyo chapter is <jalt.org/groups/westtokyo>, the CUE SIG is <jalt.org/groups/CUE>, and the Teaching Children SIG is <jalt.org/groups/teachingchildren>. Please note that in some cases chapters or SIGs may not have provided up-to-date information for our databases; this will be reflected on the webpage. We hope JALT members will find this service useful. Queries can be directed to the JALT (English) web editor, Paul Collett; <editor-e@jalt.org>.

The Language Teacher

. . . needs English language proofreaders immediately. Qualified applicants will be JALT members with language teaching experience, Japanese residency, a fax, email, and a computer that can process Macintosh files. The position will require several hours of concentrated work every month, listserv subscription, and occasional online and face-to-face meetings. If more qualified candidates apply than we can accept, we will consider them in order as further vacancies appear. The supervised apprentice program of The Language Teacher trains proofreaders in TLT style, format, and operations. Apprentices begin by shadowing experienced proofreaders, rotating from section to section of the magazine until they become familiar with TLT's operations as a whole. They then assume proofreading tasks themselves. Consequently, when annual or occasional staff vacancies arise, the best-qualified candidates tend to come from current staff, and the result is often a succession of vacancies filled and created in turn. As a rule, TLT recruits publicly for proofreaders and translators, giving senior proofreaders and translators first priority as other staff positions become vacant. Please submit your curriculum vitae and cover letter to the Publications Board Chair; <pubchair@jalt.org>.

Perspectives

This month, Mark Zeid gives us a closer look at the Hiroshima Chapter. The coeditors of this column invite you to submit 750-word reports of interest to JALT members in English, Japanese, or both.

Hiroshima JALT Celebrates its Silver Anniversary

Happy birthday to the Hiroshima Chapter, which celebrated its 25th birthday last March with a special dinner honoring its founder, Marie Tsuruda. A look at the chapter's history shows how it has handled the challenges currently facing all JALT chapters.

Ironically, Tsuruda heard about JALT while at a conference in Taiwan in 1975. Later, in Osaka, she met many officers and JALT members who encouraged her to start a chapter in the Chugoku area. "It was during the time when teaching children was becoming big and there was very little written on the subject," said Tsuruda. She arranged for an elementary teacher from an international school in Tokyo to come to Hiroshima and give a presentation. "We had more than 80 people show up and 60 joined that day."

In 1978, the Chugoku Chapter was the fourth chapter to join JALT, which had just been formed from three local associations. While the Chugoku Chapter was on Honshu, it did avail JALT to people in Kyushu and Shikoku. "Our book fair was one of the first in this area," continued Tsuruda, explaining that people from Fukuoka and Matsuyama would come to attend the book fair and several presentations.

Indeed, the chapter does have a good deal to be proud of. It has grown to about 90 members and continues to be one of the most active chapters in JALT. It was difficult at first, as with all chapters, to find officers and volunteers, yet Tsuruda managed to recruit teachers from local schools. There can be no doubt that Tsuruda's leadership is one of the main reasons the Hiroshima Chapter has survived and continues to flourish.

One of the chapter's highlights was hosting the 1996 JALT national conference in Hiroshima. Again, Tsuruda led the way as the site chair. However, it was a real team effort with dozens of volunteers working on the conference planning and onsite activities. In fact, many people who helped with the 1996 conference still serve on the annual conference committee.

Another reason the chapter continues to do well is local support for its annual events. The Hiroshima Chapter continues to hold an annual book fair for the community. Once again, there is no shortage of volunteers. It is one of the most successful chapters in JALT mainly due to the efforts of all of its members. The book fair is a shining example of this, where most members pitch in and help.

Hiroshima Chapter has been blessed with many talented local presenters. It also brings in famous speakers like Carolyn Graham, Mario Rinvolucri, and John Fanslow. Additionally, many chapter members have served as national board directors and on JALT publications.

The chapter has received special recognition for its charity work such as sending school supplies and clothes to refugees in Kosovo and organizing local classes to raise money for orphanages in the Philippines. The chapter also takes an active role in promoting local events and nonprofit organizations.

The chapter has also taken on a strong role in the community. There are email lists to both members and nonmembers. Information on JALT events, job openings, community events, and projects are all listed. The chapter uses the lists to let teachers in the area know of anything interesting.

"It's wonderful that it's lasted this long," said Tsuruda at the birthday celebration when she received a bouquet of flowers from the current president, Naomi Fujishima. "I'm happy that the Hiroshima Chapter has been as successful as it has been." Fujishima adds, "We are grateful to Marie for her hard work and diligence in forming the Hiroshima Chapter. She continues to offer us insightful words of wisdom and assistance whenever she can."

Certainly, the Hiroshima Chapter will keep flourishing as a result of ongoing participation from its members. The current local executive

weblink: www.jalt.org/groups/Hiroshima

Perspectives

committee has a strong cross section of both foreign and Japanese teachers working together. No single project is left to only one or two individuals. The idea that many hands make light work is a common theme in all events that take place in Hiroshima, where the focus is not on the past, but the future. "We appreciate the time and effort our volunteer officers put into JALT,"

commented Fujishima, "and hope that not only our chapter, but the JALT organization as well, will continue to thrive in the years to come."

Reported by Mark Zeid
Hiroshima JALT Special Projects Officer
JALT National Business Officer
<mzeid@has.att.ne.jp>

Book Reviews

...with Amanda O'Brien <reviews@jalt-publications.org>

David Stormer reviews *Japan Through the Prism of the World Cup* in this month's column. This text could provide the inspiration that your team needs. If you are interested in writing a review for this column, please read the guidelines on the submissions page.

Japan Through the Prism of the World Cup

[Sanborn Brown and Sae Matsuda. Tokyo: Sanshusha Publishing, 2003. pp. 95. ¥1,800. ISBN: 4-384-33344-7.]

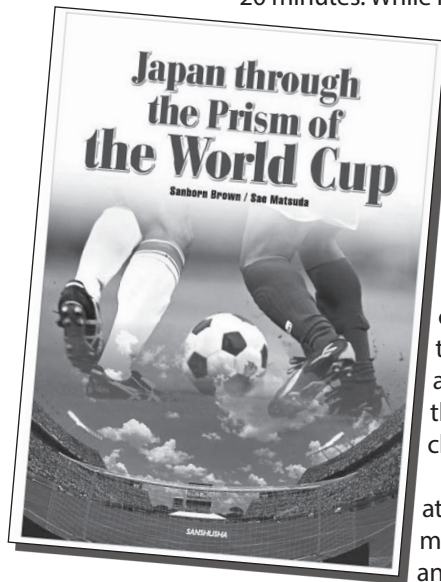## Reviewed by David Stormer, Osaka City University

For topicality, Japan Through the Prism of the World Cup is a textbook that deserves some notice. There is nothing revolutionary about its format, but the content offers two almost irresistible attractions to the Japanese tertiary student in that, firstly, it holds up a mirror to Japan, and secondly, it does so via an event that put Japan briefly, but prominently, on the world stage. No doubt there are teachers who would instinctively reject a textbook about soccer. However, this is not what the book is about, and anyone expecting it to focus on the game itself will be largely disappointed.

As the title suggests, the book is about Japan, and according to the author's introduction, each of the topics that make up the 22 units is one that was featured in the local Japanese media at the time of the big event.

The format is uniform and simple. It begins with a Kick Off section where students are given a few simple questions to get the ball rolling. Next is a reading of about 350 words that could either be assigned as homework, or done in class in about 20 minutes. While reading, students can refer to Notes which include Japanese equivalents of potentially unfamiliar vocabulary (in bold in the reading). Four or five True/False questions, followed by fuller-response Comprehension questions, test understanding. A fill-the-blanks Listening section adds a challenging aural element (both the reading and this section itself are included on the tape), and the chapter finishes with a group/ class discussion section.

To return to the book's primary attraction, it is its themes that make it stimulating for teachers and students alike. They include the Osaka police's blitz on the local prostitution industry in order to rescue the city's international image; the sudden problem of a 10-year-old mountain of garbage near the South African

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

team's training ground in Mie; pop idol Ayumi Hamasaki's tour schedule that, oddly, included shows on the very nights of the World Cup semi-finals and final; a profile of the Japanese team supporters; the questionable tactics of coach Phillippe Troussier in Japan's final match; all about Japan's trump card, Brazilian-born Alex; the Japanese media's subtle racism towards black players; David Beckham/England-mania on Awaji-shima; the pros and cons of enforcing celibacy on players; and the economic effects of the World Cup. The majority of topics are those that don't usually find their way into textbooks in Japan. Having been intentionally chosen for their newsworthiness, they have more pizzazz than the usual fare.

The zing of this book, though, is truly limited to its content. The format, as mentioned above, is very predictable, but for some this may be a virtue. Each unit comes with a photo, but apart from the cover there is a complete lack of color, distinguishing it sharply from the big league players. The presence of instructions in Japanese, however minimal, may also earn a mark against it from purists. But for the busy and resourceful teacher looking for a no-nonsense format, this book is an easily accessible and manageable resource that is bound to arouse the interest of the Japanese student, and even elicit reaction.

Correction—The teacher's book for Speaking of Speech by David Harrington and Charles LeBeau which appeared in June's Book Review column has 127 pages.

Recently Received

...with Tamara Milbourn <pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

The following items are available for review. Overseas reviewers are welcome. Reviewers of all classroom related books must test the materials in the classroom. An asterisk indicates first notice. An exclamation mark indicates third and final notice. All final notice items will be unavailable for review after August 31. Materials will be held for two weeks before being sent to reviewers and when requested by more than one reviewer will go to the reviewer with the most expertise in the field. Please make reference to qualifications when requesting materials. Publishers should send all materials for review, both for students (text and all peripherals) and for teachers, to the Publishers' Review Copies Liaison.

For Students

Contact: Tamara Milbourn <pub-review@jalt-publications.org>

Books

!Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. (6th ed.). Hornby, A. Oxford University Press, 2002.

*Basic English for Computing (Revised and Updated). Glendinning, E. R., & McEwan, J. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Business Explorer 2. Knight, G., & O'Neil, M. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

English Idioms in Use. McCarthy, M., & O'Dell, F. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

*Getting Ready for Speech. LeBeau, C., & Harrington, D. Medford, OR: Language Solutions, Inc., 2002.

*Global Outlook (High Intermediate Reading). Bushell, B., & Dyer, B. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2003.

*Global Outlook (Advanced Reading). Dyer, B., & Bushell, B. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2003.

Grammar in Practice (1 & 2). Gower, R. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

*Listen Kids! Harrington, D., LeBeau, C., & Chaffin, D. Medford, OR: Language Solutions, Inc., 2003.

Vocabulary in Practice (1, 2, & 3). Pye, G. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

*What About You? (1 & 2). Beigel, K. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2003.

CD-ROMs

*Oxford Phrasebuilder Genie. TEXTware A/S, Copenhagen. Oxford University Press, 2002.

*Oxford Student's Multimedia CD-ROM Dictionary. TEXTware A/S, Copenhagen. Oxford University Press, 2002.

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

For Teachers

Contact: Kate Allen <kateob@kanda.kuis.ac.jp>

The Bilingual Family: A Handbook for Parents. Harding-Esch, E., & Riley, P. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

*Controversies in Applied Linguistics. Seidlhofer, B. (Ed.). Oxford University Press, 2003.

*Haiku Composed in English as a Japanese Language. McMurray, D. Japan: Pukeko Graphics, 2003.

*Language Learning Online: Towards Best Practice. Felix, U. (Ed.). The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger B. V., 2003.

*Practical English Language Teaching. Nunan, D. (Ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2003.

Teachers' Narrative Inquiry as Professional Development. Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (Eds.). Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Special Interest Group News

...with Coleman South <sig-news@jalt-publications.org>

For your planning purposes, this is a list of the events that SIGs are organizing so far for 2003. However, since some events and dates are tentative, please contact the appropriate SIG for more information.
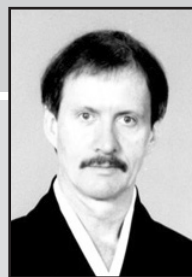
The following is useful information for all SIGs, so I have included it at the beginning of the column:

The SIG Dissolution Fund (funds remaining in the accounts of SIGs which have dissolved) is available to provide grants to SIGs wishing to undertake a special project. Applications should be made directly to the SIG Representative Liaison (Andrew Obermeier <andrew@kyokyo-u.ac.jp>) who will present the proposal to a sub-committee of SIG coordinators. The sub-committee is empowered to offer grants to individual SIGs, depending on their financial circumstances and the nature of the application.

Grants will not be given to support regular SIG activities, such as newsletters or invited speakers, but shall only be made in support of clearly-defined projects which a) fall within the SIG's objectives, b) serve to expand the SIG's activities, and c) have a clear time frame. Such projects might be, for example, a conference, workshop, or a one-time publication. Any application to the Fund shall be accompanied by a financial plan, detailing the anticipated expenses of the project and how the grant or loan would be used. After completion of the project, detailed accounts should be presented to the sub-committee via the SIG Treasurer Liaison.

Submitted by Andrew Obermeier

Bilingualism—¥32,000 was awarded to the Bilingualism SIG to pay for the difference between

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what it costs to put on a regular chapter meeting and what it will cost us to co-sponsor the Bilingualism Forum on June 14, 2003. The money was used to pay for rent, janitorial services, and childcare at the host facility, Hokkaido International School. There is now ¥605,208 left in the fund. Please see the notice above regarding use of such funds that are available to SIGs.

College and University Educators—This SIG, along with the Learner Development SIG, invites you to their fall mini-conference at the Mt. Rokko YMCA, Kobe, Japan, October 17-19, 2003. For more information, see the Conference Calendar in this issue or our website at <www.kobeconference.com>.

GALE, GILE, PALE, and TC and other sponsors bring you Peace as a Global Language II at Seisen University, Tokyo, September 27-28, 2003. Please visit the Conference Calendar or conference website for details.

One featured speaker, Spencer Kagan, will also give a pre-conference teacher training workshop sponsored by JALT chapters, SIGs, and others. Visit the following website for details: <www.jalt.org/global/sig/Conference.htm> or contact Jane Nakagawa (Contact List below).

Learner Development—This SIG is cohosting a mini-conference, Learner Development: Contexts, Curricula, Connections, in Kobe, October 17-19. Please see the Conference Calendar for details.

Also, LD's anthology of new writing on learner autonomy in Japan will be published at JALT2003. The 18 chapters result from collaborative research and writing that included a June retreat. The anthology gives a foreground for the voices of teachers-as-researchers, their learners, and their collaborators in exploring classroom development of autonomy. It also includes chapters by Tim Murphey, Phil Benson, and critical responses from well-known figures in the field of learner autonomy. Buying a copy will give you access to a website with downloadable materials to use with your learners.

Other Language Educators—OLE has issued its Newsletter #26 containing the longer abstracts of a German Workshop, the SIG Forum,

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and a French workshop, as they were submitted to JALT2003. Also included are the abstracts from the OLE-related papers in the JALTCALL 2002 proceedings. This newsletter also contains an introduction to the Umwelt Report, Report on the Environment, a new German textbook by Klaus Willand and Ayumi Hiwasa. Copies and information are available from the coordinator at <reinelt@ll.ehime-u.ac.jp>.

に提出されたジャーマン・ワークショップ、SIG（分野別研究部会）フォーラムやフレンチ・ワークショップの要約を含むニュースレターNo.26を発行いたしました。JALTCALL2002において行われたOLEに関わる論文の要約も掲載されています。また、このニュースレターには、クラウス・ウィランドさんと日和佐歩さんによる新しいドイツ語の教科書、"環境レポート"も紹介されています。ご注文は<reinelt@ll.ehime-u.ac.jp>までお願いします。

OLE(その他外国語教育研究部会)は、JALT2003

Chapter Reports

This column features reports of presentations held at local chapter meetings throughout Japan each month. Submissions should be informative, well written, and interesting to readers from other chapters. For guidelines on contributions, see the Submissions page at the back of each issue.

Ibaraki: May—I Say Tomato, You Say Tomato by Kathleen Yamane. The presenter provided a picture of the variations in the English language that occur across generations, across races, across cultures, and within cultures. Yamane started with an easy to understand analysis of a familiar American limerick, "Mary had a little lamb," followed by a popular Japanese song, "Haru Yo Koi." The purpose was to show how the vocabulary, grammar, and lexicon of English and Japanese have evolved from the olden times (Middle Age for English, and Edo Period for Japanese) to contemporary usage.

Yamane then proceeded to highlight specific language variations over time and space, focusing on phonological, grammatical, and lexical examples from British and American English. Even more enlightening was the discussion on intra-cultural linguistic differences seen among Standard Japanese, Kansai Japanese, and Ibaraki Japanese. For instance, it is interesting to note how such words as ohashi (chopsticks), wakaranai, and dame have evolved phonologically, grammatically, and lexically in the different regions of Japan. The presenter then provided examples of variations in South American English, New York City English, and Black English. By showing video clips from contemporary movies, Yamane illustrated the variations in southern speech and New York City working class speech. We then analyzed a short passage from Black English vernacular where differences from standard English were very distinct. It was apparent that the topic of language variations can raise related issues such as race, socio-economic, and ethnic norms as well as religious beliefs of a particular region.

Without dealing too much with jargon, Yamane shared significant insights on variations of language. By focusing on specific, concrete examples that the audience could identify with, she aroused our attention to what could have been an otherwise remote and thematically difficult topic. The last question remains unanswered: Which English is THE correct English—grammatically, phonologically, and lexically?

Reported by Cecilia Ikeguchi

Kitakyushu: May—Web Resources for Wired Teachers by various presenters. See the TLT Wired column at the end of this issue of TLT.

Nagoya: May—26 Basic Things Any EFL Teacher Should Know by Setsuko Toyama. Toyama took the 26 letters of the alphabet as her starting point in demonstrating a large number of activities: A for activities based on the alphabet, B for board games, C for colours, etc. She stressed that as learning styles differ from individual to individual, teachers should include elements of the three main learning channels (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic) in all their lessons. She also emphasised the importance of the three R's of learning: repeating, recycling, and reviewing, and of having a flexible approach so that if a lesson plan flops, the teacher has something else to fall back on. She made the point that games should have a learning point and should not be used as an end in themselves or as a reward. She also advised that teachers should set up a routine in their lessons. One routine she suggested was: greeting, new language, practice, game or activity, story time, wrap up.

The activities she demonstrated included making simple puppets by taking a sock and using sticky seals for eyes, the delightful koala in the bag activity, and the teaching apron where letters and cut-out figures are attached to the teacher's apron with Velcro and used for teaching new words. She stressed the importance of music, noting that children can handle more complex language and improve their pronunciation if the language is inserted into a song. She advocated reading aloud as a way of helping students to internalise new language. This can be particularly useful in helping young learners to handle English verbs, which can be difficult to remember unless the children use them in sentences. Her final thought focussed on the last letter of the alphabet: Z for zeroing into the students' needs.

Reported by Bob Jones

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

Nara: May—Operating a Private Language School by Steven Nishida. The presentation began with an overview of the English conversation industry as it has developed to this day. The analysis revealed the strengths of the large national franchise chain model where students study cheaply and locally, literally in front of the station, but in an environment where curriculum is controlled by management so that lesson planning and teaching can be done by nearly any native speaker, regardless of qualification, and resulting in an often shaky marriage between business and education. Smaller schools, which aim to keep teacher turnover to a minimum and cannot demand the substantial up-front fees, are compelled to set their rates higher.

Nishida suggested operating in the niches by first focusing on population and transportation, not unlike doing market research for a fast-food restaurant. If an area looks workable, you can expect a franchise school to open or to be there already. The selection of location may well determine the success of the school. Second, try targeting specific demographic markets by age and interest. This requires your school to have a curricular focus. Smaller schools will also need to expect smaller sized classes, to tailor their hours to their students' schedules, and to look to generate three times the school's cost of the lesson hour to remain bankable. This is based on providing all students with the services they have paid for. A nominal fee to join is suggested as a means to create a sense of commitment, as is advertising locally for continuous exposure. Word of mouth is most favorable, but it is after hearing of a school three or more times that an inquiry may be prompted. Smaller schools may have to consider arranging homestays, outsourcing classes, or other programs to help stay afloat. While this seemed to be a topic familiar to most teachers, Nishida showed that the industry is evolving, and innovators may soon be challenging mainstream schools with a track record of results and accountability.

Reported by Larry Walker

Omiya: May—Using Movie Scripts, Lyrics, and Pictures from the Internet by Rich Porter. Activities based on movie scripts with scenes shown on video activate student interest and provide intrinsic motivation to complete the task. While the presenter recommended movie based cloze exercises for conversation classes, they would also make good listening activities. Porter showed how to access his homepage, which contains a tutorial on locating Internet materials and using them to prepare cloze exercises, then took us through the process of finding a script, locating a particular scene, deleting the direction to leave only dialogue, and finally checking the script against the actual movie, which is important as the Internet script often differs from the final version. He also touched on finding movie trailers, lyrics, and music samples, and on downloading pictures. Porter used a live wireless connection to the Internet and a projection of his computer screen, which was perhaps not the most efficient method as the inevitable technical hitches and fiddling around with split screens and resizing windows slowed the presentation down. Simple printouts of the screen with directions for each step would have been sufficient and saved time. While the focus of the presentation was simply how to access the material and prepare cloze exercises, more ideas or a brainstorming session on other ways to use the material would have also been welcome. The presentation provided a useful list of websites and a good introduction to locating and downloading Internet materials for those with little or no experience.

Reported by Amanda Everaert

Yokohama: April—Words and Meanings in the EFL Classroom by Eddy White. The presenter offered ideas for explaining word meanings effectively in the classroom. He sees two key issues. First, one should consider why some vocabulary items are harder to explain than others. Language often resembles a form of code—You are a practical person without a context makes a word like practical hard for the student to decode and the instructor to explain. Teachers should be prepared to deal with both planned and unplanned vocabulary. Some students are pretenders: They wait, hoping the context will eventually make the meaning of a word clear. Other students are checkers, and generally one should try to provide context to counter this tendency. Explanations of words may not go far enough, or they may go too far. Teachers should keep the explanations simple, write the word on the board, and give

the students time to consider it. Generally, the more specific the word, the easier it is to explain: pony, horse, animal represents increasing difficulty. Sometimes the context is not full enough. The time factor is also important, but is it legitimate to tell the student not to worry about the meaning of a certain word, or that it's not important? Low-frequency words may not merit time, but teachers should respond to students' questions. As for providing definitions, there are two main techniques: direct verbal equivalents and genus et deferentia (e.g., "A rose is a kind of flower").

The second issue, a very contentious one, is when (or if) to use the students' first language. It has been argued that, since there is usually no exact word correspondence, translation is an overly indirect method, and the class time is better spent using the target language. However, White believes that translation can sometimes be effective and efficient, especially with low-frequency items, though it should be limited in use. Bilingual dictionaries should be used as a tool (rather than as a crutch), since they can also interfere with learning. Teachers should also consider various cultural factors, including how much the students like to guess at word meanings. This excellent presentation considered a number of cultural and individual factors in addressing the issue of explaining word meanings and proposed practical solutions.

Reported by Ron Thornton

Chapter Events
...with Tom Merner <chap-events@jalt-publications.org>

Kitakyushu—Summer Social Event. As in 2002, we are planning to hold a casual summer get together at a beer garden in Kokura. All members and their guests are welcome to attend. Please check the chapter website for more information closer to the date. Saturday August 9, 19:00-21:00; venue and cost TBA.

Gunma—15th Gunma-JALT Summer Workshop at Kusatsu by Kip Cates and others.

Day 1: Global Issues and EFL: Teaching For A Better World. How can we help students improve their language skills while empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to solve world problems? This lecture will introduce the field of global education and discuss how to add global perspectives to English language teaching.

Day 2: Global Education: Ideas, Activities, Resources. The EFL classroom can be an exciting place to acquire "global literacy" while developing important language skills. This lecture will introduce innovative teaching ideas. Participants will have a chance to experience EFL lessons designed around global education themes. Saturday August 23, 11:00-21:00, and Sunday August 24, 9:00 - 14:30; Kusatsu

Seminar House (737 Kusatsu, Kusatsu-machi, Guma-ken 377-1711; t: 0279-88-2212; f: 0279-88-8030); members ¥8000 for two days including room and board; one-day members ¥3000 for program fees only.

Shinshu-Using Kamishibai in ESL/EFL Classrooms For All Ages by Taeko Okamoto. Okamoto, currently an ESL consultant working in the USA, will give a talk on the practical use of Japanese kamishibai as a means to tell English stories to people of all ages. In this presentation, she will show how the art of kamishibai picture storytelling can be implemented in ESL/EFL teaching with ready-made commercialized kamishibai stories, magazine pictures, hand-drawn pictures, and photos. She will demonstrate how all four skills can be integrated into the storytelling lesson. We will also have the opportunity to enjoy live kamishibai storytelling by this popular presenter and storyteller. Sunday August 31, 14:00-16:45; Shinshu University Kyoikugakubu Shinanoki Kaikan in Nagano-shi; one-day members ¥1000.

weblink: www.jalt.org/calendar/

Chapter Contacts

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Job Information Center

...with Jennifer Danker <job-info@jalt-publications.org>

To list a position in *The Language Teacher*, please email <tlt_jic@jalt.org> or fax (089-924-5745) Jennifer Danker, Job Information Center. Email is preferred. The notice should be received before the 15th of the month, two months before publication, and contain the following information: city and prefecture, name of institution, title of position, whether full- or part-time, qualifications, duties, salary and benefits, application materials, deadline, and contact information. A special form is not necessary.

Kanagawa-ken—Obirin University Foreign Language Education Centre invites applications for full-time lecturer in the English Language Program (ELP). Starting date, April 2004. Responsibilities: Currently required to teach approximately 10 hours per week, with a 4 day per week commitment to Obirin University. Committee, curriculum, and administrative duties, as required. Requirements: Masters Degree in TESOL/Applied Linguistics. Minimum 3 years teaching experience in Japanese colleges/universities. Good interpersonal skills and ability to work as part of a team. Experience in ELT curriculum/materials development. Computer literacy (Macintosh—Word, PageMaker, In Design, Excel.) Proficiency in Japanese an advantage. Contract: Initial contract for 3 years, renewable subject to performance evaluation and university needs. Salary according to university scale plus research allowance on approval. Application procedure: Applications should be made in writing and should include a cover letter, up-to-date curriculum vitae, including a list of publications, with passport size photo attached, a recent letter of reference, and a 500-word essay on your view of teaching Japanese university students. Deadline: October 17, 2003. Contact: Applications should be addressed to ELP Director, Obirin University ELP, Planet Fuchinobe Campus, 4-16-1 Fuchinobe, Sagamihara, Kanagawa 229-0006. Telephone, email, or fax inquiries/applications will not be accepted. Short-listed candidates will be contacted and invited for an interview and should prepare copies of two publications prior to the interview.

Tokyo-to—Temple University Japan (TUJ) is seeking a full-time Assistant Dean for English language education, starting January 1, 2004. The Assistant Dean directs the Academic Preparation Program (APP; TUJ's intensive English program) and the START program (a bridge between APP and the undergraduate program), as well as coordinates other programs to improve students' English abilities. Qualifications: PhD/EdD in

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Second Language Acquisition, TESOL, Applied Linguistics, or related field, significant teaching and administrative experience, experience as a college English writing instructor or familiarity with current pedagogy, and ability to assist in recruiting new students. Salary and benefits: Negotiable, depending on experience. Application materials: curriculum vitae and cover letter. TUJ is an equal opportunity employer, and applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Deadline: September 20, 2003. Contact: Roman Cybriwsky, Associate Dean, Temple University Japan, 2-8-12 Minami Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 106-0047; <roman@tuj.ac.jp>. Visit our homepage at <www.tuj.ac.jp>.

Ehime-ken—Matsuyama University in Ehime is seeking a full-time EFL instructor to teach in the Faculty of Business Administration, starting April 1, 2004. The contract is for two years and is non-renewable. Qualifications: Native speaker of English, Masters Degree in TESOL/TEFL, Applied Linguistics, or a related field, experience teaching Japanese students preferred. Duties: Teach six 90-minute classes per week, instruction in extracurricular activities, English chat room, and other activities upon request. Salary and Benefits: ¥267,500 per month, and ¥722,100 bonus per year. Employees must join Shigaku Kyousai for health insurance. Commuting allowance, housing allowance, research funds, and moving expenses will be provided according to the university laws and regulations. Application materials: Please submit the following documents: curriculum vitae, transcripts, photocopy of degree, list of publications, and up to three sample publications (photocopies acceptable). Application procedure: Applications should be made in writing and documents forwarded to Hiroyuki Murakami, Faculty of Business Administration, Matsuyama University, 4-2 Bunkyo-cho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime, Japan 790-8578. Deadline: September 10, 2003. Contact: Questions regarding the position may be directed to Tatsuhito Abe, Director of Office of Records and Registration; <abe@gc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp>.

Ehime-ken—Matsuyama University in Ehime is seeking a full-time EFL instructor to teach in the Faculty of Humanities, starting April 1, 2004. The contract is for 2 years and is non-renewable. Qualifications: Native speaker of English, Masters Degree in TESOL/TEFL, Applied Linguistics, or a related field, experience teaching Japanese students preferred. Duties: Teach six 90-minute classes per week, instruction in extracurricular activities, English chat room, and other activities upon request. Salary and Benefits: ¥267,500 per month, and ¥722,100 bonus per year. Employees must join Shigaku Kyousai for health insurance. Commuting allowance, housing allowance, research funds, and moving expenses will be provided according to the university laws and regulations. Application materials: Please submit the following documents: curriculum vitae, transcripts, photocopy of degree, list of publications, and up to three sample publications (photocopies acceptable). Application procedure: Applications should be made in writing and documents forwarded to Keiichi Kunisaki, Faculty of Humanities, Matsuyama University, 4-2 Bunkyo-cho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime, Japan 790-8578. Deadline: September 10, 2003. Contact: Questions regarding the position may be directed to Chiyomi Matsui, Director of Office of Records and Registration; <matsui@gc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp>.

Ehime-ken—Matsuyama University in Ehime is seeking a full-time EFL instructor to teach in the Faculty of Economics, starting April 1, 2004. The contract is for 2 years and is non-renewable. Qualifications: Native speaker of English, Masters Degree in TESOL/TEFL, Applied Linguistics, or a related field, experience teaching Japanese students preferred. Duties: Teach six 90-minute classes per week, instruction in extracurricular activities, English chat room, and other activities upon request. Salary and Benefits: ¥267,500 per month, and ¥722,100 bonus per year. Employees must join Shigaku Kyousai for health insurance. Commuting allowance, housing allowance, research funds, and moving expenses will be provided according to the university laws and regulations. Application materials: Please submit the following documents: curriculum

vitae, transcripts, photocopy of degree, list of publications, and up to three sample publications (photocopies acceptable). Application procedure: Applications should be made in writing and documents forwarded to Yasuhiro Kawahigashi, Faculty of Economics, Matsuyama University, 4-2 Bunkyo-cho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime, Japan 790-8578. Deadline: September 10, 2003. Contact: Questions regarding the position may be directed to Kazuyuki Fujii, Director of Office of Records and Registration; <fuji@gc.matsuyama-u.ac.jp>.

Okayama-ken—Notre Dame Seishin University in Okayama is seeking a full-time visiting English language instructor starting April 2004. Contract will be 2 to 3 years. Notre Dame Seishin University is a Catholic women's university. The student body is small, 2000 students, and the school prides itself on its sense of community. Class size ranges from 10-35 students. Teachers are responsible for instructing students in the English Department, as well as other departments of the university. Qualifications: MA in Linguistics preferred. Duties: Teach 20 hours per week, plus bimonthly meetings. Salary and Benefits: Five years or more teaching experience: ¥270,000 per month, plus two bonuses of ¥300,000. Less than 5 years teaching experience: ¥250,000 per month, plus two bonuses of ¥300,000. The university provides a small, furnished apartment within walking distance of campus. The teacher is responsible for rent and utilities. Deadline: September 30, 2003. Contact: Please forward letter and resume to Yoshiji Hirose, English Department Head, Notre Dame Seishin University, 2-16-9 Ifuku-cho, Okayama, Japan 700-8516.

Tokyo-to—The School of International Politics, Economics, and Business at Aoyama Gakuin University's Sagamihara Campus is seeking versatile part-time teachers for the 2004-2005 academic year to teach English courses, communication courses related to public speaking, discussion and debate, English in the mass media, English for academic purposes, reading, essay and thesis writing, and advanced English courses related to specific themes such as intercultural communication, comparative culture, media studies, gender awareness, conflict resolution and peace studies, global issues, and other subjects related to international

studies. Qualifications: Resident of Japan (any nationality, both native and nonnative speakers of English); proper visa if non-Japanese; MA or PhD in relevant areas of the humanities, social sciences, or education (including TEFL/TESOL); 1 year previous teaching experience at the university level in Japan; ability to teach language, communication, and advanced courses in English. Publications and membership in relevant academic associations a plus. Salary & Benefits: Similar to other private universities in the Tokyo area. Application Procedure: Send a complete resume, in English, including details of qualifications and experience in the above areas. Deadline: September 30, 2003. Contact: Send applications to Richard Evanoff, School of International Politics, Economics, and Business, Aoyama Gakuin University, 4-4-25 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan 150-8366. No personal responses (including replies to inquiries) will be made unless the applicant is being seriously considered for a position.

Shiga-ken—Ryukoku University is seeking a full-time tenured teacher of English at the associate professor or full professor level beginning April 1, 2004 in its Faculty of Intercultural Communication (Otsu campus). Qualifications: 45 years or older, PhD or equivalent research achievement in an English-related field, 5 years or more of Japanese university teaching experience, ability to teach in an area related to intercultural communication, ability to participate in committees conducted in Japanese. The successful candidate must have Japanese language ability in reading and speaking sufficient to supervise student graduation theses and to lecture in Japanese. Finalists will be asked to demonstrate this ability during an interview. Duties: Teach four or five English language classes per week as well as a graduation seminar and/or graduate class, participate in all required administrative and curriculum committees and meetings. Salary and Benefits: Salary and benefits are according to the Ryukoku University regulations and depend on age and years of teaching experience (mandatory retirement at 68). Application Procedure: These are explained on the university homepage. Use the standard Ryukoku University employment form. Follow the links in Japanese to recent announcements

starting at <www.ryukoku.ac.jp> for the Japanese application, and use your own CV format in English. All documents must be submitted, typed, in both Japanese and English on A4-size paper. Deadline: All documents must be received by September 20, 2003. The selection committee will read materials, and a list of candidates to be invited to an interview will be drawn up. Interviews will be in English and Japanese. Candidates may be asked to bring a videotape with a sample of their teaching. Notification of acceptance will be made in early November 2003.

Aichi-ken—The Extension Center at Aichi University, Kurumamichi Campus (Nagoya) will be expanding the Open College program in April 2004. Part-time teachers are being sought for intermediate level and above to teach evening or weekend courses geared to business people. Depending on qualifications, openings are available for autumn 2003 as well. Qualifications: Resident of Japan with an MA in TEFL/TESOL or related field, experience with teaching business English, curriculum development, and program management. Some proficiency in Japanese is desirable. Application Materials: Resume (English and Japanese) with photo and cover letter. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: M. Takiguchi, Extension Center, Kurumamichi Campus, Aichi University, 2-20-31 Tsutsui, Higashi-ku, Nagoya 461-8641.

Tokyo-to—The English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University is seeking part-time teachers to teach conversation and writing courses at their Atsugi campus. The campus is about 90 minutes from Shinjuku station on the Odakyu Line, and classes are on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Qualifications: Resident of Japan with an MA in TEFL/TESOL, English Literature, Applied Linguistics, or Communications; 3 years university teaching experience or 1 year university English teaching experience with a PhD; teaching small group discussion, journal writing, and book reports; collaboration with others in curriculum revision project; publications; experience with presentations; familiarity with email. Salary & Benefits: Comparable to other universities in the Tokyo area. Application Materials: Apply in

writing, with a self-addressed envelope, for an application form and information about the program. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: PART-TIMERS, English and American Literature Department, Aoyama Gakuin University, 4-4-25 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, Japan 150-8366.
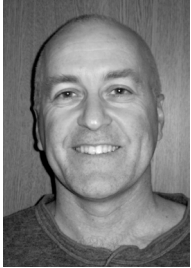
Web Corner

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

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

THE LANGUAGE TEACHER
WIRED

**...with Malcolm Swanson & Paul Daniels
<tlt-wired@jaltpublications.org>**

Monthly presentations at JALT chapters scattered around the country have always provided a rich source of teaching ideas and resources—none more so than the ever-popular *My Share* sessions. These offer something for everyone, and it is amazing how often even knowledgeable attendees are heard to mutter, "Wow, I never knew that!" This month's *TLT Wired* column reports on a recent *My Share* event in Kitakyushu, which focused on web resources for teachers.

As well as our *TLT Wired* feature columns, we would also like to answer reader queries on technology in educational settings. If you have a question, problem, or idea you'd like discussed in this column, please write to us at <tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org>.

Kitakyushu JALT My Share:
Web Resources for Wired Teachers

The writer, as first presenter, introduced **Hot Potatoes** <web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/>, a suite that includes six applications, enabling users to easily create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching or ordering, and gap-fill exercises for the World Wide Web. This is available for Windows and Macintosh machines (currently there is no OS X version, though it works fine in Classic mode), and can be used for free by nonprofit educational institutions. If you're using Hot Potatoes, it's worth checking the finished pages in a variety of browsers as results can vary. One nice option, if your provider has a FormMail CGI script installed, is that you can get the results of some tasks emailed to you—useful for checking student progress.

Nigel, the second presenter, focused on demonstrating a solid list of EFL resources available online. Most attendees knew many of the sites, but every one of us came away with something we hadn't seen before. First on the list was **Google** <www.google.com>, with particular focus on the Images tab in the opening menu—an excellent place to find graphic and pictorial resources.

Next up was **Dave's ESL Cafe** <www.eslcafe.com>—as Nigel stated, "This site has everything! The first place to look for ESL-related stuff." For translation of text or websites, he recommended **Babel Fish Online Translation** <babelfish.altavista.com>, though there are many others available. Most search engines have similar services.

If you're looking for articles, lesson plans, or grammar quizzes (and much more), the **Internet TESL Journal** <iteslj.org> has a huge resource available. This well-maintained site is very fast and reliable—welcome news for teachers who have planned an Internet lesson, only to find their resources have disappeared overnight! Another excellent resource is the BBC and British Council **Teaching English** site at <www.teachingenglish.org.uk>.

Helpful Hints

For Mac OS X users, here are a few little hints and tips to make life easier.

- Want to add a ‡, §, Æ, or © to your document, but don't know the keyboard shortcut? You can use the KeyCaps utility, but an easier way is to use the Character Palette. To access this, you first need to open the International pane in your System Preferences, click the Input Menu tab, then select the Character Palette option. Close Preferences, then go to the languages menu at the top of your screen (next to Help). Now, if you select Show Character Palette, you'll have instant access to many symbols and characters.

- Not sure if you've saved that file you're working on? A quick way to check is to look at the red close button in the top left corner of the file window. If it has a black dot in the centre, the file is unsaved.

- And speaking of those three buttons, if you think the genie-into-the bottle effect is cool when you hit the centre orange button, try pressing the Shift key as you click it. Great party trick!

The ever-popular **Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab** <www.esl-lab.com> is a fun and well-made site; very useful for teachers wanting to give their

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

TLT Wired

students extended listening practice.

Finally, Nigel introduced the online **National Public Radio** <www.npr.org>, which has extensive audio archives of USA news, information, and discussions. Most of the material is very high level, so is probably most suited to advanced-level classes or as a teacher resource.

Next up was Peg, with what was arguably the gem of the evening. The **Plumb Design Visual Thesaurus** <thesaurus.plumbdesign.com> is better experienced than described. All I can say is that if you ever wanted a very graphic method of illustrating the relationships between words, this is a jaw dropper! Please take a moment and try it out. It is available as a downloadable standalone player ($39.95) for Windows (98 or higher) and Macintosh (OS X), or as a free online service.

She also introduced **SelfAccess** <www.selfaccess.com>, which builds lessons from Reuter's news articles, and the **British National Corpus** <sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>, a self-described "unique snapshot of the English language, presented in a way that makes possible almost any kind of computer-based research on the nature of the language."

Lastly she presented **Surfing the Net with Kids** <www.surfnetkids.com>, particularly recommending Barbara Feldman's weekly newsletter, not just as a resource for teachers in Japan, but for our children as well.

The last presenter of the evening, Dave, introduced an activity for finding key vocabulary words used in class in song titles by using Napster-like **Limewire** <www.limewire.com>. "What I do is write the part of speech I want the class to practice, such as 'going to,' 'has been,' 'if you ever,' etc. and get lots of songs that include those words in the titles."

As the Kitakyushu JALT Chapter has found, these My Share sessions offer something for every attendee. They're also a good way to bring otherwise reclusive members out of the woodwork, and offer less confident presenters a supportive environment in which to start out.

Malcolm Swanson

Note: Reporting of the websites presented at this chapter event does not imply any support or recommendation by the editors of The Language Teacher.

The Language Teacher

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Membership Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Join or renew

JALT（全国語学教育学会）について

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

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

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

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

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

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